

# Cambridge launches downtown revitalization initiative

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*Press release provided by city of Cambridge*

Cambridge City Council is launching a new initiative to revitalize downtown by inviting interested community residents, business owners, commercial property owners, and members of the City's Downtown Task Force, to develop new opportunities to retain and attract new businesses to its historical downtown.

"We've seen the expansion of big box stores and commercial development on the east side of Highway 65 draw consumer traffic away from our long-standing downtown core. We now need to take a serious look at ways to bring the community back downtown," said Howard Lewis, city council member.

The estimated six-month community engagement process will draw from resident and business input, research, and plans to develop a wide range of ideas and concepts that will reposition downtown as a community destination.

"We are excited to listen to fresh ideas from our community to re-establish downtown as a center of activity for our youth, adults, families and seniors. We want downtown to be a place where our community gathers morning, day and night, seven days a week, and we need our community's help to transform downtown into something special for our City," said Mayor Marlys Palmer.

One thing that is necessary to succeed is to increase economic productivity—which means committing resources strategically. In researching the impact of a healthy and distinct Downtown area over the past three years, every path (including the work of the Minnesota Design Team and Preservation Alliance "Main Street Project") has pointed back to the core downtown. Based on the data, and the Task Force's assessment of how to best use what resources we have, city staff recommended to City Council that hiring Todd Streeter and "Community Collaboration" to make good on the years of work on this issue.

"We need to keep this moving," noted Bob Roby, Downtown Taskforce chair.

The city has hired community engagement experts, Todd Streeter, principal, Community Collaboration, and Hans Muessig, chair, Minnesota Design Team, to assist in the revitalization efforts.

“The Minnesota Design Team was here for three days in April and we presented a number of ideas to re-energize downtown. Keeping the library downtown will be a first step because it keeps an estimated 500 daily library visitors downtown where they will visit other downtown businesses. Additional revitalization efforts will be focused on attracting more businesses to locate downtown. We’re delighted to be part of this exciting opportunity to harness Cambridge’s vast community resources to further this effort,” Muessig said.

Streeter, a former mayor of the City of Lake St. Croix Beach, Chamber of Commerce executive and community foundation co-founder, has helped Stillwater prepare its downtown for new changes occurring with the new St. Croix Crossing Bridge, bike trails and riverside parks.

“As a member of the Minnesota Design Team, I was impressed by the city’s desire to see downtown retain its prominence as a community center and awed by the amount of community interest in ushering a new and vibrant downtown. The city has demonstrated its continued commitment by engaging the community to help shape its future. We look forward to seeing the ideas residents and businesses create to make downtown the place where community comes together,” adds Streeter.

The community engagement process will involve the creation of a new working group of interested community participants collaborating on research, ideas and formal presentation of recommendations to the City Council.

“The timing of this initiative is ideal as we prepare our 10-year Comprehensive Plan and hope to include our community’s ideas into our final plan,” said Lynda Woulfe, city administrator.

Additional information and committee participation opportunities will be announced soon. Interested participants are encouraged to contact Lynda Woulfe at 763-552-3201 or by email [atlwoulfe@ci.cambridge.mn.us](mailto:atlwoulfe@ci.cambridge.mn.us).