



Revitalizing Woonsocket: A Main Street Implementation Plan

Community Partners:

- RI Economic Development Corporation
- City of Woonsocket, RI



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REVITALIZING WOODSOCKET: A MAIN STREET IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

AN APPROACH TO DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION THROUGH HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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SCHOOL OF ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY | BRISTOL, RHODE ISLAND

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PREPARED BY:

NINA CARUSO, ALISON FREDERICKS, CAITLIN MERRITT, SHANNON PITT, KATHLEEN WILSON

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

CITY OF WOONSOCKET

JEREMY WELLS, PROFESSOR

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SCHOOL OF ART, ARCHITECTURE, AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS CENTER
ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

PREPARED FOR:

THE CITY OF WOONSOCKET
169 MAIN STREET
WOONSOCKET, RI 02895

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I. INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Roger Williams University created the Community Partnerships Center, whose “mission is to undertake and complete projects that will benefit the local community while providing [Roger Williams University] students with experience in real-world projects that deepen their academic experiences.”¹ The CPC achieves its mission by providing “project-based assistance to nonprofit organizations, government agencies and low- and moderate-income communities in Rhode Island and Southern Massachusetts.”²

One of the major projects that the CPC has undertaken is providing support for the creation of a Rhode Island Main Street Program. The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation and Roger Williams University, via the Community Partnerships Center, is assisting in the development and creation of a Main Street Program. In 2012, it was announced that the Preservation Planning Workshop class, a graduate-level course in historic preservation, would be working with the City of Woonsocket, Rhode Island, to help develop a Main Street program for the City.

Woonsocket, Rhode Island is a major city in Rhode Island that is experiencing an economic downturn. Through site visits and interviews it is clear that downtown Woonsocket is in dire need of an economic turnaround.

The class, led by Professor Jeremy Wells, PhD., prepared the following report. The report is a compilation of the work the students have completed, as well as information that has been prepared by other organizations also working on downtown revitaliza-

1 Community Partnership Center, “Community Partnership Center – About” (Bristol: Roger Williams University, 2013) accessed May 5, 2013 <http://www.rwu.edu/about/partnerships-initiatives/cpc>

2 Ibid.

tion for the city of Woonsocket. The report is a public document intended to help the City of Woonsocket understand the Main Street Approach, as identified by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and provide the foundation for implementing a Main Street Program in downtown Woonsocket.

The report provides information on the Main Street Program, existing information and analysis of downtown Woonsocket, as well as an implementation plan for the creation of a Main Street Program.

The first section, Chapter 2, deals with information about the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Street Approach. This includes a history and overview of the program as well as examples of its proven success.

The second section, Chapters 3 through 7, identifies and analyzes existing information that will help inform the creation of a Main Street Program. This includes a summary of all the available data on Woonsocket’s downtown, including all existing reports on downtown revitalization. The section also provides a recommended boundary for the Main Street Program, recommendations for cultural resources, information on stakeholders and public engagement, and an analysis of the regulatory environment.

The third section, Chapters 9 through 13, provides information on how to implement a Main Street Program, including information on the four approaches for the Main Street Program and a work plan for a Main Street Program.

The final section, the appendix, contains all of the information, specifically reports and inventory lists, which are referenced throughout the report.

II. THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

HISTORY OF THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

In 1977, the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) was concerned with the growing threats to economically declining historic downtowns across the United States. The NTHP created a program to help revitalize historic downtowns through historic preservation. The Main Street Project began as a three-year pilot program that was designed to study the factors and reasons relating to why downtowns were struggling. By determining the elements affecting a community's overall health, the NTHP was able to create a comprehensive revitalization strategy to encourage reinvestment while saving historic commercial buildings.¹

Three test communities were selected amongst a state-wide competition that included seventy towns. The three downtowns chosen for the Main Street Project ranged in population from 5,000 to 38,000: Galesburg, Illinois; Madison, Indiana; and Hot Springs, South Dakota.²

The NTHP helped the communities analyze their

¹ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/history.html#.UQloiEpU7iM>,
² Ibid.



Fig. 1

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program has helped revitalize over 2,000 communities nationwide.

needs and assets. Needs consisted of adding more businesses, cleaning-up the facades, adding parking; whereas, assets included: existing historic architectural styles, historical landmarks, and waterfronts.

The architectural and economic summaries of each downtown became the guidelines for design improvements and economic revitalization plans that would make it feasible to reuse and rehabilitate historic downtown buildings. A grant allowed the NTHP to hire full-time Main Street Managers for each community. It is the responsibility of the Main Street Manager to be an advocate for the town while creating projects and encouraging business and property owners and city officials to invest funds that would create long term benefits for the community.³

The pilot program created the foundation for the Main Street approach of preservation-based downtown revitalization. During those three years, it was determined that the success of any Main Street required strong public-private partnerships, organization, a full-time Main Street Manager, design guidelines, promotional programs, and a coordinated, incremental process. At the end of the three years,

³ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/history.html#.UQloiEpU7iM>,



Fig. 2

The Main Street Approach is a strategic, proven system that capitalizes on existing assets.

business improved in all three downtowns. New businesses were created in all three towns - seven in Hot Springs, six in Madison, and 30 in Galesburg. In addition to growing businesses, sales tax revenue increased in all three communities. Most importantly, several historic buildings were rehabilitated and re-used, which preserved the character of each community's heritage.⁴

In 1980, The National Main Street Center (NMSC) was established to spread the successes of Hot Springs, Madison, and Galesburg. The NMSC is located in Washington, D.C., and, initially, was supported by five federal agencies: Department of Housing and Urban Development National Endowment for the Arts, Department of Transportation, Economic Development Administration, Small Business Administration, and Farmers' Home Administration.

The NTHP designed another pilot program following the original plan, with a few changes. Another competition was announced to select six states to participate. From the 38 states that applied, Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Texas were selected. Each state selected five towns to take part in the program. After three years of the state pilot program, 20 of the communities created new downtown organizations, while eight substantially strengthened existing groups. Twenty-eight of the towns created low-interest loan pools and other incentive programs to produce funds for rehabilitation project costs, which allowed for over 650 new facades and 600 rehabilitations. All communities experienced growth in existing businesses as well as new business creation, resulting in economic stability.⁵

In 1984, the National Main Street Center started to expand its network. By the 1990's, the program grew to include 31 states and over 600 communities. The program has continued to grow in popularity. Between 1986 and 2003, more than 1,600 communities

⁴ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/history.html#.UQloiEpU7iM>,
⁵ Ibid.

formed Main Street Programs in 41 states. From 1980 to 2002, Main Street communities saw a cumulative net reinvestment of \$17 billion, with an average reinvestment of \$9.5 million in each community. Also, the programs generated more than 57,000 new businesses and created 231,000 new jobs. In addition, "each dollar spent on operating the local program generated \$40.35 in return to the community...the Main Street program became the most cost efficient economic development program in the country."⁶

Today, the center is known as The National Trust Main Street Center and continues to encourage reinvestment and revitalization in downtowns. The Main Street program follows a 4-Point Approach and 8 Principles that help to address the various issues that many dying downtowns face while promoting economic development and revitalization through historic preservation.

OVERVIEW OF THE 4-POINT APPROACH AND THE 8 PRINCIPLES

The National Trust has refined the Main Street program into a proven 4-point approach based on eight founding principles. Both the four points and eight principles are meant to be utilized by town governments as they begin to form a working main street revitalization program for their town. By incorporating these practices into Main Street efforts, towns have found that their culture and economy have been revived and have flourished.

The eight principles are as follows:⁷

(1) Comprehensive: The National Trust stresses the importance of an inclusive Main Street Program. In order for the program to be successful, it is essential to involve numerous contributing members of the community, including businesses, non-profit organizations, and local government.

⁶ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, "Growth and Expansion of the National Main Street Center 1990-2003," <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-center/history.html#.UQloiEpU7iM>

⁷ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html#.UQ7Ts46vXQc>



Fig. 3

The Main Street Approach advocates the promotion of local businesses. The Main Street Program relies on community members to market the community and help enact positive changes.

(2) Incremental: The stages of the revitalization must be gradual, beginning with small activities that generate interest and delineate the town's potential. As further interest is generated, larger actions may be taken to expedite the process.

(3) Self-help: The National Trust stresses the importance of having local people and organizations fix local problems. Though this program is advocated for on the national level, community leaders must have the willpower, desire, and gumption to undertake the necessary efforts.

(4) Partnerships: Positive relationships must be fostered between the public and private sectors. Though each sector likely will have a unique role to play, both will benefit from a vibrant, healthy Main Street.

(5) Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets: Community assets are commonly appreciated, but

the Main Street program advises that they also be capitalized upon. By utilizing local landmarks in the Main Street program, the town will have a foundation for revitalizing not only its economy, but its sense of belonging.

(6) Quality: In each step of the program, a high level of work quality is expected. The quality of the working process will determine the quality of the final outcome.

(7) Change: At the beginning of each Main Street endeavor, skepticism is widely distributed. However, "Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite - public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals."⁸

⁸ National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html#.UQ7Ts46vXQc>



Fig. 4

The Main Street Approach incorporates historic preservation undertakings. By preserving the community's past, the community's future is enabled.



Fig. 5

Seneca Falls, NY, is an example of a Main Street Success. Their downtown is now a vibrant, attractive, cultural haven for community members and visitors alike.

(8) Implementation: Finally, the eighth principle explains that success is a direct result from implementing the projects. By proceeding with planned changes, the community will begin to see the changes and will, thereby, gain confidence in the program.

These eight principles are the foundation for the 4-point approach⁹, described below:

(1) Organization: This is the first key element in the Main Street approach. By efficiently organizing both the volunteers and processes, the program will be able to effectively implement each part of the plan. Organization creates communal collaboration, an entity necessary for Main Street success.

(2) Promotion: By promoting the Main Street Program, less-involved community members will be enticed by the visual opportunities within the program. Advertising and marketing will result in a wider base of support while simultaneously reestablishing local pride. Furthermore, promotions create the public face of the program and could communicate the efforts to potential investors.

(3) Design: This point refers to “getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors.”¹⁰ Designing an appealing community can be completed on numerous levels, from enforcing design guide-

9 National Trust for Historic Preservation, History of the National Trust Main Street Center, <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/eight-principles.html#.UQ7Ts46vXQc>, 10 Ibid.

lines on historic buildings through educating local business owners about quality design practices.

(4) Economic Restructuring: The final point implies diversifying the local economy to best appeal to contributing demographics. While this may include recruiting new businesses to presently vacant lots, it may also mean celebrating local landmarks or assets.

EVIDENTIARY SUPPORT FOR THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

According to the National Trust website, “since 1980, more than 2,000 affiliated Main Street programs have been launched in 43 states through a unique partnership structure with Main Street ‘Coordinating Programs.’”¹¹

Overall success since the inception of the Main Street Approach in 1980 can be summarized into a few powerful numbers: 231,682 new jobs created; over \$17 billion in Main Street commercial district investments; 57,470 new businesses created; and 93,734 buildings rehabilitated.¹²

Statistics demonstrating the Main Street Approach's success in “creating jobs, expanding wealth, and building tax bases for each participating community” are collected and reported annually. These reinvest-

11 National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street Reinvestment Statistics, 2013. <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/reinvestment-statistics-1.html>

12 “Twenty Years of Success.” The Main Street Program: A Proven Way to Revitalize Commercial Districts. The National Main Street Center. <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/Fact-Sheet-on-the-Ntl-Main-Street-Center-2004.pdf>

ment statistics measure the economic activity of local Main Street Programs throughout the country.

Figure 6 shows a comparison of dollars reinvested in communities, net gain of businesses, net gain in job creation, and the number of buildings rehabilitated as reported annually from 2006 to 2011. The chart also lists the number of Main Street Programs that were included in the data collection process. Based on these statistics, it is difficult to determine which area of economic activity bears the greatest success. However, it is evident that the number of jobs created appears to be indirectly related to all other criteria for determining economic success. As dollars reinvested, net gain in businesses, and the number of rehabilitations of buildings increases, the net gain in jobs increases.

Although the overall estimated net gain in jobs from 1980 to 2011 is a monumental number that implies economic success, there is a drastic decrease in the amount of jobs created from 2006 to 2011 from slightly over 27,000 jobs to just under 12,000. The other categories of statistics appear to fluctuate rather consistently with one another; whereas if the number of building rehabilitations rises, the amount of dollars reinvested in physical improvements also rises.

Figure 6 also shows illustrates estimates of the numbers based on cumulative statistics gathered from

1980 to December 31, 2001 for all designated Main Street communities nationwide.¹³

REPRESENTATIVE CASE STUDIES

Precedent 1: Seneca Falls, NY

Seneca Falls, NY is located in the Finger Lakes Region of upstate New York, about 45 minutes west of Syracuse, New York. The name Seneca Falls comes from a series of waterfalls on the Seneca River. The location of the town on the river provided waterpower for mills and other factories.

Seneca Falls overcame the challenge that Woonsocket faces with making a connection between the downtown and the river. When taking advantage of the waterfront, there are two important principles that underscore effective downtown waterfronts:

First, cities must provide clear pedestrian linkages between the commercial core often several blocks away and the water.

“This can be a challenge because buildings frequently turned their backs to rivers and waterways in the past; and over the years, downtowns have been cut off from the water by parking lots, railroad tracks, busy streets,

13 “2012 Reinvestment Statistics.” Main Street Reinvestment Statistics. National Trust for Historic Preservation. 2013. <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/reinvestment-statistics-1.html>

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
Dollars Reinvested	2 billion	3.41 billion	3.25 billion	2.71 billion	3.24 billion	2.49 billion	53.6 billion	Total Reinvestment in physical improvements from public and private sources
Net gain in businesses	5,334	5,037	5,130	4,871	5	5,453	104,961	
Net gain in jobs	27,318	21,405	22,580	20,811	18,990	11,926	448,835	
Number of building rehabs	7,565	7,305	8,699	6,780	7,512	7,389	229,164	
Number of Programs included	841	976	1,059	954	1,023	1,038		
Reinvestment Ratio (i)							518:51	(i) The Reinvestment Ratio measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar of participating community funds to support the operation of a Main Street program. It is based on median annual program costs reported in the National Trust Main Street Center by participating programs. The ratio compares maintenance and equipment investment and administrative budget from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2011.

*From National Trust.

Fig. 6

The yearly reinvestment statistics delineate the economic advancement that exists as a direct result of the implementation of the Main Street Approach.

and industrial buildings. Second, public access is essential. The design of waterfront buildings and open spaces must make it easy to get to and view the water.”¹⁴

Seneca Falls resolved their connective issues by constructing a waterfront park along the river that provided visible connections and pedestrian pathways. Clearly-defined, well-maintained stairs lead pedestrians from the sidewalk that lines Main Street, down to the waterfront. Along the waterfront, there are benches, lights, and bike racks. There is a dock for boats and even a riverboat for guided tours. Seneca Falls, New York is a successful example of how to connect the downtown to the waterfront that Woonsocket, RI can look to for insight.

