

# DART REPORT

*Downtown Assessment Resource Team Visit*



Logan  
*March 16-17, 2009*

846 ½ East Main Street ♦ Columbus, Ohio ♦ 43205 ♦ 614.258.6200

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# *Introduction*

Heritage Ohio's Downtown Assessment Resource Team spent one and a half days (March 16 & 17) in the City of Logan to assess the district's revitalization needs and opportunities. The assessment process had several functions:

- To identify some of the commercial district's major challenges, opportunities, and needs;
- To provide community members with information about the Main Street approach to commercial district revitalization;
- To learn whether the Main Street Approach is an appropriate strategy for the City of Logan; and
- To determine Logan's readiness and potential to embrace the Main Street program.

The team formed its comments, observations and recommendations based on documents, personal interviews, meetings with community leaders, walking and driving tours through the Logan commercial district, and the team's own experience in working with programs and community development corporations throughout the state of Ohio.

# *Team Members*

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# *National Main Street Center*

The National Main Street Center (NMSC) is a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust). Created by a Congressional Charter in 1949, the National Trust is a nonprofit organization with over 275,000 members. As a leading advocate of historic preservation in the United States, the National Trust is committed to saving America's diverse historic environments and to preserving and revitalizing the livability of communities nationwide. Economic growth, urban revitalization, and the creation of new jobs are all issues the National Trust addresses through the rehabilitation of historic resources.

Established in 1980 by the National Trust, the NMSC helps communities of all sizes to revitalize their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. More than 1,900 towns and cities in 43 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico have participated in Main Street's comprehensive commercial revitalization program. During this time, approximately \$31.5 billion has been reinvested in Main Street commercial districts, creating 331,417 net new jobs, 72,387 net new businesses, and spurring more than 178,727 building rehabilitation projects. Participating communities have leveraged more than \$28.31 in new investment for every dollar used to support the local revitalization effort – a reinvestment ratio that makes the Main Street program one of the most successful economic development strategies in the nation. The NMSC also sponsors the National Main Street Network™, a professional membership program for organizations interested in commercial revitalization. It produces publications, newsletters and special reports on revitalization and preservation issues and serves as a clearinghouse for information on community development issues. The NMSC accomplishes its mission through the Main Street Four-Point Approach™.

The Main Street Program assists local partners to plan and implement a comprehensive revitalization strategy for their commercial districts. The foundation of the “Four Point” or “Main Street Approach” to downtown revitalization is preservation: using those elements of quality that have survived as assets upon which we can build a lasting, positive physical and emotional image for everyone who uses downtown. Historic Preservation is used as an economic development tool. It capitalizes on over-looked and underutilized assets, encourages imagination, sharpening of entrepreneurial skills and strong participation by the private sector.

# *The Four-Point Approach*

The four point methodology works to create a total image for the community: Providing the retail/professional area with its necessary market niche, creating a cohesive visual identity unique to the community, and nurturing a cultural ambiance associated with the community's location, appearance, and way of life. The Main Street Approach gradually builds on existing resources and fosters improved community leadership and support on behalf of the central business district for the long term.

- **Organization** is the building of consensus and cooperation between the groups that play a role in the downtown. Many individuals and organizations in the community have a stake in the economic viability of the downtown.
- **Design** involves improving the downtown's image by improving its physical appearance – not just the appearance of buildings, but also of window displays, parking areas, signs, sidewalks, streetscapes, landscaping and all other elements that convey a visual message about the downtown.
- **Promotion** involves marketing the downtown's unique characteristics to shoppers, investors, new businesses, tourists, and others. Effective promotion creates a positive image of the downtown through retail promotional activity, special events and heritage tourism.
- **Economic Restructuring** involves strengthening the existing economic base of the downtown while diversifying it. Economic Restructuring activities include helping existing downtown businesses expand, recruiting new businesses, providing a balanced mix, converting unused space into productive property, and sharpening the competitiveness of downtown merchants.

