A RATIONALE FOR REVITALIZATION PLANNING
IN SMALL RURAL TOWNS: A CASE STUDY

by

Jesse M. English

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APPROVED:

Benjamin C. Johnson, Chairman

James Canestaro Dean Bork

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(ABSTRACT)

Central Business Area Revitalization Planning theory and practice has evolved from a concern with physical revitalization to an emphasis on a comprehensive approach which includes areas such as housing and recreation, which had not in most past cases been viewed as relevant to the undertaking. The current thinking views all aspects of town planning as inter-related and approaches the task in a holistic manner. The methodologies utilized in Planning for Central Business Area Revitalization have evolved as well. Detached consultant planning, which included little or no public involvement and which produced inflexible plans which outlined the way to revitalization, has evolved to a flexible, dynamic approach, which involves those responsible for implementation at all stages of planning; thereby, reflecting their beliefs, attitudes and values and having high probability of implementation. Successful efforts to revitalize the central business areas of rural towns require an informed leader who will function as an educator, and a planning and design process which leads to implementation through its participant centered, incremental, multiple objective approach.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my committee for their forebearance and support.

And the towns of Covington, Virginia and Vinton, Virginia for allowing my participation in their Central Business Area revitalization efforts.

This work is dedicated to Jane, who taught me how to love.

Thank you, Father.
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I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this effort is to enunciate a management philosophy, develop a process theory and to test the philosophy and process in an effort to revitalize the central business area of Vinton, Va.

The revitalization of a central business area is a difficult undertaking. The forces which cause the decline of central business area vitality are at work now and will continue to work against central business area vitality in the future. To combat the situation consultants will prepare plans using methodologies which do not include opportunities for direct participation by those involved. The resulting plans will not be implemented because the plans do not reflect the attitudes, values and desires of those responsible for implementation. Regrettably, if they are implemented, these attempts to reverse the decline of the central business areas in communities both large and small will do neither and in some cases may make the situations worse. This work is intended to provide a rationale for those just beginning the work of central business area revitalization, whether they be businessmen, other groups of private citizens, local officials or a combination of these. The rationale provides a basis from which to begin and build a successful central business area revitalization effort.
The study has been conducted by the case study method. The body of the study consists of several sections. Section II consists of a general review of Central Business Area Revitalization Planning documents available in the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Studies Library. Section III consists of a review of Central Business Area Revitalization Plans produced for Covington, Va. and Vinton, Va. Section IV is a statement of management philosophy which deals theoretically with the problem of implementation, elucidating the essential qualities and roles of the central business area manager/facilitator and the ultimate goal of revitalization activity. Section V sets forth the qualities of the planning process without attempting to restrain the process concept by reducing it to an inflexible rational model. Elements of the Planning and Design Approach developed by Gerald Nadler\(^1\) are included as aids to facilitation. Section VI is a discussion of revitalization activity recently begun by the Town of Vinton in which this writer has been involved and conclusions drawn from that experience.
The concern of this study is the process which leads to the revitalization of central business areas in small rural towns. A particular focus of this study is the problem of implementation. It is hoped that this study will develop a philosophy and, consequently, a process which will enable small rural communities to realize significant benefits over time by utilizing community resources rather than the results of detached planning exercises to realize central business area performance improvement objectives.

The term small rural town as it is used here should not be construed to mean only those unincorporated places with a population of 2500 or fewer persons. The approach to revitalization activity advocated herein will work just as well in a city of 100,000 or more in population. The discussion is directed to smaller rural towns because they often lack the resources of larger places and may feel that they cannot take those actions which will lead to revitalization.

The development of such a process is necessary and important since the rural areas of the United States may be considered a 'clean slate'. In rural areas opportunity exists for the public to act early to prevent the urban deterioration and environmental chaos that characterizes cities and towns which experienced growth earlier. Growth in rural areas will result in the consumption of agricultural and forest land for urban use. As a result the aesthetic quality of the rural landscape and the quality of the biological environment will be threatened. Rural communities have the ability to prevent this occurrence and to contribute to the future of the United States through the institution of sound planning principles, among these the concept that more compact urban
development, properly managed, is a more efficient alternative to sprawl. The acceptance of this concept requires a new process.

In the same vein, a vital CBA will also allow for the retention and improvement of the character of the place, which is currently an issue in urban planning. Local character can be retained through preservation of that which is valuable and through efforts to guide the form of new construction so that it is compatible with the old. As troublesome as it may be, these two examples illustrate that if growth is to be promoted and problems are to be avoided the emerging town must be prepared to set policies in areas beyond the parochial concerns of the CBA, areas such as housing, industrial location, and transportation to name only a few. The acceptance of this concept requires a new process.

The problem of control is important since over the last several decades, many small cities, towns and villages have experienced population decline as changes in the national and regional economic structure caused farm workers to leave the land and migrate to the cities. This had been a long standing trend which began in the mid 19th century. As a result of this out migration, central business districts lost a good portion of their markets. Now, although the growth of urban areas has not ceased, the trend has been modified. The fastest growing Co's are now those containing no incorporated place of 2500 or more.² Seventy-nine percent of all non-metropolitan counties gained population between 1977-82.³ As a result of the immigration to rural areas, retail potential and housing demand in rural America is expanding, especially in the Sun Belt.
Nevertheless, the traditional CBA continues to suffer in many cases when the population and retail potential in its market area is expanding since most new developments is located on traffic arteries outside the traditional CBA. Managing these trends requires control. The acceptance of this concept requires a new process.

A CBA revitalization process specifically adapted to the needs of small towns is important since a strong CBA can be an effective tool in shaping growth in rural towns. A study conducted by the University of Chicago, "Diffusion of an Innovation in an Urban System," found that in smaller SMSAS a strong central business district delayed the adoption of planned regional shopping centers. This study implies that strong CBAs in rural towns and villages will prevent or slow the spread of commercial activity on the periphery of small urban areas, allowing time for the locality to set policies which will guide development in areas yet to be developed. Furthermore, the study found that in the long term strong central business areas indicate a strong market and encourage further commercial development. From this perspective, the vitality of the central business area, which is the traditional center of the community, will spur growth and insure the retention of the tax base, which is essential to the health of the community. Furthermore provision of retail and other services as a major sustenance activity can encourage population growth. The money which consumers spend stimulates the local economy, creates jobs and slows out migration. New firms seek out established retail centers which enhances the areas growth potential even further.
Recently, many communities have acted to spur activity in their CBAs. Clearly, the forces which affect the vitality of the CBA are numerous and not limited to the physical environment. However, some past attempts to prevent or reverse the decline of CBAs in rural communities have been misguided and short sighted, failing to consider the genius loci of the place and failing to approach the problem with a complete understanding of the forces at work. Malls and other improvement schemes which rely on generalizations concerning causes of decline, and programs to overcome the cause when applied without thought to a particular case are most likely doomed. "Physical revitalization alone cannot change the economic, social and symbolic well being of main street when other, more powerful forces remain unchecked."  

Relative to these points, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald Salanich in The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective state "... to understand the behavior of an organization (CBA), you must understand the context of that behavior." Organizations are inescapably bound up with the conditions of the environment (emphasis mine). Indeed it has been said that all organizations engage in activities which have as their logical conclusion adjustment to the environment. 

As a case in point that improvement schemes did not understand environment most of the work that has been done has attempted to adapt big city solutions to small town problems. The malling craze is a case in point. Often when a town received 'The Plan' which focused on physical improvements, the recommendations were so numerous and costly and unpopular that the plan was never implemented. When plans commissioned were implemented the conditions necessary for implementation to occur
were existing. That is, the values of the residents were such that there existed a ready consensus. In most cases consensus will have to be created. This will necessitate clarifying existing values, creating new values and institutionalizing those values which give eminence to the town's and business area's overall health.
II. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In an attempt to gain an understanding of the types of planning documents produced early in the concern for the life of the rural CBA, several full and partial plans have been reviewed. The initial aims of the survey were to identify conventional plan elements, to define the process used in their production as nearly as possible and to identify the resources which were utilized to improve CBA vitality and those which were ignored.

A 1958 study, not a plan, conducted by the Urban Land Institute for the town of Mooresville, N.C. is interesting in that it dealt directly with marketing concerns, addressing such questions as:

"- Are present merchandising methods in Mooresville's CBD adequate?

"- Is there a proper balance of types and quantities of goods and services available in the CBD as evidenced by the number and types of stores?

"- Are there goods and services offered in the CBD which should not be offered in view of Charlotte's offerings and vice-versa?

"- Should the CBD be developed in depth, in contrast to further strip extension to the north?"8

It is interesting to note that while these were and still are genuine concerns that no mention is made of the culture which gave rise to the questions. The point can be made that at this time--the beginning of the 60s growth spurt and Charlotte's growth to major city status--little could be done but ask the questions. The present day conditions, a more
general valuing of the old and a desire to maintain distinctive places, have created the environment which makes value questions more likely to occur as attempts are made to direct growth. In this light, the omission of questions related to housing policy, historic preservation and other current issues is understandable.

Of interest also is the market orientation of the questions. This is unusual in the plans and studies reviewed and stems perhaps from the fact that the study was conducted by the Urban Land Institute and not a design firm. The questions point out an awareness that Mooresville's proximity to a major regional growth center would necessitate strategic planning to maintain the proper mix of goods and services within the CBA. The question concerning growth in the CBA as opposed to strip development is an interesting one since it points directly to the kinds of value/policy decisions which must be made if the small town CBA is to remain viable or recover. Selznick in Leadership in Administration provides some insight to the nature of the undertaking when one considers why and how institutional decisions are made. His emphasis is on values.

"The formation of an institution is marked by the making of value commitments, that is, choices which fix the assumptions of policy makers as to the nature of the enterprise, its distinctive aims, methods, and roles. These character defining choices are often not made verbally, they might not even be made consciously... Institutional survival, properly understood, is a matter of maintaining values and distinctive identity."

Two North Carolina preliminary plans were reviewed. The N.C. State Department of Conservation and Development produced in 1965 and 1966 preliminary plans for Laurinburg and Farmville, N.C. respectively. The
Laurinburg Preliminary Plan focused on urban renewal and the mall concept. The Farmville Preliminary Plan focused on physical improvements. No attention was paid, in either case, to housing, retailing or other larger policy issues. The main emphasis was on physical improvements.  

A bit later in 1970 on the other side of the continent the Greater Anchorage Alaska Planning Commission prepared a plan which focused on a proposed government center; traffic, parking and circulation issues; land use/zoning; tourism/convention, entertainment, physical soundness; high density residential development. The plan stated particularly that the downtown residential area "should be encouraged to develop into a high density residential area that would contain also those professional offices and neighborhood type service facilities compatible with its primary function as a CBD oriented living area." No attention was given to merchandising/retailing issues; although this is a more complete plan than others reviewed.  

By observation most past efforts have relied on physical rejuvenation as a tool for reviving business activity only to find that this approach did not achieve the desired goals and in some cases, as with some attempts at malls in larger towns, only hastened the decline. This narrow view of actions necessary to change the fortunes of the CBA has been the result of a lack of understanding by those involved of all the forces at work to cause the decline of the CBA. It is apparent that a shift is occurring as far as the basic assumptions which underlie planning efforts are concerned. While the objectives of CBA planning have generally remained the same, the planning process philosophy has
changed; therefore, the assumptions and consequent strategies to achieve goals and objectives have changed.

The "top-down" approach which can be characterized as planners presenting their ideas to the public has given way to a guided, "bottom-up" approach which involves planners as facilitators who elicit ideas from the public. Concurrently, a greater emphasis is being placed on larger policy areas in recognition of the various forces which have affected the CBA's in small communities. For example, Selma, Alabama, a community of 30,000, has acted upon a plan produced by the Tombigbee Regional Commission, in an effort to revitalize its CBA. A spokesman says Selma is "exercising better control over zoning in other areas of the city, trying to keep the character of the tree-lined streets intact." As the downtown plan notes "preventing the spread of commercial uses within older neighborhoods near downtown will serve to strengthen the business core and protect both intown residential uses and the resultant customers."12

Another example of this new approach is Lancaster, Texas, a town outside Dallas, which grew from 2,600 in 1950 to 10,000 by the late 60's. Lancaster acted when its citizens felt that its identity was being threatened by new growth which was suburban in character. Citizens for Coordinated Planning of Lancaster, a group which was comprehensive in makeup, produced a regenerated Town Square and CBA by creating three historic districts; (downtown commercial, the residential area surrounding downtown and another residential area); a master plan for the town; an open space plan for a creek on the western edge of the Town Square and an extensive housing rehabilitation program.13 Of interest
here is the fact that housing was a primary concern. Also significant is the concern with protecting the identity of the town by preserving the Town Square and the residential areas surrounding it rather than by allowing the town's fabric to deteriorate and be destroyed by invasion development of different character, which would have been incompatible.

The most noteworthy example of the new approaches to CBA revitalization is the National Main Street Program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This approach to CBA Revitalization Planning adopts a three pronged, incremental approach: Organization, Promotion and Design. These are used to create a positive, identifiable image of downtown. As the program progresses and confidence builds, a fourth aspect, economic restructuring is brought into play.

The Main Street Program must be adopted on a statewide basis before individual towns can participate. Even their participation is limited and selection for involvement can be competitive. If a town wishes to be selected for participation, it must commit to hiring a full time executive director which may not be possible for many communities. Nevertheless, the Main Street Program has proven itself effective and has produced many publications and aids for those involved in revitalization activity.

Another approach which is in some respects similar to the Main Street Program was instituted in Manteo, North Carolina. Randolph Hester developed a process called Place Appropriate Economic Development which markets the indigenous cultural landscape resources for economic renewal, rather than the usual for rural communities, cheap labor and raw resources. Using this approach challenges the designer to avoid
contrived quaintness and market the localities as they are with all their idiosyncrasies.