Precedent 2: Torrington, CT

Torrington, Connecticut is located in Litchfield County in the northwestern section of Connecticut. Torrington is approximately 30 minutes west of Hartford, CT. Torrington and Woonsocket have several things in common. Torrington is home to the Warner Theatre, Naugatuck River, and, like Woonsocket, there are major routes running through the downtown. The Warner Theatre is located on Main Street and serves the community’s diverse cultural needs. The Warner Theatre was built by Warner Brothers Studios and opened in 1931, five years after the Stadium Theatre in Woonsocket. The Warner Theatre’s seating capacity, at 1,772, is larger than the Stadium Theatre’s capacity, 1,090. The theaters were restored a year apart; the Stadium Theatre was restored in 2001 while the Warner Theatre’s restoration was completed in 2002.

Empty and deteriorating buildings plagued the City of Torrington, lowering property values. Like Woonsocket,

“the City of Torrington has been evaluating opportunities for both economic growth and revitalization of the city’s downtown area. As a result of various planning efforts and community workshops in recent years, the

¹⁴ Robertson, Kent. Enhancing Downtown’s Sense of Place. September 1999. www.preservationnation.org/main-street-news/1999/01/enhancing-downtowns-sense-of-place.html

city had developed a series of goals, objectives, strategies and initiative aimed at restoring the economic vitality of Torrington’s downtown.”¹⁵

Unlike Woonsocket, the City of Torrington used those elements to form the basis of a master plan and set forth procedures for legal adoption. Torrington has identified boundaries and created visually appealing, legible maps. In the appendix of Torrington’s Downtown Municipal Development Plan, there is a Historic Resources Investigation Report, Design Review Guidelines, and a Relocation Plan. The Relocation Plan is essential to diversifying neighborhoods and filling vacant properties.

Prior to the Downtown Municipal Development Plan’s creation in 2009 and approval by the State of Connecticut, the Torrington Development Corporation was formed as an independent, non-profit organization charged with coordinating the revitalization of the Downtown Torrington.¹⁶ This 2004 corporation is largely responsible for carrying out the Downtown Municipal Development Plan. In 2011, Torrington held the Main Street Awards Gala, which highlighted best-in-class projects, individuals, and partnerships that brought main streets back to life socially and economically. Several local businesses in Torrington claimed four of the 12 awards. The four awards were presented in a January press release:

“The Arts and Culture Commission, responsible for the highly successful Main Street Marketplace, took home the on-Going Event Award... The Torrington Downtown partners won the award for Excellence for Emerging Main Street Partnership... Torrington Downtown Partners member David Bender, who opened a new store on the corner of Main and Water Streets in June 2012, received the Building Rehabilitation Award... Julia Sloan, owner of Brazen Betties, received the award for Retail Promotion, which recognizes a promotion that demonstrates direct financial benefit to

¹⁵ Torrington Development Corporation. “City of Torrington Downtown Municipal Development Plan Phase I.” Plan, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, 2009.

¹⁶ Torrington Development Corporation. About the Torrington Development Corporation. www.torringtondevelopment.org/about.php



Fig. 7

Torrington, CT also benefitted from the Main Street Approach. Rehabilitating historic buildings became the catalyst for economic revitalization.

downtown merchants.”¹⁷

Torrington is an example of a community that celebrates their victories and recognizes their citizens for their efforts.

Torrington was just chosen by the Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC) as a pilot community for their Come Home To Downtown program. Come Home to Downtown “is a mixed-use real estate planning pilot program, which will provide selected communities with new tools to strengthen economic health and restore vitality to their downtowns.”¹⁸ Come Home to Downtown is a leading program that develops strategies to respond to changing demographics and market dynamics.

The City of Torrington is an example of how to implement a plan successfully, and celebrate small accomplishments that Woonsocket can look to for guidance.

Precedent 3: Winsted, CT

Winsted, Connecticut, like Torrington is located in Litchfield County in the northwestern section of Connecticut. Winsted, one of the first mill towns in Connecticut, formed at the junction of the Mad River and Still River. Friends of Main Street Winsted are affiliated with Connecticut Main Street Center (CMSC), which follows the 4-Point Approach and 8

¹⁷ Torrington Development Corporation. Torrington Development Corporation News, June 2011. www.torringtondevelopment.org/news.php

¹⁸ Connecticut Main Street Center. www.ctmainstreet.org/who-we-are/come-home-to-downtown



Fig. 8

Winsted, CT created the “Friends of Main Street Winsted” as an affiliate group to the Connecticut Main Street Center.

Principles developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A major U.S. Route and two Connecticut Routes cross the City.

Like Woonsocket, Winsted long suffered from disinvestment, deteriorating storefronts, unmaintained sidewalks and medians. The Friends of Main Street Winsted (FoMS), working with guidance from CMSC, have had great success because of dedicated individuals and cooperation within the town. When speaking with FoMS, it was emphasized that cooperation of citizens directly and indirectly affected by revitalization projects is critical for successful outcomes. Making everyone feel involved is key. FoMS has defined what sense of place is and means to the town and extended the “sense” of Main Street to include businesses that are important to economic development. Investors are starting to see return on investment from old mill buildings that have been restored and rehabilitated. Main Street renovation has taken place with beautification of medians, repair to sidewalks, and façade improvements.

Winsted has won numerous Awards of Excellence during the last decade. Winsted was awarded for the following awards: Façade Improvement Program, Best Design or Business Incentive Program, Merchant Service Award, 2005 CT Main Street Executive Director of the Year, Image Enhancement, Premier Special Event, Best Public Involvement Project, Fundraising Event, and more. Winsted is truly an example of a model community that works hard, celebrates small victories, and pushes forward together to revitalize the downtown.

III. PREVIOUS WOONSOCKET DOCUMENTATION

Before conducting any new research and studies on Woonsocket, there was an investigation to find any reports that may already exist. The data discovered ranged from information about Woonsocket's economy, design studies and recommendations, cultural resource studies, market studies, and comprehensive plans.

The following information will be provided for each existing report:

- Name of the report
- Who prepared the report
- Date the report was created
- Brief summary of the report's contents
- Location of the report: internet URL or physical description of location

Cultural Resources

“Connecting our Heritage: A wayfinding master plan for downtown Woonsocket” was created by Vanasse, Hangene, Brustlin, Inc. in 2010, initiated by the Main Street-Riverfront Initiative Group. This report discusses historic and cultural assets, possible wayfinding signage styles and a Wayfinding Master Plan of recommended locations in Woonsocket. This plan can be found by contacting the Department of Planning and Development at the City of Woonsocket.



Fig. 9

The Main Street Program utilizes historic preservation as its foundation; by preserving the built environment, communities can preserve a piece of their past while advocating for present and future successes.

“Blackstone Corridor Woonsocket Sites” was created by the Blackstone National Heritage Corridor. This is a list of heritage sites within Woonsocket. This source can be found at the National Park Service webpage (<http://www.nps.gov/index.htm>) under “Find a Park,” selecting “Blackstone River Valley,” “Plan Your Visit,” “Things To Do,” “Valley Sites,” and “Woonsocket – Blackstone.”

Woonsocket National Register properties were collected by the Statewide Historic Preservation Office in 2012. The site lists of all the National Register properties in Woonsocket. This list can be found on the State of Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission website under “Woonsocket.” It can also be located via the following link: <http://www.preservation.ri.gov/register/riproperties.php>

COMPREHENSIVE/MASTER PLANS/SMALL AREA PLANS

“2011 Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan” was created by the City of Woonsocket in 2011. Chapter 5 of this study addresses employment and economic development. Research was originally completed in 2008 but was updated in 2011. This study can be found at the City of Woonsocket homepage or via the following link: <http://www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us/CompPlan2011.pdf>

“2012 Woonsocket Comprehensive Plan” was created by the City of Woonsocket Planning Department in 2012. This study can be found at the City of Woonsocket homepage or via the following link: <http://www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us/CompPlan2012.pdf>

“Connections” is a summary report created by the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative with assistance from John H. Chafee of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission. This report, constructed in 2005, discusses issues and opportunity findings from a March charette at City Hall in Woonsocket. This report can be accessed by contacting the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative at 401-767-9203.

“Survey of Woonsocket” was created by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission in 1976. This survey was part of Rhode Island's Historic Preservation Plan in 1970. The survey can be located via the following link: http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_downloads/survey_pdfs/woonsocket.pdf

ECONOMIC STUDIES

“Woonsocket Businesses” was created by the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce in 2012. This website allows you to search by city to find all businesses associated with the Chamber of Commerce. This webpage can be found at the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce webpage under “Business Directory.” It can also be located via the following link: <http://www.nrichamber.com/directory/results.aspx?SearchCategories=True&SearchNames=True&SearchOnlyMembers=False&City=Woonsocket>

“Tax Assessor Online Property Inventory” was created by the City of Woonsocket. This website allows you to search for data by address, owner, lot, map, block, or unit. This database can be found on the homepage of the Assessors Online Database for Woonsocket, RI. It can also be located on the City of Woonsocket homepage under “Tax Assessor” or via the following link: <http://data.visionappraisal.com/WoonsocketRI/DEFAULT.asp>

TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

“Woonsocket Walks” was created by the YWCA Rhode Island in 2012. This is a feasibility study for improving walkability in Woonsocket that includes both environmental studies and community input. This study can be found on the City of Woonsocket Planning Department under “Planning and Projects.” It can also be located via the following link: <http://woonsocketplanning.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/woonsocket-walks.pdf>

DESIGN STUDIES/RECOMMENDATIONS

“Constitution Hill, Fairmount & Main Street Community Contract” was created by the City of Woonsocket in 2010. This study contains work Plans for: Civic Engagement, Economy, Health, Life Long Learning, Physical Fabric, and Safety/Community Health. This study can be found on the City of Woonsocket Planning Department under “Planning and Projects.” It can also be located via the following link: <http://woonsocketplanning.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/our-neighborhoods-woonsocket.pdf>

“Main Street Revitalization, Woonsocket, Rhode Island” is a report created by Roger Williams University Graduate Architecture Design Studio Arch 515 with assistance from Professor Ulker Copur. This report, created in the Spring of 2013, addresses potential design guidelines and downtown design recommendations for Woonsocket. The report can be accessed by contacting the Community Partnerships Center at Roger Williams University at 401-254-3565.

“Woonsocket Livability Study” was created by the Cecil Group in 2013. This study addresses Woonsocket's: zoning, parking, transportation, land uses, existing conditions assessments, alternatives (proposed ideas), and resources and examples of design guidelines. This study can be found by contacting the Cecil Group at (617)426-5050.

TOURISM STUDIES

The Museum of Work and Culture provides a list of businesses, dining, arts and entertainment for Woonsocket. This resource can be found on the City of Woonsocket homepage or via the following link: <http://www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us/museum.htm>

MARKET STUDIES

“Woonsocket Market Study” was created by LISC MetroEdge in February of 2012. This study researched and analyzed data on trade, diversity, employment, etc. and can be very useful for demographic-based conclusions. accessed by contacting LISC MetroEdge at 312-385-4806 or by visiting the following link: <http://metroedge.lisc.org>

IV. RECOMMENDED MAIN STREET BOUNDARY

After completing on-site assessments, consulting previous research studies, and interviewing community leaders, we have identified the following recommended boundaries for the Woonsocket Main Street District. Similar to the 2013 Livability Plan completed by The Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc., and Alta Planning + Design, this district aims to highlight commercial, residential, civic, institutional, and social aspects of Downtown Woonsocket.

Our boundaries largely incorporate the Downtown Woonsocket Historic District, which was initially defined “to comprise the most visually intact sections of Main Street’s commercial, civic, and industrial buildings.”¹ By incorporating the existing historic fabric and marketing the abundant cultural resources, it is believed that the Main Street organization will be equipped with a district aimed at maximizing economic, social, and civic revitalization.

The northern boundary is defined by Monument Square, at the intersection of North Main Street, Social Street, and Blackstone Street. The western boundary follows Main Street with an approximately one-block depth allowance to accommodate the buildings that maintain facades along Main Street; this also allows for the inclusion of valuable cul-

¹ National Register of Historic Places “Downtown Woonsocket Historic District Nomination.”

tural resources such as the Woonsocket Depot. The boundary then breaks west and, subsequently, south to follow the Blackstone River and include the open space and parking between Sayles St. and S. Main Street, an area that has been and will continue to be utilized for public activities such as festivals, carnivals, or open-air markets; the boundary is also inclusive of Market Square and River Island Park.

The boundary then follows the river, thereby including the Allen Street Historic District and the riverfront until reaching Court Street. Following the eastern boundary to the North, it travels along Clinton Street. The area between Clinton Street and Monument Square was included because of its intact urban atmosphere, clear pedestrian orientation, and its storefront retail potential. The area to the east of Clinton Street was not included due to the lack of intact historic fabric. Finally, the boundary veers Northwest along Worrall Street and returns to Monument Square.

The Livability Plan’s Recommended Main Street Boundary, created by the Cecil group, is similar to our proposed boundary except that it includes more residential areas. Their boundary also continues further north and includes the small cluster of buildings on the eastern side of Clinton Street. We felt these areas were not representative of downtown Main Street and chose to exclude them from our new boundary.



Fig. 10
Aerial image of the suggested Main Street District for Woonsocket.

V. IDENTIFICATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES

This chapter will identify the cultural resources within downtown Woonsocket. Recommendations for the treatment of these cultural resources will also be discussed.

Important Cultural Resources

The following have been identified as important cultural resources. Cultural resources, in this case, are the tangible resources that relate to the culture of Woonsocket.

The list is sorted by address:

- 1. River Island Park:** River Island Park has a direct connection to the water and provides open green space in the downtown.
- 2. Museum of Work and Culture:** The Museum of Work and Culture is a major attraction for Woonsocket. The museum ties together the story of the Industrial Revolution and the people who were part of it.
- 3. Hanora Lippitt Manor:** The Hanora Lippitt Manor, which was once the Ballou/Harrison/Lippitt Mills is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This building is a direct result and reflection



Fig. 11

Cultural resources, such as the Museum of Work & Culture, should be promoted and celebrated as essential components of Woonsocket's Culture.

of the Industrial Revolution and Woonsocket's role in the Industrial Revolution.

- 4. Woonsocket Institute for Savings:** The Woonsocket Institute for Savings building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building in the Main Street Historic District. This building is an excellent example of the Renaissance Revival style. The building is currently the home of the Museum of Broadcast Technology, which can draw in tourists.

- 5. Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company:** The Rhode Island Trust Company building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building to the Main Street Historic District. Many residents have pointed the building out as being an important cultural resource for the downtown.

- 6. City Hall:** Woonsocket City Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. City Hall was once the Harris Block, a building built by one of Woonsocket's leaders of industry. The building relates to the industrial past of the city as well as the center for local government.



Fig. 12

At the end of the proposed Main Street District, River Falls has created a culinary cultural haven in Woonsocket.