# *The Eight Principles of Main Street*

While the Main Street approach provides the format for successful revitalization, implementation of the four-point approach is based on eight principles that pertain to all areas of the revitalization effort:

1. **Comprehensive.** Commercial district revitalization is a complex process and cannot be accomplished through a single project. For successful and lasting results, a comprehensive approach must be used. Simply stated, *comprehensive* means working on all four points simultaneously.
2. **Incremental.** Small projects and simple activities lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the revitalization process and help develop skills so that more complex problems can be addressed and more ambitious projects undertaken. Starting with small projects creates progress and momentum.
3. **Self-help.** Local leaders must have the desire and the will to make the project successful. The Heritage Ohio provides direction, ideas and training; but continued and long-term success depends upon the involvement and commitment of the community.
4. **Public/Private Partnerships.** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the economic health and physical stability of the district. Each sector has a role to play, and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations so that an effective partnership can be forged.
5. **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities – like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging or businesses that have become local institutions. Main Street cannot create new landmarks or institutions; existing local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
6. **Quality.** Quality must be emphasized in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies equally to each element of the program, from storefront design to promotional campaigns to educational programs.
7. **Change.** Changes in attitude and practice are necessary to improve current economic conditions. Public support for change will build as the program grows.
8. **Implementation-Oriented.** Activity creates confidence in the program and greater levels of participation. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization process is under way. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger activities as the revitalization effort matures.

# *Heritage Ohio, Inc.*

Heritage Ohio is a non-profit corporation organized to encourage redevelopment, and improvement of Ohio through its historic resources.

Heritage Ohio is the state-coordinating program for the National Trust for Historic Preservation's "Main Street" program in the State of Ohio. Incorporated as Downtown Ohio, Inc. in 1989, Heritage Ohio membership in has increased to include over six hundred (600) individuals, families, cities, organizations, consultants, and downtown development professionals throughout the State of Ohio. Heritage Ohio became the statewide partner with the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 2000. The Board is dedicated to a statewide downtown revitalization program, and continues to work toward assisting self-motivated communities of all sizes. Heritage Ohio provides technical assistance, training, and networking in all facets of historic preservation and downtown development.

The Board of Trustees for Heritage Ohio is composed of twenty-one members, including ex-officio members from the Ohio Department of Development, Ohio Historic Preservation Office, National Trust Advisors and a municipal government. They represent a broad-based group of downtown professionals from small, medium and large cities throughout the State.

Heritage Ohio is a member of the International Downtown Association (IDA) and the National Main Street Network. Heritage Ohio also links its technical assistance services with the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) in two ways. First, in working with the Office of Housing and Community Partnerships (OHCP) to develop fundable downtown-related projects in those communities interested in applying for the Downtown Revitalization Competitive Grant Program, Economic Development Loan Program, local Economic Development Revolving Loan Funds, and the Home Program. Secondly, acting as a conduit for other ODOD programs and resources and as an advocate for downtown revitalization issues related to ODOD.

Members have the opportunity to share knowledge, common experiences, and problems concerning management, planning and development in downtown areas. Heritage Ohio holds conferences and trainings annually across the state. Conferences focus on up-to-date downtown revitalization techniques and feature presentations from regional and/or nationally known speakers. A wide variety of downtown issues have been explored, including such topics as: competing with Wal-Mart; Special Improvement Districts; architectural design standards; parking; dealing with "white elephants"; and retail recruitment. Heritage Ohio members also receive reduced rates for conference registration and *Windows*, an informational newsletter.

# *Ohio Main Street Program*

Established in 1997, the Ohio Main Street Program, administered by Heritage Ohio, is dedicated to empowering each community within the state to maintain, strengthen and revitalize the unique physical, economic, historical and cultural characteristics of its own downtown or city center.

Each year the Ohio Main Street Program selects communities on a competitive basis to become official state Ohio Main Street programs. These communities will receive technical support and training needed to restore their Main Street to centers of community activity and commerce.

