

## Staff Report

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**Report To:** OSDIA  
**Report From:** Pamela Coulter, Director of Community Services  
**Meeting Date:** July 10, 2019  
**Report Code:** CS-19-094  
**Subject:** Downtown Action and Marketing Plan - Procurement

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### Recommendations:

THAT in consideration of Staff Report CS-19-094 respecting a Downtown Action and Marketing Plan - Procurement, the OSDIA support the concept of an Action and Marketing Plan and request that City staff prepare a draft RFP for consideration, and further,

THAT the OSDIA request that staff issue an RFP on behalf of the DIA for this work, and further,

THAT the OSDIA request that City Council consider partnering on this initiative and also consider a budget amendment to allocate up to \$15,000 (up to half the cost to an upset of \$30,000) from the Rural Economic Development reserve to the Downtown Action and Marketing Plan initiative.

### Strategic Initiative:

- 1.4 – Continue to Promote the Downtown*
- 3.1 – Promote Owen Sound as Where You Want to Live*
- 7.1 – Continue to Deliver Select Free City events to Residents*

### Background:

Sections 8 and 9 of the Agreement between the City and OSDIA outlines the responsibilities of the City in the areas of Events/Attractions and Marketing & Promotion.

In the area of **Events**, City Staff will:

- Work with the OSDIA and Marketing Committee to establish, based on the OSDIA budget, a program of annual OSDIA Events/Attractions. The event planning will be completed by the end of January each year;
- Work to plan, market and promote, and deliver each event in accordance with the plan set and approved by the OSDIA Board; and
- Report on the progress and do a wrap-up of each event, including financial performance, to the OSDIA board.

At the February 2019 meeting, the Board prioritized the events for 2019 and a March 2019 report outlined each event that would be presented. For each event, there is an allocated budget to support the production of the event as well as an allocation of the budget to implement the marketing plan.

The Agreement also provides that in the area of **Marketing and Promotion**, City Staff will:

- Work with the OSDIA Board and Marketing Committee to establish, based on the OSDIA budget, an annual plan for marketing and promotion;
- Include print, web and social media marketing and promotion in the plan; and
- Work to implement the plan and report to the OSDIA Board twice annually on the progress.

On June 12, 2019, City staff attended the OSDIA meeting to provide an update respecting marketing efforts in addition to special efforts being made during the construction of Phase I of the Downtown River Precinct.

At both the March and June meetings, there was discussion regarding a marketing action plan and branding initiative. The following resolutions have been approved in this regard:

DIA-190313-005

*THAT in consideration of Staff Report [CS-19-029](#), respecting the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Areas 2019 Events, the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area (OSDIA) Board of Management:*

*1. Recommends that City Staff proceed with the planning and execution of OSDIA events as outlined in this report; and*

2. *Recommends that approximately \$14,468.00 be set aside for a 'DIA Strategy' to be determined by the OSDIA Board of Management.*

DIA-190612-011 (draft June resolution)

*THAT in consideration of the presentation by the Manager of Community Development and Marketing regarding an update to the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area Board of Management respecting Downtown River Precinct Project Marketing and Promotion During Construction, the Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area Board of Management requests that staff to prepare a report for the July 10, 2019 Owen Sound Downtown Improvement Area Board of Management meeting outlining options with respect to moving forward to retain a consultant to undertake a marketing and re-branding initiative.*

As noted, the Agreement provides that City staff will work with the OSDIA Board to develop a marketing plan and work to implement the plan. There has been some interest in leveraging the knowledge and creative expertise of a marketing expert/agency to create a plan for marketing as well as a branding strategy for the downtown. This would include consultation with the Board and the membership and be implemented over a determined timeframe.

Roger Brooks, a well-known researcher and author on building communities, has surveyed over 400 successful downtowns and using an 80-item list, developed the 20 ingredients that were most common ingredients that led to the success of these places. A summary is found in Attachment 1.

Downtown Owen Sound already has many key ingredients on the list and continues to make progress in other areas. The first item on the list:

*1. They all begin with a plan*

*Successful communities start with a plan. Bring together your partners and stakeholders and work together so that everyone's efforts are towards common goals and a defined direction.*

- *Every community has different features, so each community needs its own special Branding, Development and Marketing Action Plan;*
- *Identify what sets your community apart from everyone else. Make that the focus of your executive summary and your detailed vision statement. That will be your strongest sales tool.*

- *Your action plan needs to include your brand and brand promise, product development plan and marketing plan.*
- *Your Action Plan needs to be a detailed "to-do-list".*

*(Roger Brooks, The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination)*

## **Analysis:**

The idea of the Board to work in partnership with its members to develop a Downtown Action and Marketing Plan is in keeping with the Vision and Mission of the DIA.

