Revitalization Strategies for Business Districts

SVEDA CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 9, 2022
Agenda

- Background (what led us to explore revitalization strategies?)
- Findings: Innovations and Challenges Survey
- Top Strategies for Leading Issues
- Examples of Creative Approaches
- Table-Top Discussions
COVID-19 from Recovery to Sustainability

- Downtowns and business districts play a pivotal role in the long-term health of a region (International Downtown Association).

- Since the onset of the pandemic cities have suffered economically and socially as businesses closed, businesses curtailed their hours or people worked from home.
Downtown San Jose and Oakland are struggling, but not like San Francisco, as workers say ‘nope’ to the office

Small businesses getting hammered with downtowns empty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Downtown areas</th>
<th>Percent change in Spring, March-May, 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, UT</td>
<td>155%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Columbus, OH</td>
<td>112</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fresno</td>
<td>108</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Omaha, NE</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>El Paso, TX</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Among 62 surveyed downtown areas in North America
Source: The University of Toronto

BAY AREA DOWNTOWNS SLOW TO RECOVER

According to a University of Toronto study based on cell phone location information in major downtown areas in the U.S. and Canada, the Bay Area’s three most populous cities lag far behind most other urban centers in activity.
Surveyed Bay Area Cities on Innovations and Challenges
Visible/Difficult Issues for Cities since COVID-19

- Vacant Storefronts
- Public Space Management
- Homelessness
Most Valuable Innovations during COVID-19

- Street Closures
- Outdoor Programming
- Outdoor Dining
Suggested Strategies for Business Districts

- Revise Codes for Mix of Business Uses and Public Space Activation
- Fill Vacant Storefronts
- Improve Wayfinding/Signage
Strategies for Vacant Storefronts

- Retail/Restaurant Incubators
- Vacant Storefront Window Treatment Program
- Administrative Reforms
- Property Management Monitoring Program
- Tax or Fine Vacant Property Owners
Examples of Creative Approaches

City of Santa Cruz

Downtown Pops
- Pilot program retail/restaurant incubator, designed to lower the barriers to entry for businesses.
- City enters a master lease with downtown commercial property owners with vacant spaces on a designated area.

City of Campbell

Vacant Storefront Window Treatment Program
- Beautify vacant storefront windows in collaboration with property owners and community partners.
- Voluntary, no-cost program, artwork can be temporarily displayed in storefront windows to help revitalize empty tenant spaces.
Strategies for Public Space Management

• Allow for Street Closures
• Facilitate Parklet Programs
• Develop Community Parklets and Placemaking
• Pop-Up Parks
• Maker’s Market
Examples of Creative Approaches

**City of San Jose**

- Moment “Pop-Up Retail Project”
  - Developed from parking spaces includes the extension of parklet along the sidewalk for smaller shops.
  - Public-private partnership between the city of San Jose and the San Jose Downtown Association.

**City of Morgan Hill**

- Sidewalk Saturdays
  - Curated outdoor pop-up marketplace of local makers, artists, and small businesses.

**City of Mountain View**

- Permanent street closure on Castro for outdoor dining, festivals, and downtown ambiance, they even had a pop-up karaoke on the street.
Strategies for Homelessness

- Coordinated Response Teams
  - Housing and Police
  - Non-Profits and County partnership for optimal resource/service delivery.
- Holistic Service Approach
  - One-stop facility that includes Navigation Center/Day Center.
- Coordinated Entry System
  - County’s VISPDAT (vulnerability index prioritization decision assessment tool) assists with transitional housing placement.
Examples of Creative Approaches

City of Morgan Hill
Fostering relationships with the unhoused and partnering with Non-Profits to ensure they are provided with a housing option for transitional housing.
• Resulting in a decreased homelessness count of 47%.

City of Washington D.C and San Diego
Implemented a one-stop facility
• This one-stop facility offers basic needs as well as specialized support.

City of Santa Cruz
Investing in transformative solutions to homelessness from prevention to long-term stable housing.
• Santa Cruz works closely with a homeless response team, mental health outreach team, and downtown cleanup team.
The Future of Downtowns/Business Districts

- Ambient sound/music in all business locations
- BID funding, dedicated programmatic funding to support downtown
- To adopt all our economic development strategies and implementations without barriers
- Reduce permitting requirements/Removal of CUP
- Substantially increase fines for vacant storefronts and subsidies for property owners to go into vacant storefronts
- 24/7 homelessness outreach and mental health team
- Two-story underground and two-story above ground parking structure
- Permanent street closures and parklets
- Online permitting system, consistent and unified across all cities in California
- Comprehensively improve bicycle lanes and infrastructure, add secure bicycle parking
- Require only AUPs for live music and alcohol uses
- Revolving loan fund
1. **Homelessness** (Rebecca Unitt, City of Santa Cruz)
   a) Public safety perception
   b) Wraparound services

2. **Activating Vacant Storefronts** (Sarah Domondon, Downtown Pops)

3. **Activating Public Spaces** (Anthony Carnesecca, City of Los Altos)
   a. Parking
   b. Parklets
   c. Retail

4. **Programming/ Experience/ Events** (Monica Renn, City of Los Gatos)

5. **Supporting Small Businesses** (Ernesto Lucero, City of South San Francisco)
   a) Support a small business pipeline

6. **PBIDS/ BIDS** (Jennifer Chen, City of San Mateo)
   a. Safety and sanitation

7. **Zoning Codes** (Brittney Sherman, City of Morgan Hill)
   a. Permits