

Shelby 360° Downtown Assessment Report



On-site Assessment Jan. 21-22, 2007

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Thanks to:

Shelby City
Council

Mayor Larry Bonderud
Chip Miller, Ward 1
Cindy Doane, Ward 1
Eugene Haroldson, Ward 2
David Irvin, Ward 2
Harvey Hawbaker, Ward 3
Don R. Lee, Ward 3

With special thanks to
Mayor Larry Bonderud and Lorette Carter
Community Development Director

City of Shelby
Staff

&

the numerous
Downtown
Stakeholders
who
participated in
the Assessment

We couldn't
have done it
without you!

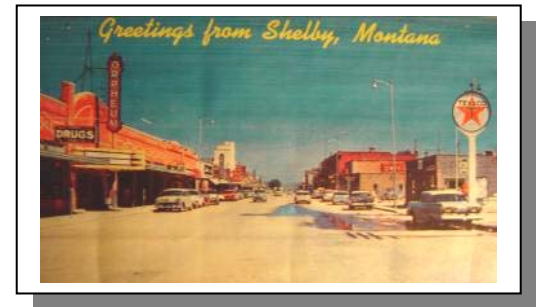
Shelby 360° Assessment & Report Produced by:



Vicki D. Dugger, Executive Director
Downtown Solutions Team
PO Box 2912
Salem, OR 97308
503.587.0574
www.downtownsolutions.org

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Downtown redevelopment, economic development and job growth are intricately connected - - especially in areas where tourism is part of the economic development strategy. The way a downtown looks and functions does matter to economic development. These days, an attractive, viable downtown is necessary to garner more visitor and resident dollars and send the message to potential businesses, industries, investors and residents that the community values its downtown as the commercial, social and cultural center of the community.

Downtowns are not static. They never sit still, but are always moving forward or backward - - sometimes incrementally, sometimes not. Successful downtowns are active, inviting, pedestrian-friendly environments that have a range of retail, service, dining and housing (or lodging) options for community members and visitors alike. Successful downtowns don't just happen. They are a complex interweaving of the following components:

- Walk-ability - - where shoppers park once and walk often rather than vice versa
- Contiguous businesses that are located at the sidewalk rather than set back behind 'front loaded' parking
- Civic anchors (destinations) such as City Hall, the Library, and Post Office
- Inviting streetscape and public spaces that encourage browsing, gathering and community interaction
- Enticing ambiance and a unique experience - - not 'anywhere USA'
- Good wayfinding, circulation, and parking

Attributes of a Vital Downtown District



"A community is characterized by civility, respect and neighborly concern.

It is a place; people feel rooted, they belong, they can participate in civic life.

A town supplies the heartbeat and signature for the area. It is where people gather to live, play, learn and grow."

- - William Hudnut

5 Rules for a Well-Designed Downtown

- 1. Create a sense of place.**
 - Reflect your natural and cultural heritage
 - Make downtown a place that people remember in a positive way
- 2. Design the place for people.**
 - Downtowns need to be at a scale for pedestrians.
 - Create building details & signage for pedestrians.
 - Make sidewalks & public spaces enjoyable.
- 3. Mix in a variety of uses.**
 - Mixed-uses need to be both vertical & horizontal.
 - Local complementary uses should be adjacent to one another.
 - Have uses that keep downtown active after 5 pm.
- 4. No parking lots in front of buildings.**
 - Locate parking to the side, or behind, buildings.
 - Use on-street parking where possible to help shrink parking lots.
 - Make parking attractive for both cars and people.
- 5. Connect all the pieces.**
 - Storefronts – Sidewalks – Public Space - & Parking...they should all work together and complement each other!

- Attractive storefronts that invite shoppers to stop and shop
- A feeling of safety
- A variety of goods and services plus browsible shops and good dining/entertainment options
- Great customer service, convenience and value
- Attractive marketing (including high quality web presence)
- Outstanding events

Downtowns are a perfect match for smaller, locally owned businesses as they serve a good business 'launch pad' because rents are typically lower and spaces smaller to accommodate the needs of entrepreneurs. In addition, locally owned businesses are typically more unique and customer service friendly.

Locally owned businesses also re-circulate a larger proportion of earnings back into the local economy than big boxes and chains. For every \$1 spent in a locally owned business, an average of 54¢ is put back into the local economy as compared to 14¢ with a chain store.

How a downtown is designed makes all the difference in how it functions as a district. Downtown buildings that are contiguous, set at the sidewalk and have active retail and inviting shop windows encourage pedestrian activity. There is a real psychology as to how pedestrians behave and move through a downtown environment. Pedestrians will cross the street or turn around and get back into the car if there are gaps in the architectural fabric, drive-thrus, or blank walls. These are all detriments to a walkable downtown environment.



It's easy to see how a building's design affects a downtown's pedestrian environment.

Building siting & height-to-width ratios have much to do with pedestrian comfort & downtown vitality.

The illustration, below, shows the downtown development model vs. the strip-development model

Ideal - 1:3 height-to-width ratio



Challenging - 1:7 height-to-width ratio



In short, downtowns are very complex and made up of appealing and walkable environments, great stores, community gathering spaces, easy wayfinding and parking, and outstanding marketing and events. However, the most important component in downtown development is the champions, or sparkplugs, that get things done!

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The discussion relating to Shelby and its downtown development began in late Fall 2006 after Mayor Bonderud heard a presentation at the Montana League of Cities and Towns Conference on a successful downtown project in Lewistown. The City contacted Vicki Dugger of the Downtown Solutions Team (who had led the Lewistown project) and, in a phone conference with Mayor Larry Bonderud and Lorette Carter, Community Development Director, outlined issues related to downtown Shelby and discussed ideas and solutions. It was agreed that a two-day on-site assessment would be an appropriate next step. Based on this conversation, the Downtown Solutions Team developed a proposal for a business district assessment. City Council voted in favor of the assessment project and January 21-22, 2007 was set for the on-site component of the work.

Vicki Dugger, Executive Director of the Downtown Solutions Team conducted the Shelby 360° Downtown Assessment. The Downtown Solutions Team (DST) is a regional non-profit whose mission is to assist communities achieve vital, inviting downtowns. Based in Salem, Oregon, DST has worked in more than 100 communities over the past five years in varying downtown assessment and planning capacities.

The scope of work for the Shelby 360° Assessment included pre-visit research and a two day on-site analysis culminating in a public presentation of findings. This report

Shelby 360°

Project Overview





completes the project and summarizes the on-site findings and recommendations.