## **Procurement**

The OSDIA Policy and Procedure includes the following policy respecting purchasing:

### **6.13 Purchasing**

Preference must be given to merchants within the OSDIA boundary. However, if there is a significant difference in price (i.e. a significant higher price in relation to the product) between an OSDIA merchant and a merchant outside of the OSDIA boundary then the item may be purchased from the merchant outside of the OSDIA boundary. Single, standard purchases of any budgeted item under \$2,000 are at the discretion of the Administrator. Single purchases of any budgeted item over \$2,000 require prior approval of the Board. Quotes are required when and if identified by the Board of Management and as the Board directs.

It is estimated that the project would cost an estimated \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Based on the estimated value of the project, the local preference identified within the OSDIA purchasing policy should not be utilized as it could be open for challenge. Using the City's Purchasing By-law for guidance, a Request for Proposal would be an appropriate mechanism through which to retain such a service.

The Request for Proposal would include a description of the project as well as a scoring tool that would be used to evaluate all proposals.

A cross-functional evaluation committee consisting of City staff and OSDIA Board members could score the proposals and bring forward a recommendation to the Board.





# The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown

- HANDOUT -

# The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination | Handout

## Where did this come from?

For more than 30 years the DDI team has worked around the world helping communities become outstanding destinations for investment, new business opportunities, and as a place to live and visit. Coming from the tourism industry, we discovered an interesting fact: The number one activity of visitors in the world is shopping, dining and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting – your downtowns. This is where 80% of all non-lodging tourism spending takes place. That's right: 80%.

Is it any wonder that Disney has built Downtown Disney right next to its theme parks? It's to capture that visitor spending. Understanding this changed our business – we realized that downtowns are critically important to any tourism program and that downtown and destination marketing organizations should be joined at the hip.

Digging a little further, we found a couple more interesting facts:

1. If you don't hang out in your own downtown, neither will visitors. Visitors go where residents go. If that's somewhere besides downtown, that's where visitors will go as well.
2. Overnight visitors spend the night where there are things to do after 6:00 pm. In fact, 70% of all consumer retail spending, including that of visitors, now takes place during the evening hours. Are you open?

But even with this information, a big question loomed: What does it take to create a downtown where visitors AND locals would spend time and money? We decided to find out.

We developed a list of criteria that included nearly 80 items: from store hours, to parking limits, to business mix, wayfinding signage and marketing programs.

We then surveyed 400 successful downtowns and downtown districts (big and small) throughout the U.S., Canada, and Western Europe. Using the 80-item list we found the 20 most common ingredients that led to their success.

Few downtowns had all 20 ingredients, but those with 17 or more got an "A" from our research and were clearly successful destinations. Many had 15 or 16 and those earned a "B," and those with 13 or 14 earned a "C." After working with nearly a thousand communities and surveying hundreds of others, we found that more than 600 of those did not meet the qualifications to earn a "C," and were not nearly as successful.

Additional criteria to determine success was then included:

- The downtowns or districts had to have at least a 97% or higher occupancy rate in the core district or area being surveyed.
- The lease rates had to be "market rate" or higher compared to similar cities and towns in the state, province, or region.
- The turnover had to be less than 5% per year. Revolving door downtowns are not sustainable in the long run.
- They downtowns or districts are seen as the lifeblood of the community. Full of activity and life.

There are 19,500 cities and towns in the U.S., and of those, 18,500 have populations of less than 40,000 residents. In Canada there are more than 8,000 cities, towns and villages, of which more than 7,500 have smaller populations. And the majority of these cities and towns have struggling downtowns. We are in an age when people want to spend time in vibrant downtowns more than ever before. Yet because many downtowns have property owners who do not work together with a common vision, many of whom are absentee owners, or they have regulations that stifle successful retail or other dysfunctional qualities, developers are now building new "downtowns" – lifestyle retail centers. These are designed to mimic the traditional downtown of yesteryear. Virtually all of them use these same 20 ingredients to ensure their success.

As you go through the 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown, see how your downtown or district stacks up. If you have 13 or more of these ingredients, wonderful! Please let us know! We are always updating our research, looking for great case histories, and would love to share your story with others.

