



DOWNTOWN NORTH BATTLEFORD
STRATEGIC PLAN

AUGUST 2013

Nuguru Business & Marketing Consultants Inc.



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Introduction

The Downtown North Battleford (BID) contracted Nuguru to provide facilitation for the development of the Strategic Plan and Initial Work Plan. The Strategic Planning session was held at the North Battleford Innovation Credit Union board room on August 27th and 28th, 2013. This report compiles and organizes the information from that session into the following strategic plan.

The sessions were designed to review and create the required elements of strategy (Vision, Mission, Goals and Key Priorities) as well as the development of a one year work plan.

Executive Summary

The Downtown North Battleford BID was formed in March of 2013, but is now becoming operational with the recent hiring of an Executive Director and the development of a formalized board and committees. The purpose of this report is to address the need for mission and vision statements, a strategic plan, and a work plan. This Strategic Plan focuses on priorities over the next three years with an emphasis on the next twelve months. Through various exercises the committee compiled a list of priorities, focusing their efforts on five main issues that need to be addressed. From these five issues, detailed projects and initiatives were created and put into an initial work plan. Initial activities included improving communication with the city, researching bylaws and developing list of needed bylaws, hosting events, completion of the inventory of empty buildings, and an awareness campaign.

Methodology

The session began with a discussion of the vision, mission and goals of the BID and a discussion about branding and taglines. A number of exercises were used to identify the short term challenges to be addressed and to assess the target markets. A work plan was developed for the short term based on priorities identified in the Focus Five exercises.

Vision, Mission and Tagline

A new Vision and Mission were required as the organization is newly created. Using descriptors and comparatives to other BIDS, a new Vision and Mission were developed.

Descriptors of Downtown North Battleford

In this exercise, the Board was asked what words they would want others to use to describe the organization itself. These words were used in the creation of the Mission and Vision and can later be used to assess organization performance through surveys.

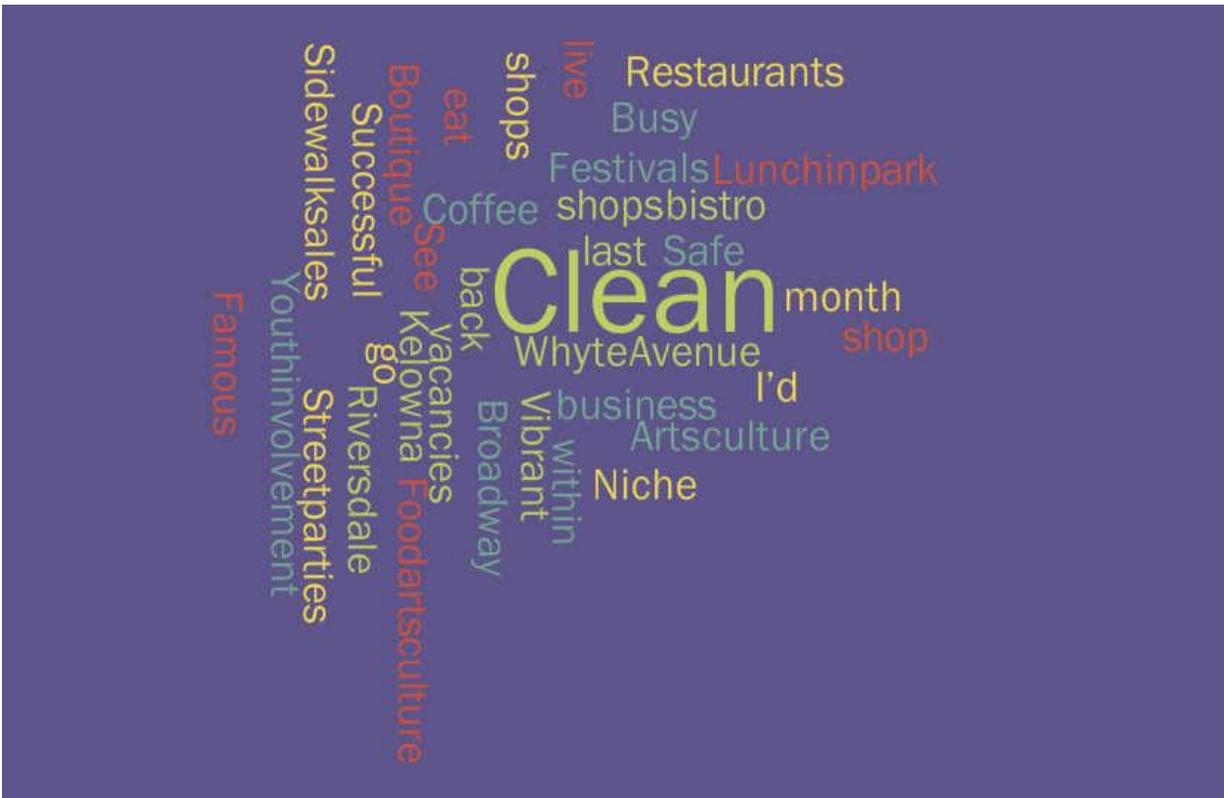
| | |
|------------------|--|
| Energetic | Environment |
| Forward-thinking | Supportive of business |
| Fixers | Transparent |
| Perseverance | Focused |
| Enthusiastic | Purpose |
| Available | Organized |
| Approachable | Dependable-do what we say we're going to |
| Getting it done | Partners |
| Champion | Defining what vision looks like |
| Motivated | Resilient |
| Determined | Trust |