The process for the Shelby 360° Downtown Assessment included:

- Project coordination with the City
- Community Electronic Survey initiated 2 weeks prior to the visit
- Web research prior to the visit
- Phone interview with the City Building Inspector prior to the visit
- Review of Shelby's marketing materials, codes & plans prior to, and during, the on-site visit
- Facilitation of two Focus Groups
- In-store visits and interviews
- On-site reconnaissance (walking & driving)

Signage and wayfinding systems are vital for communities wanting to capture more visitors. They inform, guide, and motivate people in their travel plans. They are also an important factor in shaping the identity of a city through consistent use of style, design, colors and lettering.

Existing Conditions

For the first time visitor, finding downtown Shelby is neither easy nor intuitive. The directional sign for Uptown Shelby that is located at Pamida (shown at the right) gives a good impression. However, once a visitor leaves this location, it is not readily apparent how to find the central business district.

To further complicate matters, a proliferation of signage at the edge of town (12th/Marias Valley Rd. & Roosevelt Hwy.) makes the area look cluttered and creates a haphazard impression (plus the *Montana Superhost* sign is partially blocked by the stop sign). There is the need to organize, reduce where appropriate, and create more consistency in Shelby's directional signage.

The blue 'M' signage for the Marias Museum on Roosevelt Hwy. gives good indication of where to turn. But once the turn is made, wayfinding is difficult when the road to the museum splits and there is not further signage.

Once in downtown, there is a nice sign promoting the Marias Museum (westbound on Main Street), but an

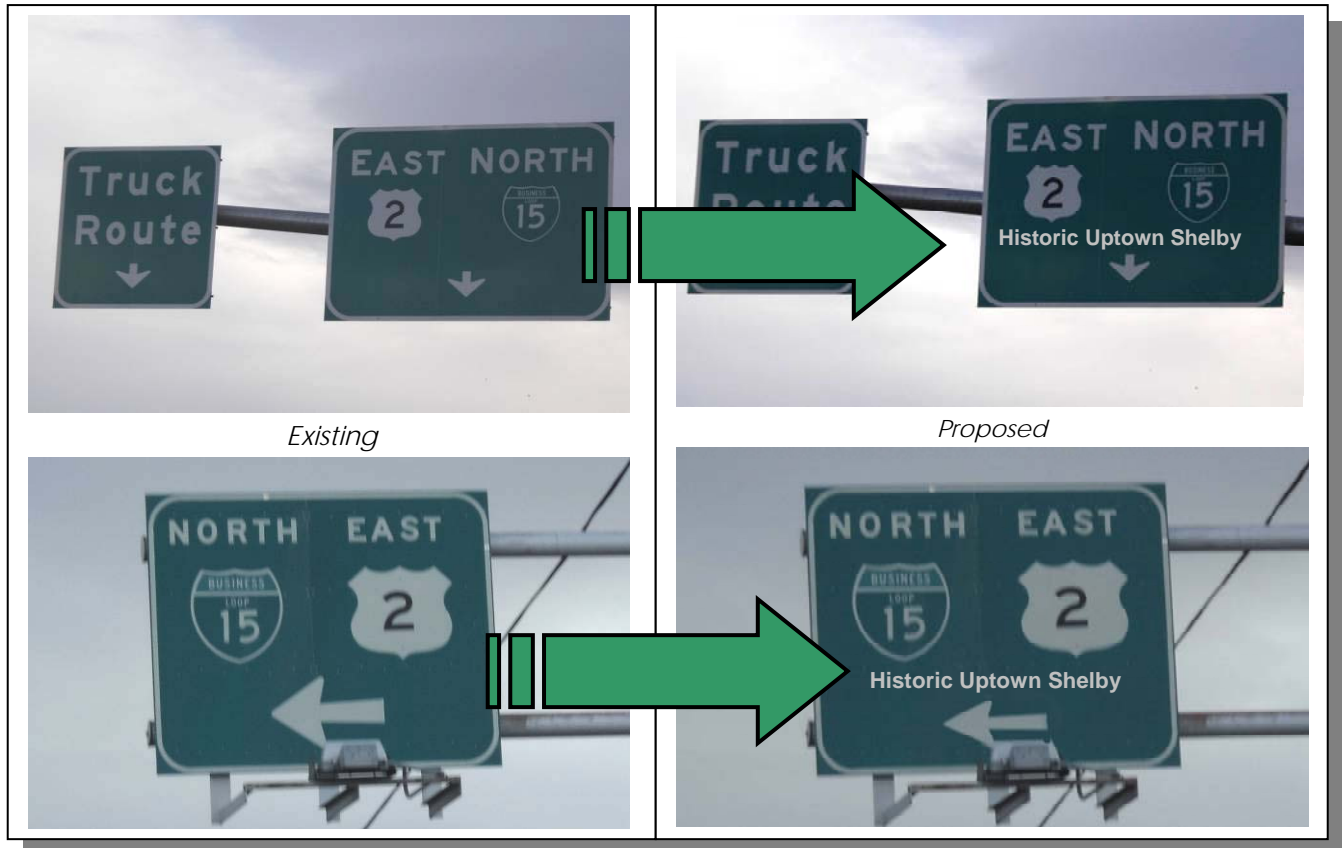
Shelby 360°

Wayfinding



address and operating hours need to be included on the sign.

Along Roosevelt Hwy., it would benefit the downtown (& visitors trying to find downtown) if the phrase 'Historic Uptown Shelby' could be added to the green directional highway signage (see photos, below).



**AN IDEA TO
CONSIDER:**

In the future, the City and Chamber may want to further improve directional signage and wayfinding through a more comprehensive community branding project.

Recommended Actions

- Declutter, and reduce where appropriate, signage at Roosevelt Hwy. and 12th/Marias Valley Road.
- Install wayfinding signage to Marias Museum on 1st Street where the road splits.

- Work with Montana Department of Transportation to get 'Historic Uptown Shelby' added to the green highway signs on Roosevelt Hwy. and 5th Ave. North.
- Add operating hours and the museum's address to the Marias Museum sign located at 2nd Ave. South and Main Street.

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Downtown parking is always a hot-button issue when talking with business owners. Whether the local issue is just perception of a parking problem or real need to manage turnover, almost every community believes they have a downtown parking problem. That said, available on-street parking in traditional downtown business district is a must. Many small downtowns do not enforce on-street parking and as a result, business owners and employees often get lazy and park on-street taking up valuable parking real estate (but never in front of their own businesses!). Conservatively, it is estimated that each on-street parking space in a downtown is worth at least \$20,000 per year in retail sales. So if 7 on-street spaces are regularly taken up by those who are not shopping that means \$140,000 less in retail sales per year for the business district as a whole! Looking at parking from this perspective puts a whole new light on the importance of designated off-street parking (including alleys and shared use of private lots, when available) for business owners and employees.

