

RDBID's Application to the Main Street Saskatchewan Program Proposed Work Plan

Submitted by Regina Downtown BID

August, 2014

Background

The Main Street Saskatchewan program is a downtown revitalization program that is administered by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport. The program supplies training, technical services, and funding support for accredited members. Main Street Saskatchewan focuses on using the Four-Point Approach to begin a long-term reversal of trends that saw businesses and residents flocking to the suburbs post-World War II.

Main Street originates from a program that was developed in the United States in the late-1970s. Since then, the program has been used to rejuvenate approximately 2,000 communities, generating \$54B in investment, 450,000 jobs and over 200,000 building rehabilitations in the US. In Canada, Alberta and Quebec currently have programs that are based on this Main Street model.

From 2011-2014, Main Street Saskatchewan implemented a convincing demonstration program. In the pilot communities of Indian Head, Maple Creek, Wolseley, and Prince Albert, the program was directly responsible for the creation of 66 new jobs, the opening of 22 new businesses, and \$4.9M committed to historic building and streetscape improvements. Nearly 14,000 volunteer hours on Main Street specific projects contributed towards improved attitudes and perception towards downtown.

At the conclusion of the demonstration program, the Ministry decided to implement Main Street Saskatchewan as a permanent program. Beginning in 2014, they will be granting two communities in the province with accredited status through a highly competitive application process. For more information on the Main Street Saskatchewan program, please visit <http://www.pcs.gov.sk.ca/MainStreet>.

The Main Street Four-Point Approach

The Four-Point Approach is a community-driven, self-help approach to downtown revitalization. The following four areas of activity operate simultaneously to ensure successful, sustainable revitalization.

1. **Community Organization** – Focus on building consensus and collaboration between all groups that have a stake in the success of downtown. Broad support makes it easier to work toward a common goal, and draws on a broad range of perspectives and skill-sets.
2. **Economic Restructuring** – Strengthening and diversifying downtown's economic base. This involves retaining and expanding existing businesses and attracting new ones to achieve a commercial mix to meet the needs of the area. Key to this is finding new commercial uses in existing unused or underutilized properties.
3. **Marketing/Promotion** – Advertising, promotions, special events and branding to create a positive image of downtown as a distinctive and appealing place to shop, visit, operate a business or invest.

4. **Design/Heritage Conservation** – Creating an inviting pedestrian-oriented downtown through public realm improvements, rehabilitation of heritage buildings, and new construction that is compatible with the area’s historic character.

Structure of Main Street Saskatchewan

Local Main Street programs are overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors that has overall responsibility for the program’s direction, operation and finances. A paid program coordinator manages the administration of the program, supports the board in implementing the Main Street work plan, and serves as a liaison among business people, property owners, other interest groups, and the community-at-large.

The Ministry’s Role

The Ministry provides training in the Four-Point Approach and supports the development and promotion of the Main Street brand. The Ministry also oversees the grant funding that is available to local programs through the MSSP. Accredited tier communities receive a one-time \$25,000 matching grant to support the development of the Community Vision and Work Plan.

Three additional grants can be accessed on a competitive basis.

Available only to Accredited members:

1. The Main Street Heritage Conservation Grant supports historic building rehabilitation.
2. The Main Street Enhancement Grant for public realm improvements, non-historic building improvements, and event staging

Available to both Accredited and Affiliate members:

3. The Main Street Capacity Building Grant that provides funding for activities that enhance knowledge and skills related to the Four-Points.

Application Process

The application deadline for the Main Street Saskatchewan program is September 5th, 2014; while the deadline for the inclusion of the municipal resolution has been extended to September 25th. Applicants will be notified of the application results approximately six weeks after the closing date.

RDBID’s Application

The Regina Downtown Business Improvement will be applying for the Accredited Tier of the Main Street Saskatchewan program. The program will be managed and funded by RDBID. A separate Main Street Committee will be struck. The Main Street Committee will be administered by the program coordinator and will report to the Regina Downtown Business Improvement District Board of Directors. New policies will be drafted and adopted acknowledging the binding decisions of the Main Street Committee. A

separate project code for Main Street expenses will be set up within our existing financial system. This will allow us to separate Main Street specific projects from our existing, ongoing projects. Main Street specific financial reports will be easily generated.

Contribution from the City of Regina

Our enrollment in the MSSP requires the continued support in municipality's heritage conservation activities such as the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program, which was recently approved by City Council on August 25th. Subsequently, this requires the resource time of the City of Regina staff. We anticipate that there will be approximately 300 hours in 2015 based on our proposed work plan.

Relation to the Regina Downtown Neighbourhood Plan

The formation of Main Street Regina will support or fulfill specific actions within the RDNP as follows:

7.4 Business

B.1 - Action 2

Develop policies to reinforce "cluster" identity by encouraging and supporting the identified uses, including encouraging small businesses to locate/relocate downtown.

B.5 – Action 1

Develop an incentives program to encourage property owners to improve building facades and add high quality landscaping to existing surface parking lots. A range of incentives should be offered, providing the City with the flexibility to consider each development on a case-by-case basis, with the value of the incentive varying in relation to the scale and permanence of the development.

7.5 Culture

C.1 – Action 1

Develop a Cultural Plan in consultation with the Regina Arts Commission and a cultural planning consultant.

C.4 – Action 1

Update the heritage inventory to include modern architectural forms and heritage landscapes. This will require a complete assessment of existing Heritage Stock and buildings listed in the Heritage Holding By-law.

C.4 – Action 2

To foster a culture of preservation, create an inventory of heritage features worth retaining in each building on the Heritage Holding By-law. This list should be maintained by the City Centre Branch and be available to the public and developers seeking to make changes to Designated Heritage Buildings and buildings on the Heritage Holding By-law.

C.4 – Action 3

Raise awareness and understanding of current heritage management policies, guidelines, and incentive programs.

C.4 – Action 4

Assemble a compiled heritage management strategy, presented in a form that is easily accessible to the public.

C.4 – Action 5

Amend the tax structure that currently encourages and provides an incentive for landowners to remove heritage buildings and build parking lots.

C.4 – Action 6

Through the authority of the City Development Officer, demand the highest standards of design and compatibility of all new development in a heritage context. Explore the possibility of amending *The Heritage Property Act* to delegate authority from City Council to City Development Officer to deny applications to demolish heritage resources.

C.4 – Action 7

Develop a specific policy that makes the connection between heritage policy and the fulfillment of other Downtown goals such as attracting tourists, façade improvement, and the objectives of the Culture Plan.

C.4 – Action 8

Formally adopt the Federal Standards and Guidelines for heritage, and align heritage policy language with those standards.