Fig. 13

The urban fabric of Woonsocket creates a unique architectural language that should be marketed to visitors.

- 7. Longley Building:** The Longley Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building to the Main Street Historic District. Many residents have cited the Longley building as a key cultural asset to the building.

- 8. Providence and Worcester Railroad Station:** The Providence and Worcester Railroad station is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building to the Main Street Historic District. The railroad station is considered the most impressive depot along the Providence and Worcester line. The railroad station is considered an important part of Woonsocket's history and heritage.

- 9. Old Post Office Building:** The Old Post Office Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is currently part of the YMCA complex.

- 10. Stadium Theater:** The Stadium Theater is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The stadium theater is a major attraction for downtown Woonsocket.

- 11. Stadium Building:** The Stadium Building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places in conjunction with the Stadium



Fig. 14

The Stadium Theater is regionally renowned, attracting tourists from across New England. This provides the opportunity to expand Woonsocket's tourism industry.

Theater. The Stadium Building is a major part of the history of the Stadium Theater.

- 12. Bernon Mills:** The Bernon Mills are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The mills are reminders of the city's industrial past.

- 13. The Lofts on Allen Street:** The Lofts on Allen Street are listed on the National Register of Historic Places as contributing buildings in the Allen Street Historic District. The lofts were once mills that were a major part of the city's industrial past.

PHYSICAL ASSETS

The physical assets listed below include architectural heritage. The cultural resources listed above are all part of the architectural heritage, along with many of the other buildings in downtown Woonsocket.

1. Proximity to the river
2. Bike path
3. Railroad tracks
4. Architectural Heritage

CULTURAL ASSETS

1. Industrial Revolution history
2. French heritage

BUSINESSES

These businesses are listed in order of address.

1. Museum of Work and Culture
2. Ye Old Fish and Chips
3. New York Hot Wieners
4. Chan's Restaurant
5. Ciro's
6. Beacon Charter High School
7. Stadium Theater

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations provide suggestions and advice on the treatment of the list of cultural resources on the previous page:

- 1. River Island Park:** River Island Park should have better signage so that visitors know that it is there. It should also be redesigned to be more welcoming to residents and visitors alike. These recommendations were made by participants in the planning workshop.
- 2. Woonsocket Institute for Savings:** The Woonsocket Institute for Savings building currently houses the Museum of Broadcast Technology. This building should be rehabilitated to better accommodate the museum and any other businesses or residences that can be put in the vacant spaces of the building.
- 3. Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company:** The Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company building is currently vacant. This building should be rehabilitated for one of the following uses; a hotel, mixed use building that would house residential units in the upper floors and retail on the bottom floor. The retail options are numerous but a suggested option would be a grocery store.¹

¹ A grocery store would require a zoning change; however, in order for downtown to survive and thrive a grocery store is a necessary business.

These ideas came out of the planning workshop and are further explained in the chapter on economic restructuring.

4. City Hall: City Hall, although useable as it is now, could stand rehabilitation. The exterior of the building is not in keeping with the historic integrity of the building. The interior is also a confusing and unwelcoming place. For instance the main entrance leads the visitor to a dead end hallway with locked doors and little signage. If the city wishes to be more accessible and friendly, an interior redesign is necessary. It is also recommended to remove the current first floor façade and partake in a façade rehabilitation of the original building as the current façade changes were not made in the period of significance of the district.

5. Longley Building: The Longley Building is currently vacant except for the Domino's on the first floor. The Longley Building needs to undergo a historic rehabilitation. The building should remain commercial with storefront retail on the bottom and private companies such as law offices on the upper floors.² Proposed reuse of the building is further discussed in the economic restructuring chapter.

6. Stadium Building: The Stadium Building, which is directly related to the Stadium Theater is currently vacant. This building should be rehabilitated to house performing arts businesses and services as well as space for the stadium theater.³

² A historic rehabilitation plan was created by a class at Roger Williams University. The final findings of this report are available through the Community Partnerships Center at Roger Williams University.

³ This is currently a proposed rehabilitation of the Stadium Building which can be seen at : <http://www.woonsocketcall.com/node/7939>

VI. PARKING UTILIZATION

WOONSOCKET LIVABILITY STUDY

In January 2013, The Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc, and Alta Planning + Design prepared a draft of Woonsocket Main Street Livability Plan, for the City of Woonsocket. The draft of the livability study's study area consists of the city's traditional downtown that stretches along Main Street from Market Square to Monument Square. The Blackstone River bounds the eastern and southern parts of the study area. The northern portion extends to the intersection of Social and Earle Streets and Arnold Street is the western boundary of the study area. The study also has considered the western area all the way to River Street.

The Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday Inc, and Alta Planning + Design, conducted various parking surveys of the downtown area. The results indicate that the supply of parking in the downtown area is abundant. Parking currently consists of 1,700 parking spaces available in public and private lots. In addition there are 300 on-street parking spaces, only 40% of the spaces were utilized during weekdays and less than 30% occupied during the weekend evenings.¹

The results of the study indicate that the parking needs in the downtown area include:

- (1) A program for parking management of public parking areas
- (2) New surface conditions, lighting and security in the existing municipal lots
- (3) Improved wayfinding signage
- (4) Greater enforcement of parking regulations

¹ Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc, and Alta Planning + Design. Woonsocket Main Street Livability Plan, "Parking," January 2013, 23.

(5) Long and short term parking designation²

For more information regarding parking, consult the Woonsocket Main Street Livability Plan, that can be downloaded from this website: <https://www.sendthisfile.com/bpqZIf6M6BXz7sHBHpyscdrQ>.

The parking survey that the Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc, and Alta Planning + Design conducted, mirrored the community's responses towards parking. The business owners and intercept interviews in the community, conducted by the Roger Williams University Planning Workshop Graduate Course, revealed that there is plenty of parking in the downtown.

² Cecil Group, Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc, and Alta Planning + Design. Woonsocket Main Street Livability Plan, "Parking," January 2013, 23.



Fig. 15

Some businesses, like Le Moulin, share parking lots at the ends of Main Street.

VII. STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION & ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The identification of stakeholders, residents, business owners, non-profit organizations, and community and political leaders by our team was imperative and necessary for stakeholder involvement in the students work in downtown Woonsocket. The stakeholders were involved through an interview process that allowed them to teach the students about what is important and meaningful in the downtown.

Once the stakeholders had been identified and interviewed, they were contacted and invited to engage and participate with the students in a community workshop. This process granted the community the opportunity to share knowledge and ideas concerning the revitalization of Main Street.

This chapter will discuss how the stakeholders were identified and the methodology that was used for the interview process. An outline of the strategic partnerships and alliances that currently exist that focus on revitalizing downtown Woonsocket and those that may need to be developed will be provided. In addition, a comprehensive list of key business/non-profits in and near the district that may have a stake in the Main Street district, based on the interviewee's responses, will also be provided.

METHODOLOGY

Interviews were conducted in order to collect data from community leaders, business owners, and residents in downtown Woonsocket. Prior to the collection of data, a list of twenty specific questions was made relating to the built and regulatory environments of downtown Woonsocket. The questions were used to determine what people thought about downtown Woonsocket and its revitalization. The five students used the same list of questions to conduct interviews with community leaders as well as business owners and residents of Woonsocket. There were two different formats for the interviews:

intercept and scheduled. Although there were different formats and settings for the interviews, they were conducted in the same manner with the same guidelines.

IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS

A list of stakeholders and their contact information was compiled over a few months of research on the City of Woonsocket. Names of organizations, businesses, executive directors, boards of directors, and city officials were listed in a reference document as the students identified and documented existing publications and reports on downtown Woonsocket.

Furthermore, *GuideStar*, an online service that provides information on nonprofit organizations in the United States, was used to identify all the nonprofit organizations in downtown Woonsocket, as well as who the executive directors are and the names of people on the board of directors. Internet research was also utilized to access the websites where the students could gather contact information. The names and contact information that were collected were listed in the reference document. The list, to the students' best abilities, is a comprehensive cross sections of business owners, non-profit leaders, and political leaders.

An outline of Strategic Partnerships and Alliances that currently exist that focus on revitalizing downtown Woonsocket:

- NeighborWorks
- City of Woonsocket
- Riverfront Initiative and the City of Woonsocket

Strategic Partnerships and Alliances that may need to be developed:

- Neighborworks
- City of Woonsocket
- Museum of Work and Culture
- Stadium Theatre

- The YMCA
- Thundermist
- Family Resources

Comprehensive List of Key Business/Non-Profits in and Near the District that may have a stake in the Main Street district, based on interview's responses:

- Beacon Charter School
- Stadium Theatre
- City of Woonsocket
- Museum of Work and Culture
- Moulin Mill
- Family Resources Community Action
- Thundermist
- The Cakery
- Riverzedge
- Stage Right
- YMCA
- Neighborworks
- The Call
- Ciro's
- Chan's
- CCF (Connecting Children and Families)
- JM Paintball/Fireworks
- Frolicking Goddess Craft Studio
- Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
- Libreria Jehova Yireh

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWS

All interviews were conducted following identical standards. Upon receipt of a verbal agreement, the students would explain the terms of the interview, which included an explanation of the nature of the study, the expectation of the interview to last about fifteen to thirty minutes, and the interviewee's right to end the interview at any time or request that any data collected be destroyed.

The interviewee was also told that any data collected from the interview would not be associated directly with that person; rather, the data would be aggregated with all the other data. All interviews were conducted in a public space or formal business location for safety reasons.

INTERCEPT INTERVIEWS

While the students were in the field (i.e. downtown Woonsocket), they would ask people, typically residents, on the street if they would have time for an interview regarding what they thought of downtown Woonsocket and its revitalization. Upon receipt of a verbal agreement, the students would explain the aforementioned guidelines of the interview and begin the interview.

The intercept method was also used for business owners. The students entered businesses in the downtown and asked business owners if they would have time for an interview. The students were respectful of the business



Fig. 16

The Main Street Approach promotes local businesses.



Fig. 17

Stakeholders can include business owners, residents, or community members interested in improving Woonsocket.

owners and only interviewed the owners if they were not busy and there were no customers.

SCHEDULED INTERVIEWS

Once a list of all community leaders and their contact information was compiled, the students scheduled times to interview community leaders either in person or by phone. E-mail interviews were not acceptable, as they do not allow for open dialogue. The same guidelines were followed for the scheduled interview process.

CONCLUSION

Stakeholder identification and engagement is critical for the success of any community revitalization plan. For any outsider wishing to understand a community, the best way is to involve them and ask, "What is important and what is meaningful to you about your downtown?" This chapter addressed how the students identified the stakeholders and how the interviews were conducted.

LIST OF QUESTIONS

1. Basic demographic info: male/female, ethnicity, age (can be approximate).
2. Does he/she live in Woonsocket? If so how long has he/she lived in Woonsocket?
3. Does he/she live in downtown Woonsocket? If so, how long has he/she lived in downtown Woonsocket?
4. Does he/she work in Woonsocket? If so, how long has he/she worked in Woonsocket?
5. Does he/she work in downtown Woonsocket? If so how long has he/she worked in downtown Woonsocket?
6. Does he/she own property in downtown Woonsocket?
7. Has he/she heard about the National Trust's Main Street Program? If so, ask him/her to explain what it is. (Don't Correct or add information unless specifically asked.)
8. How does he/she feel about downtown Woonsocket?

(This should be an open-ended question.)

9. Is he/she aware of any downtown revitalization activity happening in Woonsocket? If so, ask him/her to describe it.
10. How does he/she define "downtown" in reference to downtown Woonsocket? (e.g. geographical boundaries, such as a street, river)
11. What particular buildings and places in downtown Woonsocket are important to him/her? Why?
12. Is parking an issue in downtown Woonsocket? If so, why?
13. Who are the important people and organizations in downtown Woonsocket? Why?
14. Is there something about the regulatory environment in downtown Woonsocket that makes it difficult to develop or invest in the downtown?
15. What would need to change to make downtown Woonsocket a better place?
16. Is there a need for an organization whose primary task would be to just focus on revitalizing downtown Woonsocket or would this activity be a better fit for an existing organization that focuses on other activities as well? Why?
17. What are the economic strengths and weakness of downtown Woonsocket?
18. Are there things about the way that downtown Woonsocket is designed (buildings, roads, places) that need to be improved? If so, what should change?
19. What sorts of amenities, assets, or cultural activities should be promoted in downtown Woonsocket?
20. If and only if the person you are interviewing shows a strong interest in downtown revitalization, ask him/her if he/she would potentially be interested in working with an organization focused solely on revitalizing downtown Woonsocket.

VIII. REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

The following chapter identifies and analyzes the existing regulatory environment for downtown Woonsocket. This includes zoning, building codes, fire codes, and possible sources of funding.

ZONING

The proposed "Main Street" District for the city of Woonsocket, Rhode Island is located in downtown Woonsocket. This district contains four different zoning districts. The zoning includes "C-1" (Commercial 1), "MU-1" (Mixed Use 1), "MU-2" (Mixed Use 2) and "PR-1" (Public Recreation 1). Each of these districts dictates what can be built in those districts and what the existing buildings can be used for.

The definitions of the zoning districts are as follows:

C-1. Urban Commercial District, "primarily for the conduct of retail trade, administrative and professional services, and service to the general public. Also permits upper story residential use. A minimum of six thousand (6,000) square feet is required per lot."¹

MU-1 Mixed Use Commercial/Residential District, "primarily for the purpose of providing day-to-day convenient shopping needs, administrative and professional services, with an emphasis on daily necessities for the immediate residential area, provided that the gross floor area of each establishment shall not exceed three thousand (3,000) square feet, and the lot coverage shall not exceed thirty (30) percent. Minimum required lot area for both residential and nonresidential uses shall be six thousand (6,000) square feet for the first residential or nonresidential unit, plus four thousand (4,000) square feet for each additional residential or nonresidential unit on the same lot, with a maximum possible density of ten (10) dwelling units per acre."²

¹ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 3.
² Ibid, 3.

MU-2 Mixed Use Industrial/Commercial District, "primarily for the conduct of manufacturing and other industrial uses which do not involve excessive smoke, odor, or noise; and/or the conduct of retail trade, administrative and professional services and service to the general public. Also, permits accessory residential uses limited to persons conducting primary industrial or commercial uses. A minimum of six thousand (6,000) square feet is required per lot."³

PR-1 Active Public Recreation District, "for the preservation and enhancement of those areas within the city which are best suited for structured, active recreational activities, with or without accessory facilities. No minimum lot size is required."⁴

The following uses are allowed in the following zoning districts:

In C-1 districts the following uses are allowed:

The residential uses, which are: single family dwellings, two family dwellings, multifamily dwelling, three or more units and community residences are allowed in upper stories. Hotels and Motels are permitted. All other types of residential uses are not permitted.⁵

The following public and semi-public uses are allowed: municipal uses, state uses, non-profit educational institutions serving older children and adults, including high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities and family day care homes. Federal uses are allowed in upper stories. Places of worship, day care centers, hospitals for human care, in-patient and out-patient rehabilitation facilities are allowed by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals. Compassion Centers, either for cultivation, processing, sale or distribution are allowed by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals and city council.

³ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 3.
⁴ Ibid, 3.
⁵ Ibid, 6.

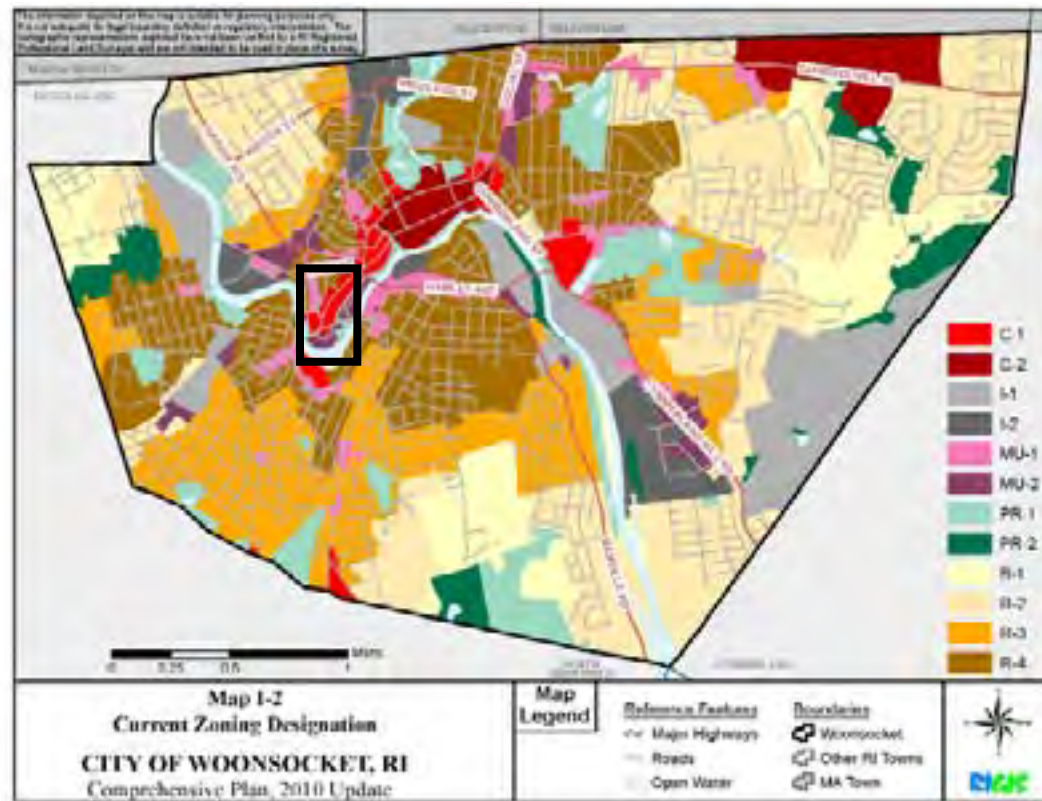


Fig. 18
View of Woonsocket's 2010 zoning map. The proposed Main Street District falls within the black rectangle. Image courtesy of the City of Woonsocket's website.

The following commercial uses are allowed: business services and offices, including design salons operated under the authority of an approved A.I. license, including a barber, hair dresser, cosmetician, manicurist or esthetician licensed in accordance with title 5, chapter 10 of the General Laws or Rhode Island, catering businesses, commercial parking garage or lot, corporate offices, health club facility, prepared food sales, incidental home occupation, on premises dry cleaning facility, self-service laundry, trade schools or other for profit educational institutions serving older children and adults including high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities.⁶

Motor fuel stations, motor vehicle repair garages and motor vehicle specialty shops are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.⁷

⁶ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 3.
⁷ Ibid, 8.

Retail sales include adult book stores, by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals, auction houses, motor vehicle or vehicle sales, lease or rental by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals, restaurants, cafes, diners, snack bars or other establishments where the sale of food and/or beverage is a principle use; alcoholic beverages may be sold under the authority of a BL or BV or C license, taverns, bars, lounges, pubs or other establishments where alcoholic beverages are sold under the authority of a BL or BV or C license, entertainment facility or amusement enterprises including adult cabaret, adult motion picture theater, night clubs or similar establishments where entertainment is provided are allowed by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals. Cinemas, theaters or cultural arts centers are permitted.⁸

Recycling facilities are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals. In re-

⁸ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 8.

gards to industrial uses only structures for the generation and transformation of electricity, gas, water or communications are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.⁹

In MU-1 the following uses are permitted:

In residential areas, the following are permitted uses: single-family dwellings, two family dwelling, multi family dwelling, three or more units, community residences, rectory parsonage or religious residences, rooming or boarding houses, and bed and breakfasts.¹⁰

In public and semi-public areas, the following are permitted; municipal uses, federal uses, family day care homes and day care centers. State uses, places or worship, charitable, fraternal or service organizations, nonprofit educational institutions serving young children including nursery schools, pre schools, kindergartens, elementary schools and middle schools, nonprofit educational institutions serving older children and adults, including high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities, hospitals for human care and in-patient rehabilitation facilities are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.

The following commercial uses are allowed: business services and offices, including design salons operated under the authority of an approved A.I. license, including a barber, hair dresser, cosmetician, manicurist or esthetician licensed in accordance with title 5, chapter 10 of the General Laws or Rhode Island, corporate offices, and incidental home occupation. Catering businesses, motor fuel stations, trade schools or other for-profit educational institutions serving young children including nursery schools, pre-schools, kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities and, restaurants, cafes, diners, snack bars or other establishments where the sale of food and/or beverage is a principle use are acceptable; alcoholic beverages may be sold under the authority of a BL or BV or C license and are allowed by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.

⁹ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 8.
¹⁰ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 6.

In regards to industrial uses, only structures for the generation and transformation of electricity, gas, water or communications are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.

In MU-2 the following uses are permitted:

In regards to residential uses, hotels and motels are permitted. Single-family dwelling, two-family dwelling and multifamily dwelling, three or more units, are allowed on as accessory to a permitted use.¹¹

In regards to public and semi-public uses, municipal uses, federal uses, and no-nprofit educational institutions serving older children and adults, including high schools, vocational schools, colleges and universities are permitted. State uses require special permits and approval by the zoning board of appeals.¹²

In regards to commercial uses, the following are permitted: business services and offices, including design salons operated under the authority of an approved A.I. license, including a barber, hair dresser, cosmetician, manicurist or esthetician licensed in accordance with title 5, chapter 10 of the General Laws or Rhode Island, building, electrical plumbing and similar contractor storage with or without office use, catering businesses, commercial parking garage or lot, health club facilities, prepared food sales, heating oil sales, service and storage, on-premises dry cleaning facilities, self-service laundry, trade schools or other for profit educational institutions serving older children and adults, including high schools, vocational schools colleges and universities, trucking terminals, retail sales including auction houses, lumber yards, motor vehicle sales, lease or rental, wholesale commercial uses including sale to the public when secondary to primary wholesale commercial use and restaurants, cafes, diners, snack bars or other establishments where the sale of food and/or beverage is a principle use; alcoholic beverages may be sold under the authority of a BL or BV or C license. Car washes, motor fuel stations, motor vehicle repair garages, motor vehicle specialty shops, flea markets, , bars, lounges, pubs or other establish-

¹¹ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Appendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 6.
¹² Ibid, 6.

ments where alcoholic beverages are sold under the authority of a BL or BV or C license, entertainment facility or amusement enterprises including cinemas, theaters or cultural arts center, night club or similar establishment where entertainment is provided, as well as storage or warehouse uses, specifically self-service storage facilities are available with a special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.¹³

In regards to industrial use, manufacture assemble processing or fabrication of materials in adherence with performance standards listed in subsection 9.2-4 and 10.2-5 are permitted and structures for the generation and transformation of electricity, gas, water or communications are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals.

In PR-1 the following uses are allowed:

No residential uses are allowed.¹⁴

In regards to public and semi-public uses, municipal and federal uses are permitted by approval by city council and state uses are allowed with a special permit and approval by both the zoning board of appeals and city council.¹⁵

Commercial uses are not permitted.¹⁶

In regards to industrial uses, structures for the generation and transformation of electricity, gas, water or communications are permitted by special permit and approval by the zoning board of appeals and city council.¹⁷

Building Codes

The City of Woonsocket adopted and adheres to the Building Officials Conference of America (BOCA) Basic Building Code. There is no mention of a code for historic or older buildings. The City has minimum nonresidential standards that declare the establishment of conditions and maintenance standards essential to the protection of the public health,

¹³ City of Woonsocket, "City Ordinances: Apendix C- Zoning" (Woonsocket: City of Woonsocket, 2013) 7, 8.

¹⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹⁵ Ibid, 6.

¹⁶ Ibid, 7,8.

¹⁷ Ibid, 8.

safety, morals, and general welfare. It is the owners, operators, and occupants responsibility to fix properties that have been deemed unfit for use.

FIRE CODES

It is difficult to meet fire code regulations when rehabilitating existing buildings, especially in Rhode Island due to the Station Nightclub Fire. The Station Nightclub fire, which resulted in the death of Rhode Islanders, resulted in significant changes to the Fire Code. The deaths were a result of broad regulation relating to fire prevention and life safety. The Rhode Island Rehabilitation Building Fire Code is the Fire Safety Code that will be adhered to along with compliance with the existing occupancy provisions of the Rhode Island Life Safety Code, which addresses the current or proposed occupancy.¹⁸ In many instances, the installation of sprinkler systems is required and can become costly. Even local owners and managers have attested to the difficulty to meet fire code regulations. The consensus amongst the interviewees is that permitting around fire safety is difficult and confusing, especially when you are unfamiliar with the code and permitting process. Interviewees expressed the need to have a dedicated staff member at the state level to assist and educate building owners on the fire code.

The code also calls for the establishment of key box systems must be established in "any structure or property which is converted, altered or otherwise changed so as to become applicable under this section shall comply with this section at the time of conversion, alteration or changes." The key box system allows the local fire department access to locked areas.

DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Design Review Overlay District regulates "the design of new and existing commercial or mixed-use buildings, structures, improvements and facilities with regard to assessing the impacts of predominantly commercial development on the surrounding community with regard to issues of health and safety, visual and architectural quality

¹⁸ The Rhode Island Fire Safety Code can be found at: <http://www.fsc.ri.gov/documents/copyright%20rules%20and%20regulations%202012%20final.pdf>
The Rhode Island Rehabilitation Code can be found at: <http://www.rbfc.ri.gov/rehab/>



Fig. 19

The River Corridor Overlay district imposes additional regulations regarding new development and land use. Image courtesy of the City of Woonsocket's 2012 Comprehensive Plan.

and long-term planning strategies."¹⁹ The district includes "all nonresidential buildings, structures, improvements and facilities within zoning districts C-1, C-2, MU-1 and MU-2, excluding all buildings, structures, improvements, and facilities within any area under the authority of the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket."²⁰ All buildings, structures, improvements, and facilities in those districts "shall be regulated by both the requirements of the district in which they are located and the requirements of this overlay district. This district shall furthermore overlay all lots, or portions thereof, where any building, structure, improvement or facility is associated with a use otherwise permitted only in a C-1, C-2, MU-1 and/or MU-2 district, that has been granted by variance or special use permit by the zoning board of review."²¹

The Design Review Commission reviews any proposed new construction of commercial or mixed-use buildings as well as any project that including a substantial renovation to an existing building. A

¹⁹ City of Woonsocket, City Ordinances, Appendix C – Zoning 12.1 Design Review Overlay District. 9/2/1997 (Ch. No. 6154, Sec. 1(J), 10-16-95; Ch. No. 6400, Sec. 1(M), 9-2-97)

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

substantial renovation is any project where fifty percent or more of the existing exterior materials are being replaced or seventy percent of the exterior facade materials are being replaced.

The Design Review Commission, which comprises the members of the planning board, is to prepare and adopt design guidelines for the applicants to follow. However, the ordinance does not have guidelines.²²

Any applicant that needs to appear before the design review commission must fill out an application describing the proposal and including supporting materials. The application is to be submitted to the town planner. The supporting materials include a site plan, which has been prepared by a registered land surveyor or a registered professional engineer. An architectural summary must be submitted, and is to include all elevations, exterior lighting plan, floor plans and materials samples. Landscape plans are to be submitted. The applicant must also pay \$200.00 to appear before the Design Review Commission.

²² Based on a conversation in December, 2012, with City Planner Jennifer Siciliano, no design guidelines exist.

RIVER CORRIDOR OVERLAY DISTRICT

The River Corridor Overlay District regulates “the development and use of land, buildings, structures, improvements and facilities in proximity to the Blackstone River, with regard to assessing the impacts of development on the river environment with regard to issues of health and safety, environmental protection, public access, visual and architectural quality and long-term planning strategies. All land, buildings, structures, improvements and facilities within the River Corridor Overlay District shall be regulated by both the requirements of the district in which they are located and the requirements of this overlay district.”²³

Design Guidelines for this district were repealed in 1999.

Applications are to be filed with the city planner with a proposal and supporting materials. The supporting materials include a site plan and architectural submittals, which include elevations and exterior lighting plans. There is also a \$200.00 fee to

²³ City of Woonsocket, City Ordinances, Appendix C – Zoning 12.3. River Corridor Overlay District.

appear before the commission.

BUILDING AND ZONING PROCESS

The target area for the Woonsocket Main Street program consists mostly of commercial, municipal, and mixed-use building. The zoning associated with these buildings includes commercial, mixed-use, and overlay districts.

The overlay district is primarily used to regulate the design of new and existing commercial or mixed-use buildings, structures, improvements, and facilities with regard to assessing the impacts of predominantly commercial development on the surrounding community with regard to issues of health and safety, visual and architectural quality.²⁴

Any rehabilitation, renovation, or construction of buildings within the overlay districts must be granted by variances or special use permit by the zoning board of review.

²⁴ City of Woonsocket, City Ordinances, Appendix C – Zoning 12.1 Design Review Overlay District. 9/2/1997 (Ch. No. 6154, Sec. 1(J)), 10-16-95; Ch. No. 6400, Sec. 1(M), 9-2-97).



Fig. 20

The majority of Woonsocket’s open spaces are outside of the Main Street district. It is worthy of consideration to question whether more green spaces can be incorporated into the downtown. Image courtesy of the City of Woonsocket’s 2012 Comprehensive Plan.

The design review commission is established as the agency to grant variances and special-use permits for buildings within the overlay district. This includes any and all proposed projects that are new construction of commercial or mixed-use buildings, or projects that include substantial exterior renovations of existing buildings. The last recorded minutes from a design review meeting were in November of 2009.

A proposal for development within an overlay district is made by submitting an application to the city planner that describes the proposal and supporting materials. Applications and supporting materials are submitted for review. Supporting materials include:

- Site plans
- Architectural submittals
- Landscapes plans

Developers are encouraged to discuss proposals with the city planner and division engineer for guidance and suggestions.