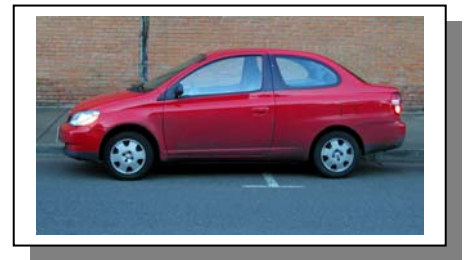
The whole idea is to have available on-street parking to encourage customers 'park once and walk often' - - using the downtown as a single destination.

Existing Conditions

In meetings and interviews, the subject of parking problems on Main Street was often brought up, along with the admission that some merchants regularly park on Main Street.

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Parking



The City is looking to upgrade off-street (employee) parking along the railroad on Front Street as part of the construction project slated for this summer. There was also some interest in knocking down more buildings in order to create additional parking - - which is directly antithetical to downtown development. In short, there seems to be a lot of talk about parking, but not an agreed upon approach about how to comprehensively address it.

Recommended Actions

- Downtown parking needs to be addressed in three ways: 1) educational outreach to merchants about the value of each on-street space and the location of employee parking; 2) creation of additional designated employees parking through new lots and/or shared agreements with owners of private lots; and 3) an approach to enforcement that makes sense for the community.
- A parking assessment and plan is needed to make the most of existing on-street parking by adding additional parking through the development of new lots or the creation of shared parking agreements with private property owners. Adding additional on-street parking is another possibility on side streets where the right-of-way would allow it by making these spaces angle-in instead of parallel (i.e. in front of the Chamber office).
- Do not knock down any more buildings for surface parking. Once an empty lot becomes a parking lot, it is difficult to redevelop. For existing 'white elephants'

that are good candidates for redevelopment: it is better to go through the difficult process of redevelopment and get these properties back on the tax rolls rather than razing them for parking that could be accommodated and managed in other ways.

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Shelby 360°

Façade Rehab, Property Redevelopment & Infill

These days, communities are looking for an extra edge or 'hook' to capture visitors' imaginations and spending. According to a government website for the National Endowment of the Arts, a study commissioned by the Travel Industry Association of America has shown that an increasing number of visitors rank the arts, heritage and/or other cultural activities as one of the top five reasons for traveling.

Highlights of this study include:

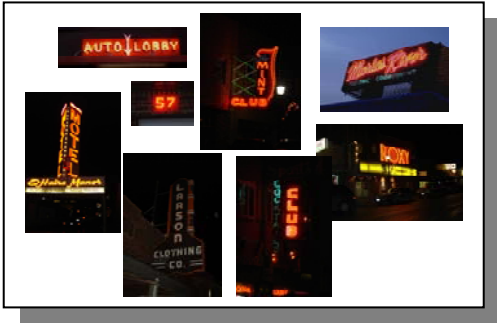
- 92.4 million, or 46%, of the 199.8 million U.S. adult travelers included a cultural, arts, heritage or historic activity during the previous year.
- Among these 92.4 million travelers, visiting an historic site such as an historic community or building was the most popular cultural activity (31 percent), followed by visiting a museum (24%), visiting an art gallery (15%) and seeing live theater (14%).
- Of the same group of travelers, 29% (26.7 million) added extra time to their trip because of a cultural activity or event, pumping more dollars into local economies. Of the 26.7 million travelers who added time:
 - 61% added part of one day ; 30% added one night ; 5% added two extra nights; and 4% added three or more extra nights

Historic downtowns that are vibrant, interesting and revitalized have unique opportunities to garner more of



this specialized travel niche called cultural tourism. This is an especially good opportunity for downtown Shelby.

Existing Conditions



Shelby is fortunate in that it has a historic, and largely intact, downtown commercial district - although the Interstate traveler would never know this as there is no signage that describes, or directs one to, the historic downtown core (refer to *Wayfinding*, beginning on page 11). The recent addition of the Chamber office to the National Register of Historic Places is a recent success, especially since no historic districts have yet been designated in Shelby.

The spine of Shelby's downtown runs along Main Street, roughly from 5th Avenue to 2nd Avenue/Galena; with the primary downtown core located between the overpass and 2nd Avenue/Galena. In addition, downtown development extends up the hill and across the railroad tracks on Central Avenue.

The material of choice in Shelby's historic downtown is brick and buildings are primarily 1- and 2- stories with the exception being the Rainbow Hotel that has 3-stories (with the top story added for additional lodging for the Dempsey/Gibbons fight). One unique design form in Shelby is the historic neon (both in good shape and disrepair). The amount (& quality, if restored) of neon makes Shelby unique, interesting and adds a nostalgic appeal. However, back-lit plastic business signs in the downtown core detract from Shelby's historic neon.

Many of downtown's buildings maintain their original features (particularly on the south side of Main Street). However, several of downtown's historic buildings have had windows blocked up, compromising their original design integrity and working against a pedestrian-friendly environment. Other buildings could use simple improvements such as new awnings, blade signage and revamped neon to bring out the unique charm of the facades.



The fact that Shelby has historic architecture has not guaranteed that new infill and redevelopment automatically complements the existing historic 'fabric'. On the contrary, the integrity of Shelby's historic downtown core is being compromised by new infill that is 'front-loaded' with parking that works against the 'park once, shop often' goal. This development style better fits with Roosevelt Hwy. commercial than downtown. Fortunately, other recent infill (Fieldstone Gallery) does complement the traditional downtown style of development. It should be emphasized that the community cannot afford to continue to depend on luck to get the right results with downtown revitalization and redevelopment. Design guidelines, or standards, are needed to protect and enhance downtown.

In addition to strip-style development in downtown, there appears to be some interest in knocking down the historic Rainbow Hotel and replacing it with surface parking as part of the overpass realignment project. Currently, this downtown 'white elephant' does not contribute to downtown's vitality. But rather than razing it, the



community should rally around finding the right developer and development program, then get this terrific building back into an active use - - one that complements and improves the overall appeal and vitality of downtown. This site, along with the Williamson Building and Hannah Holmes site should be considered 'opportunity sites' and marketed as such. Removing historic buildings that have positive redevelopment potential and replacing them with parking deteriorates the pedestrian experience and leaves fewer reasons for visitors to stop, get out of their cars, and explore Shelby's historic downtown. Once historic downtown buildings are gone, they are gone forever.