***Communities selected to participate in the Ohio Main Street Program will receive technical assistance, including:***

- Volunteer and program manager training
- Advanced training on specific Downtown issues, such as marketing and promotion, business recruitment, volunteer development, market analysis, design, historic preservation and fundraising.
- On-site visits to help each community develop its strengths and plan for success
- Materials such as manuals and presentations
- Linkages to other national and state Main Street communities
- Opportunity to apply for Ohio Main Street grant program

***Benefits of the Main Street Program include:***

- Protecting and strengthening the existing tax base
- Increasing sales and returning revenues to the community
- Creating a positive community image
- Creating visually appealing and functional buildings
- Attracting new businesses
- Developing new housing opportunities in historic buildings
- Creating new jobs
- Increasing investment in the downtown
- Preservation of historic resources

# ORGANIZATION

## Observations

- Logan Town Center is a great place to start with the community's revitalization efforts.
- City of Logan officials give every indication that they are willing to participate and be a partner in the efforts to revitalize downtown.
- The revitalization efforts up to this point have been led by a relatively small group.
- The organization lacks a cohesive long term strategic plan.
- There is a lack of volunteer opportunities or information regarding volunteer opportunities.
- The organization lacks a comprehensive fundraising strategy.
- Community at large is unaware of the efforts of the Logan Town Center organization.

## Recommendations

- Schedule a strategic planning meeting as included with the Network membership with Heritage Ohio to define organizational goals for the coming year.
- Prioritize goals and define time line to complete goals.
- Use strategic work plan goals to recruit committee volunteers to populate four Main Street committees. When recruiting volunteers consider all potential partners in the community including city and county employees and officials, other non-profits, community organizations, local institutions, area residents and for profit businesses.
- Appoint committee chairs from board of directors to each committee. Committee chair facilitates work planning session to identify projects that will address goals set out by the board. Committee must then break out projects in small manageable and definable tasks including person responsible and date to be completed.
- Board should review committee work plans upon completion and on a monthly basis.

## Fundraising

- The full board may need to be involved in the development of the initial funding strategy. Then it could be turned over to the Organization Committee to implement. If organization committee does not have the volunteers, the board must remain responsible for fundraising. Ultimately funding the organization is the responsibility of the board.
- Create a fundraising package, which includes: mission; committee structure and short and long term goals; board members; chronology of activities; DART visit summary; current budget, and three year budget.
- Preferred revitalization program funding mix is do-able in Logan (1/3-1/3-1/3). As a long range goal: first third from the City of Logan and perhaps Hocking County, the second third from membership, corporate sponsorship and donations, and the final third from foundations, grants, fundraising events and merchandise sales.
- Ask donors for a multi-year commitment or multi-year gifts (3 years). The Mayor may consider co-signing the corporate and foundation letters of request.
- Seek out community and family foundations that may support this effort, invite them to sit on the board, ask for multi-year donations.

- Identify corporate donors; assign teams to visit and present fundraising package. Ask for multi-year financial support. Logan has several stakeholders in or surrounding the district. These entities need to be involved both financially and as board members/committee members to ensure stability, partnership opportunities and cooperation/collaboration.
- Help identify corporate sponsors for any major Promotions Committee events (and indeed all other committee projects). The fundraising committee ‘controls’ these solicitations too, but acts in partnership with committee needs. Get all of the solicitation done in one visit to businesses, not multiple each year.
- Put membership-structure in place that pulls together all merchants, building owners, individuals...get marketing volunteers to establish strategy for attracting members. Be wary of creating a membership program structured too heavy on member benefits. The value of membership is a revitalized and economically viable downtown. Identify inherent benefits built into the organization’s work plan and mission, instead of trying to create new incentives. *Do not* confuse major donor support with membership campaign.
- You may want to consider some type of joint membership program with existing organizations, so that all organizations can be stronger. Contact Main Street Orville to find out how they, as a new organization have succeeded with a joint program. (Contact information can be found on Heritage Ohio’s website: [www.heritageohio.org](http://www.heritageohio.org))
- Establish a recognition and thank you program for all solicitation appointments (funded or not) and all pledges and gifts.
- Keep those who declined solicitation visits or donation opportunities well informed, they may say yes next time, as you prove yourselves through this establishment phase.