This process consists of several steps which are outlined below:
- Purposes and Goal Set by a Community Steering Committee.
- Create Objectives.
- Prioritize Objectives.
- Map and Inventory - avoid mapping what you won't need.
- Introduce the community to itself - Public presentation of info.
- Get a Gestalt - expresses the landscape and the people - an essential contribution of the planner/designer in place appropriate eco. dev.
- Drawing anticipated activity settings taken from
  - The existing uses.
  - The desired uses (from goals survey).
  - The uses necessary to meet desired goals.
- Let Archetypes and Idiosyncracies inspire form (socio spatial patterns and variations from what is expected).
  - What and whom does each setting function for?
  - How and where and when is it expected to function given the patterns and nuances of the particular community.
- Prepare conceptual plan.
- Develop a spectrum of Design Plans. Compare to goals along continuum.
- Evaluate alternate plans before construction - choose one.
- Transfer responsibility.
- Post construction evaluation.
These examples further illustrate the point that CBA revitalization efforts today are concerned with broader issues than the cosmetic considerations of the past. Today's efforts address housing, recreation, retailing practices and other issues which might not at first seem to be related to CBA vitality. Given recent research findings, however, the efficacy of this approach becomes clear. Johansen and Fuguit concluded that the trade center function of rural villages (those places under 2,500 population) will depend to a great extent on population growth patterns, including both their structural and behavioral characteristics and that it will depend indirectly on the developments in other more basic economic activities that support residents nearby. They also conclude that the traditional structural correlates of village growth, such as region of the country, population change in the county, accessibility to large centers and initial size of place, are no longer as important as they were. Local areas and individual characteristics are more important in making them attractive to growth. Growth which can mean increased retail trade. For this reason activity must spread beyond a narrow concern with CBA vitality to the general vitality.

For more information on population and retail growth in rural areas, and background to aid in understanding the form and function of villages and basic planning information, the following resources are suggested.


"Thoughts on the Revival of Downtown U.S.A." Institute of Community and Area Development University of Ga., Athens, Ga., 1975.


"Things to Know Before Beginning Main Street Revitalization: Essential Elements, Obstacles, Leveraging Points" Robert Lynch, New England Neighborhood Revitalization Center, Box 70, Warren R.I., 02885.


III. CASE STUDY

In order to illustrate the shortcomings of the former approaches, two cases were studied closely. Covington, VA and Vinton, VA. Following are analyses of those planning efforts.

The two plans were evaluated using four criteria:

- Is the plan business centered?
- Is the plan value based and implementable?
- Is the plan dynamic and incremental?
- Is the plan comprehensive?

The criteria are as follows:

**Business Centered:** Consideration was given to the recognition of the central role that business development plays in central business area revitalization.

**Value Based:** Consideration was given to the recognition of the effect that commonly held values have on the likelihood of implementation. Was an attempt made to develop a strategy for the institutionalization of values which would lead to implementation? Were the current values of the locale assessed?

**Implementable:** The problem of implementation was addressed directly in the plan? Is the document/process structured to lead to implementation?
Incremental: Consideration was given to planning for the incremental nature of the process so that this is an asset rather than a detriment.

Dynamic: Consideration was given to the dynamic nature of the process. Does the plan generate new strivings and new needs?
A. Covington, Virginia

Covington, Va. is a town of approximately 9,000 located in the Allegheny Mountains of Western Virginia. Significant retail growth has occurred there both during the 1970s and continues to the present. Much of the retail growth has been located outside the traditional central business area. Although Covington's central business area has never been severely depressed, even with the establishment of Mallow Mall outside the corporate limits, business and civic leaders have been active for many years in efforts to maintain the vibrant qualities of the CBA.

The Central Business District Task Force, an arm of City Council, under the leadership of Bob Herbert, City Manager, met on April 12, 1978 to discuss their duties, to set goals and to define the project area of concern. The months following this meeting were productive months for the task force as they contacted those involved in parking matters stating their concerns, discussed possible improvement schemes for the physical environment, discussed possible new business opportunities, organized a clean-up/fix-up campaign, began publicity efforts, conducted a newspaper survey, contacted V.P.I. Extension and set up a meeting date and discussed hiring a professional design consultant. All this in two months. Significant progress had been made without benefit of professional planners.

In the months which followed, further progress was made as a meeting was conducted by Virginia Tech's Small Business Institute, surveys were conducted and the Task Force enlisted the support of the Chamber of Commerce and contacted government officials concerning funding. James B. Richardson in a memo to the Covington City Planning Commission stated that over the last three years preceding his memo that CBA business own-
ers had spent in excess of $3,000,000 in private capital upgrading their businesses and had contributed in excess of $100,000 toward the development of parking facilities in the CBA. Clearly the merchants and civic leaders were committed to the revitalization effort.

This same memo mentions a $19,000 budget item designated for planning intended to carry the revitalization effort forward. The Task Force wanted to use these funds to obtain a preliminary economic study, a feasibility study and a conceptual master plan. This is the beginning of trouble. On August 1, 1979, a committee appointed by City Council met to discuss criteria for hiring a consultant. A consultant had not been hired on November 14, 1979 when the committee decided that it needed to solidify its ideas and priorities before beginning to interview firms. On November 20, 1979 the following determinations were made and the search began for a consultant.

"1. It was determined that the downtown revitalization be taken in a step by step manner establishing zones of priority.

"A. Zone 1 - Main Street from Monroe to Lexington. Court and Maple to Locust and both sides of Locust excluding residential property.

"B. Zone 2 - The 100 block of Main Street, the second and third blocks of Maple, Maple and Court to Riverside, Monroe to Riverside and Locust.

"C. Zone 3 - Riverside Avenue and along the river itself.

"2. The Committee was in agreement that the following should be explored during the study of Zone 1.

"A. A serpentine traffic pattern for Main Street."
"B. The placement of all utilities underground.

"C. The liberal use of trees, shrubs and flowers to enhance the appearance of the downtown.

"D. A study of downtown lighting, use and placement of benches and establishment of public restrooms.

"E. Adoption of a sign ordinance and/or some type of sign standardization.

"F. A study of the feasibility of implementing the "Courthouse Square" theme suggested by the Virginia Tech people (Landscape Architecture Program) as a focal point for downtown Covington.

"G. Conduct a comprehensive parking study."

These concerns listed indicate that the people involved were thinking in fairly reasonable ways about what they were doing, that they understood their needs and the needs of the locality.

Some of the concerns expressed are, if not objectives, then very close to objectives. The placement of all utilities underground, for instance, is an identifiable objective. This particular objective could have been implemented without resorting to a consultant. It is possible that the city engineering office could have undertaken some of the responsibility to develop schematic/concept designs and cost estimates.

A February 11, 1982 File Memorandum by George Nester, who replaced Bob Herbert as City Manager, lists the objectives of a study which was commissioned by the City of Covington and was to have been completed by Mosely-Henning & Associates of Richmond, Virginia. They are as follows:
"1. Identify problem areas in the downtown area which could be immediately addressed by merchants.

"2. Establish a strategy for improving the downtown area to encourage increased limit (sic) and improved physical appearance and to improve the use of the facilities.

"3. To provide the city and downtown Covington with a plan to be implemented through a planning process and to serve as a support document for any federal grant funds which might become available."

The cost of these objectives being met was agreed upon at $18,000, plus reimbursable costs. Mosely-Henning undertook the study; however, as of February 11, 1982, expenditures had exceeded $18,000 with the project only 90% complete. Arrangements were to be made to conclude the study at least cost so as to comply with the legal obligations contained in the contract.

The product consisted of a block by block compilation of real estate tax levied from 1970-1980; a square foot tabulation of property, listing the square footage of the lot, the building square footage, square footage devoted to retail use, square footage devoted to office use, vacant square footage, number of employees/residents and number of parking spaces available. Also included in the data collected is a block by block building survey and evaluation including pertinent physical, financial and ownership and tax data. A parking tabulation was also prepared.

Exhibits prepared and presented in a brochure format consisted of perspectives of Main Street Improvements, Mid City Mall Improvements,
Courthouse Plaza Phase I, Project area labeled by number, a project area zoning map, an access and circulation map, and a conceptual plan for the Court Avenue Mall and Main Street Improvements. Five colored renderings of suggested physical improvements were presented separately. Also presented outside the brochure format were a parking demand/supply exhibit, a colored parking and circulation analysis and a colored zoning map, an existing functional analysis and an improvement analysis. A Market Study was also completed.

When the results of the planning effort are compared to the stated wishes of the Task Force and the stated objectives for the study it is clear the desired results were not achieved. Without addressing all the concerns, it is obvious that no attention was devoted to identifying areas which could be immediately addressed by merchants, no strategy was developed "for improving the downtown area to encourage increased limit (sic) and improved physical appearance and to improve the use of the facilities." The city did not receive a plan to be implemented through a planning process and some information which could be used to support application for federal grant funds, specifically the tax and building condition data.

The application of the four criteria for evaluation of the plan reveals several shortcomings of the effort.

The question of whether or not the plan is value based is moot since a plan per se does not exist. It cannot be said that the values of the client are reflected in the plan since they were not directly involved in its preparation. The conceptual nature of the improvements suggested barely go beyond the suggestion that these concerns be
addressed. The values and commitment of the publics involved may have been put to better use had a task orientation been apparent in the effort. The previously listed objectives put forth in 1979 are more in keeping with the desires. Since the Task Force had already identified the Court House Square concept as a desirable project based on presentations by the Virginia Tech Department of Landscape Architecture students, the time and money devoted to study could have been devoted to developing and implementing a solution. It is apparent by inference that the consultant had a different view of purpose than the client.

The work presented to the city of Covington was not business centered. This orientation may have been of low importance since the business community was fairly well developed. However, the direct request for activities which could be implemented immediately by merchants was ignored.

The question of the dynamic/incremental nature of the plan is difficult to address since no document exists which sets down a schedule for implementation. The complete separation of the planning and implementation functions would create in any case impediments to implementation. The failure of the consultants to fully comprehend the values and needs of the client and the failure to adopt a task orientation toward implementation created a static, dead piece of work. If the consultants were aware of what the clients sought, perhaps some of the fee could have been put toward clarifying objectives and then deciding what data was necessary.

While some or all of the concepts presented are implementable the likelihood of their implementation is low. At the risk of being repeti-
tious, the reasons are that the values and desires of the community were not considered. This resulted from a lack of understanding on the part of the consultants of the real objectives of the clients. As a consequence, their objectives were not met and the study went beyond schedule and over budget. This fact created resentment on the part of the client and cast doubts on the reliability of the documents which were received.

Subsequent to the events just described, the City of Covington and the Business Community undertook, with the assistance of other consultants, a task oriented approach to improvements in the CSA. A logo was produced and erected at strategic points, an inexpensive street beautification program was begun which included the placement of planters made of whiskey barrels cut in half and the placement of street trees, accomplished through cooperation between the city and business community. It is emphasized that the consultants were brought in as needed to give form to the desires of the public. The public was not expected to give form to the desires of the consultant.

Several possible reasons exist for the ability of Covington's effort to continue following the failure of the consultants to deliver an implementable program. Covington had a strong, stable leadership which had developed a history of success in making downtown improvements. This is a very important element which will be discussed later. A high visibility of the successful CBA effort following the failure helped to continue the momentum of the effort. There was wide participation in the community which helped prevent finger pointing and accusation. Another factor which had the effect of suppressing the unfavorable impacts of the incident was an unwillingness to create an issue on
the parts of those involved. There was a larger concern for the general good.16
B. Vinton, Virginia (see Appendix A for description of Vinton)

A CBC revitalization plan developed for the town of Vinton by the Environmental Design Group of Charlottesville, Virginia has not been implemented in its entirety. The stated objectives of the planning recommendations contained in the plan are as follows:

"1. To insure that the downtown area has the quality of environment and appearance important to attract shoppers and investors.

"2. To insure that the proposed development will optimally serve the needs and desires of the community.

"3. To provide a clear visual identity to the downtown.

"4. To preserve the natural character and landscape setting of the downtown in the location of buildings, open spaces, and parking.

"5. To organize the downtown such that each activity occupies the best possible location for effective functioning.

"6. To emphasize awareness and orientation by interrelating the visual circulation and information systems and their functions.

"7. To provide short range and long range recommendations with emphasis on local implementation of ideas and proposals."\(^{17}\)

The objectives make clear at the beginning that the implementation of any recommendations which grow from realization of these objectives of the plan document will rely heavily on control. Recommendations are made in the following areas in Phase I.

Vehicular Traffic and Circulation
Transit
Land Use, Zoning, and Public Facilities

Town Form and Visual Quality
-- Uses and Activities
-- Downtown Form

One is led to believe by the title of the study report that a plan for the revitalization of Vinton's Central Business Area is inside. What one finds, however, in Phase I of the study is a far-ranging list of recommendations concerned more with the town as a whole, which is necessary to effectively promote revitalization. However, the recommendations such as, "Perform a complete economic study of the town to determine the extent of need for additional land use activity" and "Revise the present zoning ordinance to reflect the goals of the economic and land use studies of the town," while they are relevant to the goal of central business area revitalization and may at some point be necessary, are far from the place to begin. These are complicated, costly undertakings which by their complexity frustrate efforts and will do little to move the effort forward.