From a streetscape and public space point of view, Shelby has some very nice community parks, but there is a desire to develop a downtown plaza or public gathering space for community events. There is also an opportunity to 'soften' harsh edges coming into with landscaping and better connect off-street parking to Main Street through upgraded alley-ways.

Recommended Actions

- Update the City Code to create a Downtown Overlay Zone. Guiding principals for this zone could include:
 - Create a high quality pedestrian environment
 - Create a unique character for downtown
 - Encourage mixed use, commercial viability and vitality – for days, nights, & weekends
 - Strengthen and improve the street to building relationships

The Downtown Overlay Zone should include development standards that address these critical components:

- Maximum building set back
- Maximum building height
- Site coverage
- Parking & access
- Ground floor windows
- Entrances (main entrances)
- Screening & landscaping



In addition, design guidelines could be developed that give examples of how to achieve a more pedestrian friendly downtown through elements that are:

- Support a human development scale
 - Provide weather protection
 - Support pedestrian-oriented ground floor uses
 - Reinforce the corner, and
 - Provide pedestrian scaled signage and lighting
-
- Explore a National Register Historic District designation for downtown Shelby. This would be a great way to celebrate Shelby's historic downtown assets. Having a National Register Downtown District will also garner more cultural tourists (described at the beginning of this chapter). It also says, "we're a town of quality that celebrates and honors its past." Once downtown is listed on the National Register, brown 'Historic



A flexible set of redevelopment 'tools' is needed to help facilitate revitalization activities.

Downtown' signs can be added on Interstate signs for Shelby exits.

- Develop a local Façade Rehab Program to make it easy for property owners to 'do the right thing' when it comes to façade upgrades. This could include low or zero interest loans and/or matching grants for façade rehabs, neon sign rehabs, new non-backlit signage, and new awnings, etc. Downtown Shelby's buildings could really shine again with a well marketed and structured program. Architectural renderings showing how buildings could look with sensitive and appropriate rehabs would also be very helpful, as a picture is worth thousand words.
- Make a concerted effort to keep (& redevelop) remaining historic resources that might be considered 'white elephants', i.e. The Rainbow Hotel, the Hannah Holmes building, and the Williamson Building. Creating a targeted strategy for marketing these properties to developers should be high on the list of things to do.
- Move forward with next steps planning that deals with placemaking issues such as: creation of a new plaza/gathering space in downtown; softening harsh edges/entries, etc. through plantings; and better connecting off-street parking to Main Street.

It doesn't matter how terrific a downtown historic district looks if the storefronts are empty. A critical component of downtown revitalization is business development, which is often the toughest component of downtown development. That said, having a downtown filled with locally owned businesses that cater to both residents and visitors is essential to downtown success. Clustering businesses in a downtown in order to achieve more synergy is also an important, yet often difficult, goal to achieve. Customers, especially visitors, are looking for a walkable environment with attractive storefronts that both pull them inside the stores (and down the sidewalk). Businesses should be enticing and have an interesting and deep selection of products. Great customer service caps the shopping experience.

Existing Conditions

Downtown Shelby has many terrific businesses that cater to both residents and visitors. There are also some great businesses that primarily serve residents, but that visitors also find interesting and shop. Downtown also has a strong local 'home decorating' cluster with the flooring store, Prairie Peddler's decorative housewares, paint in the True Value, photography & art work in the gallery and photography studio, and furniture across the tracks on Central Avenue. Shelby also has a budding arts cluster that includes: two quilting/sewing shops (that also offer lessons, etc), a new gallery that offers western art, sculpture and historic photographs, Marias Museum, and

Shelby 360°

Business Development





the beautiful, unique (and unmarketed) Native American items for sale at the Chamber office. Once you start thinking about business development in terms of clusters, and how they can derive greater synergy and sales by being marketed as clusters, then it gives a more focused perspective on how to approach business recruitment. Downtown Shelby has some business clusters, but the addition of unique, yet complementary businesses could strengthen the downtown business district even more.

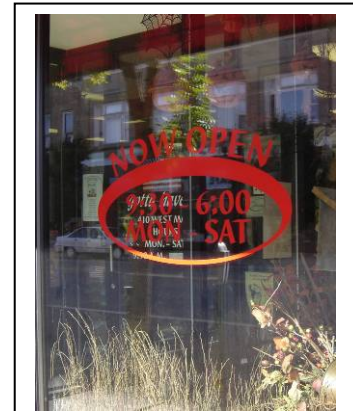
Business retention is another important aspect of business development in downtown Shelby. This small, compact district is facing the potential closing of anchor businesses due to the planned retirement of their owners. Many small towns struggle with this issue and succession planning in Shelby is of primary importance to downtown's success.

A lack of cohesive and extended shopping hours is also an issue that downtown Shelby faces. Fifty percent of all retail sales are made after 5 pm, and on weekends, and this trend plays out locally as well.

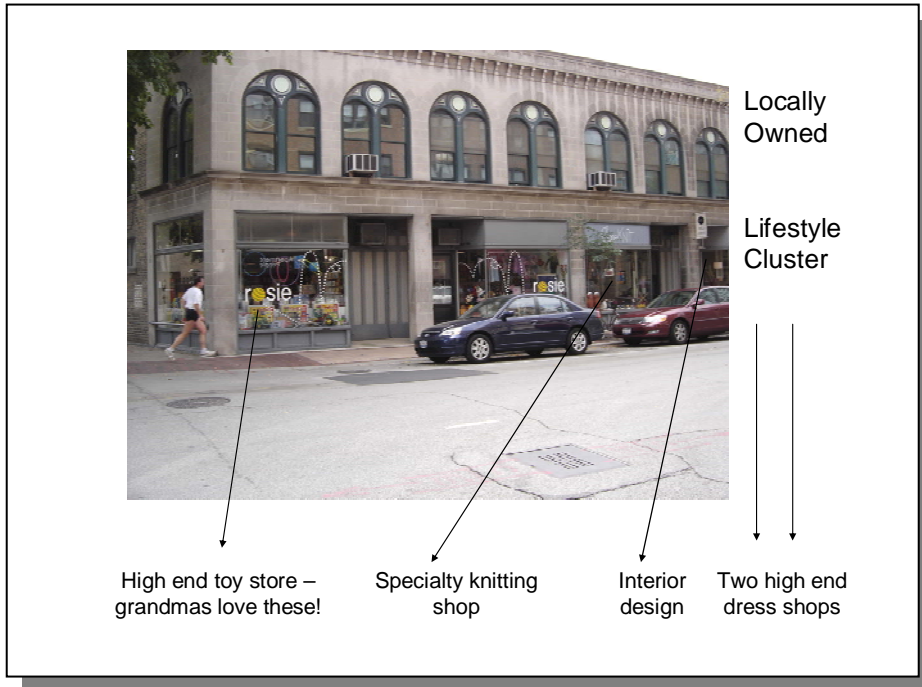
On the target market side, Shelby is gaining new residents and employees due to increased Border Patrol and Homeland Security activities and the siting of a new prison. During the Shelby 360° Assessment process, many business owners acknowledged they are not reaching this new customer base and that increased outshopping is a growing concern.