For those of you working hard to turn your downtown into an outstanding destination, we hope these ingredients can become your "Action Plan" so that your community can enjoy the benefits of an enjoyable, economically healthy and vibrant downtown. We would love to add your community to our list of Outstanding Downtowns.

## The Property Owners List



### 1. They all begin with a plan

Successful communities start with a plan. Bring together your partners and stakeholders, and work together so that everyone's efforts are towards common goals and a defined direction.

- Every community has different features, so each community needs its own special Branding, Development & Marketing Action Plan.
- Identify what sets your community apart from everyone else. Make that the focus of your executive summary and your detailed vision statement. That will be your strongest sales tool.
- Your Action Plan needs to include your brand and brand promise, product development plan, and marketing plan.
- Your Action Plan needs to be a detailed "to-do list."



### 2. They defined a strong brand and retail focus

Branding is perhaps the most misunderstood concept in the world, yet here we are smack dab in the middle of the "Era of the Brand." Outstanding destinations have a strong brand and a successful, vibrant retail core.

- Brands are perceptions
- Brands are built on product
- Brands are earned: Good or Bad
- Brands are built using public relations and word of mouth
- Brands must be experiential
- Branding is the art of differentiation
- Jettison the generic



## The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination | Handout



### 3. They orchestrated recruitment of “critical mass” or “clustering.”

Successful downtowns need to have a critical mass of like businesses. This would include a minimum in three lineal blocks:

- **Ten places that sell food:** soda fountain, coffee shop, bistro, café, sit-down restaurant, wine store, deli, confectionery.
- **Ten destination retail shops:** galleries, antiques (not second hand stores), collectibles, books, clothing, home accents, outfitters, brand-specific businesses, garden specialties, kitchen stores, cigars, etc.
- **Ten places open after 6:00 pm:** entertainment, theater (movies, performing arts), bars & bistros, specialty shops, dining, open air markets, etc.

### 4. They each have “anchor tenants”

An anchor tenant is your primary lure – what makes you worth a special trip.

Like every mall, every town relies on anchor businesses to attract customers, and all the other businesses benefit.

To be a successful community, you must have at least one or two anchor businesses, ones that people would drive an hour – or more – to visit.

Always promote your anchor tenants – your primary lures. Create a “best of” brochure for your community that highlights your very best attractions and businesses.

### 5. Lease agreements included defined operating hours and days

- 70% of all consumer spending (both locals and visitors) takes place after 6:00 pm. Are you open?
- People spend the night where there are things to do after 6:00 pm. Visitors don't like sitting in a hotel room after dinner watching TV.
- Conferences and conventions are booked around things to do AFTER the meetings adjourn that day.
- The majority of the businesses must be open after 6:00, not just a few. If half the stores in the mall closed at 6:00 rather than 9:00, would you go to the mall after 6:00?
- Start by staying open on Friday and Saturdays until 7:00 pm the first year, then add Thursday, then Wednesday.
- Bring nighttime music and entertainment downtown to provide incentives for people to go.

## The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination | Handout



### 6. People living and/or staying downtown

- The reinvention of downtowns also includes residential upper-story development: condos, loft apartments, downtown hotels and a business mix to support them.
- Residential drives retail. What comes first? A downtown that people will want to live in. This includes businesses open AFTER 6:00, entertainment, all in a pedestrian-friendly, attractive downtown setting – a “Third Place:” the place we want to live and hang out.
- Hotel development downtown is another great mix that provides “new” customers nearly every day. Hotel development helps restaurants and destination retail shops flourish.



### 7. Pioneers with patient money were convinced to invest

- Every downtown revitalization effort requires property owners with patient money, the will to “make a difference” and the ability to think long-term.
- Reduce rental rates until you develop the critical mass so that key merchants can stay alive until you become a destination downtown.
- Incentives need to happen from the property owners in terms of rent abatements, reduced lease rates, and a focus on the tenant mix: the critical mass.
- It takes one-third of the property owners, working together, to “reinvent” downtown in terms of business mix, curb appeal, upper story living units, etc.
- Every downtown effort requires tireless pioneers and those who will champion the cause. Enthusiasm is contagious and is an essential ingredient for every revitalization effort.



### 8. They started with just one or two blocks - a “demonstration project”

Begin revitalization in a very small area – concentrate your efforts so they make a big impact fast – just one or two blocks.

Where to start? Where the property owners are most willing to help with the efforts.