Phase II of the study states that its objective is to create a plan for that revitalization and indicate how such a plan might be carried out. The final recommendations which follow are intended by the consultants to provide town and business leaders with the information to make creative future planning and town growth decisions, to provide a structure and framework upon which future development can occur and to form a basis for future more detailed planning and design studies.\textsuperscript{18}

The following recommendations were made.
1. Downtown needs basic reorganization to better serve the people of Vinton. To this end, we recommend the creation of an internal circulation loop which receives special treatment and intercepts the major town entry points...(further recommendations of cosmetic nature).

2. Downtown needs a strong focal point or gathering place. To accomplish this a new town hall building should be considered and serve to illustrate the town leader's commitment to a revitalized downtown.

3. Downtown needs to restructure its basic central form. This recommendation is basic to the revitalization of downtown and it is in this zone that work must commence.

4. Downtown needs concentration of activities and commercial uses.¹⁹

These are worthwhile recommendations, but how attainable are they? How quickly and inexpensively can they be instituted? How much control is required? Does the community accept and support these conclusions? How will they lead to revitalization?

The loop concept is for all intents and purposes in place in Vinton. The town hall has been constructed. The remainder of the central business area remains much as it was twelve years ago when the report was submitted. It might be argued that it is in a worse state since at least two convenience shopping centers have been erected in the recent past on the Highway 24 Corridor, both within five minutes driving time of the central business area, and much more convenient and visible to shoppers than Vinton's central business area.
This plan is not value based. Clearly there are many recommended areas of action, but one must question if the values reflected in the recommendations are the community's values or the values of the consultants. Consider, for example, the recommendation in the section in Phase II entitled Town Form and Visual Quality which suggests the development of visual impact guidelines for all development. Zoning regulations of this sort are extremely difficult to carry through the adoption process. How is the adoption of these guidelines to be accomplished? Are town planners to write the guidelines? Are the developers to meekly submit to the imposition of outside controls? Surely the consultants intend this recommendation as a long term goal, but even then little likelihood exists for its institution since the strategy for its implementation is not suggested.

Rather than being business centered, the plan is essentially centered on environmental improvements. One recommendation suggests the study or retail potential for the central business area be undertaken by the Fifth Planning District Commission in order to guide the location of business development so that a complimentary shopping experience is created in Vinton. The consultants feel that this complimentary nature of business type and location will hold customers in Vinton, and well it may. One must question, however, whether a full scale study of the type indicated is necessary when a windshield survey will indicate what types of business are being conducted in a given location. If a niche exists, study the particular case if it's felt that this is necessary.

The dynamic/incremental nature of the Vinton plan document is apparent in that the types of recommendations made must necessarily
occurs over time since changes in policy do not occur quickly. Direct attention is given to the incremental nature of the revitalization process by the inclusion of a section in Implementation Activities. The activities included are described as "within the capabilities of local resources" and as "project oriented as opposed to process oriented with an attempt to involve many elements of the Vinton Community in their realization." The phases are shown below.

**Immediate Action:** Refers to those activities that can be begun right away because they are within the capabilities of local resources. These activities are project oriented as opposed to process oriented with an attempt to involve many elements of the Vinton community in their revitalization: private citizens, business people, community service groups, local government, etc.

**Phases** indicate the order or sequence in which activities should be initiated.

**First Phase:** Reinforce the linearity of the commercial street frontage and upgrade the visual appearance of Pollard and Lee Streets. Activities include:

* screen parking lots from sidewalks with tree plantings.
* develop vacant parcels of land along commercial streets.
* plant street trees to provide scale and shade.
* place overhead wires underground.
* remove noxious signs.
* restore undesirable building facades.
* upgrade entry to town hall.
* utilize vacant space at Pollard and Lee Streets.
"Second Phase: Begin development of "front door" entry to downtown area on Washington Avenue and begin development of shoppers vehicular access loop. Activities include:

* plant street trees on Washington Avenue and Maple Street.
* place "to downtown" signs at Washington Avenue/Maple Street intersection.
* develop improved off-street parking lots within each of the four main commercial blocks.
* provide pedestrian walkways from parking lots to commercial streets.

"Third Phase: Finish development of shoppers vehicular access loop. Activities include:

* complete street tree planting on Maple Street.
* plant street trees on Cleveland, Walnut and First Streets.

"Fourth Phase: Improve visual and physical connection to the downtown area from the bypass and improve access via the shoppers bus route. Activities include:

* plant street trees along Pollard Street to the bypass.
* place "to downtown" sign at Pollard Street/Rt. 24 bypass intersection (providing intersection has been reconstructed).
* locate shoppers bus stops and develop appropriate facilities."

It is interesting to note that in the 12 years since the plan was accepted by the town only two of the activities have been completed. The overhead wires have been placed behind buildings and the town is in the process of developing a new parking area. Obviously the problem of
implementation requires more for its resolution than listing in phases those activities "within the capabilities of local resources."\(^{24}\)

The plan document also recommends extended Action Activities which are shown below.

"Extended Action: Refers to those activities that need to be begun right away but whose results will be realized only after an extended period of action has occurred. These activities are initially process oriented in that they primarily involve a substantial policy, procedure and study format prior to the desired action or project occurring. Because the resultant actions of these activities are so integral to downtown planning, they must be commenced immediately. These activities, in some cases, also necessitate going beyond the immediate resources of the town. They include:

* communication with the Virginia Highway Department to reconstruct the intersection of Pollard Street and the Route 24 by-pass (Phase I recommendation).
* ensure that the revised zoning ordinance indicates that the area south of Cleveland Street to the by-pass is zoned for residential use and that commercial development along Washington Avenue east to the by-pass be limited to protect its quality and character as the primary entry to the downtown area (Phase I recommendation).
* determination of whether a new town hall is desired, and, if so, what spatial requirements are to be considered.
* development of necessary local studies and citizen participation components for application for federal grants.
* initiation of a comprehensive special street treatment program along the basic loop primary road system in town along Washington Avenue, Hardy Road, Route 24 east and the by-pass (Phase I recommendation).
* determine the feasibility of developing the proposed shoppers bus route between the downtown shopping area and the eastern commercial areas in the town (Phase I recommendation).25

Of these Extended Action Goals, only one, the construction of a new town hall has been completed to illustrate lack of carryover and coordination. The zoning plan developed and approved by the Town in June 1982 continues the tradition of strip "commercial development" along the Virginia Avenue - Highway 24 corridor as well as a portion of the Washington Avenue - Highway 24 corridor.26 Two reasons are given for this course of action.

"1. The traffic generated by the commercial establishments can best be handled along the major thoroughfares in the town, and

"2. directing commercial growth along highway corridors helps to protect the internal integrity of Vinton's residential areas."27

The decision to zone the Highway 24 corridor runs counter to statements made in the Downtown Revitalization Study of 1974.

"Before allowing further random zoning changes of residential or agricultural land to commercial business use, especially along and east of Route 24 By-pass, the Town ought to have a full complete
economic study done to determine the extent of need for additional land use activities. This ought to be done so as to coordinate zoning for such activities in accordance with the development of actual need and so that additional zoning would not be detrimental to efforts to rejuvenate the downtown shopping area."

Perhaps the reasons given are adequate rationale for the decision, but one must question why the land was zoned commercial in the blanket fashion which occurred rather than on a piece by piece basis as need arose or at least based on some projection of need.

There are several recommendations contained in the comprehensive plan which echo recommendations contained in the Downtown plan. The Comprehensive Plan recommends an expansion of recreational and park areas, the improvement of sidewalks in the downtown area, the continued support for beautification efforts, the promotion of a detailed examination of the future commercial needs and a review and update of the zoning ordinance.

The fact remains, however, that very few of the recommendations put forward by the consultants have been implemented. I believe this condition exists because the plan assumed that the town shared the consultant's values rather than developing a strategy for defining these values in Vinton's leaders and population. Another detriment to implementation was the fact that the plan was not business centered. It focuses on physical improvement and policy issues, rather than focusing on business leaders in order to develop values and consensus that would lead to recognition of a need for policy changes and physical improvements. While the plan does appear to possess some characteristics which allow it to be implemented in an incremental nature and allow the objectives
to change or be placed in any order, it ultimately falls short since most of the objectives were not implemented.

I submit that the document presented as a plan was not a plan but rather a description of Vinton's problems. It is not a plan since the means of implementation is never seriously considered by the consultants. Action is happening now in Vinton because of effective leadership. If planning efforts of this type are to be successful, planners must develop a process which enables the communities to move the effort forward by consciously building strategies for implementation into the process.
IV. MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

The central question to be answered by this case study is "Can rural, small communities create significant improvement in the economic health of their central business areas using local resources and expertise?"

Subsidiary questions

1. What is to be the role of the professional?
2. What is to be the role of the public?
3. What are the qualities of the process.

A. Thesis Statement

With these questions in mind the following thesis is offered:

Successful efforts to revitalize the central business areas of rural towns require an informed leader who will function as an educator, and a planning and design process which leads to implementation through its participant centered, incremental, multiple objective approach.

B. Role of the Professional

While the concept of unaided successful attempts at CBA revitalization is appealing, in reality this will seldom if ever occur. The level of knowledge required to handle the job is too specialized for most of the individuals who will be involved in the effort. For this reason hiring a consultant will be a necessity if the undertaking is too succeed. The optimal situation would be to hire a full time director for the effort. However, most small communities lack the resources to finance this. The next most desirable situation would be to engage a consultant to guide those who will actually implement solutions. The remainder of the discussion proceeds with this situation assumed.
"Creation of means is not a narrow technical matter, it involves molding the social character of the institution. Leadership goes beyond efficiency (1) when it sets basic mission and (2) when it creates a social organism capable of fulfilling that mission."

If one is to manage the central business area of a small community, it must be viewed and approached as what it is -- a business enterprise. The function of the professional is to help business leaders in the community seeking help solve various problems which they do not fully comprehend. They have identified a general goal -- central business area vitality -- but lack the direction and understanding necessary to reach that goal.

Chester Barnard in The Functions of the Executive states why dysfunction occurs.

"The common sense of the whole is not obvious, and in fact is often not effectively present. Control is dominated by a particular aspect...with the result that (TOP performance) is not secured and failure ensues or is perpetually threatened. No doubt the development of a crisis due to unbalanced treatment of all the factors is the occasion for corrective action on the part of executives who possess the art of sensing the whole."

The forces which caused changes in the markets were many; however, the decline could have been slowed or reversed had those in control recognized and understood the process of change and developed business strategies to adapt to the new market conditions and to remodel the stated and unstated public policies which were their enemies.

If it is accepted that "sensing the whole" is a prerequisite for success, and it is obvious that those who control the situation do not possess this ability, the initial role of the professional is that of educator. Those who are seeking to improve their abilities to achieve
their goals can only succeed if they develop direction and purpose. An understanding of the whole is necessary before this can occur.

"The inbuilding of purpose is a challenge to creativity because it involves transforming men and groups from neutral technical units into participants who have a particular stamp sensitivity and commitment. This is ultimately an educational process. It has been well said that the effective leader must know the meaning and master the technique of the educator...."

The role of the professional or leader does not end with the inbuilding of purpose. The ultimate role of the professional is to institutionalize the organization which has been created to work toward central business area vitality. "Organizations become institutions as they are infused with values...the infusion produces a distinct identity where institutionalization is well advanced, distinctive outlooks, habits, and other commitments are unified, coloring all aspects of organizational life and binding it a social integration that goes well beyond formal coordination and command." The process which will bring this institutionalization to fruition will be covered later.

In summary, the purpose of the professional is to transfer through an educational process the 'sense of the whole' to his clients. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the consultant to build the purpose of the organization designed to manage the central business area so that it becomes an institution infused with appropriate values. When this has been accomplished, the participants themselves will become leaders and work to further institutionalize the values which give eminence to the vitality of the CBA and indeed the whole community. In short, the function of the leader is to shape action into lasting commitment to a new strategic direction. One author has identified
several leadership tasks which both the professional and participants will perform to further the goal of CBA revitalization. They are as follows:

"Amplifying understanding
Building awareness
Changing symbols
Legitimizing new viewpoints
Making tactical shifts and testing partial solutions
Broadening political support
Overcoming opposition
Inducing and structuring flexibility
Launching trial balloons and engaging in systematic waiting
Creating packets of commitment
Crystallizing focus
Managing coalitions and formalizing commitment"

C. Role of the Public

The term public as it is used here does not refer to those individuals directly involved in the revitalization activity as implementers of solutions. The public in the larger sense of the general population need not be involved as part of the process until interventions move into the larger public domain since initial objectives will be limited to areas within the private sector and areas which are in the public domain but which do not require direct participation by the general public. Naturally, one aspect of the process, a very important aspect, is building public awareness of the efforts being made by the merchants and the public sector to create a more attractive and service-
able CBA. From the beginning the general public will be included in the process from this perspective.

When in the course of events interventions move into the larger public domain, whether the interventions concern the fabric of the central business area or land use policy within the town as a whole, then organized participation by the larger public can be solicited. If the need for wider participation is felt necessary by those directly involved in the process, then this participation may occur at any time. When public participation is solicited, care must be taken to control that participation by appropriate group processes and techniques so that participation contributes to the fulfillment of a clearly defined goal. The process must be controlled to prevent the dissipation of energy, yet provide for meaningful participation which fosters commitment.

The publics involved in central business area revitalization, both the small public and the larger general public, have much to contribute to the revitalization effort as providers and as users. Their importance cannot be underestimated. The full impact of their participation will become more clear in the discussion of the process philosophy itself.
V. THE PROCESS

A. Building Consensus

The primary problem with the Covington and Vinton plans which were reviewed is that they did not grow from a process which had implementation as a strategic objective. Implementation was expected to occur as a matter of course according to the Rational Planning Model which can be described in five steps:

1. Set goals
2. Determine alternatives to achieve goals
3. Compare the results of the alternatives
4. Choose the most effective alternative
5. Implement the chosen alternative.  

