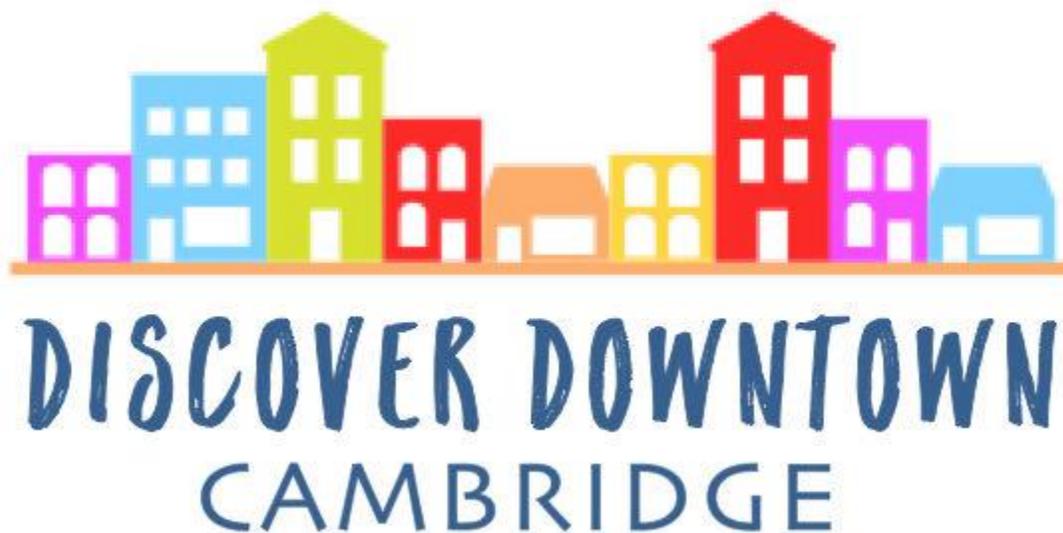


Curb appeal, events and social media may help downtown

Isanti Chisago County Star, Megan Bergman, Mar 30, 2017



“How many of you would like to see downtown meet the needs of its community and become an attraction for our city?”

This question was posed by Bob Roby, a member of Cambridge’s Downtown Revitalization Committee, to the crowd at the committee’s presentation to reveal proposed ideas and recommendations to the community and city officials on March 22.

The project launched in September of 2016, and committee members have been tirelessly working on a new look and new ideas to breathe life back into the old Main Street area of downtown Cambridge. Members of the various subcommittees for the project highlighted different areas that can be improved on to invite more people into downtown.

“Downtowns are like an engine,” explained Todd Streeter, project facilitator. “It’s complex. There are a lot of things that make it function, and when things aren’t functioning properly downtown, things become very problematic. And naturally as an economic engine for a community, a downtown that is not running on all six cylinders isn’t very efficient.”

Making main street relevant

Throughout the evening, presenters displayed ideas being offered to help in the revitalization of downtown that included: illumination of business areas and stores, curb appeal, conformity in amenities (matching trash cans, planters, benches), enticing signage, interactive parks and activities for families, outdoor seating for downtown restaurants and other areas that need improvement such as cleaning up the alleyways.

“We believe that the back of our stores should be as beautiful as the front of our storefronts,” said presenter Julie Immel. “It’s important to see that life from the front and the back.”

Other areas the committee has been addressing include: How can we get the right mix of businesses downtown that offer various services and convenient hours of operation? How do we get people connected and easy access to Main Street if they are traveling from Highway 65 or passing through on Highway 95? How can we expand on events that already attract people downtown such as Cambridge Appreciation Day and the Snowflake Parade?

Adding more housing is one of the ways the committee is considering to bring more people, more life and more business back to Main Street. “Another thing that is very exciting that’s coming downtown,” Mayor Marlys Palmer said, “is a new apartment building right down on Main Street, called Main Street Flats.”

Project members also discussed the need for websites and social media sites that are kept updated and dedicated to finding out more about downtown, its businesses and events.

Recommendations move ahead

Over 50 recommendations are being proposed to the executive committee of the planning project team. The team will narrow down the most efficient, the most effective and the most economic ideas to incorporate into their final planning.

If interested in helping with the transformation and revitalization project, contact Lynda Woulfe at (763) 552-3216 or by email at lwoulfe@ci.cambridge.mn.us.