Concentrate the focus of creating critical mass in those blocks. Work with property owners on lease agreements, choice of tenants, facades, beautification.

Timeline: Three years. The rest of downtown will see the results and follow along – driven by the market.

## The Public Sector List



### 9. Solving the parking dilemma

- Two-hour parking in a pedestrian-friendly downtown restricts spending.
- If you insist on two-hour parking, then identify WHERE the all-day or extended hour parking is located.
- It doesn't have to be free, but needs to be reasonable.
- Consider incentive parking programs:
  - Spend \$20 or more and get the parking free
  - Have local banks and businesses "sponsor" free-parking days or evenings
  - Reduce the parking fees the longer they park downtown
- Angle-in parking generates increased sales over parallel parking. Additionally you'll get a third more spaces in the same area.



### 10. Public washrooms

- The number one reason passers-by stop in a town is to use restroom facilities.
- Restrooms should be in the heart of spending districts. Once visitors get out of the car, you have a four-times greater chance of getting them to spend money.
- Make sure they are open 24-hours a day



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## 11. Development of gathering places

- Turn parks into plazas. Common ingredients include:
- Permanent home for an outdoor open market with permanent structures. Open air (Farmers) markets should be placed in the heart of spending districts.
- Interactive water features
- Multiple stages
- Pocket parks or small venue plazas
- Amphitheatres
- Trees and raised planters
- Public art
- Night lighting and walking areas
- Music



## 12. Creation of good first impressions: Community Gateways

- Look at all gateway signage: does it reflect well on downtown?
- Always place your gateway signs where you make the first, best impression.
- Signage at city limits should be directional signage to key downtown districts. For instance "Downtown Anywhere – 1 mile."
- Place gateways at your downtown or district entrances. These can span the street, include decorative crosswalks, pole banners and other identifiers creating a "sense of arrival."



## 13. Design, fabrication & installation of a wayfinding system

- Wayfinding should be decorative to fit the brand.
- It should include both vehicular wayfinding as well as pedestrian wayfinding signage.
- Never put more than five items on any one sign.
- Use 1" tall letters for every 12' of viewing distance.
- Use "identifier" kiosks or maps to showcase district boundaries and key amenities and/or attractions.
- Every community should develop and implement a signage plan and program: wayfinding, gateways and entries, billboards and marketing displays, amenity identifiers. Nationally, less than 5% of visitors stop at visitor information centers – IF they can find that.
- Wayfinding also educates local front-line employees of what you have to offer and where it's located.

## The Merchants List



### 14. A good first impression: downtown or district gateways

- Downtown gateways create a “sense of place” and arrival. They can also promote a sense of group pride among the merchants downtown, helping to foster group cooperation with beautification and marketing.
- They should always be attractive and reflect the ambiance of the town, promoting a feeling that you have arrived at a special destination.
- Decorative crosswalks are an excellent way to separate the district and increase pedestrian safety at the same time



### 15. 20/20 signage: retail signage rules & regulations

- Develop perpendicular or “blade signs” in core downtown districts.
- Typical guidelines: no lower than 7', no higher than 9', no wider than 42". Keep them consistent in height and width so you don't create sign clutter.
- Create a merchant-driven signage review committee. This would include retail signage, the use of sandwich boards, extension of window displays into exterior spaces.
- Businesses need to promote, on signage, their key “lure” more than the name of the business.
- Get rid of the “Closed” signs and instead use “We'll be open” signs.
- Never use “restrooms are for customers only” or “no public restrooms” signage. Instead, tell customers WHERE they can find restrooms.

## The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination | Handout



### 16. Sidewalk cafes and intimate surroundings

The biggest trend in successful downtowns is the creation of intimate surroundings:

- Narrower streets
- Wider sidewalks
- Street trees every 30' to 35'
- Buffers between sidewalks and traffic or parking
- Decorative crosswalks
- Decorative night-lighting
- Architectural lighting

Other common ingredients include:

- Water features
- Sidewalk cafes and exterior dining



### 17. They invested heavily in retail beautification

- Extension of window displays to exterior spaces, NOT outdoor merchandising. Folding tables, boxes of goods, shopping carts piled with goods, are NOT good examples of curb appeal and should be discouraged or not allowed.
- The most important element of curb appeal is the softening of the transition of building facades and the sidewalk, not curbside street trees and landscaping.
- Besides word of mouth, shoppers typically have only curb appeal to help determine whether or not a shop is worth visiting. Curb appeal can account for 70% of new visitor sales at restaurants, retail shops, and hotels and lodging.