Recommended Actions

- Initiate a local Business Development Team focused on downtown business development issues such as retention and recruitment. This team should be comprised of community 'sparkplugs' who are action oriented, including City staff/elected officials and downtown champions who are well versed in business development. Would representatives of the Merchants Committee be interested in participating on the Business Development Team or are they more interested in marketing and events? This is a good place to have this discussion with them.
- A top priority should be to work with 'at risk' business owners who may be facing retirement without a business succession plan (meaning they will close their doors when they retire). Retaining existing businesses is typically much easier and less costly than recruiting new ones in. Also, any loss of anchor businesses along Main Street will negatively impact the rest of the downtown district.
- Begin a cohesive effort for downtown retailers to stay open until 6 pm. In order for this to work, a number of businesses should participate and it should be well marketed through cooperative advertising and in identical, attractive storefront signage (see example above, right).



An example of how new, extended hours for shops could be marketed.



Here's an example of a Lifestyle Cluster that developed naturally. These businesses create a little destination through retail synergy.

- Expand existing, and grow new, business clusters.
Examples of the types of businesses that would work well in downtown Shelby include:
 - More art and artisans
 - Bakery (Wheat Montana?)
 - Quality antiques and collectibles (no junk!)
 - High quality family restaurant
 - Home/lifestyle to complement existing
 - Web/graphic design
 - Boot/saddle repair

Some of the businesses outlined above could stand alone (such as a quality family restaurant) or integrated into existing, complementary businesses (in Klamath Falls, Oregon a destination boot and saddle repair is located the basement of a high quality western clothing shop).

- Develop an outreach strategy for new residents and employees (also see Marketing/Events section that follows). The strategies for reaching residents and employees will include some of the same information, but may have a different emphasis (i.e. when marketing lunch options to employees, promote convenience and options; when marketing dining options to new residents, promote dining as an *experience* and options).

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This section of the assessment deals with Shelby's marketing and events. How Shelby presents itself from the moment a potential visitor clicks onto the Chamber or City's websites, to the customer service a new resident receives helps make up the perceptions and feelings about Shelby as a community to visit, live, work and invest. A strong image and unique brand, coupled with high quality and consistency in every facet of marketing (web sites, tourists and business development materials, & face-to-face encounters) will send a strong message that 'Shelby really has it together.'

Questions to consider when thinking about how to position and market Shelby include:

- What is Shelby's current image?
- Does it match what you want it to be?
- What is Shelby's story and how are you telling it?
- Is everyone on the same page, giving customers, potential investors, new residents, etc. the 'right' message about Shelby?
- How can you play up your 'community DNA' of being a creative, visionary and progressive?

Existing Conditions

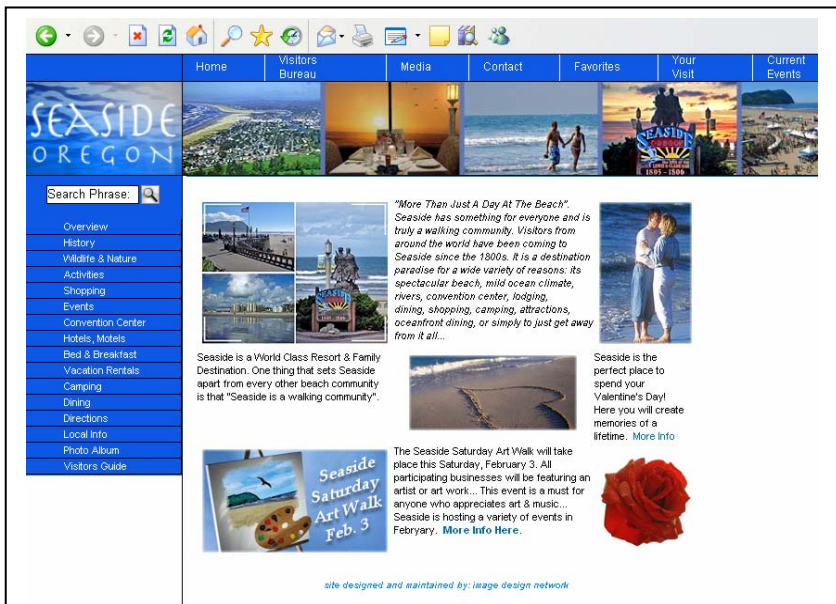
Before stepping foot in Shelby for the assessment, the Downtown Solutions Team's first stop was the Chamber's and City's websites to check on how well the community

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Marketing & Events

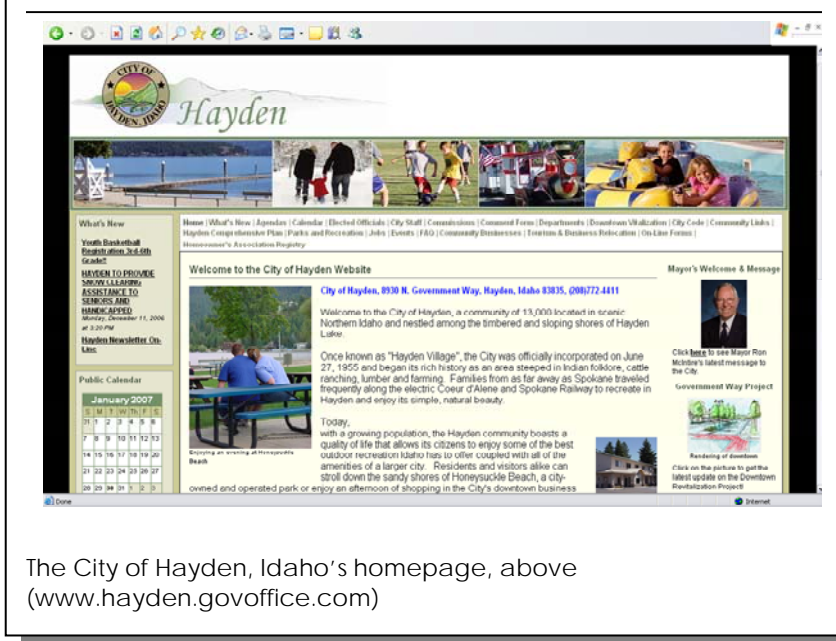
*Everything
you do or say
is
public
relations.*

is marketed. I also wanted to compare level of quality and consistency in Shelby's message on these websites.