The planners assumed consensus and a consequent will to proceed, eventhough those expected to implement the chosen alternatives had never been directly involved in the process of planning. Implementation is more likely to occur when those responsible for implementation are directly involved in the decision making so that the chosen alternative is their idea, when they have defined purpose and set goals, and when interventions are incremental, all leading to the defined goal.

Several authors have addressed the problems associated with the Rational Planning Model which can lead to difficulties of implementation. The flaws associated with the RPM are summarized in a paper by J. Friedman and B.M. Hudson. For our purposes the most important are the problem of knowledge and the problem of implementation.

The problem of knowledge as it relates to CBA Revitalization Planning centers on the ability of those implementing solutions to know the
future. Certainly in a fluid environment predictions of events in the retail or service industries are difficult to make. Those making decisions must realize that the solutions that are developed and implemented are attempts to adapt to an ever changing context. The fact that the context is continually changing has implications for the nature of the process itself and for the scope of the interventions.

The problem of implementation has already been covered to some extent. To re-emphasize the causes of failure to implement.

- lack of recognition of implementation as goal.
- resulting in lack of participation by those involved in implementing.
- assumption that context is static.
- assumption of willingness to act.

In most cases several of the initial participants in the revitalization effort will want to begin the process by resorting to an in depth study of parking, circulation, building condition and other time and resource consuming endeavors. The thinking is that the study of these areas will identify and quantify problem areas. This was the case with both the Vinton and Covington planning efforts which were reviewed.

The necessity of in depth study of issue areas at an early stage in the process is doubtful. Just as the professional has at his disposal a wealth of experience which enables him to 'sense the whole' of the situation with respect to the many factors that contribute to the vitality or lack of vitality in a central business area, so too the businessmen and civic leaders have at their disposal years of accumulated experience in their market area and a thorough knowledge of the
immediate problems of parking, circulation and building condition to name only a few examples. This is not to say that study should not occur. At some point in the effort, decisions involving large sums of capital and significant changes in the built environment may be suggested which will require study on a case by case basis.

Clearly, in any undertaking action is preferable to inaction. Robert Shaffer, a management consultant states, "The essential idea is to focus immediately on tangible results rather than programs, preparations and problem solving as the first step in launching performance improvement thrusts...instead of trying to overcome resistance to what people are not ready to do, find out what they are ready to do." 37

The process of acting will have the effect to some degree of institutionalizing the group of participants. The initial impact of any effort is important for "...only if you get people acting, even in small ways will they come to believe in what they are doing. Moreover, the process of enlistment is enhanced by explicit management of the after-the-act labeling process -- in other words, publicly and ceaselessly lauding the small wins along the way. 'Doing things' (lots of experiments, tries) leads to rapid and effective learning, adaptation, diffusion and commitment." 38

The researchers who made this statement conducted an experiment in which subjects were asked to place a small sign in their front windows supporting a cause. Those who initially agreed subsequently agreed to display a billboard in their front yards, which required letting outsiders dig holes in their front lawns. Those who were not asked to dis-
play the smaller sign, a small step, turned down the large sign in 95 out of 100 cases. The implications for the nature of the planning process are clear. Rather than spending time studying problems and developing grandiose plans, initial action should involve as many persons as possible in the process, identify small easily implemented interventions and move to implement those interventions.

B. Educating

As was stated earlier, an effective central business area revitalization effort must have as its basis an educational orientation. The participants in the process must become aware of factors involved in the decline of the CBA and the factors which can contribute to its rejuvenation. The focus of the educational phase of the process is to encourage the participating managers that they do understand to a great degree the problems the CBA faces and, more importantly, can recognize the opportunities for improvement. The method to be utilized in the educational phase is not the traditional teaching that most would visualize. The consultant professional need not come prepared with a course syllabus and a complete set of behavioral objectives, for, as is well known, the best teacher is experience. The learning and recognition of inherent knowledge will be realized as the participants set purpose, identify goals and objectives and begin to work toward solutions.

The educational process itself is relatively straightforward. The participants, guided by a knowledgeable professional, are led through a process which has objectives: to organize an efficient mechanism for accomplishing objectives, to formulate a purpose statement for the organization and to create an initial list of objectives which will move
the CBA toward vitality; and to identify opportunities and constraints which exist within the particular context.

The statement of purpose objective listed above can be accomplished by utilizing the Planning and Design Approach (see Appendix F) in its initial stages. This approach has many of the characteristics of the approach which is advocated herein.

C. Process Characteristics

If the process begins with an educational orientation in working toward solutions, the participants will reveal the values which motivate their thinking on particular issues. During the process the role of the consultant is to clarify the underlying values. The clarification can be accomplished through the use of various group techniques which cause the participants to evaluate the impacts of values on the task, and to determine whether they are helps or hindrances to the CBA revitalization effort. This aspect of the process is of great importance. Care must be taken not to impose values but to inspire values through a questioning process. The ultimate product of such thinking will be the clarification of values already held which can contribute to the life of the central business area, the creation of new values to the same end and most importantly, the institutionalization of both. This aspect of the process will occur naturally throughout its course.

This approach is superior to values imposed by a plan produced by outside consultants as it will help insure the implementation of solutions. Policy, which is a reflection of values, follows in this case the creation of the conditions which make policy decisions necessary and apparent to the stakeholders by consensus. To enunciate
policy or to attempt to enunciate policy could, at the beginning, create a political response which would create obstacles to the goal of central business area revitalization.

Once the participants have identified the organization's function, then they can identify objectives which they believe will further that purpose. This initial list will contain items as objectives which cannot be implemented easily or quickly. At this point in the process the participants can group the objectives under broad headings or issue areas. If the participants were not already aware of the issue areas in CBA revitalization planning, this step of the process will make them apparent. The participants will at this point in the process begin the task of assigning priority to the items contained in the lists of objectives.

As has been emphasized throughout, the successful central business area revitalization process in the small rural town must begin with solutions to problems which do not involve the collection and interpretation of data or the expenditure of large sums of capital. Once these items are identified and removed from the list, two questions are to be asked of any suggested solution: 1) How does the proposed solution lead to the goal of central business area revitalization? and 2) what is its relationship to people, i.e., how does it contribute to their comfort, pride, and self worth. Once these basic criteria of the feasibility model have been applied the low data/low cost solution can be implemented in the prioritized order. The implementation in and of itself will bolster confidence in the future of the CBA, but should it occur that the intervention is not successful in accomplishing the objective, then
there is no need to undo or redo since the intervention is small scale. The detrimental effects of a failed intervention can be ameliorated fairly quickly and easily as well since the time frame for formal evaluation will be of short duration. Informal evaluation which can be applied will be of even shorter duration and will allow for other confidence building interventions to be implemented quickly.

A successful revitalization effort in rural towns will be dynamic and incremental. Nothing is static. The environment about us is ever-changing and the purpose of any organization is to adapt to its environment. As the environment changes opinions and values will change. Attitudes will change. In the same way, what is needed to adapt the central business area to its environment will change. The nature of the low cost/low data approach insures that continual adaptations can be made to the environment since large scale decisions about the environment have not limited at an early stage the options for the future. The low cost/low data approach also allows for a dynamic approach since many tries and experiments can be instituted. Every intervention will lead to another.

Another characteristic of the successful revitalization effort in small rural towns is a task orientation. Several small groups of participants will be delegated responsibility for aspects of the effort. This will involve more community leaders in the process and serve to broaden the base of support. This characteristic will also allow for several lines of activity to take place at one time with less a burden on a central manager. So often the function of public involvement efforts is to have the public advise, but not participate directly in implementation. As Gerald Nadler, author of the PDA says,
"Generally, the 'experts' collect large amounts of data and withdraw to their offices to 'plan'. Contact with the client occurs on a disjointed or occasional basis. Seldom are the people in the client's world included in the process. Defensiveness and skepticism result. Meanwhile the data collection effort changes the P & D experts' perception of the problem. Their solutions reflect these new perceptions. At the same time the client's world changes; perceptions, priorities and understanding of the problem alter. The scope and context of the problem may differ dramatically from its initial conception.

Consequently, when the planning and design experts make their recommendations the client rejects them. The premises underlying how each views the proposals are simply too divergent. The solution finally adopted, if any, is far too often a compromise neither party particularly likes. Lack of creativity, unachieved purposes, unmet objectives and failure to implement frequently characterize the results."

D. Moving the Effort Forward

As was stated previously, several areas of the revitalization effort may be active at a given time. The movement however cannot appear to be haphazard. Some coordination will be necessary. Periodic meetings of Task groups will be sufficient to prevent task groups working at cross purposes or in an untimely fashion.

Another concern is the problem of timing interventions. "The effectiveness of leadership often depends on being able to time small interventions so that the force of natural organizational processes amplifies the interventions rather than dampens them." This quality of timeliness will require that there be those of the public involved in the effort who are in time with the environment and ready to act. It also underscores the requirement that action be taken without resorting to undue study of the situation. On a more specific level, phasing of
intervention can be timed by a fairly simple set of guidelines. The next phase or intervention can go forward in any task group when 1) community confidence is established from past effort, 2) the need is present, 3) the project fits the feasibility model, and 4) there is no conflict with other projects.

These concepts were applied to the CBA revitalization effort from its inception. For a record of the effort over its first year see Appendix A.
VI. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This effort has been a process of redefinition for Vinton's Central Business Area. The Town is in the process of redefining their values and, in the process, the image and function of the Vinton CBA. They are moving toward a clear market identity and toward self management. This is not an easy task.

This document can serve as an educational tool for revitalization groups in other towns and villages. This is a document which will help move them closer to their goal by documenting the fact that people working together, one step at a time, can attain a goal that may at first appear impossible for them to accomplish.

This case study began with a thesis statement which was to be applied in a specific case in order to test its validity. The application of the principles set forth in the statement has proven them to be true in the Vinton case. In April, 1987 the town of Vinton entered their revitalization effort in the Virginia Achievement Award Competition sponsored by the Virginia Municipal League. The letter sent to the VML (see Appendix B) amply illustrates the progress which has been made and the confident attitude which prevails. All since June 26, 1984.

One must be wary, however, of making the assumption that the application of these planning principles is totally responsible for these changes. Certainly in Vinton's case the Explore Project, the Roanoke River Parkway Project and the Washington Street Improvements have had profound impacts on the Vinton Central Business Area. In all cases, favorable climate like this may not exist and movement may be
slow. (The Explore Project is envisioned as a major tourist attraction, featuring a zoo and other educational exhibits.)

Another point to be made is that the level of planning activity presented here was not the only level of planning activity which was occurring at the time. A look at the "areas of cooperation" within the entry into the Virginia Achievement Award Competition (Appendix B) will reveal that the Central Business Area Revitalization effort is part of a larger set of goals. This fact, nevertheless, does not preclude the rationale set forth here. In fact, a close reading of the letter will reveal many of the same concepts.

When one considers the importance which applies to the clarification, creation and institutionalization of values, the project can be considered a success. The commitment of the town to the goal is evident by the tone of the entry letter. What should not be overlooked is that the values, in this case, probably did not have to be created. This may be attributable to the knowledge of various issue areas by those who were participating in the activity. When the condition of Central Business Areas first became a concern during the 1950's information related to this type of planning was generally unavailable. Today information about the result of Revitalization Planning is readily available and can act as an aid to quick action and ready acceptance of the challenge.

Participation in the effort to revitalize Vinton's CBA and a review of the actions since the effort began have made these truths apparent:
- plans should come from the community to insure that they are willing to undertake the responsibilities. The community should lead not be led.
- improvements and activities should move from small to large.
- do not attempt to set policy -- create the conditions which make policy questions apparent and the setting of policies desirable.
- the purpose of the professional is to foster commitment and spur learning, not to impose ideas.
- do not waste time and money collecting large amounts of data without a clear purpose.

Several paragraphs of the body of this work were devoted to an examination of an effort undertaken in Covington, Virginia which presumed that data collection was somehow necessary. The funds, $19,000, were spent but little was accomplished. The attitude that data collection in and of itself or as some would say, "preparing to plan" is a legitimate activity is still prevalent in the planning community. As evidence of this fact, a member of the Roanoke County Planning staff presented his agenda for Revitalization Planning in the form of a list of activities (See Appendix G). Old habits die hard.

A particular problem encountered during this study was the lack of information available concerning Revitalization Planning itself and the difficulty of obtaining actual planning documents. As a result the Historical Review does not chronicle the field. There is no continuum by which to gauge with adequate clarity and accuracy the assumptions upon which planning of the type under consideration proceeded or to gauge changes in these assumptions. More work needs to be done to
chronicle the initial assumptions which guided the planning work in downtown revitalization efforts and the changes which have occurred over the years.
FOOTNOTES


13. The Urban Renewal Agency of Lancaster, Texas. "Town Square" ... prepared by Oblinger/Smith Corp., Dallas, Texas.


18. Vinton Downtown Plan, p. 35.

19. Vinton Downtown Plan, p. 36.


25. Vinton Downtown Plan, p. 44.


27. Town of Vinton Comp. Plan, p. 87.

28. Vinton Downtown Plan, p. 3.


33. Selznick, p. 81.


39. Fraser, Scott, p. 200.

40. Nadler, p. 123.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Vinton, Virginia, population approximately 8,000, is located in the Roanoke Valley of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains. The town's beginnings can be traced to the mid 1700's when the area was first settled. In 1790 the Gish Mathers established Gish's Mill on Glade Creek and the area became known as Gish's Mill. In 1838 Roanoke Co. was formed and Gish's Mill became part of the Co. Gish's Mills became a flagstop on Atlantic, Mississippi, Ohio Railroad. Following the Civil War, a substantial depot was constructed. Families began to settle more in the area.