In the second exercise, the Board was asked what they wanted people to say about downtown or to suggest other downtowns they wanted to emulate. The Board provided the following descriptors and locations.

| | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Clean | I shop there |
| Safe | See the business |
| Vibrant/Busy | I'd go back |
| Sidewalk sales | Restaurants |
| Been there within last month | Coffee shops/bistro |
| Successful | Arts/culture |
| No vacancies | Boutique shops |
| I live there | Broadway Avenue |
| Downtown North Battleford | Moose Jaw downtown |

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| Swift Current downtown | Kelowna |
| Whyte Avenue | Food/arts/culture |
| Niche | Famous |
| Youth involvement | Street parties |
| Lunch in park | Festivals |



The vision and mission of similar BIDS were reviewed from across North America. In general, the branding of many organizations was difficult to understand, mission and visions were unclear or not present, websites were difficult to navigate, and target markets were not clearly identified.

The final vision and mission were developed by the Board and are as follows:

VISION

To make Downtown the place to be; an active and inviting boutique shopping destination with a mix of retail, restaurants and events.

MISSION

To champion the transformation of Downtown North Battleford through investment attraction, signature events and partnerships.

TAGLINES

The organization currently has developed a number of potential taglines including, “We’re glad you’re here”, “Your Destination Place”, and “Surprise Yourself”.

LOGO

The individual circles represent the diversity of business and people downtown. The large circle represents Downtown North Battleford and its merchants, what they do for the community as a whole by providing opportunity and strengthening pride.

Environmental Scan

In this strategic planning session, we used three exercises to identify the target audience, Board priorities, and the challenges faced by the BID in reaching their goals. Downtown North Battleford already has a pull as a niche shopping destination, financial centre, and professional services location but that much more has to be done to add attractions and traffic.

Target Markets

There are really two target markets: business owners (including non-resident landowners and professionals) and consumers. Additional attraction of complementary businesses and the creation of signature events are the keys for success.

Consumer traffic is increasing, but many consumers have false perceptions about the Downtown North Battleford area. Strategies to promote the available good and services through a “Where?” campaign and through media stories of positive experiences – a day of shopping in Downtown North Battleford – are required.

Priorities – Focus Five

The Board believes that the right mix of business in Downtown North Battleford combined with the development of events that bring people to the neighborhood, should be the primary focus of the BID. The priorities, ranked by the Board, are as follows:

1. *Change perception*

- a. Communicate
- b. Be transparent
- c. Plan
- d. Repeat as required

2. *Improve Aesthetic*

- a. Communities in bloom
- b. Parks
- c. Keep it up with clean team (unified plan – four seasonal changes , garbage can plan)

3. *Address Empty buildings*

- a. Inventory
- b. Reach out to owners-engage them, ask permission for window filler/space use

4. *Increase Social Interaction*

- a. Lunch in park
- b. “Where Campaign”
- c. “Did you Know Campaign”,
- d. Clean Team
- e. Building Owners Communication Strategy

5. *Improve Relationship with the City*

- a. Get to know city counselors
- b. How can we help them-they help us
- c. Bylaws – create inventory of needed bylaws. Research bylaws to see what’s there and to see what’s not being enforced. Some bylaws may exist already.

Challenges

Downtown North Battleford remains an affordable and interesting business location, but the reputation of the neighbourhood has traditionally discouraged investment. There is a perception of Downtown North Battleford as unsafe and unclean – studies have noted that part of this perception is commonly due to a lack of traffic during certain hours or a lack of activities or businesses that encourage traffic.

The Board discussed the barriers to success and the ways in which they can address them. The barriers are common in many downtown environments, but many communities have managed to revitalize downtown in spite of the challenges.

Barriers

1. Lack of funding-address this by obtaining grants, partnerships with city, tax levy, acceptance of in-kind donations, sponsorships
2. Buy-in factor of business owners-address by articulating the success, pushing back (any success will make the buy-in easier)
3. Loss of focus and bad/stagnant leadership- business owners/building owners-address by ensuring healthy turnover of leadership; always looking outside the inner circle for new innovative positive people
4. Lack of accountability-address by keeping government on task and aware of our support (applies to business owners as well)
5. Lack of results or impatience-address by celebrating small successes
6. Lack of relationship with the City of North Battleford
7. Absentee Landlords
8. Loss of momentum as BID
9. Succession and lack of new businesses
10. Perception that BID will fix all
11. Business owners themselves have to make changes

How do you address the barriers (Mitigation Strategies)?

