

Facts of Life About Commercial District Revitalization

Here is some hard won but solid advice about revitalizing a commercial district:

1. **There is no magic bullet**, no formulas, no big fix answers, nor easy solutions. The [Main Street approach](#) cannot save you from hard work, but it can substantially improve your chances for success by giving you an effective and structured framework for your revitalization efforts.
2. **There are no handouts**. Most traditional government and foundation grants shun projects that involve commercial enterprises, and the days of urban renewal's big fix projects are gone.
3. **Most resources are local**. Whether you need people or money to make projects happen, they are most likely to be found in the community, and YOU must find them.
4. **Not everyone will like you**, not even everyone you must work with. You must forge coalitions that have never been formed, and many of the people involved may not be used to working with each other.
5. **Everyone has an agenda**, and it is probably not just commercial district revitalization. YOU must create the culture — and the priority — for Main Street's renewal.
6. **Some change will be needed**. Most traditional commercial districts will never again be able to provide the range of goods and services they offered decades ago. To support the rehabilitation and maintenance of commercial areas in today's market, we must aggressively expand Main Street's business mix — and its market area.
7. **You can't do it alone**. Main Street is not entirely city hall's responsibility, but independent businesses owners can't do it alone, and neither can citizen activists. A collaborative effort, combining the unique skills and vantage points of public and private sectors, is essential.
8. **Revitalization won't happen overnight**. It is a gradual process that begins with small steps, eventually building capacity to tackle larger, more complicated revitalization projects and problems. "Big fix" solutions to commercial district revitalization almost always fail to bring the kind of lasting, positive change that they promise.
9. **The process is never finished**. Traditional commercial districts, like shopping malls or industrial parks, require full-time, professional management.
10. **You are just as qualified as anyone else to make it happen**. Thousands of concerned citizens and business owners make a difference in revitalizing their downtowns and commercial districts just by stepping up to help, regardless of experience or background. We can provide the tools to help you help your district.