Seaside, Oregon's Visitor Bureau's homepage, above (www.seasideor.com)

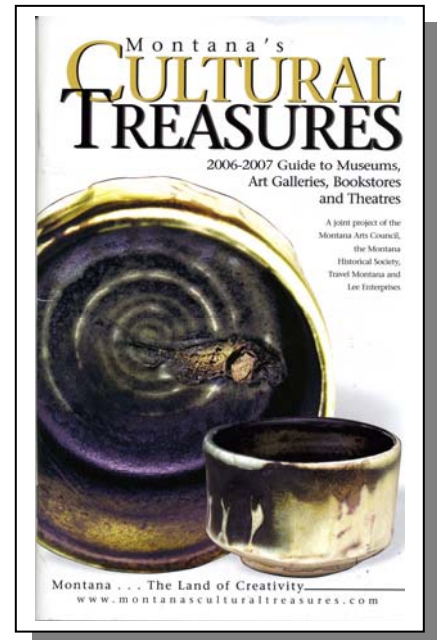
The Chamber's website did not have any photographs of historic downtown Shelby or the surrounding Marias Valley or Sweetgrass Hills. The home page does show a photo of the Chamber office (which is nice), but I was more interested to see what the town and surrounding area looked like. (Remember, one picture is worth a thousand words!) In addition, the monthly calendar was geared more for local civic meetings than special events that might draw visitors to town. Finally, there were 'dead links' and other links that went to wrong pages, making it very frustrating from the potential visitor's or customer's point of view.



The City of Hayden, Idaho's homepage, above (www.hayden.govoffice.com)

Like the Chamber's website, the City's does not have any photos that show the downtown, industries, or community life (although it does have an aerial photo of town and pictures of staff and elected officials). The City's website

has great information related to meetings, staff, elected officials, the community newsletter and other links to local organizations. However, all of this is minimized by the loud, synthesized '*Hey, Hey We're the Monkees*' music that starts the moment the City's homepage opens. (In fact, I was so embarrassed by the attention this 'music' caused when I checked the City's website while waiting for a flight, that I immediately closed the website rather than trying to figure out how to turn the music down.) If I were a developer who had heard good things about Shelby and wanted to find out more about it on the City's website, the Monkees' music would say to me, "this town and City government doesn't take itself seriously - - maybe it's not worth my time to take a closer look at it." Sometimes the simplest things can send potential investors and visitors running the other way.



It's a fact that City and Chamber websites are now the first stop for visitors, investors, potential businesses, and residents before visiting a community for the first time. Are Shelby's websites promoting this terrific little community as well as they could? The best web-based info that I could find on Shelby was at a fishing website (www.bigskyfishing.com) and at the state's tourism site (www.visitmt.com). Potential visitors and investors view your web presence as an introduction - - and you only get one chance to make a first impression!

Information on Shelby can also be found in the travel and visitor brochures, although the information and images could be much stronger. Any mention of Shelby is missing in the state's *Cultural Treasures* Guide even though there

are destinations to include such as the Marias Museum, Fieldstone Gallery, D & L Photography and Chamber that sells the Native Amercian craftwork. There also seems to be a level of comfort with simply letting Shelby 'ride the coattails' of the regional tourism marketing of Russell Country.

As a first time visitor to the Chamber/Visitors Center office, I was greeted and treated well. I was surprised to find, however, that the rear end of a cougar was the first thing I saw as I walked into the center. I had to ask about the story of the cougar as with the 'Camp Collie' display. Shelby has great stories that are begging to be told.

Informational materials relating to Shelby were buried in the Russell Country section of the brochure racks. I was looking for information on simple things to do around town without taking a separate brochure for each. I also found out that there are important sites (buffalo jump and massacre, others?) around Shelby that are completely missing from any visitor information. Western history and culture buffs would be very interested to know about these culturally unique and sensitive sites.

On the upside, having the Chamber participate in the official Montana Host program is beneficial. The public area at the Chamber office is comfortable and relaxing and I really appreciated the fact that I could check flights and print out my boarding pass before heading out to the airport. The Chamber Director was friendly and helpful. She was also anxious to improve web and marketing

materials after a 'debrief' conversation at the end of the assessment.

Regarding events, Shelby seems ready to add a new special event or two. In the past, the town has shown a lot of creativity and enthusiasm with the 'Trading Places' and 'Fantasy Ball' events. It is time to dust off the ideas and think about adding a new event to the arsenal. When creating a new event, things to consider include:

- Should it be a stand alone event or coupled with an existing event?
- What is the goal of the event - - build community support & cohesion? - - bring more outsiders in? - - increase visibility and local sales to new residents & employees?
- Whatever the new event is, make sure and get it listed on the City's and Chamber's websites and on appropriate regional and state websites, as well.



Recommended Actions

- Commit to *quality, quality, quality* in all forms of community marketing: web sites, printed materials and on-site. Consider a community branding project to help define Shelby's market position and message and how it is presented.
- Rework both the City's and Chamber's websites. At the writing of this report, the Chamber has two websites up and this is very confusing. Take down the old site with the white background.

- Conduct web research on other Chamber and City websites around the country. Decide on a look and content that is appealing, conveys information and ‘tells the story’ in an engaging way.
- Take the best ideas gleaned from web research and redevelop both the City’s and Chamber’s websites. It is recommended that both sites have the same general look and feel to reinforce a cohesive community image. This will give web visitors the sense that Shelby ‘really has it together’.
 - Remove links that are dead or send the web visitor to the wrong page (Chamber’s site).
 - Create new links to sites such as www.visitmt.com, etc.
 - Remove the Monkees’ theme from the City’s website.
 - The City’s website should include industrial and business development initiatives and success stories. A short testimonial on why a business located in Shelby would add interest and help with selling the community as a great place to live and do business.
 - Include (more) high quality, professional images of Shelby on both the City and Chamber websites, including downtown and the beautiful surrounding area. Include shots of ‘people having fun’.
 - Update the Chamber’s web calendar to showcase all events that visitors would be

interested in. For civic meetings, either put them in another section of the website or list them as “School Board, 2nd Tuesday of the month...etc.)

