Downtown Revitalization

Making Downtown the Heartbeat of Your Community Once Again

Presented by:

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• Havana, IL – City Treasurer/Economic Development Director 2017 - 2020
• Canton/Fulton County, IL – Executive Director, SRPED 2020 – Present
• Board Member – Prairie Hills Resource Conservation & Development
• Advisory Committee – Excellence in Economic Development Awards – International Economic Development Council
• Peoria Magazine – Forty Leaders Under 40 – 2022 Award Recipient
What will we be discussing during the presentation?

- A brief overview of the core principles of downtown development as defined by the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs and examples of why they were so important for success in Havana and Canton
- How important Public-Private partnerships can be for successful and sustainable revitalization efforts
- The Importance and value of developing a vision and a plan for Downtown Revitalization (As a community)
- How Canton developed a vision and plan for downtown revitalization 2020 – 2022
- Canton’s Business Development District #1 – How we got here, and where we are headed
Core Principals for downtown development

*Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs*

1. Develop a Vision and Plan for Downtown
2. Identify and Build Upon Local Assets
3. Build a Strong Public-Private Partnership
4. Enhance the Downtown’s Sense of Place
5. Determine the Downtown Market
Building a strong public-private partnership

Strong public-private partnerships are essential for creating sustainable community and economic development initiatives. By leveraging the resources and expertise of both the public and private sectors, communities can create mutually beneficial relationships that lead to improved quality of life and greater economic opportunities. I firmly believe that this is one of the most important factors in the successes that will be shared today.

Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs

Rural communities benefit from organized efforts towards downtown development rather than unorganized groups seeking to make improvements. Pooling precious human and financial resources just makes common sense. An organized group has the power of collective action, can be an effective lobby, and can help raise the profile and visibility of the downtown area.

Successful downtown development cannot occur unless both the public and private sectors are heavily involved and committed. City government can demonstrate this commitment by (1) providing incentives to new business development, stabilization, business expansion, and façade improvements. (2) relaxing city and zoning codes – where appropriate – to allow for adaptive reuse of downtown buildings.
Creating a vision and plan for anything is important, but it is essential to the success of downtown revitalization efforts. Having a clear and comprehensive plan helps to ensure that all stakeholders are on the same page about the goals and objectives, establishes the timeline for implementation and lays out the resources needed for success. It also sets expectations for all parties involved so that everyone understands their role in the defined efforts.

A vision and plan can help to generate public support for the initiatives and encourage participation from the community. Ultimately, a detailed plan and vision can help to bring a downtown area back to life and make it a vibrant, welcoming, and safe place for everyone while considering many different perspectives.
Why Downtown Revitalization?

Downtown revitalization in rural communities is vitally important to creating economic stability and opportunity. By investing in the people, infrastructure, businesses, and public amenities of downtowns, rural communities can create jobs, attract new businesses and residents, and spur economic growth. Downtown revitalization has the potential to create a vibrant atmosphere that can improve the quality of life for all members of the community.
Results of Successful Downtown Revitalization Programs & Initiatives with the use of TIF funds

2016 – 2020 - Havana, IL - Population 3,600

- 32 Total Projects including 15 new businesses (2016 – 2020)
- +$7.5 mil in public and private investment in downtown business district
- Over $1.9 mil in local contractor work (Havana zip code) remaining $2.5 mil was within a 50 mile radius (specialty jobs or services not offered in the local community) $3 mil + for Streetscape
- Significant increases to retail sales tax in the downtown business district
- Increased property values throughout the TIF 1 District
- Has led to additional investment throughout the last three years (2020 – 2023) without incentives being necessary to attract these additional new businesses and expansion projects.
New Retail Business 2018
The Hang-Up
Clothing boutique

New Business 2018
Touch of Class Salon
Massages, Tanning & Nail Salon

Existing Business Expansion Project 2018
Josh Peterson State Farm
Insurance Agency
**New Retail Business 2020**
Giesla’s Haus
*All Things Home*

**New Service Business 2018**
Touch of Class Salon (Additional Building)
*Massages, Tanning & Nail Salon*

**Expanded/Relocated Retail Business 2018**
Havana Outdoors
Hunting, Fishing, & Outdoor Equipment
Existing Service Business Expansion 2018
Josh Peterson State Farm Insurance Agency

New Retail x2, Overnight Lodging x4 2019/2020
The Wahlfeld Building
Stella Mae’s Coffee
The Cove – Artisan Event & Showcase Center
The River Bend Inn – 4 AirBnB Units each with their own unique theme
Community Development/Revitalization Project 2018

Before

After
A walk through downtown Havana

Photos from August 2013 – Havana, IL
Results of Downtown Revitalization planning & what’s next in Canton, IL

2020 – 2023 - Canton, IL - Population 13,500
2020 – 2022 developing a vision for Canton

• Starting in early 2020, the City of Canton, business owners and community leaders came together to start envisioning how we could revitalize the downtown business district as well as other main corridors throughout the community.