In the late 1870's and 1880's, the Gish family led a movement to establish a town at the depot site. Incorporation took place March 17, 1884 with population of 584 and 1.5 square miles.

The growth of Vinton was closely tied to the growth of Roanoke, a newly established rail center, since most of the new residents during and following the 1880's were employees of Norfolk and Western Railway Co.. Hence, Vinton became known as the "working man's town."

Vinton contains several well established industries, among these are Burlington Industries and Southern States. Recently industrial firms have located within the town, and commercial growth has occurred along Hardy Road and Route 24 in the form of strip development.
Vinton's physical location provides the best of two worlds. On one side the city of Roanoke provides urban amenities, on the other the Blue Ridge Parkway and rural land provide access to another lifestyle. Vinton, although it is continuing to urbanize, retains its small town flavor and its citizens want to see this flavor preserved, in the town as a whole and in the Central Business Area.

Vinton's Town Government, realizing a need for improvements in the CBA, has initiated street, sidewalk, sewer and water improvements to be instituted along a several block area of the CBA. The Town Government, aware of the declining business environment in the CBA as evidenced by declining sales and vacant storefronts, took the initiative and brought downtown merchants together on June 26, 1984 for a meeting. This meeting resulted in a steering committee which met for the first time on July 31, 1984. It is the responsibility of this committee to coordinate activities and lead the development of the CBA.

Initial meetings with the Town Manager, interested individuals and the Steering Committee have made the following tasks apparent:

A. Establish purposes of CBA revitalization effort.

B. Identify immediate action plans.

C. Create recommendations for street improvements.

D. Ascertain through exploratory research the community's image of the CBA.

E. Establish criteria for decision making.

These objectives represent the beginning of the revitalization effort in Vinton. The continued effort will be a test of community will. The long range effort will require that the town undertake a
total marketing effort. This will become apparent when the steering committee begins the purpose expansion phase of the effort.

The revitalization effort will have to contend with significant obstacles to increase its patronage and to attract new businesses. In its favor are its high identity factor within the community, the highly developed Vinton town identity, a committed citizenry and the fact that much of the property in the CBA is owned by a limited number of individuals. The presence in the community of an effective leader in the person of town manager, George Nester, will greatly enhance the prospects of success.

The growth of Vinton's population, the growth of the Smith Mountain Lake Corridor and the recent proposal for a regional zoo and a steam train attraction and Roanoke River Parkway near Vinton place Vinton at the threshold of a new age as a focus of activity in the Roanoke Valley. Vinton is fortunate and wise to begin now, to devise strategies to capitalize on these advantages. Notes from organizational meetings and steering committee meetings (my notes) are included hereinafter.

3-19-85
Met with George Nester and Whit Watts
- set next meeting meeting time as March 27th, 7:00 p.m. in Council Chamber.
- discussed selection of task force.
- George presented the following information:
  60% of businesses own their buildings.
  40% rent space
  15% of property owned by absentee landlords.
453 private parking spaces.
106 public parking spaces.
108 on street
Parking space is not a problem but will be cited as issue.
- suggested study areas: Design improvements for pavements.
  impact of street widening.
  inventory of facades.
- Whit Watts studio and Va. Tech will develop exhibits for
  environmental improvements consisting of suggested street
  improvements, area wide improvements to buildings and entrances,
  and a slide presentation.
- Facilitator will develop policy for design based on mall
  marketing strategy and common sense, relate to zoning regulation
  and voluntary merchant compliance.
Concerns expressed -- re-establish as destination, problem of lack
of centralized management.
Strategy for approaching business:
- personal contact best
- question businesses about what they want to see.
- keys: Bank, Wallace Cundiff, Billy Vinyard, Dan Doss.
Suggest low interest loans for facade improvements.

3-26-85
Met with George Nester
George introduced these concepts
- Town's role is one of support.
- Work is to be done under the merchants. Have them promote the study. Merchant involvement will help carry the effort forward.
- Develop a checklist for improvements to help businesses.
- Approach the issue from the perspective of its helpfulness to business.

5-26-85

- Suggested targets for Participation
  Bill Cundiff - Realtor
  Don Davis - Mgr. Sovran Bank
  Dan Doss - Retail Merchant
  Wallace Cundiff - Drugstore and landlord at Goode
  Fred Swisher - Western Auto
  Bill Vinyard - Vinton Motors
  Member of Council - Mr. Reynolds
  Downtown Merchants Association
  Charlie McCarty
  Phil Day

- Suggested contact Vinton Beautification Committee
- Meeting planned for facilitator to meet with Don Davis and Dan Doss, president of Downtown Business Association.
- Town to outline the study area, develop letter inviting all business people from the affected area to a mass meeting at which time they will select Steering Committee.
6-5-85

- George introduced the concept of merchant input to Dan Doss and Don Davis.
- George expressed concern that other areas would be offended if it were perceived that the CBA was receiving special attention.
- Invitation to business owners to focus on downtown improvements, public domain responsibility and private domain responsibility.
- Dan Doss brought up retail recruitment. He believes that merchants can be recruited. He identified the problem of lack of cooperative attitude among merchants.

June 17th scheduled Mass Meeting for the purpose of merchants choosing Steering Committee.

6-13-85

George Nester, Whit Watts, Randy Austin, Jesse English

June 17th meeting rescheduled to June 26th.

Agenda
I. Welcome by George
II. Town Plans
III. Merchant Participation
IV. Slide Presentation on CBA developed by Virginia Tech Landscape Architecture Program
V. Select Steering Committee
VI. Question/Answer and General Discussion
6-17-85
George Nester, Don Davis, Dan Doss, Jesse English

- Preview slide program
- Discussed area to be included. I stressed including as many as possible and to include the visual or real downtown rather than a limited area.
- Dan and Don were briefed on the agenda.

6-26-85
Mass Meeting
Twenty-three merchants and businessmen attended

George Nester presented the Capital Improvements program. He made the point that these street, sidewalk, water and sewer improvements are an outgrowth of Vinton's Comprehensive Plan. Clarified the point that property values in the affected area may increase.

Dan Doss spoke at length about the National Main Street Program teleconference experience at VPI, highlighting examples that he found exciting. He brought in the concept of purpose.

Slide presentation on Main Street revitalization prepared by VPI Landscape Architecture Program (see Appendix E).

George Nester spoke again to emphasize the work that will be necessary to accomplish the goal and to elicit response for Steering Committee and to provide information on the purpose of the Steering Committee. He emphasized the fact that merchants and owners should volunteer. This followed a suggestion that Dan Doss and Dan Davis be members of the
Steering Committee. The same participant suggested that the committee include one representative from each block.

Another participant suggested that the group focus on problems which George allowed. This participant suggested that parking was a problem and also suggested that a marketing plan be developed. Another participant suggested that Vinton's CBA's main attraction is ease of parking and access to a variety of services. The participant who mentioned parking cited loss of businesses as a problem, stating that this loss must be curtailed.

Clarification of improvements was requested and George complied.

In response to a question on overhead utilities, George presented the options for placement of electrical service. He defined the time-frame for the street, water, sidewalk and sewer improvements.

The type of parking on Pollard and Lee will remain parallel.

George pointed out the ample parking areas in the CBA. A participant brought up the lack of signs to direct people to parking areas.

(The meeting continued in this fashion to its conclusion.)

AGENDA

DOWNTOWN VINTON REVITALIZATION MEETING

June 26, 1985

III. Downtown Merchants

Introduction of the Assistance to the Provided

A. At a time when the Town of Vinton will be making downtown improvements, there is an opportunity for businesses and
property owners to coordinate improvements to their businesses or property with the Town's improvements.

B. Downtown merchants, property owners, and professionals thru the Town will be able to receive technical assistance if improving downtown stores and property.

C. Receipt of technical assistance and downtown improvements can be planned by a downtown improvement steering committee, made up of merchants, property owners, and professionals. This steering committee can be selected tonight.

D. Possible technical assistance which can be obtained thru Virginia Tech will be in the following areas:

Environmental Designs
  Streetscape Improvements
  Facade Improvements
  Town Codes and Ordinances
  Guidelines for downtown improvement and criteria

Marketing Assistance
  Store Displays
  Advertising
  Market Research
  Marketing Strategy

Business Management Assistance
  Accounting
  Inventory Control
  Personnel
  Budgeting
E. Examples of some possible improvements will be seen in the following slide show.

7-31-85
Rob Stalzer, Roanoke County Director of Planning; Liz Bradley, Roanoke County Planner; George Nester; Randy Austin, Jesse English
- Discussed funding of full time town planner position
  - circuit rider
  - joint town and county
- Rob Stalzer emphasized his view that a full time position is mandatory.
- Discussion of other localities' actions.
- Discussion of parking and street widening.
- Discussion of Main Street U.S.A., a Main Street Project Movie.
  Included is a Downtown Action Plan/Preliminary Inventory
  Requirements which was introduced by Mr. Stalzer (see Appendix G).

7-31-85
Steering Committee First Meeting
- Street improvements scheduled for mid-November.
- Overview of Process (PDA) presented.
- Discussion of timing of street improvements.
- Discussion of options for electrical service. Cost of underground appears to be prohibitive. Concern over place to hang Christmas decor and concern over street lights if rear
service is instituted. One suggestion was to attach lighting fixtures to buildings.
- Discussion of reducing the width of side walks.

8-22-85

Movie: Main Street U.S.A. (Available from National Trust for Historic Preservation)

- Discussion of short term immediate objectives. List Developed.

Parking - Improve Signage
Kill Weeds
Promote Programs and Advertising
Group Promotion -
Stores Downtown Area
Improve Facades of Buildings
Contact V.P.I. Extension
Improve Directional Signs
Show where downtown is
Zoning Ordinance
Open Hours
Festivals
Renting Unoccupied Buildings
Street Cleaning
Select Theme
Select Logo (contest)
Lighting Improvements
Window Display
V.P.I. Ext., Prize for Best

Publicity
Final Report
Determine the Purpose
Market Strategy
Store Signs
Attract Different Types of Business
Attitude of Merchants
Park
Community Activities
Open Air Market
Capture Parkway Traffic
Field Trip Committee
i.e., Shelby, N.C.
IRB Money (Iudus Trial Revenue Bond)
Low Cost Loans from Banks
Tax Break on Improvements
Evaluate Business License
Rent Structure for New
Clean Stores (Inside and Out) Businesses
Improve Sidewalks Designate Urban Enterprise Area
Merchandising (V.I.P. Ext.) Promote our Pluses!
Traffic Flow Free Help
Street Scape Help from Roanoke County Engineers
Promotional Manager Rebuild Gish Mill
Community Involvement Police patrol parking lots daily
Plant A Tree Trash Cans on Streets
Building Codes Regular Merchants Meetings
Fire Codes

9-4-85

- Suggested Purposes
  TO develop a plan for DT Vinton.
  TO improve the appearance of the downtown area.
  TO improve business opportunity and service.
  TO bring more trade to the downtown area.
  TO renew social and economic opportunities.
  TO develop a downtown theme
      (and others)

- Trip to Tarrboro, N.C. scheduled for September 26th.
- Sidewalk tour by Committee on September 11.
- Street cleaning project selected as initial activity.

The Steering Committee selected purpose:
TO develop a plan to Market Downtown Vinton to make it more attractive to both shoppers and business in order to generate more profit for both business people and the community in general.

The identification of immediate action plans has been accomplished. A list of actions generated by the public participants has been included. Inspection of the list reveals that several of the objectives are long range objectives rather than short range objectives. Among these are Group Promotion, Facade Improvement, Zoning Ordinance, Attract different types of business, Tax Break on Improvements. The tax break on improvements illustrates that the participants are thinking strategically as does the rent structure for new businesses. Some will require the development of separate strategies for their accomplishment, for instance, Capture Parkway Traffic.

Serious problems will and have arisen when trying to use this list to develop a priority of projects. The consultant will need to break the list into short term projects, long term projects, solutions, and problems. It is anticipated that this task could be accomplished by the participants using an appropriate group technique.

The appropriateness of the list to the task at hand -- if not its form indicates that the participants are aware of the various facets of the revitalization effort. It should be remembered that this writer as well as George Nester are familiar with the process and that most participants are at least aware of the efforts of Roanoke and other localities so by observation have some idea of what is required.
9-11-85

Dan Doss announced that a fact-finding trip has been organized to Tarrboro, N.C. The trip will take place on September 26.

The steering committee took a sidewalk tour of the central business area in order to become more aware by looking at it from their new perspective. They made these general observations.

- poor sidewalk condition
- scaling paint
- metal and wood light and electrical poles
- unkempt lots
- no trash cans on streets
- vacant buildings
- trash on street
- need for wider turning radii at intersections
- lack of variety in retail offerings

On a positive note they cited these attributes:

- personal service
- owner operated
- small town atmosphere
- good location within market area

10-16-85 meeting

7:00 p.m.
Municipal Building

Committee present
Overview of 9:00 a.m. Meeting with Appalachian Power Co.
Developed format for video presentation.
Suggestion of week of Nov. 11th for clean up.
Weekend promotion for sales with recommendation for Vinton Messenger to advertise.
Meeting with Vinton Messenger at 9:30 a.m. Friday, October 18, 1985.

1-15-86

George Nester reported that his investigations had not produced a consultant to work with merchants on facade improvements. Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia and the state declined to participate. Vianii Ellis, a local architect, is not available.

Following discussion the decision was made that Don Davis will take slides and facade renovation ideas will be generated by Jesse English, landscape architecture student from Virginia Tech.

The buildings owned by the Cundiff brothers were identified as the first targets.