- On both sites, include a ‘click to receive a relocation packet’ link rather than just relocation information which is on the Chamber’s site and needs to be reworked and expanded.
 - Include visitor brochures and information on both web sites that can be easily downloaded and printed from a pdf format.
 - Add examples of Native American craftwork for sale at the Chamber to the ‘Gift Ideas’ page of the website.
 - Make sure to add meta tags, meta descriptions and key words to help Shelby come up ‘higher’ in Internet search engines.
- Develop new marketing materials focused on Shelby and the surrounding area. Don’t settle on riding on Russell Country’s coattails. Create a ‘buzz’ of your own! An example of new Shelby brochure could be ‘10 Things To Do In (& Around) Shelby’. It should high quality and include great graphics and photos. It might include things such as:
 - Go on a scavenger hunt for cool neon
 - Visit Kingsley the jewelry-selling dog
 - Relive the Dempsey/Gibbons Fight at the Marias Museum

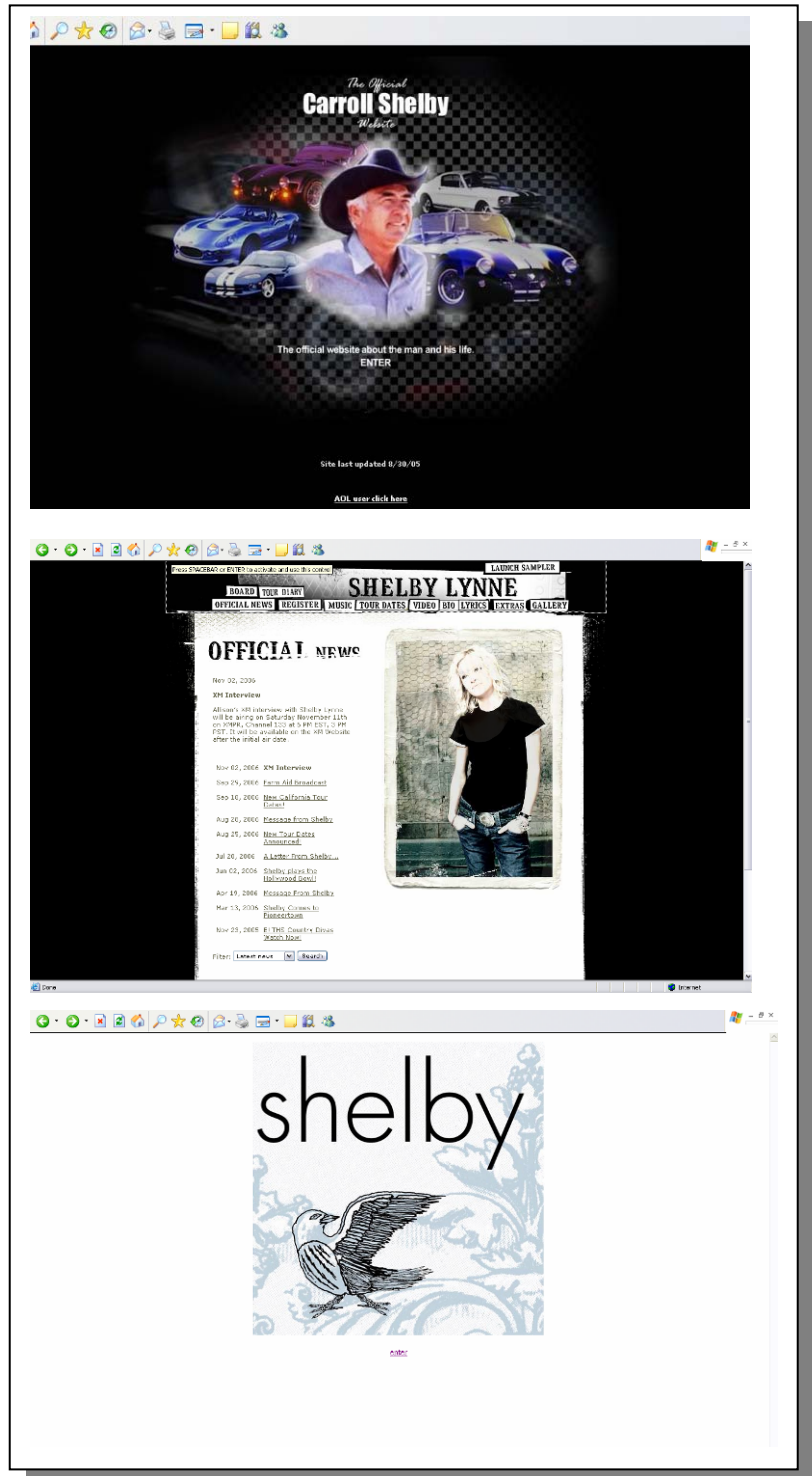
- Purchase unique, hand-made Native American articles
 - Honor those lost at a massacre site
 - Shop for Made-in-Montana gifts
 - Golf to your heart's content
 - Discover what happened when a cougar stalked Main Street a few years ago
 - Visit a historic buffalo jump
 - Learn to make a colorful wall hanging
- Develop your own downtown walking and area driving tour map that includes easy to read (downloadable) pdf maps.
- Showcase Historic Uptown Shelby in regional and marketing materials (it's about more than the golf course)
- Get Shelby 'on the map' in the *Cultural Treasures* Guide
- Expand marketing efforts, but target them to specific audiences. One example would be to create a "Little Getaways" package targeted to Canadian visitors. It will need to include ideas on things to do (10 Things brochure) beyond what's offered in the package.
- Place Shelby Visitor Information front and center at the Chamber office (near the water cooler). A top priority of the Chamber should be to 'sell' Shelby first. In the Russell Country display, Shelby information should also

be included to show that the community is part of a larger regional marketing effort.

- Rearrange the Chamber office space so that the 'big cat' is better displayed. Have stories of the cougar and 'Camp Collie' printed out for visitors.
- Events: create a new signature event for Shelby. Decide what you want to accomplish with it, then go *all out* to make it the best event it can be! It's all about quality and fun! Here's an idea: how about a Shelby Mustang Car Show??

Or how about an 'All Things Shelby' event? How about performances by Shelby Lynn or the band Shelby? It might be worth looking into.

One thing is for sure: the folks in Shelby, Montana are creative enough that whatever they come up with will be great!