### **Communications & Accountability**

- The distinction needs to be clear that the Organization Committee communicates about the organization. The promotion committee communicates about downtown events and activities.
- Make sure you have correct contact information for all building and business owners. Decide what type of information and frequency you plan to communicate with them, and follow through. Plan to keep news flowing to the community, whether it’s about a building rehab, an upcoming event, new businesses, or exceptional volunteer stories. Plan to keep the organization in the news; take advantage of all media opportunities.
- How will you communicate with donors, merchants, members, and the community at large? Newsletter; E-news, web site, Facebook, Twitter, blog, Flickr, press releases to media?
- Consider establishing an on-going newspaper column to engage and educate the public.
- Provide a press/photo opportunity with each of your donors: perhaps at the \$500 or above giving level.
- A communications strategy with regional partners such as the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, Convention and Visitors Bureau should be developed.
- Establish an annual meeting to recognize progress.

- Plan to write an annual report to communicate with stakeholders.

### **Resource Management**

- Office Space may be donated. Determine how to furnish and equip an office. You do have vacant commercial space that might be donated towards an office. This may be another opportunity to partner with your large stakeholders. They also have the ability to donate equipment, phone and Internet services, and employee/student assistance. The larger stakeholders might consider loaning expertise from their professional staff in a variety of applications.

### **Staff**

- Logan does not currently have a paid manager in place to focus on the commercial district. The identification and placement of a part-time manager may provide the needed catalyst to coordinate activities while funding is secured to pay for this position.
- Set a goal date for hiring a paid manager. Determine the amount of money needed to make that step.
- Write a job description and set personnel policies prior to hiring, see Roadmap to Revitalization.

### **Volunteer Management**

- Board development; analyze strength and weaknesses of board, recruit new members as needed. There are excellent examples of board analysis, available from Heritage Ohio.
- Prepare recruitment and training materials for board.
- Use strategic work plan to help identify and recruit potential volunteers. Strive to be upfront with volunteers regarding time commitment, project and length of service.
- Determine how best to recruit, assign, train, and recognize initial volunteers who will populate committees.
- Begin a system to log volunteer hours. The current federal dollar value of a volunteer hour is \$19.51; this can be used to show the value of volunteer commitment.

### **Budget/Financial Reporting**

- With executive committee and committee chairs, the Treasurer should draw-up a one-year and three-year budget. Set realistic goals as to where you want this organization to grow.
- Determination should be made what style of financial reports will be presented and on what frequency to the board.
- Procedures for expending funds should be in the form of a written policy.
- Make sure your organization is prepared to file appropriate papers with the Ohio Secretary of State and Attorney General's office.
- Make sure that if your revenue is over \$25,000, your organization is filing 990 forms with the IRS.
- Finally, Have Fun! What you are doing should be personally rewarding, as you act and plan on a vision for Logan's future.



# PROMOTION

## Observations

- Logan has a very unique Washboard Music Festival. This major festival appears to be pretty successful. Continue to make this event unique, and get Logan better press!
- Logan is the heart of the Hocking County, this needs to be promoted much more.
- Tourism is a large part of the economy in Hocking County, the Convention and Visitors Bureau would be well served by helping to promote downtown Logan.
- There needs to be a bigger push for retail events, they are challenging, but have the opportunity to connect businesses to your program and have significant impact.

## Recommendations

### Image Development

- This category is basically the art of good public relations, which consists of everything from personal contacts to top quality graphics.
- An image campaign will help to create an identity for Logan, so there isn't any question that you have 'arrived' in the business district. This can be achieved through physical improvements, consistent use of logo design and graphics. It would be practical to adapt a compatible logo to the one the Village of Logan has developed.
- Consider working with regional community colleges to develop a comprehensive promotional strategy that will be effective in the long-term and that will address the many target market opportunities in Logan. The economic restructuring committee should complete a comprehensive market analysis for the district.
- Promotional packages developed by this committee should be used for all four points of the main street approach. For example, they can be used for fundraising, business recruitment and tourism.
- The logo/identity should be publicized heavily and used in all marketing materials, signs and way finding, banners, and event materials. Business owners should be encouraged to use the 'district logo' in all of their advertising to promote a unique and cohesive district.
- The logo window clings could be expanded in businesses in the district to further promote a unified group. Or paper shopping bags could be a shared order that would further solidify Logan's shopping district image.
- Consider selling hats, t-shirts, and other advertising specialties with the district logo, or as give-aways at events.
- Make sure that the logo is utilized in all web sites that have links to the new district web site. Also link these community web sites to the district site. Or consider one community website that incorporates any/all of these entities to show unity, particularly as this was identified as a key concern during the Logan DART visit.