George announced that discussions between him and Rob Stalzer had led to a decision for Roanoke County to study parking needs within the Vinton central business area.
Jesse English, Landscape Architecture student at VPI & SU presented the results of an exploratory survey which he conducted.

George Nester presented information which he had obtained concerning the Virginia Small Business Financing authority. Investigation as a source of money will continue.

Discussion of priority for facade improvement identified Holdrens, Vinton Restaurant and DaLongs as likely targets. A committee which had been formed to study promotions and events presented its report (see Appendix C). The steering committee in discussing the strategy to pursue in presenting the idea to the more general public identified the following options:

- several persons to visit other merchants to present program
- mass meeting and small group presentation
- representatives to contact constituents
- newsletter with space for response to bring to the mass meeting

The newsletter concept was chosen and an outline of contents was prepared. The newsletter is attached (see Appendix D).

George Nester, Town Manager, presented the possibility of the Town's selling Gearhart Park for development as an apartment complex to move more people nearer downtown.
Newsletter Committee presented a progress report. Concern was expressed that the timing of release of plans might prohibit merchants from participating in May 10th promotion. Discussion of strategy of promotion plan presentation followed. Under discussion was whether or not to present plans in parts or as a whole program. The latter was chosen. The newsletter will be personally delivered.

Random discussion of Downtown form, residence of customers and advertising cost followed until the meeting was adjourned.

Mass Meeting

Don Davis, chairman of the steering committee, presented an overview of the revitalization effort. He emphasized the long term nature of the undertaking.

George Nester presented an overview of the Town's role in the revitalization effort which is outlined below:
- bring people together
- provide beginning
- facilitate learning
- upgrade and maintain infrastructure

Don Davis introduced the committee. He then pointed out the positive forces at work in Vinton's future: the Vinton Corridor and the Explore Project, the possibility of a bridge link to Vinton from the proposed River Parkway, the Vinton Industrial Park and the location of
the Roanoke Co. Health Department and Roanoke County School offices in Vinton. He then presented the Promotions Plan and the results of exploratory survey conducted by Jesse English, a student at Virginia Tech. At this time the meeting was opened to the audience. The general concern of those present was with the duration of construction.
CREATIVE APPROACH TO REVITALIZATION IN VINTON

CATEGORY: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Town of Vinton
P. O. Box 338
Vinton, Virginia 24179
George W. Nester, Town Manager
Charles R. Hill, Mayor
Dear Sir or Madam:

Please find attached a proposed project for the Virginia Achievement Award Competition in the category of Community Development. The Town of Vinton has been involved in an ongoing process of revitalizing our downtown. This concept is unique as it involves the use of our own public works employees, equipment, and staff to promote and encourage this development process. The results have been a raised degree of confidence by the public and their municipal employees, and an improved downtown business area. The Town of Vinton does not view this as an end to our project, but instead the beginning of cooperative efforts to revitalize our downtown area and extend outward to all areas of our Town. We feel this approach is innovative and better utilizes the existing resources of the municipal government. This approach is ideal for smaller governments without the financial ability to support major improvements by use of contractors.

Thank you for reviewing this project and considering it during your competition. Should you have questions or need additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

George W. Nester
Town Manager

Attachment
There is a world of hidden talent available in municipal work forces. Unfortunately, the opportunity does not present itself to fully utilize these talents. The Town of Vinton, Virginia, located in Roanoke County has undertaken a comprehensive program of improvements to revitalize its downtown business district. This program has been unique and innovative in that it has used inhouse employees for conducting the work, and the local planning staff has done a tremendous job to coordinate the resources of the Town to help meet other projects scheduled in and around our community.

The Town began its process by conducting an inventory of our fifty plus year old infrastructure in our central business district. The inventory revealed inadequate water and sewer service, deteriorating sidewalks and curbs, insufficient parking, limited handicapped access, streets in need of resurfacing, and congestion of overhead utility wires. Upon completion of the inventory it was apparent that improvements needed to be made and they needed to be made quickly.

Cost estimates revealed that $1.5 million would be needed to contract these improvements. The Town of Vinton was unable to make this type of financial commitment. Instead, the Vinton Town Council, administration, and town staff developed a creative plan for revitalizing the downtown by utilizing the skills of our present employees. A careful cost estimation, budget plan, and serious negotiations with public utility companies enabled the Town
to begin this process with a budget of $400,000. One of the early problems of the process was to identify ways of removing overhead utility service in the CBD. That was accomplished through negotiations with the two utility companies, Appalachian Power Company and C&P Telephone Company. C&P Telephone Company agreed to provide the materials and conduits if our labor force would install them. This would be done under the periodic inspection of a telephone company inspector.

The cost of placing electrical service underground proved to be cost ineffective. Instead, an alternative plan provided for the re-routing of electric service from the present front of buildings to the rear. The end result would be a cleaning up of overhead utility lines from our downtown area. This work is presently underway. The benefit of removing these overhead utilities would improve public access to our downtown, improve the aesthetics of our downtown, and promote public safety by permitting emergency equipment to have better access to our central business district area.

Not only has the plan created substantial saving for the Town, but it has built confidence in the Public Works Department, Engineering Department, and Special Programs Department of the Town. According to George Nester, the Town Manager of Vinton, "the Town employees feel they are equal to any task that is put before them". In addition, citizens of the Town have more confi-
dence in the ability of Town employees to deal with difficult tasks.

The Vinton Town Council recognized the need to improve the oldest and most visible section of Vinton. Fortunately, the Town Council realized that the central business district represented the image of Vinton. This area not only represented the oldest area, but it identified the roots of our expanding community. Neglected downtown reflected an unhealthy appearance throughout the entire area. Council counted by providing financing to carry off these critical projects. In essence, the goal of the downtown revitalization project became multi-faceted with the following areas of cooperation being sought:

1. Promote and enhance public safety and security.
2. Reduce the risk of public liability from deteriorating public facilities.
3. Improve the appearance of our downtown area.
4. Enhance Vinton's perception among the residents of the Roanoke Valley in general.
5. Encourage private investment in the Vinton community.
6. Improve delivery of goods and services to the Vinton community.
7. Capture a larger share of the Roanoke Valley market.
8. Encourage and promote new residential, commercial, and industrial growth within the Town.
9. Revitalize deteriorating areas and restore them once again as productive, contributing segments of the Vinton Community.

10. Improve and enhance transportation serving the Vinton community.

11. Promote Vinton as a regional trade center located in close proximity to Smith Mountain Lake and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

To promote public participation, Mayor Charlie Hill designated a Downtown Revitalization Committee. Representatives from each block of the downtown were involved in the Steering Committee which directed the planning process for the downtown. The Steering Committee serves as a source and sounding board for ideas and is responsible for organizing and publicizing frequent downtown revitalization meetings. The committee members have researched other downtown revitalization projects, attended conferences, and visited other communities involved in revitalization efforts.

To meet the technical needs of this process, the Town of Vinton called on Virginia Tech to supplement its planning staff. The university undertook this project and provided technical assistance to assure that an adequate and continuous planning process proceeded. This assured that key elements of revitalization were addressed and that the community knew of the key issues and were involved in seeing that these issues were addressed in the planning process. Additional technical assistance was provided through Roanoke County's planning staff who assisted us in doing
a detailed parking inventory and analysis for our downtown area. The result of this involvement by the County planning staff identified the need to create additional public parking facilities in the downtown area. As a result of this parking study, plans are underway to implement the construction of a multi-use parking area. The parking area will be designed such as to promote festival activities and to accommodate periodic farmers' markets in our downtown area. New entrance signs have been located at key entrance points to Town. The signs have been designed to promote the Town's image of being a Blue Ridge Parkway community.

Merchants have begun to implement facade improvements in the downtown area which are being coordinated through Mr. Hadd Wirt, a fifth year landscape architect at Virginia Tech. This process involved careful coordination with downtown merchants to identify their structures and what each merchant felt they would like their buildings to project.

Another area of creative service has been from the Town of Vinton's Special Programs Department. In particular, a Town employee has been made available to work with merchants to coordinate programs to promote and enhance the downtown. One of the most successful events has been a halloween promotion conducted during the afternoon daylight hours in which 37 businesses, including merchants, professionals, the Health Department, and Town of Vinton provided treats for all children. Over 400 children participated in this first-time event. Other events and promo-
tions included four weeks of group advertising for Christmas, a breakfast with Santa, a construction sale, and an Easter promotion. An upcoming promotion will include an extensive car show for the benefit of the Muscular Dystrophy Association.

"Company is coming", and the Town of Vinton is preparing. A number of major projects are shaping up in and about the Vinton community. To help support these improvements, the appearance of our downtown is vital. Since the implementation of our central business district improvements, a number of other projects have dovetailed with our project. A sample of those projects are:

1. The location of the State Health Department administrative offices in Vinton.
2. The construction of a Family Life Center at the Vinton Baptist Church.
4. The planned relocation of the Roanoke County School Board Offices to Vinton once the new junior high school building is complete. (The School Board will relocate to the old junior high school building.) This will bring an estimated 150 jobs to the Vinton area within one block of our downtown.
5. Roanoke County has received a grant to renovate a building on the William Byrd Junior High School property. As a result, a Headstart Center and an Adult Day Care Center will create 30 new jobs and provide a needed service to the citizens of the Vinton area.
6. The LancerLot has been constructed. This is a privately constructed and operated sports complex providing an Olympic size swimming pool, sports arena, health club facilities, banquet rooms, and features a championship ice hockey team, the Virginia Lancers. This facility is private and is known in Vinton as our civic center. This facility pays taxes, yet offers service to the entire Roanoke Valley.

7. The scheduled widening of Washington Avenue, State Route 24 has been scheduled for the spring of 1988, involving a $3.5 million expenditure by the Virginia Department of Transportation.

8. Creation of the Vinton Industrial Park which has opened 50 acres of land for development which are projected to create 200 jobs. The most recent addition is a joint partnership involving two English companies and an American company who ultimately will employ over 100 skilled positions in the Vinton Industrial Park.

9. Finally, the Federal Highway Administration has recently authorized $15 million to develop a River Parkway for the proposed "The Explore Project". The Explore Project is a major tourist destination located in Vinton on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This project will chronicle the exploration of Lewis and Clark's journey. Involved will be a major conference hotel center, zoological park, golf courses, vineyards, Virginia Tech Research Center which will generate an estimated attendance of over one million visitors per year. This development will be made under the direction of the Virginia
Recreational Facilities Authority. Most important, this project assures that development within the 1,400 acre park will protect and serve the environment of this area.

As Mr. H. Bern Ewert, the Executive Director of The River Foundation, a private non-profit organization coordinating The Explore effort has said, "there is a great creative field imminating from Vinton". Recent successes in the improvement of the Vinton community would affirm that statement.
APPENDIX C
PROMOTIONS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT
FEBRUARY 27, 1986

SPECIAL EVENTS OUTLINE

Kick-Off

May 10 - Carnival Day

Carry out a carnival theme. Have employees at businesses, banks, municipal building, etc. wear clown outfits, party hats, clown make-up. Advertise as "Carnival of Savings", "Carnival Sale", etc. This activity will tie in with the carnival that Roanoke County Parks and Recreation is having May 7 through May 10 at the War Memorial.

Suggested Activities

Come and Have Lunch With Us - each store have a food item ie. sandwiches, another store-lemonade, another store-popcorn, another store-cookies, etc.
*This would encourage shoppers to go to each store

Invite Shriners Clowns & Red Cross Clown Unit

Ask V.F.W. to have Face Painting Booth

Clown Contest - best costume(or Punky Brewster Contest)

Clown Parade for Children

Sidewalk Art Show - allow children to draw on sidewalk using color chalk and provide large sheets or roll of paper for children to paint on.

Fire Hydrant Painting

Bang-A-Wreck - get an junk car and let people bang on it with hammers. Could be a fund-raiser.

Carnival Tickets - Ask Sunshine Shows for Promotional Tickets to Carnival at War Memorial. Stores could give them away to first 25 shoppers, or purchases over a certain amount, etc.

Puppet Show - Possibly "Kids on the Block" provided by Junior League of Roanoke

Construction Money - Target Date Contest

Balloon Release - possibly a prize to finder of winning balloon or just have the release

Hot Air Balloon
June 28 - Completion Celebration

Suggested Activities

Grand Prize Drawing for Target Date Contest

Pancake Baking Competition or Homemade Ice Cream Competition between Civic Organizations and Churches

Bake Sales

Craft Sales

Games and Contests:
Street Hockey with Brooms and Beach Balls/Town of Vinton Council and Roanoke County Board of Supervisors

Dunking Booth

Women's Wedding

Smelly Sneaker Contest (by appearance only) - give a new pair of sneakers

Best Legs Contest

Entertainment i.e., Sweet Adelines, Cardinal Chorus
August - "On the Go" Festival

Bicycle Race Through Downtown Vinton
BMX Bicycle Free Style Competition
Big Wheel Race
Bike Judging - Decorated Bikes
Bike Safety
Tricycle Race - Town Officials/Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, or Vinton Lions Club/Vinton Breakfast Lions Club

October - Halloween Celebration

Trick or Treat at each store or professional office - have it after school and early evening before the Halloween Party starts at the Vinton Recreation Center.

Ask V.F.W. to organize a haunted house at V.F.W. Building, have it open the entire week before Halloween. Possible admission charge.

Illuminated Strips for Safety - make them at each store and professional office. Town of Vinton sponsor.