Proposals for development within this district shall be reviewed with the respect to the following:

- Architectural design
- Landscape design
- Impacts on utilities and the planning of future improvements
- Off-site traffic impacts
- On-site traffic circulation
- Overall visual quality
- Relationship to surrounding buildings and sites
- Site design
- Site layout

The time frame for the process of getting approval for a project and the appropriate permits is not clear in the zoning and building ordinances.

Fees:

- Appearance before the design review commission: \$200
- Appearance before river corridor overlay district commission: \$200

Fees for filing applications for special variances/petitions:

Residential Uses:

- Single-family residence or in-law apartment: \$150.00
- Duplex residence: \$175.00
- Multi-family structures up to nine (9) units: \$200.00 for the first unit, plus \$50.00 for each additional unit thereafter
- Multi-family structures ten (10) units or more: \$250.00 for the first unit, plus \$75.00 for each additional unit thereafter
- All other residential variances or special use permits or extensions, including signs \$125.00
- Notification charge: \$2.50 per abutter within two hundred (200) feet of the perimeter of the property; \$90.00 advertising charge, and \$47.00 charge to record decision.

Commercial/Industrial Uses/Office:

- Use containing up to five thousand (5,000) square feet of gross floor space: \$250.00
- Use containing more than five thousand (5,000), but less than ten thousand (10,000) square feet of gross floor space: \$300.00
- Use containing more than ten thousand (10,000), but less than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet of gross floor space: \$375.00
- Use containing more than twenty thousand (20,000) square feet of gross floor space: \$500.00, plus \$25.00 for each one thousand (1,000) square feet of gross floor space over twenty thousand (20,000) square feet of gross floor space
- All non-residential variances or special use permits, including signs \$250.00;
- Notification charge: \$2.50 per abutter within two hundred (200) feet of the perimeter of the property; \$90.00 advertising charge and \$47.00 charge to record decision²⁵

FROM BUILDING ORDINANCES

Issuing permits:

(c.1) Section 118.1 is amended by adding thereto the following:

“No building permit shall be issued for construc-

²⁵ City of Woonsocket, City Ordinances, Appendix C – Zoning 12.1 Design Review Overlay District. 9/2/1997 (Ch. No. 6154, Sec. 1(J)), 10-16-95; Ch. No. 6400, Sec. 1(M), 9-2-97)

tion, alteration or remodeling of any structure if the applicant or any legal entity in which the applicant has an ownership interest has outstanding and uncorrected Building Code, Minimum Housing Code, or Zoning Ordinance violations, or owes any taxes to the City of Woonsocket. Upon presentment of a certificate by the appropriate official that the violations have been removed or the taxes have been paid, said permit may be issued.”

OTHER FEES

The following are Excerpts from Article II: Building Code . Amendments to building code:

2(c)(1) Fees for Rehabilitation Work

For a permit for rehabilitation work for building, plumbing, electrical, and mechanical work that includes the alteration, removal, or installation of porches and/or decks, swimming pools, sheds, kitchens, retaining walls, antennae or satellite dishes, signs, ramps, canopies and awnings, fences, chimneys, trailers and mobile homes, bathrooms, ceilings and walls, exterior renovations, roof and re-roof, residing, enclosed porches and/or decks, windows, doors, additions, stairs, fire escapes, elevators or lifts, window store fronts, and miscellaneous; and for the demolition or moving of structures, the fee shall be as follows:

2 (c) (3) Fees for Non-profit or Quasi-public Organizations

When non-profit or quasi public organizations propose to construct new or renovate existing educational and/or recreational facilities that are available to the children and/or the general population of the City of Woonsocket, then the permit fees as established in 2(c)(1) and 2(c)(2) may by resolution of the city council be reduced to the following portion of the calculated fees:

(a) New construction - one-quarter (25%)

(b) Rehabilitation - one-third (33.3%)

Funding

Public-private development finance is financing for development projects that benefit the public that are undertaken by the private sector, and that receive some sort of public financial assistance.²⁶ Many cities have successfully integrated public-private development finance into their community economic development initiatives. Examples of these financing tools include: historic tax credits, TIF districts, community development block grants, state enterprise zone, etc.

Woonsocket is currently taking advantage of a number of public/private developmental financing options. They are as follows:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT

Woonsocket is currently receiving funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). CDBG's provide funds to individuals and community-based, non-for-profit organizations that implement programs and/or projects addressing affordable housing, economic development, and public service and needs. CDBG funded programs and projects carry out a wide range of community development activities directed toward neighborhood revitalization, economic development, and the provision of improved community facilities and services. Activities must benefit low and moderate-income persons, address slum and blight, or address an urgent community need.²⁷

In addition to the approved projects and activities listed on the summary sheet, small business loans are available to local businesses. Depending upon the circumstances, conditions of the loan may include job creation and retention, the provision of goods and services to low to moderate-income markets, and/or a direct benefit to a low to moderate-income person.

For owners of commercial buildings facing Main Street, Community Development Block Grant funds are available for exterior restoration projects. Funds

²⁶ Smith, Kennedy. 2007. "Public-Private Development Finance: a primer for main street practitioners." Main Street News. No 293. National Trust Main Street Center. P. 2.

²⁷ "Notice of Funding Available." Department of Planning & Development. October 2012. City of Woonsocket, RI.

are limited to \$40,000.00 per project.

ENTERPRISE ZONE ON TAX BASE PLANNING

Although originally conceived as a federal program for helping distressed inner-city areas, enterprise zones have become a central pillar of many states' economic development efforts. In most states, zones have been used to focus economic development policy on poorer areas. The justifications for such targeting range from the arguments of spatial mismatch theorists, who claim that inner-city minorities have particular difficulty accessing the buoyant job markets of the suburbs, to Timothy Bartik's work which shows that the efficiency of economic development policy is likely to be improved by focusing benefits on the disadvantaged. State and local enterprise zone programs consist mainly of tax instruments: property tax abatements, sales tax exemptions, and income tax deductions, credits, and exemptions for employment creation, capital investment, or income creation in the zones.²⁸

²⁸ Peters, Alan H., and Peter S. Fisher. 2002. "The Effectiveness of State Enterprise Zones." *Employment Research* 9(4): 1-3. http://research.upjohn.org/empl_research/vol9/iss4/1/

Any business with a certified business facility within a state-designated Enterprise Zone or a Federally-designated Enterprise Community in Rhode Island may qualify for the following incentives:

Enterprise Zone Business Tax Credit: Firms that locate in a state-designed enterprise zone and increase employment at registered enterprise zone locations by at least 5 percent annually may be eligible for a state business tax credit equal to 75% of the total wages paid to employees living in an enterprise zone or 50% of wages paid to workers not living in an enterprise zone. The maximum credit is \$5,000 per enterprise zone resident employees and \$2,500 for other enterprise zone employees. All new hires must be Rhode Island residents and the jobs must be classified as full-time. Earned but unused enterprise zone credits may be carried forward for up to three (3) years.

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

HOME funded programs and projects provide safer and/or more affordable housing to low and mod-



Fig. 21

Effective zoning will allow for more efficient mixed-use spaces in the proposed Main Street District. This is vital for rehabilitation projects, as large historic buildings, like the Longley Building, can serve multiple purposes.

erate-income persons. Funding often covers single and rental-housing rehabilitation, as well as homeownership programs.²⁹ HOME provides formula grants to States and localities that communities use, often in partnership with local nonprofit groups, to fund a wide range of activities that build, buy, and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership or provide direct rental assistance to low-income people. HOME is the largest Federal block grant to State and local governments designed exclusively to create affordable housing for low-income households. Each year it allocates approximately \$2 billion among the States and hundreds of localities nationwide. The program was designed to reinforce several important values and principles of community development:

HOME's flexibility empowers people and communities to design and implement strategies tailored to their own needs and priorities.

HOME's emphasis on consolidated planning expands and strengthens partnerships among all levels of government and the private sector in the development of affordable housing.

HOME's technical assistance activities and set-aside for qualified community-based nonprofit housing groups builds the capacity of these partners.

HOME's requirement that participating jurisdictions (PJs) match 25 cents of every dollar in program funds mobilizes community resources in support of affordable housing.

FEDERAL TAX CREDITS

The federal government offers tax credit programs which can be used in Woonsocket.

-Federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit: The federal government offers a 20% tax credit for the historic rehabilitation of properties listed on the National Register that are being rehabilitated into an income producing property.

²⁹ "Notice of Funding Available." Department of Planning & Development. October 2012. City of Woonsocket, RI.

STATE TAX CREDITS

The State of Rhode Island is in the process of reinstating the state tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects. The 25% tax credit would piggy back the federal tax credits.

RHODE ISLAND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC) provides financing for small businesses. One loan is provided between \$51,000 to \$250,000 for capital, expansion, land/building purchases or expansion and equipment. They also have bond-type financing programs for large projects. In addition to those financing options RIEDC through its Urban Business Growth Fund offers small business in Woonsocket, as Woonsocket is one of the five urban core communities. The loans range from \$10,000 to \$50,000.

ZONING RECOMMENDATIONS

The majority of the Main Street area is in zoning district C-1. One of the major issues with the regulations of the C-1 district is that it does not allow supermarkets or grocery stores. A grocery store is a necessary business to have in a downtown area if people are to live downtown. Without a grocery store the residents of downtown are forced to venture outside of the city to get their groceries which will lead to them purchasing other goods outside of the downtown.

BUILDING CODE MODIFICATIONS

It is recommended that the City of Woonsocket adopt and adhere to Rhode Island Rehabilitation Building and Fire Code for Existing Buildings and Structures or the Building Codes for Existing and Historic Buildings by the International Code Council (ICC). These codes address Fire Safety Factors, the most important design consideration in rehabilitating historic buildings.

The city has very specific ordinances that address blight, and nuisances and it gives the buildings inspector the right to issue violations.

ZONING AND BUILDING PERMIT PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

-Based on interviews with members of the community it has become clear that the process for obtaining building permits is a long and confusing process. It also came out in the interviews that some buildings are given permits through an easier process than others. The process to obtain building permits must be streamlined and the same for everyone.

-In order to better allow for development in the downtown area it would be recommended that a new zoning district is created for the downtown area which combines the aspects of mixed use and commercial 1. This zoning should allow for grocery stores and not allow gas stations or car retail. Grocery stores are needed for people living in the downtown area. Gas stations and car retail shops because they have negative environmental impacts; they also are not conducive to a pedestrian friendly area.

-In order to better preserve the historic character of downtown an overlay district regarding historic district zoning. The design guideline for this district should reflect the secretary of the interior's standards for rehabilitation.

IX. ORGANIZATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

“Organization” is the first key element in the Main Street approach. By efficiently organizing both the volunteers and processes, the program will be able to effectively implement each part of the plan. Organization creates communal collaboration, an entity necessary for Main Street success.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATION TO RUN THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

There are three major organizations that have demonstrated interest in the revitalization of downtown Woonsocket over the past few decades. The main supporters of this project have been the City of Woonsocket Planning and Development Department, the Woonsocket Main Street Riverfront Initiative (Main Street 2000), and NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley. Each organization has implemented a different approach to completing this task.

The City of Woonsocket Planning Department has supported downtown Woonsocket with their aim to “provide quality customer service; enrich community life; facilitate controlled, orderly, and sustainable growth and promote balance of the built and natural environment through professional guidance, public involvement, and efficient, equitable, and lawful enforcement.”¹ The Planning Department has aided in future development and revitalization of the city through the creation of Comprehensive Plans, Livability Plans, and numerous other studies of Woonsocket.

The Riverfront Initiative, previously conducting business as the Main Street 2000 Development Corporation, is a “private-non-profit organization that was created by the City of Woonsocket and the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce in 1990 to address the decline of business and general activity on Main Street.”² This group came about as a result of a dire need to enhance the image of downtown Main

¹ “Mission.” City of Woonsocket, RI Planning Department. <http://woonsocket-planning.org/>

² “Woonsocket Main Street – Riverfront Initiative.” City of Woonsocket. <http://www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us/mainst2000.htm>

Street. This new proposed effort would focus on Main Street’s businesses, as well as the appearance and relationship to the Blackstone River. The Riverfront Initiative is run by a Board of Directors comprised of volunteers from the community as well as surrounding neighborhoods in Northern Rhode Island.

NeighborWorks is a group that, “works with residents, businesses, neighborhood institutions, partners and communities to revitalize and enrich neighborhood life and make affordable housing opportunities available throughout Northern Rhode Island.”³ NeighborWorks also runs on a Board of Directors consisting of Woonsocket community members and residents from nearby Northern Rhode Island neighborhoods.

After many months of communication with all three of these organizations, witnessing what each has to offer the city of Woonsocket and listening to what community members have to say, it has been concluded that the responsibility of implementing the Main Street Program should be undertaken by a single entity. NeighborWorks appears as though it may be the best candidate to take on the task of running this program into the future. NeighborWorks already has a strong presence in downtown Woonsocket and expresses goals similar to the Main Street Program’s goals. With a Downtown/Main Street Program Manager already in place within the organization, NeighborWorks fulfills one of the reoccurring desires voiced by community members as well as a requirement for a certified (NTHP) Main Street Program. NeighborWorks also receives operational and development funding from the government; an asset that has helped them immensely in successfully carrying out past projects.

Although NeighborWorks has been suggested to run the Main Street Program in Woonsocket, it, like any organization, still has a few concerns that need to be addressed before moving forward. First of all, if NeighborWorks is to take on this role, there needs to be a significant increase in involvement from their board of directors. There is also a lack of direct involve-

³ “About Us.” NeighborWorks Blackstone River Valley. 2013. <http://www.neighborworksbrv.org/AboutUs/AboutUsOverview/tabid/216/Default.aspx>

ment by volunteers when it comes to creating specific projects and a strategic plan for the city. This dependence on staff for project implementation and planning is troublesome. Also, although NeighborWorks has a designated Main Street Program Manager, this person is currently only part-time. A full-time, paid Main Street Manager position needs to be established within the organization. Another issue NeighborWorks is faced with is the absence of a sustainable funding source for a Main Street Program. Even with the existing government funding granted to NeighborWorks, in order to start a Main Street Program, more significant funding is needed. An example of an initial operating budget (shown below) demonstrates why proper funding is required.

It should be noted that there are presently no start-up funding sources available for Woonsocket.

Volunteer Recruitment Plan

A successful Main Street Revitalization Program relies heavily on volunteer involvement. In order to sustain this involvement and further develop volunteer programs, a community must exercise a volunteer recruitment plan. A plan to gather volunteers can be broken down into three main components: recruitment, retention, and recognition. Each component should be addressed as a step in your volunteer recruitment plan.