### Retail Events

- Retail events work to stimulate the local economy by promoting merchants, goods and services.
- Counteract slow sale periods with retail promotional events for increased return.

- Consider holding retail events in conjunction with special events or other regional “events.”
- The business people of Logan must have knowledge of each other’s products and services before they can work together to cross-promote. Arrange morning or afternoon tours of different businesses each month. Logan cannot sell the concept of personalized service, if business owners do not have a sense of the district market in its entirety.
- Evaluate the holidays. Plan in advance the holidays you will promote and how you plan to celebrate. Be sure to start with a good lead-time in regard to holiday retail promotion, so that local business owners can fit their business promotions into the theme of the district.
- Businesses should be open when the customers are available. If there is a district event, the individual businesses must take this opportunity to advertise that their hours compliment the event and suggest how their patrons can take advantage of their products.
- Whether online or on paper, businesses have to convey the advantages, quality and services that they provide in the district that are distinguishable from the strip mall, big box stores and other regional business districts.
- Web links are critical in today’s economy. It is a first impression point for potential customers. The district revitalization group could contract professional services from a web developer to work with individual businesses that are not yet on line.
- Help retailers and businesses consider how the “experience economy” can be translated to their store. Remember the five senses in setting the mood for the customer’s experience. Touch, sight, smell, taste and sound.
- Work with the design committee so that display windows have a “WOW” factor, which entices consumers.
- Wi-fi throughout the district might be an appropriate expenditure.

### **Special Events**

- Evaluate each event Logan currently hosts and determine the effectiveness of existing events and any gaps that need filled. This way time and money spent produce maximum results.
- Create an eighteen-month calendar, so that business owners can coordinate their promotions and product orders with those events.
- It is very important for Logan to feature local restaurants at every event.
- During special events, business people should participate with a theme, so that their business seems like a part of the bigger event.
- Special events bring people to the district. It is still the business owner’s responsibility to bring them in the door.
- The district revitalization group does not run *all* special events. Rather, it encourages the district as the center of community events. Encourage community groups of all types to use the district as a staging ground for their events.

## **Heritage Tourism**

- Heritage Tourism is traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past.
- Key points: save your heritage, share it with others, and reap the economic benefits of tourism. There were several examples of wonderful stories from the past...use them!
- Cross-promote your district for the visitors at the heritage sites in your region. It's as simple as putting your brochure at the information table. A common sense idea that is often not taken advantage of.
- The local restaurants can be promoted as the practical landing place after, before or during other heritage tourism excursions in your region.
- Heritage tourists are more demanding of historical integrity. Sell Logan's unique and eclectic district.
- The downtown walking tour is an excellent feature already promoted on the website. Look for creative ways to promote the walking tour inside and outside of the community.

# ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

## Observations

- Downtown Logan is faced with serious economic challenges including first and second floor vacancy, minimum foot traffic, and declining infrastructure health.
- The district has recently experienced additional challenges with the declining economy and the loss of a major property owner.
- Downtown has a great opportunity with nearby visitor traffic, but a challenge in serving locals as well as visitors.
- Businesses in the downtown have inconsistent hours and policies and would benefit from improved cooperation and communication.
- Downtown Logan has recently seen some positive signs and can build off the momentum of new businesses and business expansions.