1. Keep communications open
2. Bring new ideas
3. Ask why we can, not why we can't
4. Address bylaw enforcement and/or changes
5. Accomplish what we said we would
6. Offer support and incentives to young entrepreneurs
7. Engage all business owners-annual meetings; newsletters
8. Engage other organizations
9. Do not be afraid

Strategic Focus Areas – Work Plan Development

The Board identified the five key focus areas and prioritized them for 2013 to ensure the Downtown North Battleford BID is continuing to work towards its desired future direction. The majority of the Board's focus is on the first two priorities. The Board's discussion and direction will assist management in developing the 2013-2014 work plan.

FOCUS FIVE

YEAR ONE

1. Address empty buildings- inventory list and owners, incentive and penalties strategies, partner with City
2. Events - increase social interaction-populating downtown; communicate with residents; coffee shop; pub/bar; shut down street one evening a week
3. Esthetic changes - garbage cans/benches/planters. Incentives to improve look and instill pride; streetscape program, Benjamin Moore grants
4. Change perceptions-find champions to spread word; publicize successes; gain trust
5. Improve or foster relationship with City-get to know them better; define their role vs. our role, encourage to be proactive instead of reactive, Executive Director to report quarterly at city council meetings

Other areas of focus included: continued momentum, decrease vacancy by 25%-retain current business; get the "ugh" out of downtown-change the reactionary tone to one that is educated celebration; public awareness of what is downtown-signage and facts (Hall of Fame, Allen Sapp, Phase 4, award winning jerky, 100 year old business).

NEXT THREE MONTHS

WHAT THINGS CAN WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON AND DO REALLY WELL?

1. Proposal to the City of North Battleford to secure funding/approval.
 - a. Resources: Lisa, Derek plus two board members; 3 weeks 40% of Lisa's time; entire board to input. Bylaw committee would work to understand bylaws. Get together with council (\$200 social event coffee and muffins)
2. 75% participation in Event #1. Requires a shoe leather blitz (door to door invitations/advertising)
 - a. Resources: Budget to be determined; 40% of Lisa's time over the next three weeks
3. Full media coverage blitz
 - a. First quarter, testimonials, interview clean team. Talk to all media outlets (Daily News, Battleford's News Optimist, Radio Stations)
4. Window and Christmas Continuity – "downtown is one entity", October project
 - a. Resources: Lisa, budget \$2000
5. Sidewalk winter safety - Friendly neighbor approach, talk to bylaw enforcement or landowners

Events: 2 events-Fall Festival September 28; Santa Parade November 23, panoramic picture

Projects

- Begin monthly newsletter or column – determine cost
- Garbage cans- \$2000 budget, check labour by comp high school, work with city for installation. Lisa and Rhonda
- Seasonal décor-Christmas trees (\$1000 less communities in bloom, sponsorship from BTC-Lisa), solar lights (BTC can get trees from up north; communities in bloom). Lisa and Kathy
- Bylaws-get together with city council and present a bylaw hit list

Conclusion

The Downtown North Battleford BID's strategic plan and work plan aggressively identifies the direction and tasks to be completed over the next few years. The organization must clearly focus on the positive aspects of the BID area to influence public perception and investment. The decay of downtown North Battleford has been a 25 year process and revitalization will require time, dedication, and partnerships.

Appendix

Strategic Planning Platform

Agenda

- Introductions
- Vision and Mission Review
- Famous
- Focus Five
- Gaps, Barriers, and Risk
- Year One – Work Plan
- Next Steps

Vision and Mission Creation

Vision and Mission

- Descriptor Exercise
 - What do we want people to say about the organization?
 - Taglines/Branding
 - What does NB Downtown want to be famous for?
 - Who do you need to impress?
 - Who are the influencers?
 - Who are the stakeholders?
 - Who do you need to attract and why?
 - What should they say about you?
 - What's the message you want repeated?
 - What needs to be changed to be famous?
 - What are the biggest challenges?
 - What can you influence?
 - Who influences the challenges?

Focus 5

- What are the five most important things to accomplish over the next three years?
- Why are these the most important?

Barriers

- What could stop you from achieving your goals?
- How do you address the barriers (mitigation strategies)?

One Block

- Pick one block in downtown NB and design it for new development and business attraction

Top Five

1. Change Perception
2. Change Aesthetic
3. Address Empty Buildings/Business Attraction
4. Increase Social Interaction
5. Improve relationship with City of NB

Year One

- From our discussions, what do we need to accomplish or launch this year if we are to reach our Focus Five Goals?
- How are these reflected in the targets for next year?
- Do we have the resources (dollars, staff, and time)?

Work Plan Development

- Tasks over the next year with resources required, breakdown of steps, timelines, responsibilities, and measurements
- Primary and Secondary Tasks

Next Steps

- Provide Report back to the group in draft form by September 5th
- Gather Input to create Final Report by September 12th