STEP 1: RECRUIT YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Before starting your search for new volunteers, you must determine the roles each will play within your organization. For any new program it is important to develop job descriptions for all volunteers and clearly define the responsibilities, qualifications and expectations for each. This easy preparation will aid you in your quest for the perfect volunteer. Every community has the necessary resources to promote volunteer work; therefore, it is important to utilize all means when executing the recruitment process. If an organization is successful it will most likely have some form of newsletter, brochure or relationship with the local newspaper (See Appendix D for sample volunteer brochure). Publishing bulletins in your local newspa-

per that describe the types of desired volunteers is an effective way to spread the word. Reaching out to your current volunteers is also crucial. Encourage present volunteers to recruit family members, friends or co-workers and share their positive experiences about volunteering with your organization. If your organization has a website, make sure to solicit volunteers. If a website is not an option for your organization, make use of volunteer referral and networking sites.

STEP 2: RETAIN YOUR VOLUNTEERS

Now that you have your volunteer base, you must develop ways in which to successfully maintain it. Training volunteers is a critical step in any volunteer program. When a new volunteer joins your organization make sure to thoroughly explain their job to them. Never assume or dictate what a volunteer should do. If a volunteer seems to no longer have interest in the responsibilities you recruited them for, offer them a new task. To effectively retain volunteers, you must give them work they actually want to do and will feel proud about. A happy volunteer is a successful volunteer.

STEP 3: RECOGNITION OF YOUR VOLUNTEERS

If you are successfully retaining your volunteers, odds are you are already recognizing and thanking them as well. Every volunteer needs to know that the work they are doing is being appreciated. It is your job to show as much gratitude as possible and make each volunteer feel like they are making a difference. The easiest way to recognize your volunteers is to simply thank them whenever they arrive at a meeting, program or event. Some additional positive recognition strategies include:

- Writing thank you notes and letters to your volunteers throughout their involvement
- Providing certificates of recognition for each volunteer
- Thanking volunteers in your local newspaper
- Organizing a volunteer recognition event
- Creating a “Volunteer of the Year Award” or other special awards that show your appreciation

No matter what strategies you employ to recognize

your volunteers, keep in mind that most volunteers like to be thanked “privately, publicly, and in front of their peers.” Using a variety of recognition strategies is key. The effort your organization puts into volunteer recognition should greatly exceed the efforts of your volunteers. This will demonstrate your immense gratitude and will mean a lot to your volunteers.

Out of the three steps mentioned above, recognition is probably the most important. Volunteers will continue to offer their services when they know their organization appreciates all of the hard work they do. A successful volunteer program is a combination of all three of these steps: recruitment, retention, and recognition. Although there are many approaches to effectively execute each step, find what works best for your organization and your volunteers and personalize your volunteer program.

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a declaration of an organization’s purpose. At a workshop conducted in Woonsocket, community leaders discussed what attributes that should be included in their city’s mission statement. Prevalent ideas include:

- Create a central hub of information to promote all venues in a positive and creative style
- Rebirth of downtown with different and unique boutiques and shops
- Environment that fosters multicultural, family-friendly, hip lifestyles
- Develop mixed use
- Premier Northern Rhode Island destination
- Vibrancy
- Revitalization
- Recruitment of business

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement embodies what an organization anticipates for the future. Vision statements provide a framework for your strategic plan. The same community workshop also produced many suggestions as to what factors should be incorporated into Woonsocket’s vision statement. Elements that community members voted to see addressed in their vision statement included:

- River access/connection to Main Street

- Pedestrian Friendly
- Diverse cultural experience, unique and only in Woonsocket
- Vibrant activity during both day and night along Main Street
- Railroad
- Safe, family friendly environment that promotes diversity, culture, and community
- Art
- Lively with activity along Main Street throughout the day
- Capitalize on the river

In the future, these recommendations could be incorporated into successful and informative mission and vision statements for the city of Woonsocket.

Suggested Five-year Strategic Plan and Goals

GOALS

Goal 1: Establish a National Trust Main Street Program

1. Establish a Main Street Program
 - a. Director
 - b. Board of Directors
2. Receive funding and support from the city
3. Determine what businesses and services are needed in the downtown

Goal 2: Attract more people to Main Street to Promote Economic and Social Activity

1. Encourage a quality business environment that supports a balanced mix of businesses
2. Promote business and property investment opportunities on Main street
3. Continue to produce quality events as well as nurture new opportunities
4. Expand tourism and marketing
5. Actively market downtown businesses and historic sites to residents and visitor

Goal 3: To expand existing services and develop new opportunities.

1. Reoccupy vacant storefronts and buildings
2. Encourage necessity businesses
 - a. Grocery store
 - b. Bakery/coffee shop

- c. Deli
- d. Etc.

Goal 4: Improve the Physical and Social Image of Main Street to help make it a destination to visit.

1. Create a set of design elements to guide future and existing rehabilitation and new construction projects.

Goal 5: Strengthen Communication with stakeholders, partners, and the community to build awareness of the main street program and its value for revitalization of the main street district.

1. Maintain facades in the downtown area (immediate and long-term)
2. Rehabilitate Store Fronts (long-term)

Goal 6: Maintain a safe, clean, and inviting environment for the Community and visitors to the area.

1. Leave Street Lights on for safe travel
2. Street cleaning
3. Public trash cans

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

Year 1 (Goals 1, 5, & 6):

1. Establish a Main Street Program
2. Organize a Board of Directors
3. Draft bylaws of the organization; including the creation of a Mission and Vision Statement
4. File the appropriate forms for Incorporation with the State of Rhode Island
5. Complete and submit the appropriate forms with the IRS to achieve non-profit status
6. Create committees for the organization, promotions, fundraising, etc.
7. Begin Fundraising
8. Hire a Main Street Manager
9. Create the organization’s website

Year 2 (Goals 3, 5):

1. Develop a structure to put into practice for gaining a volunteer base and for implementing activities
2. Develop a plan for the implementation of

- the Four Point approach to Main Street
- 3. Expand support base with locating funds by using the local media for advertising
- 4. Identify businesses needed in the downtown
- 5. Hold a community workshop to educate the community about the Main Street Program

Year 3 (Goals 3, 4, 5):

1. Create and engage the local schools with public educational programs
2. Identify improvements needed for streetscape and green spaces
3. Create design guidelines

Year 4 (Goals 3, 4, 5):

1. Develop a streetscape improvement plan
2. Create design guidelines

Year 5 (Goals 2, 3, 4, 5, 6):

1. Implement the streetscape improvement plan
2. Implement design guidelines

Woonsocket, Rhode Island Main Street Budget

Revenue	
Membership	\$ 10,000.00
Corporate Sponsors	\$ 12,000.00
Municipal Donation	\$ 4,000.00
Bank Donations	\$ 3,000.00
Festival	\$ 3,000.00
Pledged Donations (other)	\$ 29,000.00
Grants	\$ 4,000.00
Total:	\$ 65,000.00
Expenses	
Manager Salary	\$ 45,000.00
Payroll Taxes & Benefits	\$ 4,500.00
Rent	\$ 3,600.00
Utilities+Internet+Phone	\$ 1,200.00
Professional Development	\$ 2,000.00
Office Expenses	\$ 3,000.00
Insurance	\$ 3,000.00
Committee Expenses	\$ 1,500.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$ 1,000.00
Total:	\$ 64,800.00

Fig. 22
Proposed initial operating budget for Main Street.

X. ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING PLAN

Introduction

Economic Restructuring is the fourth point in the National Trust for Historic Preservation Main Street 4-Point Approach. Economic restructuring focuses on “retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix...”¹ When existing business are retained and promoted, it creates an atmosphere that new business are drawn to. Providing a balanced commercial mix that responds to the community needs is key. According to Smith (2009) “The challenge for your revitalization organization is to find the combination of uses that best reflects community preferences, captures emerging market opportunities, builds on local assets, and strengthens community identity.”²

This chapter will address businesses that will work particularly well for the downtown as well as business that will not work well, potential retail clusters, and identification of current/potential customers. Woonsocket is in a good position and ready to benefit from an economic restructuring plan.

The community has voiced what they believe would be the best combination of uses that reflects the community’s preferences, builds on local assets and strengthens community identity. The students have captured emerging market opportunities. The community of Woonsocket and the students of Roger Williams Community Partnership Center have overcome that challenge. The findings and recommendations will be reported in this chapter.

Description and Justification of Woonsocket’s Main Street District’s Trade Area

The market area for Woonsocket, RI was chosen based on knowledge of the surrounding area. The boundary to the north goes to Sutton, Massachusetts. The area south of Sutton, MA, including Uxbridge and Doug-
1 “The Main Street Four-Point Approach.” <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/>
2 Smith, Kennedy Lawson. “Economic Restructuring.” In *Revitalizing Main Street: A Practitioner’s Guide to Comprehensive Commercial District Revitalization*, by Andrew L. Dono and Linda S. Glisson, 69-102. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation; National Main Street Center, 2009.

las, was chosen because these communities do not have a major shopping center. These communities are in close proximity to Woonsocket and can easily access the city via Rout 146. Any communities further north would go to Worcester, Massachusetts for goods and services.

The northeast boundary follows Route 495. Any communities east of Route 495 would go further east for goods and services because there is an abundance of goods and services in that area.

The western boundary follows the eastern boundary of Route 395. This area is a rural area with a lack of goods and services. The communities east of Route 395 would either go further into Connecticut or follow Route 395 north into Webster or Worcester, Massachusetts.

The southern boundary follows Route 101 and Route 295. The communities north of Route 101 are rural communities and are in close enough proximity to Woonsocket that they would go to Woonsocket rather than Providence in some cases.

The East border runs along Route 295 and the Rhode Island State line. This boundary was made knowing that the communities south of Route 295 would travel to Providence for goods and services and that communities east of the state line would be more likely to travel to the mall near Attleboro or east into Massachusetts.

Market Trends That Affect Downtown Woonsocket

LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS:

Demographic data is crucial in the development of almost all areas of business. If you have an understanding of pertinent information for a specific region, you can study buying trends, make future projections, and determine the proper marketing strategies to use in order to reach consumers. Demographic data is also vital in the education process, as it allows students and teachers to gather a clearer understanding of who

makes up the United States, and how their lifestyles have changed and evolved over the years. Demographic statistics include age, race, income and education characteristics for a population living in a given area.

ANALYSIS OF STRONG AND WEAK AREAS IN THE DISTRICT’S COMMERCIAL MIX

The following strengths and weakness are based on the interview data. Interviewees were asked, “What are the economic strengths and weakness of downtown Woonsocket?” This section will put forth their thoughts on the strengths and weaknesses of downtown. Currently, Main Street can be broken into three areas, the north, the middle, and the south. The interviewees pointed out how Main Street is divided into these sections and how there is nothing connecting the north and south areas of Main Street.

STRENGTHS

The north and south ends of Main Street contain businesses clusters that draw customers and create activity. The north contains Stadium Theatre, Beacon Charter High School, the YMCA, Ciro’s Tavern, and the Tai Garden. The south end of Main Street contains many prosperous businesses, River Falls, the Museum of Work and Culture, Vintage, Ye Olde English Fish and Chips, New York Lunch, Inc., Le Moulin Shopping Mall and a handful of others.

WEAKNESSES

The middle part of Main Street is not as strong as the north and south areas and is plagued by vacant storefronts. The interviewees expressed that there is nothing connecting the two vibrant ends of Main Street. The central, most important, part of Main Street is downtown Woonsocket’s biggest weakness. There is no commercial activity.

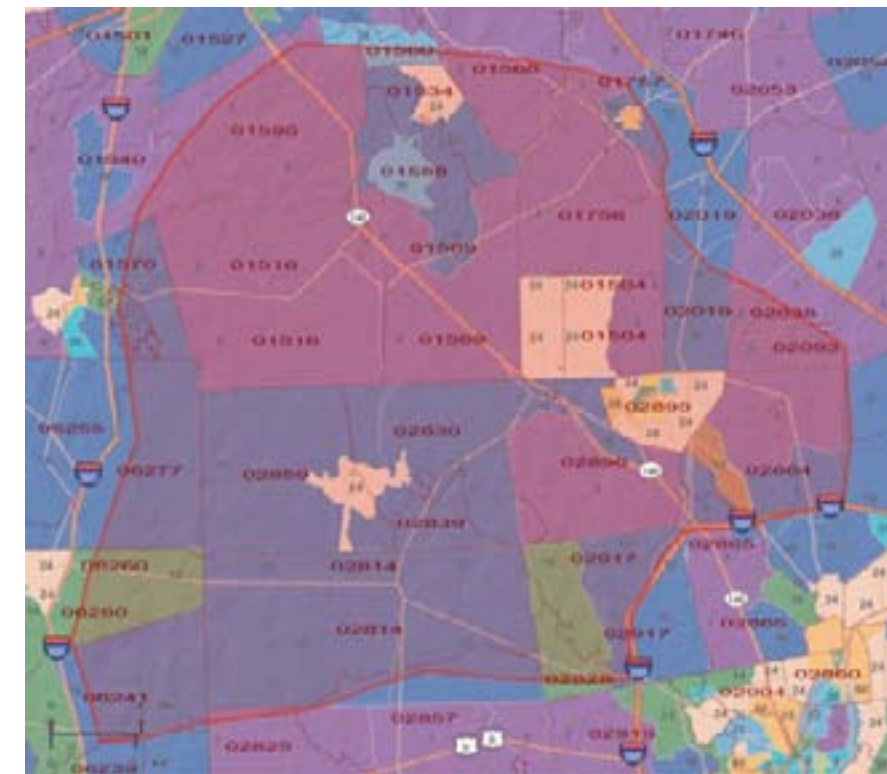


Fig. 25

The above image shows the Woonsocket Trade District.

Market Leakage Analysis of Strong and Weak Areas in the Districts Commercial Mix

STRENGTHS

Within the downtown Woonsocket trade area (.09 square miles), the most successful business types are presently motor vehicle & parts dealers, gasoline stations, and home furnishing stores.

WEAKNESSES

There is currently a notable retail gap for food & drink services, including grocery stores, specialty food stores, liquor stores, and restaurants. There is also a prominent need for electronics/appliance stores. Finally, despite popular belief amongst interviewed citizens, there is a financial need for more secondhand merchandise stores.

Based upon the ESRI data, the following businesses would likely succeed in the downtown: movie theaters, grocery stores, doctors' offices, restaurants, and bookstores.

Recommendations to Expand Woonsocket's Main Street Economic Base

Woonsocket's Main Street has physical, social, cultural, and business assets that can be expanded to improve its economic base. Woonsocket has a strong historical and cultural/ethnic identity with many locals having French Canadian roots. In addition, a number of buildings have architectural, aesthetic, and historical significance. Main Street contains several existing businesses that have succeeded in the community. Creating retail and restaurant clusters can expand on these existing businesses making the area more attractive to visitors.

The Providence and Worcester Railroad runs through Woonsocket's Main Street, creating potential transportation possibilities. In addition there are several events already in existence that attract people to Woonsocket. These include Polar Express and Au-

tumfest. Woonsocket has various green spaces and parks. In addition, Main Street is in close proximity to the Blackstone River and the Blackstone River Valley Bike Path.