## Recommendations

### **Build Relationships**

- Logan Town Center should work to establish a healthy and mutually beneficial relationship with all district business owners.
- Create a forum for business owners to meet and discuss aspects of doing business. Retailers should be aware of the inventory and promotions of other district retailers.
- Create a co-promotion effort to market many businesses at a reduced cost.
- Learn to use social networking tools to promote businesses at little to no cost.
- Develop new retail promotional events.
- Meet with every business owner in the district to explain the role of Logan Town Center and ask how the organization can assist them in doing more business.
- Logan Town Center must establish healthy and trusting relationships with all of the business owners in the district before they will be willing to buy-in to the program.
- This relationship can only be established by demonstrating to business owners that Logan Town Center is a transparent grassroots organization truly interested in assisting business owners and improving their bottom line.

### **Business Assistance**

- Business assistance attempts often get little traction unless the relationship with business owners has already been established.
- Conduct a free retail improvement series. Have successful retailers present to other retailers and topics including marketing, loss prevention, inventory, sales, etc.
- Consider retail mentoring programs for new retailers.
- Use free online tools to communicate helpful information to business owners such as trends, strategies etc.

- Work with regional colleges and your Small Business Development Center to bring educational resources to individuals operating businesses in the district and to help with some of the data gathering, analysis and strategies.
- Create a retailer library with materials to assist with all facets of running a retail business.
- Bring in retail speakers or purchase retail books, workbooks, DVD's and CD's.
- Consider local gift card programs
- Develop a shop local program

### **Business Retention, Expansion and Recruitment Thoughts**

- Business retention/assistance should be given priority over expansion and recruitment. The best business recruitment tool is a viable district. Businesses in the district must first improve before anything else can be done.
- Good existing businesses attract other businesses and healthy businesses are more likely to expand.
- The days of easy business recruitment are over, use resources wisely.
- Passively recruit. By improving the district and existing businesses, new business will come.

### **Business Development**

- Focus on developing entrepreneurs over recruitment.
- Many people are being forced into entrepreneurship by a shrinking job market.
- Entrepreneurial development is more cost effective than business recruitment and more successful.
- Local businesses contribute more to the local economy in terms of money spent locally, money donated, quality of life and volunteer hours.
- Locate potential entrepreneurs through newsletters, alumni communications, entrepreneur fair, etc.
- Demystify the process of opening a new business by mapping the process. Identify successful existing entrepreneurs, lenders, accountants, and attorneys to assist new entrepreneurs.
- Create an entrepreneur network and mentor program.

### **Incentives**

- Identify and understand all of the incentives available to potential investors (revolving loan funds, grants, tax abatements, tax credits, easements and other financing tools.)
- Communicate incentives in a simple readily available format.
- Develop new incentives if existing incentives are inadequate.

### **Recruitment and Market Analysis**

- Conduct a series of information gathering surveys including a zip code survey and intercept surveys to get a better understanding of district users.
- The community should give careful consideration to what the right mix of business might be for the commercial district.

- Use the data to identify what other opportunities exist, your ER teams should begin to work with existing businesses to see if they have the ability to expand product or services into those markets, or whether there is a need to recruit a new business.
- It is important that a comprehensive analysis of space—its use, how much is filled and vacant, price per square foot, ownership, lease terms, location, etc. —is compiled into a data base. This information is necessary for understanding the economics of your downtown. It also means that the downtown organization is prepared when opportunities for business retention, recruitment and expansion occur.

### **Upper Floor Development**

- Identify if there are any code/zoning issues that hinder developing upper floor residential housing. Support what works, work on the roadblocks.
- Many communities have upper floor tours to familiarize the community with the spaces available. It is a growing market, be pro-active about creating the residential/commercial community.

# DESIGN

## Observations

- Downtown Logan stakeholders have a great opportunity to improve their streetscape's appeal. The organization should work with the Ohio Department of Development to establish or strengthen efforts to tap into state funding to address streetscape issues.
- Downtown anchor buildings, including the former department store, are currently underutilized/vacant and in danger of being lost if feasible redevelopment plans are not explored
- Along these lines, downtown Logan has some wonderful diamonds in the rough. Once properly rehabilitated, these historic buildings will reinforce the concept of downtown Logan as a destination for residents and tourists alike.
- The Worthington Park area located downtown is a beautiful green space with important heritage ties to the history of Logan.
- Individual properties in Logan are listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) including the Logan City Hall; however, there is currently no downtown district NRHP listing.
- There is no formal design review in place to protect the architectural importance of historic downtown buildings. Recent building demolitions have left the downtown streetscape with "missing teeth."
- Small and modest sized buildings are important components of the downtown streetscape.
- Downtown infill construction, compatible to the existing building stock, is needed.
- Hocking County benefits from millions of tourists visiting each year while downtown Logan misses out on their fair share of tourist revenue; however, downtown Logan has the potential, because of its historic and unique building stock, to capitalize on capturing more tourist dollars.
- Signage focused on downtown Logan could accomplish critical goals: helping to convey an attractive gateway to visitors/tourists, directing visitors into the downtown, helping visitors find appropriate public parking.