• The City/SRPED worked extensively to collect data and feedback during this time frame, and it also helped to identify barriers to accomplishing our goals of downtown revitalization.

• 1-on-1 and group meetings with both the public and private sector helped to form a consensus of “where we were” and started forming the vision of “where we wanted to get to”.

• Once we identified our barriers, and what our vision was, the City of Canton determined that the creation of a new Business Development District would be a necessity in order to accomplish the City/Community goals, build sustainable momentum, and remove barriers that had been identified.
The planning & approval of the Canton BDD #1

The Canton Business Development #1 was established in March of 2022 with a planned amendment which was approved in October of 2022. The Canton BDD #1 will be used for a variety of specific community and economic development programs to further our revitalization and growth efforts.

The last two years were spent collecting and analyzing data with business owners, elected officials, community leaders and residents to identify the top priorities this municipal funding mechanism would address.

Having both public and private sector input and understanding during that time was crucial in the planning, approval, support and long term success of the Canton BDD #1.

The following initiatives are the main focus of the district and specific programs and funding amounts are being considered for the coming fiscal year:

- Downtown Revitalization/Stabilization
- Business Expansion/New Business Development
- Residential Housing Development
- Public Infrastructure & Safety
- Commercial & Residential Demolition
- Community Development/Placemaking
- Arts & Entertainment
• **15** Business Development District Applications since December 2022

• Over $9,000,000 mil in public and private investment in downtown business district (after the planning began for downtown revitalization, but before significant programs were made available)

• Sales tax increase in downtown business district TBD (16 new businesses/developments 2021-2023)

• Seeing a strong increase in the number of new and potential developments being considered in downtown Canton

• Several community development/placemaking projects being considered to make Canton an even a more investible marketplace and attractive to visitors
Next Steps

• Establish a more specific BDD application and formally approve the full redevelopment agreement process
• Continue accepting and evaluating case-by-case redevelopment agreements
• Create structured programs and budget amounts
• Opera House Lot & Former International Harvester site planning and use of BDD funding
• Planning and implementing public infrastructure and public safety improvement projects and updates
• FY24 BDD Budget
Summary:
The Spoon River Partnership for Economic Development (SRPED) purchased 48 N. Main Street in downtown Canton in June of 2021. This renovated building is now home to the new offices of SRPED and the Canton Area Chamber of Commerce (CACC). The renovation was completed over a 4-month period by Max Kumer Construction. Renovations to the upper story are being planned to accommodate a small-scale business incubator that will help local entrepreneurs grow their business and have access to resources that are currently unavailable or difficult to access for them.

Impacts:
✓ Revitalization & Stabilization of Existing Building
✓ Generation of Local Contractor Work
✓ Increased Downtown Foot Traffic
✓ Property Tax Increment for TIF 1
Summary:
Gabe Barton and Mandy Kosowski purchased 54 N. Main in July of 2021, to do a complete renovation, and use the building to open two new businesses in downtown Canton. The two businesses are Georgia Rae’s (clothing store) and Barton Payroll, Tax & Accounting. Gabe and Mandy worked hard to bring this historic building back to life with a modern twist, and they officially opened both businesses in December of 2021.

Impacts:
- Revitalization & Stabilization of Existing Building
- Generation of Local Contractor Work
- Increased Downtown Foot Traffic
- Property Tax Increment for TIF 1
- Sales Tax Increment
- New service business in high-demand
Summary:
Jed & Hailey Rhoades took on a downtown revitalization project in early 2021. The upper story of Rhoades Real Estate was mainly used as storage, and was an otherwise unutilized floor of the building. They were able to bring this second story back to life as an Airbnb for visitors to Canton and Fulton County.

Impacts:
✓ Revitalization of Existing 2nd Story
✓ Generation of Local Contractor Work
✓ Increased Downtown Foot Traffic
✓ Property Tax Increment for TIF 1
✓ New Downtown Overnight Lodging
✓ Generation of New Hotel/Motel Tax
Final thoughts

Focusing on downtown revitalization and economic development efforts are essential for the success of our rural communities. Investing in these initiatives not only helps to create vibrant town centers, but can also attract new investments and businesses, generate jobs, and foster economic growth. By investing in downtown revitalization and economic development efforts, we can ensure the long-term sustainability of our rural communities.

“Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world” – Joel A. Barker

Thank you for taking the time to be a part of this presentation today, and for participating in the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs 34th Annual Conference!
Questions?