### 18. They provide activities and entertainment: bring downtown to life!

Bring downtown to life!

- Open air markets should operate for at least three days a week, during at least a 24 week season (depending on location).
- Invite street musicians and street artisans on weekends.
- Recruit outside events into plaza areas.



## The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Destination | Handout



### 19. They gave downtown districts a name

Give downtown a name. This will make it a destination, as opposed to just a place. It will also get downtown on highway signage.

Popular downtown district names include:

- Pearl District in Portland, Oregon
- Bricktown in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Gastown in Vancouver, British Columbia
- Pioneer Square in Seattle, Washington
- Gaslamp Quarter in San Diego, California
- Baker Street in Nelson, British Columbia
- The Rail District in Snoqualmie, Washington
- Bourbon Street, The French Quarter in New Orleans, Louisiana



### 20. The marketing is experiential: focus on activities, not buildings

- Perceptions create a brand in multiple ways:
  - Visual cues
  - The people and attitudes
  - Word of mouth
  - Publicity, social media, peer reviews
- Always sell a feeling: not buildings and the physical environment
- Visitors are far more interested in the things to do than in the location
- Develop an activities guide that promotes what there is to do in your community

## Roger Brooks International

For over 30 years, the award-winning Roger Brooks International team has had a singular mission – to improve people’s lives by helping their communities become healthier, more attractive, and more economically vibrant. We believe that every community has the potential to become a thriving, desirable place for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Working primarily in the public sector with cities, counties, states, CVBs, destination marketing organizations, and provinces, RBI is renowned for its bottom-line, “make-something-happen” approach. This results in tremendously successful planning and implementation efforts.

### Contact Us

Roger Brooks International  
981 Powell Ave. SW, Suite 125  
Renton, WA 98057  
206-241-4770

## About Roger Brooks

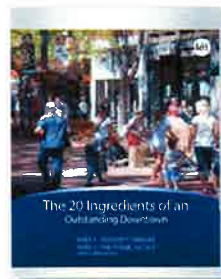
As CEO of Roger Brooks International, Roger’s expertise comes from having assisted nearly a thousand communities in their efforts to become better places to live, invest, establish a business, or visit.

The information is not just entertaining – it is clear, concise and it sticks. Known for telling engaging stories, Roger uses real-life examples shown in photos and video clips, some of them hilarious, all of them poignant. His bottom-line rules, tips, and ingredients leave attendees with rock solid action items they can implement today to make a difference tomorrow.



## The Incredible Roger Brooks Library

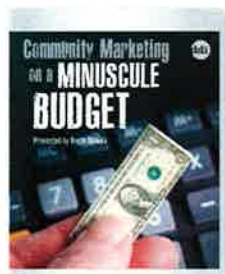
Introducing a new online program with access to a wealth of information available 24 hours a day. For a monthly fee of \$45 you will have instant access to the entire Roger Brooks video library (a few examples are shown here) plus PDF guides on a variety of branding, product development and marketing subjects. Learn more at [www.RogerBrooksLibrary.com](http://www.RogerBrooksLibrary.com)



### The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown

We surveyed 400 popular downtowns and downtown districts and found the 20 most common ingredients that led to their success. Learn how these ingredients can help your downtown achieve success too!

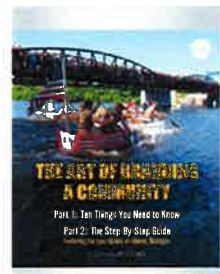
HD Video | 108 minutes



### Community Marketing on a Minuscule Budget

Learn the seven marketing ideas you can implement today, for practically no money, that will dramatically increase local spending.

HD Video | 70 minutes



### The Art of Branding a Community Part 1 & 2

**Part 1:** In this eye-opening, must-see presentation by Roger Brooks, you’ll learn the ten things you need to do to successfully brand your community.

**Part 2:** In this fascinating presentation using Alpena, Michigan as a case history, you’ll learn HOW to successfully develop your own brand using the 13-step process that took nearly 30 years to develop and perfect. Best of all: This process has a 100% success rate.

HD Video | Part I: 63 min. Part II: 60 min.



### The Seven Deadly Sins of Destination Marketing

A full 97% of destination marketing is wasted. Learn the 7 deadly sins, how to avoid them, and how to make sure that 100% of your marketing is effective.

HD Video | 72 minutes