## Recommendations

### Education and Technical Assistance

- Protect the historic assets Logan is so fortunate to have. Once historic buildings are lost they can never be replaced. In almost every instance what is seen as a suitable replacement is far inferior to the existing structure. What makes downtown Logan unique is its historic buildings and authentic feel, and that must be protected as you work to revitalize.
- Work to educate building owners and tenants about appropriate design for their buildings. Flood the community with historic images so that everyone knows how the buildings were meant to look.
- Have clear lines of communication with building owners, so that partnerships are built based on mutually rewarding goals.
- Establishing Design Guidelines or an Architectural Review Ordinance should be a goal to protect downtown Logan's architectural heritage. Design Committee members can begin the process of educating stakeholders now. Reach out to property owners, realtors, contractors, and building supply outlets.
- Logan should understand funding opportunities available through the Ohio Department of Development and their CDBG downtown grant programs. A local design review ordinance will need to be in place as part of the grant's eligibility requirements if Logan applies for a Tier II downtown revitalization grant.
- Make sure building owners, architects and contractors are familiar with both the federal 10% and 20% rehabilitation tax credit programs and know whether their buildings are eligible. The Ohio Historic Preservation Office administers tax credit programs in Ohio.

- The program should keep tabs on the state 25% tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic properties, and should maintain contact with its state representative and senator to promote its continued use. Although future funding of the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit is not assured, a new round of applications for rehabilitation projects will be opened in summer 2009. A fully funded state tax credit could be a boon to districts such as downtown Logan to jump-start preservation efforts.
- The Design Committee could work to create an architectural scavenger hunt featuring downtown Logan buildings and building elements. The scavenger hunt can involve families and create renewed appreciation for the architecture of Logan.
- Brochures created for architectural walking tours (such as those found online) can be used by residents and tourists. These also support that renewed appreciation for the area's architecture.

### **Private Improvements**

- The Main Street program can probably have the greatest impact on improving the appearance of downtown Logan buildings by encouraging business and property owners to make upgrades and by providing information regarding cost-effective improvements.
- Work with area financial institutions to build the best packages for redevelopment funding, and communicate these opportunities to building owners.
- Given the current economy, it will be much more difficult to entice out-of-town developers to fix downtown Logan's problem buildings. However, demolishing your anchor buildings will seriously hamper your future efforts to market your downtown as a singular tourist destination. Look to your community leaders to become the re-developers of your downtown. An emerging trend has been for local CICs and LLCs to take on downtown redevelopment projects of vacant & underutilized buildings.
- Stakeholders should explore with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office the eligibility of placing downtown Logan on the National Register of Historic Places. As building owners commit to investing in the rehabilitation and upgrade of their buildings, tax credit incentives (as mentioned above) at both the federal and state levels will help defray expenses.

### **Public Improvements**

- In the future, when an ordinance is in place, petition the city to have the Logan downtown area designated as a local historic district, and to become a Certified Local Government (CLG – again administered by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office). Local historic district designation will provide protection against incompatible alterations or demolitions, and may make it easier to recruit preservation-minded developers in the future.
- Logan city government and Logan Town Center should work closely together to explore the possibility of securing Tier II funding from the Ohio Department of Development (the CDBG downtown grant mentioned above) to assist with streetscape and building improvements. Numerous Main Street communities have tapped into this fund to leverage private investment while improving the look and safety of their downtown district.
- Although Logan Town Center will not have direct control over zoning and design overlay decisions, the Main Street program should closely monitor the city's review of downtown zoning issues and actively advocate for the district's needs and concerns.