TYPES OF BUSINESSES NEEDED

There is a notable gap in food and drink services in the Woonsocket Main Street District. Especially grocery stores, specialty food stores, liquor stores, and restaurants. In addition, there is a prominent need for electronics/appliances stores and bookstores.

Some suggestions for new businesses are:

- Local Coffee Shops (no chains)
- Liquor Store (in close proximity to grocery stores and BYOB Restaurants)
- Grocery Store
 - Trader Joe's
- Local Bookstore
- Restaurants (Delis, Cafes, etc)
- Law Offices, Doctors Offices
- Blackstone Valley Outfitters

POTENTIAL RETAIL CLUSTERS

Based upon the large retail gap in food & drink services, it is likely that the most plausible, successful retail clusters would be a set of restaurants/grocery stores. It should be noted that the restaurants should represent a wide range of cuisines and financial commitments in order to best appeal to the varied demographic of Woonsocket. Within a five-mile radius of the downtown, the two most desirable restaurants are family restaurants/steak houses and fast food/drive-ins. Grocery and specialty food stores might consider including themselves within the same geographic area.

A cluster of professional offices, such as doctors, attorneys, and accountants would likely be successful, as these professional services are not currently conveniently located. Several people interviewed also noted the need for these services to be located within the downtown.

Building Rehabilitation Recommendations:

Longley Building: 194-202 Main Street

The Longley Building is currently underutilized. The majority of the building is vacant, with the exception

of Dominos on the ground level. The building should be preserved by rehabilitation and storefront restoration. The building should remain commercial with storefront retail on the ground level and private office space on the upper levels.

Mill Building: 15 Island Place

The Mill Building at 15 Island Place, is located directly behind The Museum of Work and Culture and located close to River Island Park and Le Moulin: Falls Yarn Mill. The building is vacant and in a state of deterioration. It is recommended that the mill be rehabilitated to a functional state. Mill buildings are generally large open spaces that can easily be adapted to any new use. It is recommended to create residences for artists. The mill is close to various arts related businesses.

City Hall: 169 Main Street

City Hall would greatly benefit from rehabilitation. The building is in a usable state, however the façade and the organization of various interior spaces needs to be addressed. The exterior is not keeping with the historical character of the area. It is suggested to remove the front addition of the building and restore the façade underneath to match the rest of the building. In addition, the interior, mainly the entry, is confusing and unwelcoming. There is a lack of signage to direct residents and other visitors to the various city departments located within the building. It is highly recommended that the interior design be more accessible and friendly to residents and visitors.

Rhode Island Hospital Trust: 162 Main Street

This building is currently vacant. This building would benefit greatly from historic rehabilitation. The building is large enough to fit a boutique hotel or a mixed-use commercial/residential space; commercial on the ground level with residences on the upper floors. The retail options are numerous, but a few suggestions are: book store, grocery store, record store, or deli.

Stadium Theater Building: 329 Main Street

The Stadium Theater Building is related to Stadium Theater, located next door. This building is currently vacant. It is recommended and suggested to rehabilitate this building to house performing arts businesses

and services as well as space for Stadium Theater. Another recommendation for use is a mixed-use space. The ground floors should be retail with the upper floors consisting of offices and residential spaces.

BUILDINGS WHERE NEW BUSINESSES COULD FIT:

In order to generate business clusters, any new restaurants should be located in areas where there are already established restaurants (Near Ciro's, Chan's, River City, or Vintage). Ideally, any retail and commercial businesses should also be located near already established retail and commercial businesses.

Arts and entertainment related businesses should also cluster where there are established arts centers. Example: Le Moulin Mills, Stage Right, Krylo Dance Studios. Main Street Café, Cakery, Vinos Block (food services should be continued in these spaces).

Conclusion

It is recommended that a new retail cluster be created in the middle area of Main Street, where there are currently numerous vacant storefronts. Creating a retail cluster in the middle area of Main Street will serve as a bridge that connects the north and south areas of Main Street. Based on the market analysis and community members input the students recommend that a grocery store (Trader Joes), an outfitter (Blackstone Valley Outfitters), bookstore, and coffee shop create that new central cluster.

XI. DESIGN PLAN

Introduction

Design is the third part to the Main Street's 4-Point Approach. The design element strives to create an inviting and safe environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors by taking advantage of the visual opportunities in historic downtowns. Through design, Main Streets are encouraged to maintain and improve the appearance of buildings in the downtown. Design elements include, but are not limited to: public and private buildings, store fronts, signs, public spaces, parking areas, street furniture, public art, landscaping, merchandising, window displays, and promotional materials.¹

Communities can implement proper maintenance of buildings and enhance physical appearances through the rehabilitation of historic buildings. Overall, design plans try to create appealing environments through the visual and architectural character of the city.

Existing Design Character of Woonsocket

During the nineteenth century, the United States became an industrialized nation, and Rhode Island benefited the revolution in many ways. The city of Woonsocket lies in close proximity to the Blackstone River, which gave way to an abundant waterpower source; this made Woonsocket an ideal place to locate industry before steam powered machinery came to be. It became a city of factories and textile mills. Over the past 200 years, the city has expanded and matured around its industrial past.

Today, the mills and other buildings are the physical remnants of Woonsocket's industrial past. The downtown's Main Street contains a plethora of mixed use and commercial buildings that exhibit the overall character of the city. The city's downtown has a collection of various architecture styles from the early to late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. In addition to the mill buildings, the city

¹ National Trust for Historic Preservation, The Main Street Four Point Approach, "Design" <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/#.UYA-MitAS3k>.

contains the examples of the following architectural styles:

- Art Moderne
- Italianate
- Gothic Revival
- Colonial Revival
- Greek Revival
- Classical Revival
- Art Deco
- Federal

Preferred Overall Design Character

The overall preferred design goal of Woonsocket is to maintain and improve its existing character. Maintaining existing character should be exhibited in that the new construction for infill areas needs to keep within the contextual character of the surrounding environment. As the historic commercial and cultural center of Woonsocket, Main Street will preserve and promote its historic buildings and cultural assets while ensuring that future changes will enhance the area's aesthetic appeal. The following design recommendations strive to create and enhance Woonsocket's overall character to make it an inviting and welcoming place to live, work, and visit.

Recommendations - Design Guidelines

INFILL

Design guidelines for new construction for infill areas need to keep within the character of the surrounding environment. The design of new infill construction needs to consider the following:

DESIGN

The overall design of infill construction should be compatible with surrounding buildings in size, massing, and architectural style. Infill construction should not replicate a historic design, but, rather, complement it. The building should be recognized as being new but should not diminish the characteristics of the surrounding historical architecture.

HEIGHT

The height of any proposed construction should be compatible with the style and character of the surrounding buildings. For the city of Woonsocket three types of heights should be generated based upon existing heights within a building block:

- H1: minimum height should be no less than the lower of the adjacent buildings, or two stories.
- H2: maximum height should be equal to the taller of the immediately adjacent buildings, but no less than two stories.
- H3: maximum height based upon the merits of design - up to the highest existing building on the block.

SHAPE AND MASSING

Shape and massing are important when considering infill construction to ensure that the proposed development "fits" into its surroundings. Consider:

- The scale of the building should be compatible with the architectural design style and character of the surrounding buildings
- Ground level design elements, such as doors/entries, store front windows, steps, signs, plantings etc., should direct towards the use and enjoyment of pedestrians.
- Respect the height of existing buildings in the

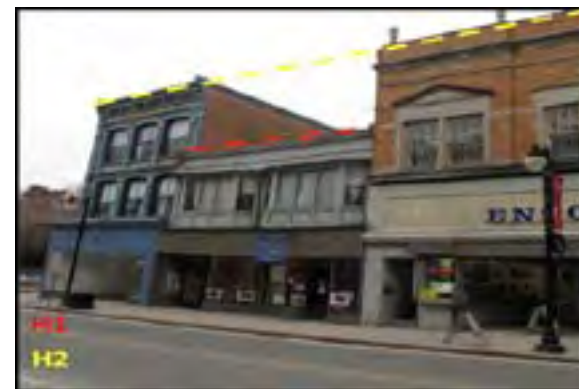


Fig. 26

The above image provides a visual definition for H1 and H2 discussed in the design guidelines.

surrounding area. No infill construction should overpower or diminish the character of the surrounding existing buildings.
-The setback of infill construction should not exceed/ go beyond that of existing buildings.

BUILDING ELEMENTS

The design of various building elements should be tasteful and compatible with the character of surrounding buildings:

- Windows should be proportionate to the buildings overall size and symmetrical in appearance
- Doors should respect the pattern of the street
- Roofs should look to surrounding adjacent buildings for appropriate examples
- Materials should be compatible with the surrounding buildings

Preservation/Rehabilitation/Restoration of Existing Buildings

Many people recognize the value of Downtown Woonsocket's built heritage. Property owners within the designated downtown boundary area carry an additional responsibility, as opposed to owners outside the boundary, when maintaining the historic character or considering rehabilitation practices within a preservation undertaking. Owners of existing and historic buildings should acknowledge that responsibility by adhering to the design guidelines set forth,



Fig. 27

Figure 28 shows H1, H2, and H3 as explained by the proposed design guidelines.

whenever s/he considers the preservation, rehabilitation, and/or facade restoration of existing buildings.

The following definitions are the provided by the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties²:

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other

² <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/>

periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Rehabilitation: is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

-Property owners shall adhere to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation because they are the lead standards in the country for rehabilitation and must be followed in order to receive tax credits.³

RESTORATION

-Remove any fabric that takes away from its historic character.

³ Standards for rehabilitation: http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm

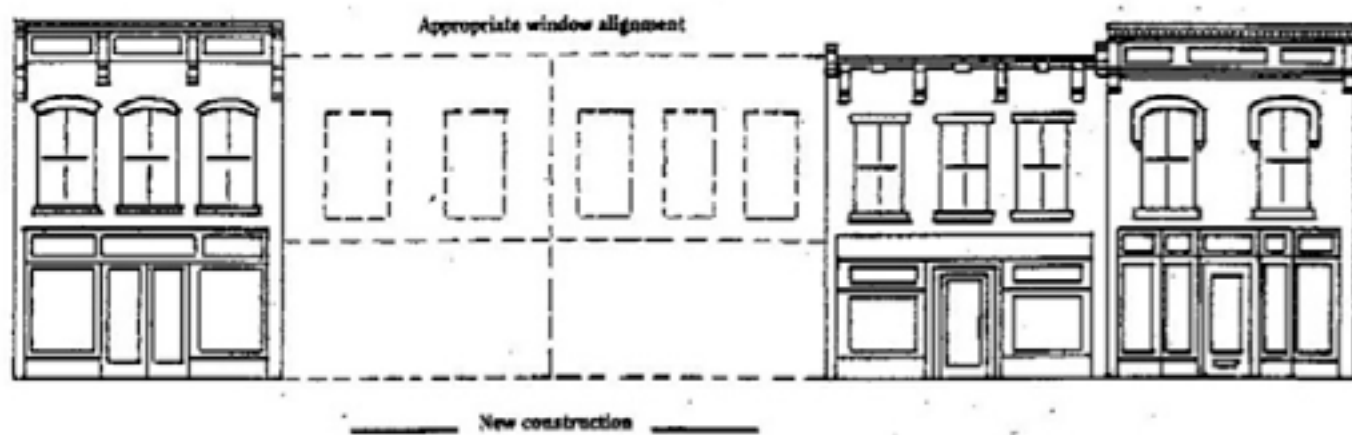


Fig. 28

The above image provides visual clarification on the proposed design guidelines for new construction.

REHABILITATION

-Property owners shall adhere to the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation⁴

BUILDING ELEMENTS

Work done should maintain the historic character of building. Strive to be historically accurate and use buildings materials similar to original materials.

-Windows: Windows are an important part of the character and style of a building. The original features should be duplicated. It is recommended that replacement windows be of the same material. New windows can easily destroy buildings integrity.

-Siding: Changing the siding of a building to an inauthentic material is considered inappropriate. Neither vinyl nor aluminum siding should be approved.

-Paint: Avoid sandblasting. If paint is removed, a new coating should be applied to the exposed surface.

The Blackstone River Valley Design Manual should serve as the basis for the creation design guidelines.⁵ This design manual provides Valley communities with information on how to create design guidelines and being a local design review process.

Store Front/Façade Design Guidelines

1. Storefronts should exist as individual expressions of the tenant's identity in an attempt to avoid "cookie-cutter" representations. Architectural language used to express individual character should be complimentary to the surrounding architectural vocabulary; whenever possible, repair and maintain existing prominent architectural features such as columns, cornices, and materials.

2. Tenants may express their identities beyond the facade in the forms of banners, small awnings, or flower boxes, providing that said expressions do not interfere with pedestrian traffic or detract from the architectural integrity of the building.

⁴ Visible on opposite page.

⁵ http://www.nps.gov/blac/parkmgmt/upload/DRManualdocument_web.pdf

3. Placement and design of storefront entries should provide a direct connection to the sidewalks and streets.

4. Construction detail and finish of all storefront materials should adhere to craftsman's standards. These materials should complement the glass window design which should exist as a focus and a view into the store. Only consistent materials found along Main Street or within a similar architectural style are acceptable. Masonry materials are advocated. Opaque, smoked, and reflective glass should be used only as accents.

5. Facades, recessed doorways, outdoor spaces, and all passageways should be adequately lit to add to both the character and safety of the streets. Night lighting contributes to the success of business during evening hours. These light fixtures should be located and angled to ensure that they spotlight the merchandise without causing distractions to surrounding drivers or residents.

6. All signage should be incorporated into the storefront design as a whole in order to provide creative consistency within the individual expression of the tenant. Emphasis should be placed on durable materials, quality manufacturing, and aesthetic pleasure.

7. Any damage incurred upon the building shall be repaired immediately. Similarly, consistent maintenance is expected from the tenant in order to maintain the aesthetic quality along Main Street.

Recommendations for Design Changes (Landscape and Buildings)

HISTORIC STRUCTURES - SECRETARY OF INTERIORS STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal changes to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alterations of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historical significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

New Construction

The height of any new structure shall not be higher or lower than two stories of the height of adjacent buildings.

New buildings should incorporate architectural elements that divide the facade into intervals that maintain a pedestrian friendly scale. Windows and doors should be placed in a manner that is harmonious with the established rhythm of the district.

New buildings should use materials similar to those in the district or on the block, including similar color.

New Buildings should maintain the relationship to the street or property line characteristic of the district or block.

New buildings should maintain the continuity of the wall surface of the block, with wall surface predominating over window openings and window openings appearing to be cut into the wall surface.

Open Spaces

Existing open green spaces shall remain open spaces.

XII. PROMOTION PLAN

Introduction

Promotion is the fourth point in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street 4-Point Approach. The goal of promotion is to create a positive image of downtown Woonsocket. "Advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns help sell the image and promise of Main Street to the community and surrounding region."¹ A strong promotion plan will identify Woonsocket's assets, understand the changing market, and define a market niche that is unique to Woonsocket in order to communicate the downtown's unique characteristics.