Halloween Parade from Downtown to Vinton Recreation Center

Christmas Promotion
Other Activities, Events, and Sales for Consideration

Spring Cleaning Sale
Back Door Sale
Coloring Contest
Art Shows
Music Concerts/Daytime or Night
Block Parties
Easter Parade
Gospel Concert
Automobile Show
Car Dealers/New Car Show
Customer Appreciation Days
Mother's Day- each store gives carnations
Fiddle and Banjo Club
Pig Roast
Chicken Barbeque
Revive Homecoming
Street Dance
Street Bingo
Open Air Market
Pancake Dinner
Holiday Sales
Temporary Publicity Signs at each Entrance to Town
Logo for Revitalization- posted in stores, entrances to town, on signs
Utilize Marketing, Merchandising at Va. Tech
Coordinate event with Fire Dptw. Evolution Contest (Fall)

Folklife Festival-possibly move downtown
July 4th Celebration - possibly mov. downtown
APPENDIX D

VINTON
"a new look"

Volume 1, No. 1 March 1986

DOWNTOWN VINTON REVITALIZATION PROJECT

The purpose of the Downtown Vinton Revitalization Project is to create the necessary conditions for positive economic change in downtown Vinton. The Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee has initiated the revitalization effort through several areas of activity. These activities are part of a gradual approach emphasizing improvement in the downtown over time.

The first activity, that of design in the downtown, is in progress with the steering committee working with the town government in developing attractive streetscaping which will improve the environment of the downtown area. The committee is also working with Jesse English, who has a master's degree in landscaping architecture from Virginia Tech, in promoting building rehabilitation and facade improvements of the structures in downtown Vinton. A parking study is currently being conducted by Roanoke County in order to assess the parking needs for the downtown. The committee has also expressed a desire to have signage regulations for the central business district which are functional and compatible with the character of the business district. The revitalization committee is currently looking into the possibility of re-establishing residential use in the downtown and designating a new zone in the downtown business district.

Joint promotion of the downtown and establishment of a united image is the second area of activity in which the steering committee has been engaged. Special events have been planned for the central business district including festivals, contests, children's events, and sidewalk sales. This newsletter has been established and a search is underway for a logo for the downtown. The steering committee has also sought assistance in improving marketing techniques for business in downtown Vinton.

Most importantly, the downtown merchant community has organized around the common goal of improving downtown Vinton and has begun the activities necessary to accomplish that goal. Following are detailed descriptions of the downtown Vinton Revitalization Project.

MEETING

Inviting all Downtown Businesses and Owners, Thursday, March 20, 1986, 7:00 p.m., Vinton Municipal Building Council Chambers. The Downtown Revitalization Committee will welcome suggestions in writing.
The Vinton Town Council has recognized a need to improve the oldest and most visible section of Vinton - its central business district. When Vinton was chartered by the Virginia General Assembly in 1884, the central business district was the very heart of the new town. From this central business district, goods and services were provided to eastern Roanoke County. In the 1930's, water sewer, sidewalks, curbs and guttering, and paved streets were introduced to the downtown Vinton. Unfortunately, years of exposure and age has taken its toll on the downtown infrastructure.

The Town Council is aware of the need to reinvest and improve its public property in the downtown area. It must be noted that the sidewalks, streets, curb and gutter are the public property and under the maintenance and ownership of the Town of Vinton. To accomplish these improvements, the Vinton Town Council has set aside $290,000 for public improvements in the downtown area. These improvements include replacing water and sewer service lines in the downtown area, restoring curbs and gutter, improving storm drainage facilities, pouring new sidewalks, relieving overhead congestion of utility wires, and paving downtown streets.

The objectives of the Vinton Town Council in the downtown area are as follows:

1. Promote public safety and security.
2. Reduce risk of public liability from deteriorating public facilities.
3. Improve the public appearance of the downtown area.
4. Enhance the Valley's perception of Vinton.
5. Encourage private investment in the Vinton Community.
6. Improve availability and quality of goods and services in Vinton.
7. Capture a larger share of the Valley market and lure them to the Vinton area.
8. Encourage and promote new residential, commercial, and industrial growth within Vinton.
9. Revitalize deteriorating areas and restore them as productive and contributing segments of the Vinton Community.
10. Improve transportation serving Vinton.
11. Promote Vinton as a regional trade center located in close proximity to Smith Mountain Lake, Blue Ridge Parkway, and serving eastern Roanoke County and Western Bedford County.

The improvement plan for downtown is limited due to the availability of public resources. This project will begin a public-private partnership that promotes Vinton in general. From this project we might see the beginning of a newly revitalized Vinton. Special effort must be taken to assure that new growth and development is not done at the expense of the Town's heritage and culture.
The $290,000 appropriated by the Vinton Town Council is designated in the follow-
budget plan:

1. Installation of Curb and Gutter
   Pollard Street - 2,340 linear feet at the cost of $8,350
   Lee Avenue - 1,300 linear feet at the cost of $4,650

2. Installation of Concrete Sidewalks:
   Pollard Street - 2,340 linear feet, 8 ft. sidewalk, at the cost of $14,550
   Lee Avenue - 1,300 linear feet, 8 ft. sidewalk, at the cost of $8,100

3. Stone for sidewalk, curb, and gutter: $3,565

4. Meter Boxes and Sewer Cleanouts
   35 new water connections, total cost $10,500

5. Paving Restoration of Streets:
   Pollard Street - 508 tons of asphalt, total cost $17,780
   Lee Avenue - 266 tons of asphalt, total cost $9,310

6. Purchase of curb and guttering forms - $7,000

7. Purchase of hand tools for miscellaneous concrete finishing work - $500.00

8. Street Signs - $2,000

9. 3,640 linear feet of 4" conduit PVC Schedule 40 for underground electrical
    service - $7,280

10. Installation of 20 high pressure sodium lights - $5,000

11. Beautification - $10,000

12. Concrete Workers - $20,000

13. Street Markings and Crosswalk Striping - $1,500

14. Refuse Receptacles - $3,000

15. Rental of Equipment - $1,000

16. Downspouts from buildings to curb line - $700.

17. Cost for Appalachian Power Company to relocate service from fronts to backs
    of the buildings - $45,000

18. Relocating Telephone Equipment - $30,000
TENTATIVE SITE SCHEDULE FOR CONSTRUCTION

Site 1 - 100 block North Pollard
Site 2 - 100 block West Lee
Site 3 - 200 block South Pollard
Site 4 - 100 block South Pollard
Site 5 - 100 block East Lee

Tentative beginning date of construction May 5, 1986

PRIVATE FACADE & BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

Photographs have been taken of the fronts of all of the buildings in the six block area of downtown that will receive new curbing and guttering. Jesse English, a Landscape Architect, is completing renderings of possible changes in downtown building facades. These renderings will be available to landlords and merchants for consideration of improvements to their buildings. Later we are hoping to extend our area of facade and building improvements to other parts of Vinton.

Information has been requested from the Virginia Small Business Financing Authority. This authority provides money under an industrial development bond for improvements to businesses. The interest rate is anticipated to be lower than conventional rates. Additional information on this matter will be available in our next newsletter.

RELOCATION OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATION OFFICES IN VINTON

The Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee has sent a letter to Alan Brittle, Chairman of the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, commending the supervisors on their foresight in making commitments to improve Roanoke County and our Vinton community by moving the county school administrative offices to the William Byrd Intermediate School and constructing a new junior high school in Vinton. The committee has invited them to attend one of our meetings and explain their plans for the old school building. Moving that many people to Vinton to work will give our economy a big boost. Let's write to our County Board of Supervisors and let them know that we support their decision. Write Mr. Alan H. Brittle, Chairman, Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, P. O. Box 3800, Roanoke, Virginia, 24015.
For the purpose of promoting business in the Downtown Business District the following suggestions have been proposed:

May 10, CARNIVAL DAYS. This event will tie in with the carnival that Roanoke County Parks & Recreation is having May 7 through May 10 at the Vinton War Memorial. Merchants and businesses would carry out a carnival theme with employees in clown costumes and make-up. Advertising will center around "Carnival of Savings". Promotional activities include: balloons, face painting, carnival ticket give aways, "Punky Brewster Costume Contest", Color-a-Sidewalk Art Show (using color chalk on sidewalk), and progressive snack lunch.

June 28, SUMMERFEST. Event would use competition between various local groups as its central theme. Some possibilities include: Street Hockey between Town of Vinton Official and the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, a Dunking Booth with local politicians and others, Pancake Cooking Contest or Homemade Ice Cream Contest between Civic and Church Groups.

August, "ON THE GO" Festival, Bicycle Races through Downtown provide the central focus for this promotion aimed at school age young people. Advertising will center around "On the Go to School Sale". Activities would include: BMX Free Style Competition, Decorated Bikes or Tricycle Contests, Big Wheel Races, Tricycle Races between High School and Jr. High School teachers.

October, "COUNTRY MUSIC FESTIVAL", Popular event form past years could be revived.

October 31, HALLOWEEN, Make halloween safe and promote our business by having Trick or Treat from store to store. Merchants and professional people dress in Halloween costumes. A civic organization could possibly have a Haunted House in a downtown building. Town of Vinton Police could provide Reflective Safety Strips to be given away by businesses.
(Continued from Promotions & Special Events)

This schedule would take us through the next eight months, and provides promotional events aimed at all age groups: children, adolescents, and adults. However, this can only be accomplished through the participation of all the Downtown Businesses. If you have any suggestions, or would like to help, please let us know.

Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee
P. O. Box 338
Vinton, Virginia 24179

Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee Members
Mr. Don Davis, office - 985-4041 (Chairman)
Mr. Dan Doss, office - 982-3842
Mr. Wallace Cundiff, office - 342-8928
Mrs. Ethel Noell, office - 982-1237
Mr. Ray Sandifer, office - 342-0092
Mr. Fred Swisher, office - 343-8505
Mr. Buddy Wells, office - 344-2116
1. **Vinton Town Clock**
   
   This slide show is geared toward assisting Vinton merchants in making small scale improvements to create a healthier retail environment. In the past, downtown was the center for activity, commerce and banking, defining the town's identity.

2. **Old Bank Shot**
   
   Buildings downtown reflected the pride and aspirations of the community. Built soundly of quality materials, they now offer opportunities for reuse and preservation. A competitive and marketable image for downtown can be established by preserving and revitalizing this traditional core.

3. **Vinton Strip**
   
   As the automobile increased mobility, many communities decentralized, creating suburban housing and strip shopping centers. The community no longer revolved around downtown Vinton.

4. **Slip Covered Store**
   
   Downtown merchants tried to compete by modernizing their buildings to look like the competition. Buildings were slipcovered. The human, pedestrian scale of downtown began to give way to the automobile scale of the strip.
5. **Exterior Mall**
   Enclosed malls developed, pulling anchor stores and customers away from downtown.

6. **Mall Model**
   Malls work well for a number of reasons. They have centralized management, planned store mix, coordinated promotion, special events, controlled climate, pedestrian amenities and parking accessibility.

7. **Mall Interior**
   Downtown merchants need to recognize the elements which have made malls successful.

8. **Revitalized Downtown**
   Downtowns have attempted to stem the tide of merchants and customers to the malls with different revitalization approaches.

9. **Downtown Malls - An Approach That Doesn't Work**
   One approach, the downtown mall, took only part of the mall package resulting in costly public improvements that didn't attract shoppers. It was an oversimplified answer to a more complex problem. Issues of business management, store mix, merchandising, joint promotion, store hours, private reinvestment and building maintenance were often neglected.
10. **Main Street Approach (Leaf)**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation developed the Main Street Project to address the complexity of downtown revitalization. They developed an incremental approach based on coordinated management and historic preservation. In contrast to the downtown mall plans, the Main Street approach has been more effective. Virginia has recently joined the effort of the National Trust by opening an office in Richmond.

11. **Downtown Model**

We have taken our model from the Main Street approach and modified it to emphasize the smaller scale design issues. A successful program for downtown Vinton revitalization must consider organization, promotion, economic restructuring and design.

12. **Organization**

Each of the groups listed here plays an important role in maintaining and strengthening the downtown market. Communication and cooperation between these groups is essential.

13. **Main Street Door**

The revitalization project should be visible in Vinton to encourage merchant and citizen participation.
14. Group Meeting
Since downtowns are diverse in ownership and operation, public meetings should be held to develop an acceptable revitalization approach.

15. Promotion
The image of downtown is reflected by its promotional activities or lack of them. Improved promotion of the downtown is a way to communicate change. Three types of promotions should be considered for any downtown: special events and festivals, joint sales promotions, and promotion of downtown as a unit.

A downtown directory is useful in presenting the range of goods and services available downtown. It reinforces the concept of the downtown as a shopping center--both in the eyes of the consumers and the merchants.

17. Logos
A logo should accurately reflect the image downtown wants to project.

18. Downtown Shopping Bag
A shopping bag can promote an image of the downtown as a unified shopping center.
19. **Sidewalk Sale**

Mall managers know that special events attract people. Downtown sales need to become events that are exciting and entertaining for the community.

20. **Advertising**

Joint advertising maximizes promotional dollars. Advertising art and layouts should create an interesting and exciting image.

21. **Balloons, Clowns**

Helium balloons, promoting the downtown, are an inexpensive way to add color and excitement to the street as part of a sale.

22. **Dixieland Band**

Entertainment also draws crowds to downtown.

23. **Mainstreet Cookout**

Food keeps people downtown longer and should be part of any event.

24. **Crafts Fair**

An arts and crafts fair such as the folk-life festival, can be a good way to get new people and organizations involved downtown.

25. **Hot Wheels Race**

Closing off a parking lot and running hot wheels races can be an effective and easy way to get children and parents downtown.
26. **Produce Market**
   A farmer's market is a good downtown social activity that attracts people. Though it does not directly benefit the retail merchants, it strengthens the image of downtown as a community center.

27. **Vinton Parade**
   With special events centered downtown, Main Street again can become the focus of the community. Where else can a parade be held, except on Main Street?