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When all is said and done with a community assessment, the big question is: How can we take this information and best move efforts forward?

In this assessment, there are recommendations that apply to different segments of the community (City, Chamber, business and property owners, etc) that each can 'bite off' and work on. The larger issue that Shelby should concentrate on and that many communities ignore is: how to coordinate redevelopment activities in order to be most efficient and effective.

Existing Conditions

Shelby is a great little community with lots of good things happening in many areas of community life: business and industrial development as well as civic, social, and cultural life. This community is really humming along and moving ahead when many of its counterparts are having a much more difficulty. The fact that Shelby is known for its forward-thinking attitude was made clear when a shop keeping in Conrad was asked about Shelby, she replied, "Oh yes, Shelby got the prison. Our community could've gone for the prison but folks here didn't want things to change so we didn't even try." Shelby's progressive outlook serves it as a community that, for generations, has been about creativity, imagination and risk-taking.

That said, even the best little communities often struggle with coordination and communication as they go about their projects and activities. Folks are so busy that keeping

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Moving Efforts Forward

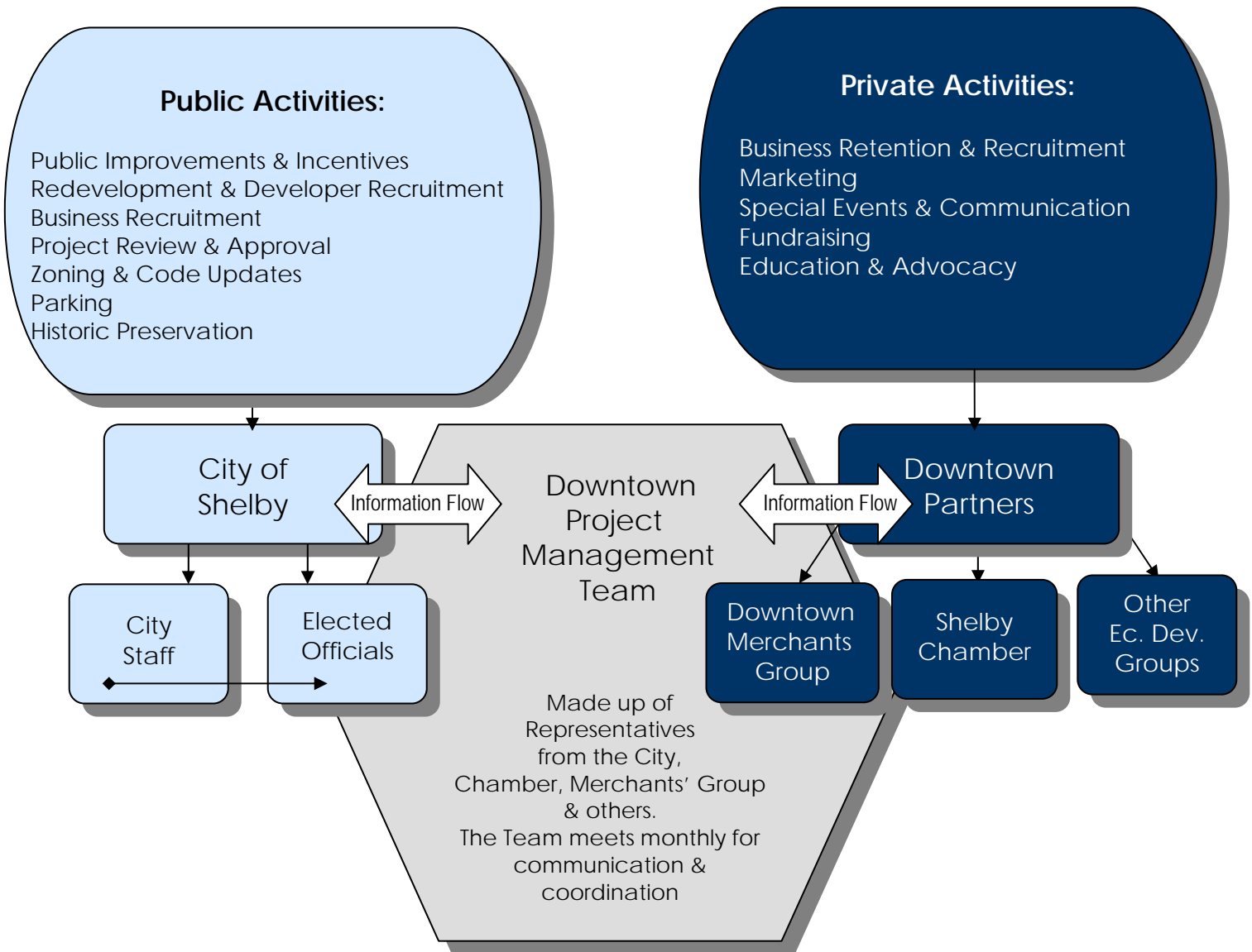


all the different groups in the loop isn't easy or a high priority. This can lead to miscommunication, turf issues and even hard feelings if not corrected. Better communication and coordination are critical to Shelby's long-term success.

Recommended Actions

- Bring groups together to discuss how to better work together. Decide how to better coordinate and cooperate on activities. Talk about 'trouble spots' and commit to making things work better.
- Create a Project Management Team in order to keep everyone in the loop, on board and moving forward. The framework, on the following page, shows how this could work.
- Understand the different types of volunteers (committee and project-only) and how they work. Cultivate new volunteers based upon how they like to participate (on-going committee format or short-termed projects with specific time limits).
- On business development, the Chamber assumes that this is the City's job and refers leads, etc. to them. It would be better to have other groups (Chamber and Merchants) more actively working in coordination with the City on this. Business development should be everyone's job!

Downtown Project Management Model for Shelby



Shelby should implement this project management model for better coordination and on-going communication.

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In almost 15 years of working with many communities, Shelby, Montana stands out as an outstanding small town that is progressive and working hard to build a better life for itself through business development and multi-faceted community initiatives. It is a community filled with a caring, engaged citizenry and it is led by community champions. It is a town on the move!

Yet, with all its successes, this community understands there is still work to be done. This assessment and report serves as the roadmap for next steps, especially as they relate to downtown. It outlines both short and longer termed projects. Many of the recommendations can be implemented now; while other, more complicated projects will need additional analysis and planning.

There is no doubt that Shelby will take this report and successfully move forward. This is one community in charge of its future and always thinking about how to be even better! Hopefully, this assessment and report will play its role in helping Shelby achieve the vibrant future it is working towards.

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Conclusion



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