This chapter will identify Woonsocket's physical, cultural and business assets, existing festivals and activities and potential new festival and activities. A plan to promote the businesses of downtown Woonsocket will also be provided. Identification of assets and existing festival and activities will allow the promotion committee to create an image for downtown Woonsocket.

Assets

Woonsocket has several physical, cultural, and business assets that should be promoted more. They all have the ability to influence new businesses as well as bringing people to the district.

PHYSICAL

Proximity to Blackstone River: Important for recreational activities and the potential incorporation of waterpower.

Bike path: Increased pedestrian footpath and the potential for new businesses related to biking.

Railroad tracks: Has the potential for future commuter rail stop, to Providence and Worcester, with the possibility to Boston.

Architectural Heritage

Rail Road Station: Physical reminder of Woonsocket's industrial past, that used the rail system to transport the products of the mills. The station has been rehabilitated and is now home to the Blackstone River Valley.

CULTURAL

Industrial Revolution History: The mill buildings are physical reminders of the development of the city of Woonsocket.

French Heritage: The city of Woonsocket was a place where French Canadians immigrated to work in the mills. Woonsocket's French Canadian heritage was important in the city's growth and is still visible today.

Chan's Restaurant: Contributes to the "new age" culture in Woonsocket. It attracts music enthusiasts from surrounding areas to see well know jazz musicians.

BUSINESSES

Stadium Theater: The theater is regionally and nationally renowned for its expansive and diverse performances. It attracts an important demographic of tourists to Woonsocket.

Museum of Work and Culture: The museum attracts various history enthusiasts, school groups, and French Canadians wanting to learn about the Blackstone River and the Industrial Revolution.

Beacon Charter School: As a school for the arts, it attracts students who do not live in the Woonsocket area. Potential new businesses could benefit from the high school aged students, by providing things that they would be interested in; trendy coffee shops, music/record stores, or diners. These places could potentially be after school hangouts.

¹ "The Main Street Four-Point Approach." <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/the-approach/>

New York Hot Wieners: A local favorite for a quick bite to eat. They have a unique style of toppings for hot dogs.

Ye Olde Fish and Chips: Local favorite that has been in business for 88 years. Positive reviews say they have the best fish and chips in Rhode Island.

Existing Festivals and Activities within Woonsocket

Woonsocket presently features a diverse range of festivals and local activities. Our team believes the following festivals should be continued and, possibly, moved to the Main Street District (if they aren't already) in order to attract tourists and generate activity in the downtown.

AutumnFest: Celebrated Columbus Day weekend in World War II Memorial Park, AutumnFest provides a family-fun atmosphere with countless activities. (<http://www.autumnfest.org/>)

Stadium Theater: Already popular, the Stadium Theater brings in a wide demographic of customers. They also support smaller theater and film festivals that

can be expanded. (<http://www.stadiumtheatre.com/>)

Spring Craft Fair at Le Moulin: Full of locally, hand-made jewelry and artifacts, the Craft Fair is a great example of an activity that has room for expansion in the community. This is a celebrated craft fair that expands on the weekly Saturday afternoon fair at Le Moulin. (<http://woonsocket.patch.com/events/spring-craft-fair-at-le-moulin>)

Woonsocket Farmers' Markets: These occur occasionally at the Thundermist Health Center. If this were expanded to occur on a weekly basis, it could create a real sense of community within Woonsocket. During the warmer weather, there is ample parking lot/open space to host the markets. (<http://woonsocket.patch.com/events/woonsocket-farmers-market-b0c13a84>)

Outdoor Ukrainian Festival: Normally held at St. Michael's, this festival is an outdoor event celebrating the Ukrainian culture. (<http://woonsocket.patch.com/events/ukrainian-festival-2>)

Christian Arts & Music Festival: In 2011, Woonsocket hosted a Christian Arts & Music Festival. This may



Fig. 30
New London, CT, coordinated with *Travel & Leisure Magazine* to feature part of their downtown in a recent issue.



Fig. 31
New London also created a Main Street travel brochure which features many of their local attractions.

provide an opportunity to bring the festival back! (<http://woonsocket.patch.com/events/christian-arts-music-festival-son-splash-2011>)

Beacon High School: As a school for the performing arts, its performances should be recognized and supported by the Main Street Community. Promoting, advertising, and attending these events could become increase in popularity in Woonsocket. (<http://www.beaconart.org/>)

Riverfest: Each year, people canoe and kayak down the Blackstone River to celebrate the natural splendor of the River. The event begins in Market Square and could easily be expanded to incorporate local merchants. <http://www.woonsocket.org/riverfest.html>

La Fete du Jour de l'An: This is a French-Canadian New Years Day celebration that used to be celebrated by the Museum of Work & Culture. This is an excellent opportunity to bring holiday visitors to Woonsocket. (<http://www.woonsocket.org/lafetedujour.html>)

New Festivals and Activities

The following is a proposed list of festivals and local activities that we believe would capitalize on Woonsocket's culture and attract large crowds to the area.

- I. New Festivals/Activities:
 - a. French Heritage Festival
 - i. French crafts persons and artists set up in market square
 - ii. Museum of Work and Culture

- provides tours on Woonsocket and the French
- iii. Stadium Theater puts a production of French Film
- iv. Restaurants have French cuisine special

- b. Monthly Music Performances
 - i. Music performances once a month in the summer
 - ii. Market Square or Island Park
- c. Farmers Market:
 - i. Farmer Market twice a month
 - ii. Market Square or Island Park
- d. Historic Walking Tour
 - i. Guided tour of downtown where the history of Woonsocket and its buildings are discussed
- e. An Evening With the Arts
 - i. Performance at the Stadium theater with free admission for Woonsocket residents
 - ii. Museum of Work and Culture displays art work
 - iii. Beacon Charter School has free refreshments

Plan to Promote the Businesses of Downtown Woonsocket

The promotion committee is charged with creating and implementing a promotion plan that will promote Woonsocket's physical, business and cultural assets and existing festivals and activities. The purpose of the following plan is to serve as a guide for promoting the downtown as a whole.



Fig. 29
West Chester, Pennsylvania, has a Main Street program that coordinates events like "Super Sunday," where local businesses and merchants bring their goods outside and streets are closed to vehicular traffic.

It is in every city's best interest to promote and support their local businesses. Businesses are the backbone of any city and if they are not represented strongly enough, there will be little desire for visitors to travel to the city and new businesses to invest in the downtown. You promote your businesses by getting the word out.

When your community buys from local businesses, money is kept within the community, helping to build your local economy. When a city takes good care of their local businesses and shows business owners that they are important, they can count on their businesses to take good care of them.

Often times, cities have an abundance of unique businesses that would have a positive impact if only they were better publicized. Businesses need to be promoted as much, if not more, than specialty events within your city. This is based on the fact that businesses are longer lasting and more substantial streams of revenue.

Some of the simplest marketing tactics for businesses are often overlooked. Here are a few examples of fail-proof styles for promoting:

- Brochures and flyers
- Urge businesses to place ads in their local newspaper
- Coupons and other incentives to encourage people to buy locally
- Suggest business create profiles on Facebook, Yelp, LinkedIn etc. to further promote their name.

The following steps are guided by ideas presented in the Promotions Committee Handbook by the Pennsylvania Downtown Center.

STEP 1: IDENTIFICATION

- Identify:
- Key physical, businesses and cultural assets
 - Existing festival and activities
- (see aforementioned lists)

STEP 2: DEFINE THE IMAGE OF MAIN STREET

The image of Woonsocket's Main Street must be crafted by the community and be based on what the vision is for the downtown Woonsocket.

A step-by-step list for creating an image for Main Street is provided in the handbook

STEP 3: CREATE A LIST OF NEW FESTIVALS AND ACTIVITIES BASED ON WOONSOCKET'S IMAGE.

What types of festivals and activities will promote community values, enhance community engagement, foster a sense of community pride, and create an identity? (Reference aforementioned list)

STEP 4: CREATE PROMOTIONS

Types of promotions:

- Retail
- Media
- Brochures
- Websites

STEP 5: EXECUTION

Committee work plan:

- Identify media relations
- Design a brochure
- Work with local business to create retail promotion
- Recruit volunteers that may be interested in helping create the website

(See appendix for examples.)

Conclusion

This chapter identifies Woonsocket's physical, cultural, and business assets as well as existing festival and activities. Expanding on existing festival and activities the students developed a list for new festivals and activities that will, create a sense of identity, promote Woonsocket's image and foster a sense of community pride. A plan to promote downtown Woonsocket has been provided along with additional resources.

XIII. TIMELINE AND WORK PLAN

INITIAL SETUP

1. Create a Main Street board of directors (existing NeighborWorks board or a new board).
2. Appoint head of committees and have the committees start working on individual items:
 - a. Organization
 - Obtain and retain volunteers
 - b. Design
 - Create attractive and clean downtown that is easy to navigate
 - c. Promotion
 - Promote positive image of Woonsocket
 - Create new events
 - d. Economic Restructuring
 - Promote new businesses
 - Assist in business retention
3. Recruit Volunteers
4. Obtain Funding (develop a sustainable funding plan)
5. Goal setting session – Main Street Board of Directors
 - a. List issues
 - b. Put issues in proper category
 - Organization
 - Promotions
 - Design
 - Economic Restructuring
 - c. Determine Priorities
 - Remove non-priorities
 - d. Create goal statement for each committee based on needs
 - e. Create (revise) a mission statement for the Main Street program
7. Activity Planning [at the committee level]
 - a. Each committee brainstorms activities
8. Action Planning [at the committee level]
 - a. Discuss timelines
 - b. Complete action plan (workplan - specifies task to complete, who works on it, funding needed, when it should be done by)

2013 Woonsocket Work Plan

MISSION STATEMENT

A mission statement is a declaration of an organization's purpose. At a workshop conducted in Woonsocket, community leaders discussed what attributes that should be included in their city's mission statement. Prevalent ideas include:

- Create a central hub of information to promote all venues in a positive and creative style
- Rebirth of downtown with different and unique boutiques and shops
- Environment that fosters multicultural, family-friendly, hip lifestyles
- Develop mixed use
- Premier Northern Rhode Island destination
- Vibrancy
- Revitalization
- Recruitment of business

VISION STATEMENT

A vision statement embodies what an organization anticipates for the future. Vision statements provide a framework for your strategic plan. The same community workshop also produced many suggestions as to what factors should be incorporated into Woonsocket's vision statement. Elements that community members voted to see addressed in their vision statement included:

- River access/connection to Main Street
- Pedestrian Friendly
- Diverse cultural experience, unique and only in Woonsocket
- Vibrant activity during both day and night along Main Street
- Railroad
- Safe, family friendly environment that promotes diversity, culture, and community
- Art
- Lively with activity along Main Street throughout the day
- Capitalize on the river

Board	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Board of Directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Diverse Board - Obtain Initial Funding - Appoint Committee Chairs - Develop 5 Year Plan - Obtain Main Street Office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain funding - Hire full time Main Street Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Obtain funding
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attract and retain volunteers - Promote membership - Strengthen partnerships with "for-profit" businesses - Creation of Main Street Property / Tenant Inventory - Volunteer orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on sustainable funding for the Main Street program - Volunteer appreciation day - volunteer recruitment - volunteer orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer recruitment - Volunteer appreciation event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer recruitment - Volunteer appreciation event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Volunteer recruitment - Volunteer appreciation event
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Look into LHD - Work with city on zoning changes - work with city on building codes - create sidewalk maintenance plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold information workshop for property owners on benefits of historic rehabilitation - Improve Wayfinding; signage - implement sidewalk maintenance plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plant container / potted trees - Install new lighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assist in rehabilitation of downtown building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create Island Park redesign plan
Economic Restructuring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify economic needs of downtown - Develop relationship with owners - Identify Vacant buildings - Advertise Vacant Buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold information workshop for business owners on storefront display 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Co-Op grocery store 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bookstore - Cafe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New retail store
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertise Main Street Program - Create Banners - Create list of all businesses - Update existing Website - Create Newsletter - Downtown Woonsocket Marketing Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create downtown brochure - Create business promotion guide - Establish 1 new event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish New Event - Information Kiosk - Partner with other nearby communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish New event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish New Event

Fig. 32

Five-year work plan and timeline for Main Street implementation.

XIV. CONCLUSION

The information presented in this report, is for the benefit of the City of Woonsocket. The report is a compilation of work done by Roger Williams University graduate students as well as information that has been prepared by other organizations working toward downtown revitalization.

Since its conception in 1977, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program has been successful across the country in revitalizing historic downtowns. Woonsocket, Rhode Island has all the resources, assets, and community support to potentially become one of the many success stories. The report follows the 4-Point Approach (Organization, Economic Restructuring, Design, and Promotion), provides recommendations for use, and has established the framework and foundation for Woonsocket to start a Main Street Program.

After looking over other studies' boundary areas and spending time on-site, the students developed a boundary area that encompasses Woonsocket's historical assets located within the downtown. The boundary justification thoughtfully considered Woonsocket's existing historic fabric and integrity. The identification of cultural resources within the boundary allowed for recommendations for the preservation and treatment of existing assets.

One of the goals of this report was to assess and bring together all existing reports that have been conducted regarding the revitalization of Woonsocket. Accumulating all existing material was necessary to understand the work that has been done, but, more importantly, to understand what needed and needs to be done.

The report shares recommendations for an organization to run the Main Street Program in Woonsocket. The organization needs a strong leader to engage the community and stakeholders. A strong organization that has clear vision and mission statements, in addition to explicit goals, is important in the establishment of a Main Street Program.

Those items are used to engage the community to gain support and a strong volunteer base. Volunteers are the foundation of a Main Street Program. They are needed to help implement long-range plans.

Buildings are the face of any downtown, as they reflect the overall character of the community. The design recommendations that have been set forth will help form and guide a design committee in the adoption of design guidelines. Design guidelines are important for the preservation of Woonsocket's historical assets as they assist in making the community a more attractive place to live, work and visit.

The promotion portion of this report identifies Woonsocket's physical, cultural, and business assets in order to expand and improve activities within the downtown. In addition, it provides a plan to promote the downtown as a whole, while capitalizing on existing assets, along with promoting the vision of Woonsocket.

The students have identified and created a boundary for the 'Woonsocket Main Street Districts' Trade area in order to understand which types of businesses would thrive in downtown. An analysis of strong and weak areas in the district have been identified along with recommendations to create a new retail cluster in the middle Main Street area that will bridge the gap between the north and south ends of Main Street.

Downtown is the historic, commercial, and cultural center of Woonsocket. Main Street, the face of Woonsocket, will preserve and promote its historic buildings and cultural assets, while ensuring that future changes will respect and enhance the areas aesthetic appeal. This report's overall goal was to identify and promote Woonsocket's historical and cultural assets, but also to reveal its potential to become a welcoming area that is vibrant and pedestrian friendly.