28. **Economic Restructuring**
   Downtown is always changing and it is periodically necessary to reevaluate the position of the downtown within the regional market. Recognizing market opportunities and constraints and being able to respond to them is critical to the long-term success of downtown. This is called economic restructuring. Issues to be considered are: the adaptive reuse of vacant buildings, conversion of upper stories to housing, changing underutilized retail space to offices and improving downtown business management techniques.

29. **Vacant Second Story**
   Unused space, typical of many second stories, offers unique development opportunities.
30. **Construction**  
With conventional buildings techniques, this space can provide interesting housing at a cost that is usually lower than equivalent new construction.

31. **Office Conversion (Before)**  
Local needs may dictate the conversion of some retail space to offices.

32. **Office Conversion (After)**  
Quality renovation increases pedestrian traffic by attracting and retaining professional businesses.

33. **Vacant Meat Packinghouse (Before)**  
Creative adaptive use can turn eyesore buildings into assets. This vacant meat packing plant was adjacent to the downtown.

34. **Packinghouse Restaurant (After)**  
Investors saw the opportunity to develop a theme-oriented restaurant, based on the meat packing heritage of the building.

35. **Business Management Class**  
Economic restructuring includes improving small business management practices. Local vocational schools or extension courses from state universities can often be coordinated to assist downtown merchants.
36. **Design**

Improved design is urgently needed throughout downtown Vinton if an image of quality is to be presented and promoted. The design issues of entry parking, pedestrian amenities, facades and display systems play an important role in the physical character of the downtown.

37. **Vinton Welcome Sign**

Entrances are important design features as they can "put up a good front" for a community by providing a positive and informative first impression to visitors and shoppers. Entrances should suggest the unique qualities of an environment while reinforcing the image of an entire community.

38. **Heathwood Welcome**

The performance of successful entrances depends upon several variables. In this example, the legibility of the sign is enhanced by providing a strong background against a thematically linked typeface. The split rail fence and the use of native vegetation serve to link Heathwood to the larger environment while establishing a unique local identity.

39. **Visitor Center - Staunton**

Entrances can provide positive introduction to a neighborhood, a shopping district or an individual building. In all of these cases the purpose remains the same: to inform and orient while providing a positive image to the community.
40. Parking Sign
Adequate, convenient parking is essential to a healthy downtown.

41. Landscaped Parking Lot
This attractive parking area with plants and smooth paving materials functions well and adds to the clean appearance of downtown.

42. Parking Court
Interior parking courts can be created from small disjointed parking lots. Here is an attractive example in Staunton.

43. Alley From Parking Lot
This lighted alleyway connects the parking court with the shops on the street.

44. Tree Grate
Simple unobtrusive public improvements complement the buildings rather than draw attention from them. It is not necessary to overdo public improvements to be effective.

45. Flower Boxes
Flowers are an easy and inexpensive way to bring color into the downtown.
46. Flowers in Whisky Barrel
This whisky barrel makes an effective container for flowers.

47. Sidewalk with Trees
Here is an example of what can be done with landscape materials to create an attractive environment.

48. Old Bank Shot
The traditional commercial facade was designed so that all of the parts worked together as a total composition.

49. Historical Facade
This illustration shows the traditional relationship of the storefront to the facade. In many cases this relationship has been altered, weakening the design qualities of the architecture.

50. As for Building Cover-up
Downtown merchants tried to modernize their buildings to look like the competition. The building industry responded by promoting products that covered up the original facades.

51. New Bank Shot
Downtown buildings were slipcovered and lost their original character.
52. Colonialized Storefront
Another popular alternative was to apply an inappropriate historical theme like this colonial storefront on a late 19th-century building.

53. Evanston Building (Before)
The display windows on this building were boarded in so that the storefront was out of proportion with the rest of the building.

54. Evanston Building (After)
The original storefront was restored by reconstructing the windows and framing, painting and adding a retractable awning.

55. Osborn's (Before)
This storefront was altered in the 1960's with steel-enamedled panels and a projecting aluminum canopy. There was no existing sign, and paint on the building was peeling.

56. Osborn's (After)
A historically compatible awning was designed to cover the enamedled panels and aluminum canopy and to serve as a sign adding emphasis to the storefront. The upper facade was painted a color to match the remaining enameled panel on the ground floor.

57. Sign Design (#49)
Does this help sell products and make downtown attractive? The historic facade of this building has been used as a billboard.
58. **Coke Sign**

   Signs should advertise the business rather than the product sold.

59. **Hardware Store in Salem**

   A variety of appropriate signs exist for every type of business. This hardware store in Salem has a well proportioned, flush mounted sign in keeping with the character of the store.

60. **Breslin's Floor Coverings**

   This facade demonstrates the use of a small projecting sign and painted, marine plywood letters flush mounted directly onto the masonry front. These inexpensive signs relate well to the building lines in placement and color.

61. **Turtle Lane**

   Traditional gold leaf letters are appropriate on most commercial architecture.

62. **Cottage Corner Thrift Shop**

   Awnings can serve as effective signs. These letters are cut from a contrasting fabric and sewn on. The lettering can also be painted on the awning.

63. **Anderson Florist**

   Creative neon signs, both old and new, can be quite desirable in the downtown, adding light and vitality at night.
64. **Aniello's Pizza**

This is a graphic sign. The form is the main element rather than a lettered message. Different sign types can add color and variety to downtown areas.

65. **Barber Pull**

Iconic signage is another way to bring interest into the downtown.

66. **Civic Art Center/Ross Typewriter (Before)**

This is an individual building that had been treated as two independent structures. It had been neglected for years and presented a shabby appearance. In the early 1960's, the cornice was removed as a safety hazard.

67. **Civic Art Center/Ross Typewriter (After)**

The two owners agreed to unify their storefronts with a common paint scheme, highlighting the architectural details. An impression of the missing cornice was recreated with paint. The signs were also changed to be compatible, though different. There are opportunities for this kind of cooperation in Vinton.

68. **Little King (Before)**

This vacuum-formed plastic sign was too large for the building's architectural boundaries. There was an overall lack of color coordination with the building, sign and awnings.
This new sign relates better to the building in color and placement as do the new awning colors. The sign still uses the Little King logo.

The paneled false front was erected in the 1960's in an effort to modernize the building.

It covered a nicely detailed late 19th-century commercial building. When the false front was put on, the cornice of the building was removed.

The false front was taken off, the brick cleaned and the trim was painted. The storefronts and cornice were restored.

This is a good example of a reconstructed storefront using traditional detailing, materials and storefront design. Notice how the sign is incorporated into the total scheme.

In this case, anodized aluminum, a modern construction material, is used to create the illusion of a traditional storefront.
75. **Bad Window Display**

Window displays reflect the retail image of downtown. This cluttered display is not likely to attract and hold a customer's attention.

76. **Fringe Benefit**

This is a simple, inexpensive display of merchandise. Coordinated color schemes with contrasting backdrops display merchandise effectively. Direct lighting should focus attention on key elements.

77. **Back Country Outdoor Exhibit**

This colorful outdoor display is a good people stopper.

78. **Bad Interior**

Poor design and merchandising has a negative effect on sales.

79. **Bonomo's**

Effective interior merchandising stimulates shopper's interest.

80. **Downtown**

Revitalized downtowns are gratifying, but they don't happen overnight. A revitalization project will take several years and will require continuous management to maintain its quality.

Designed improvements for entry, parking, pedestrian amenities, facades and display systems are only a beginning. However, the results justify the effort: an alive, healthy downtown, once again the center of the entire community.
The development and implementation of some aspects of the revitalization effort can be carried out very simply as has been pointed out earlier. However, in any central business area improvement effort there will occur instances which will require the application of organized problem solving techniques. This section is devoted to a brief introduction of The Planning and Design Approach. The PDA incorporates the requirements of a successful revitalization effort in small towns into a structured planning approach. It incorporates the following components.

- a strategy focusing on purposes to be achieved rather than upon details of existing problems.
- the development of a purpose hierarchy to enlarge the solution space and ensure that the right issues are addressed.
- techniques to foster innovation and creativity throughout the process.
- the use of a solution matrix for plan preparation.
- continual contact between the clients world and the P & D professionals.
- involvement of all persons necessary to detail and implement a solution, including administrator, workers, experts and affected groups.
- techniques to foster commitment throughout the process.
- an initial focus on those conditions that occur most frequently or are most important.
- generation of many alternative solutions, and selection of one to serve as a long term target that is ideal and feasible.
- methods of encouraging multichanneled or pluralistic solutions to fit real world diversities.
- arranging for continual review and change.
- limiting the amount of data collection to satisfy only the needs of the efforts.
- limiting the use of models and analysis techniques to situations where they are necessary to achieve purposes.

The PDA strategy is divided into five phases:

Pursuing Effective P & D Strategy

1. develop a hierarchy of Purpose Statement from small to large wherein each larger one describes the purposes of its predecessor(s). From this hierarchy the purpose a solution should achieve. Identify measures of effectiveness that indicate successful achievement of the selected purpose. More than one hierarchy of selected level may be involved.

2. generate solution ideas that achieve both the selected and bigger purposes.

3. group and shape ideas into major alternations from which the most feasible ideal solution, the target solution, is selected. This solution considers only factors occurring with the greatest frequency, or having the greatest importance, otherwise known as regularity conditions.

4. detail the recommended solution.
5. install the solution...create and maintain an environment conducive to continuing change and improvement.
Downtown Action Plan
Preliminary Inventory Requirements
BY ROB STALZER

1. Determination of study area and action area boundaries.

2. Base map preparation.
   • Scale of 1 inch equals either 50 or 100 feet.
   • Delineation of streets, (including street names) property lines, buildings, rivers and other major natural features.
   • Map must include surrounding study area as well as action area.

3. Land use and structural conditions survey within study and action areas.
   • Land uses identified as residential, retail and service commercial, general commercial, office and institutional, light industry, heavy industry, parks and open space. Note that subcategories such as single family, duplex, multi-family, and above commercial apartments may also be necessary.
   • Land use survey should establish if building is occupied or vacant, amount of gross floor area, and the number of floors, including basement.
   • Structural survey should determine the following:
     - Sound: Indicates buildings in good condition in need of normal routine maintenance only.
     - Deteriorated: Indicates buildings with deficiencies in need of corrective measures significantly beyond those associated with routine maintenance.
     - Dilapidated: Indicates buildings with deficiencies to an extent that is considered impractical to repair.
During structural inventory evaluator should observe if any of the following problems exist: over-crowding, faulty arrangement and design, incompatible land use, adverse effects from sound, vibrations, odor, inadequate parking and loading facilities.

4. Building appearance inventory within action area should establish the following:
   - Owner and address
   - Assessed valuation of building and lot.
   - Building type - historic, defaced, stripped, franchise modern, foreign.
   - General architectural style and date of construction.
   - Alteration of original facade.
   - Historical or architectural importance of building.
   - Building harmony with other buildings, with rest of block.
     - compatibility of height, materials, textures, color, architectural details, roof shape.
   - Visual contribution of building in present state, if restored or renovated.
   - Examination of materials such as cornice, roof, upper-story windows, signs, walls and surfaces, sides and rear of building, and shopfront.
   - Picture of building.

5. Streetscape survey within action area.
   - Delineation of blocks and evaluation of the following characteristics:
     - general appearance of each block, landscaping, street furniture, sidewalks, curbs, gutters, street surfaces, and potential problems such as overhead wiring, poorly maintained yards and alleys.
     - It may also be wise to investigate the adequacy of utilities such as sanitary and storm sewers, water mains and telephone and electric lines.

6. Parking inventory within study and action area.

   Conduct preliminary analysis of downtown parking problems.
Identification of all parking facilities.
- total number of parking spaces in the study and action areas.
- type of parking facilities: metered or non-metered, on-street or off-street, garage, customer parking.
- location of each type of parking facility.
- maximum length of parking time.
- determination of spaces that may be lost due to expansions, changes.

Parking space occupancy.
- tabulation of intensity of use of on-street and off-street parking facilities as well as rate of parking turnover.

Measurement of parking demand generated by individual land uses.
- sector measurements to determine adequacy of both distribution and number of parking spaces as per land uses within specific sector.

Determination of future parking requirements.

Evaluation of off-street parking requirements and parking lot design standards contained within the Zoning Ordinance.

7. Traffic and circulation within study and action areas.

Street system inventory
- Identification of arterials, collectors, and local streets as per VDH&F standards.
- Location of all intersection control devices including stop signs, yield signs, traffic signals, and type of control mechanisms.
- Location of all elements that may restrict traffic routing for trucks, pavement load limits, vertical clearances, one-way streets, and turn restrictions. Speed limits should be noted. Curb-to-curb roadway widths must be determined.

Traffic volume counts.
- Determination of in-bound and out-bound traffic on periphery of action and/or study area.
- Internal street traffic volume analysis.
- Determination of travel time and causes of delay.
- Identification of accident prone intersections and unsafe areas.
- Completion of a simple origin destination survey to determine the necessity of a traffic by-pass route around the downtown area.

3. Pedestrian Studies:

- Identify actual and potential pedestrian-vehicle conflicts.
- Inventory street and sidewalks.
- Identify primary pedestrian routes, destinations, and if necessary, pedestrian volumes.

4. Environmental Characteristics:

- Complete a slope analysis of all land within the action area.
  - Identification of flood plain, slopes ranging from 0-10 percent, slopes ranging from 10-20 percent, and slopes exceeding 20 percent.
- Identify all drainage basins in the study and action areas.

5. Population and Economic Trends:

- Identify regional population trends, market area population and trends, and selected population statistics.
- Identify basic economic data such as regional sales distribution, income distribution, income levels, and retail trade.
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