

ACTION PLAN FOR DOWNTOWN ORGANIZATION

Over the last several months a great deal of interest has been generated in the downtown. The Mayor's Conference on Historic Preservation brought over 160 people closer to a realization of the significance of Historic Preservation as a part of downtown revitalization. Many people were rudely awakened by the proposal of a 146 million dollar development scheme for the downtown redevelopment property known as parcel A. As a result of all of this interest and activity it is important that all groups involved agree upon a logical formalized process to address the needs of the downtown.

Following is a proposed step by step methodology for transforming our discussion into action:

Step 1 COMMITMENT OF THE MAYOR

Direct an on-going involvement of the Mayor has been shown to be of paramount importance in keeping downtown revitalization on track. The Mayor should be in a position to explain his expectations for the downtown and his expectations of groups working toward the revitalization of downtown. He should also be prepared to commit to a degree of personal involvement so that he can provide continuing direction of the process. He should establish the context or framework within which subsequent activities take place.

Step 2 COMMITMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

If a public private partnership is to be successfully formed, serious consideration must be given to the development of leadership as a basis for obtaining private sector support. As our examination of other downtown efforts has shown, the formation of a core group of committed volunteers is an ever present characteristic of successful efforts. This group should be broadly represented above the community, and should focus on those elements which have the potential for committing resources when needed. It is suggested that such a core group be representative of the following segments of the community:

- A. Retail professional
- B. Industry
- C. Downtown Property owners

- D. Banking
- E. Community groups
- F. Preservation Trust
- G. Cultural interests
- H. The News Times

This group could ultimately be the core of the newly formed downtown council, which up until this point has been a loose association of interested individuals.

Step 3 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The members of this core group should be invited to meet with the Mayor at City Hall for the purpose of having a dialogue on the concepts of downtown revitalization. It is at this meeting that the Mayor will formally make his expectations interests and commitment known. The group then as a unit, should set about the task of developing an overall mission and purpose which will establish the philosophical framework for downtown revitalization and the activities of the organizations therein.

Step 4 WORK PROGRAM

Once the mission of the organization has been clearly defined, a series of long and short term goals and objectives should be established. Since the downtown is made up of many components, the group should attempt to address each of the following areas:

- A. Marketing and promotion for the downtown
- B. Physical planning and development
- C. Historic preservation and esthetics
- D. Culture
- E. Housing
- F. Transportation
 - 1. Traffic
 - 2. Parking
 - 3. Road reconstruction
 - 4. Public transportation
- G. Recreation
- H. Business developments
- I. Financing

Once each of these topics has been addressed in some way, it will be necessary to obtain a commitment from the group under the direction of the Mayor to the active pursuit of those items considered of priority.

Step 5 FORMALIZATION OF THE ORGANIZATION

Once its goal has been clearly defined, the organization may consider expanding to encompass other groups and individuals interested in pursuing those goals. A more formal structure may be necessary with by-laws and articles of incorporation, and it may be necessary to formally adopt a work program which more specifically addresses the goals previously enumerated. This work program may include timetables and an enumeration of resource requirements such as:

- A. Financing
- B. Staffing
- C. Delegation

Step 6 IMPLEMENTATION

It is obvious that "bricks and mortar" type activities are highly visible and therefore most desirable in terms of sparking interest of the downtown. However, public acceptance of such efforts may not occur unless such efforts are properly organized. The City is presently embarking upon a restoration of the old jail at 80 Main Street, this serves as a very visible sign of commitment in the downtown, further, funds have been appropriated to make the old Danbury Library more presentable, which will also serve as a visible sign to those businesses which surround it. These public efforts are far easier to achieve in the short run and will reap considerable benefits in good will. Activities such as sign control and facade improvement programs which involve a high degree of interaction between the public and private sectors, should not be undertaken until a formalized organizational framework has had an opportunity to become functional.

and should focus on those activities which have the potential for consulting resources, etc. It is suggested that such a core group be representative of the following segments of the community:

- a. Small professionals
- b. Industry
- c. Downtown property owners