### **Streetscape**

- As Main Street recommends, start small and work incrementally toward bigger and better things. Start next year with flower baskets/planters, and perhaps banners. Graduate to investing in appropriate street furniture, etc.
- Public art should be integrated into the streetscape. Partner with local schools to create a program. And allow families to participate, making their mark in Logan.

- Appropriate signage, especially wayfinding signs and kiosks, can orient visitors, and hopefully draw them into town. Kiosk content can include a calendar of events, a downtown map showing store names, types, and locations, and historical content promoting Logan's past. Imagine yourself as the first-time visitor or new resident; how easy is it to find and learn about Logan's assets? Visitors who come away with a good first impression will likely return to take advantage of what the city has to offer. Visitors who have a bad experience probably won't return, and are likely to tell friends and family about their experience.

### **Beautification**

- The Design Committee can coordinate a volunteer clean up day, helping to foster an ethic of cleanliness. Evaluate problem areas downtown and brainstorm on solutions.
- Work with business to provide support for the best window presentation to market their goods and services. Any vacant windows should be filled with creative and interesting displays; for example, advertising a cultural event, or promoting a downtown business.
- Heritage Tourists want to experience authentic history. They want to reconnect and learn from the past. Downtown Logan tourism efforts should focus on positioning itself as the historic heart of the Hocking Hills. Its historic, authentic building stock has the potential to better serve tourists and residents, and if its historic design qualities are better promoted, downtown stakeholders should reap the rewards of increased use and visitation to the downtown.

# Logan Visioning

DART participants talked about Logan, what was valued and what their wishes for the future would be. The list was configured under the 4- point approach to Main Street, so that volunteers could begin creating work plans, to make these wishes reality.

### **Logan Mission/Role**

- Promoting downtown
- Make the property owners aware of what is downtown
- Be an information resource for property owners & business owners
- Be a facilitator for the property owners & business owners
- Be a major communicator to the community
- Be the conscience of the community for the property owners, business owners, residents
- Know the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor availability of the downtown
- Maintain the culture of the downtown
- Know what kind of culture we want to promote downtown—to know what is the common good for the downtown
- Resource for people new to the community interested in business/making a contribution
- Encouraging to new business
- Supportive of current business
- Work on maintaining a positive image of downtown
- Logan Town Center provide a welcoming atmosphere
- More inclusive/less exclusive
- Encouraging of people who come to the meetings—understanding how your volunteers can assist you—and how your volunteers would like to help
- Work to involve younger people
- Have regular town meetings
- Provide leadership, instill interest & excitement downtown
- Look at bigger picture/inclusive w/ different groups/audiences
- How to bring more people downtown
- Parking problem—not enough for new business recruitment

### **Downtown Logan Vision**

- Activities for all ages & younger people & children
- Unique shops & restaurants
- Streetscape qualities
- Entertainment venue artisans/craftsmen w/ workshop/education offerings
- Artists & crafts venues
- Outdoor activities—on sidewalks, outside of the built environment
- Good transportation system (like Eureka Springs AR) w/ bus line into community
- Local specialty shops
- Cleanliness
- Flowers
- Historical sites
- Walkable downtowns

- Coffee shops
- Benches/picnic tables
- Fountains
- Open doors to the shops (things that draw you in)
- Bookstores/antique shops
- Plus promotion of local history—its authenticity
- Diversity of community
- Safe, clean & attractive
- Friendly
- Outdoor vendors
- Horse & carriage rides

### **1 Year Plan**

- Create or find a youth meeting center downtown
- Sustain funding for town center
- Get historic district registered National Register
- Create another section of bike path connecting downtown to Mingo Park
- Angled parking/additional off-street parking
- Grow farm market/bring more people in on Saturday
- Developing a parking plan
- Hire director
- Enhance design concept (build on streetscape items)
- Fill more storefronts
- Youth recreation opportunities
- Creating info/education piece reaching out to different groups

### **5 Year Plan**

- Theater rehab
- Community swimming pool
- Create college student housing