LOVELAND HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING AGENDA
MONDAY, MAY 18, 2015 6:00 PM
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
500 E. THIRD STREET

THE CITY OF LOVELAND IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF DISABILITY, RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER. THE CITY WILL MAKE REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CITIZENS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY'S ADA COORDINATOR AT BETTIE.GREENBERG@CITYOFLOVELAND.ORG OR 970-962-3319.

6:00 PM

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
II. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
III. **ROLL CALL**
IV. **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
V. **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**
VI. **APPROVAL OF SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

VII. **REPORTS**   6:05-6:15
   a. Citizen Reports
       This agenda item provides an opportunity for citizens to address the Commission on matters not on the consent or regular agendas.

   b. Council Update (John Fogle)
   c. Staff Update (Bethany Clark)

VIII. **AGENDA – CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS**

   a. Tour de Pants Recap   6:15-6:35
   b. Review of Commission Mandates/Requirements   6:35-7:00
   c. Set Next Meeting's Agenda/Identify Action Items   7:00-7:05

VIII. **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**   7:05-7:15

   This agenda item provides an opportunity for Commissioners to speak on matters not on the regular agenda.

IX. **ADJOURN**

1   **City of Loveland**
2   **Historic Preservation Commission**
3   **Meeting Summary**
4   **April 20, 2015**
5
6   A meeting of the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission was held Monday, April 20, 2015 at 6:00 P.M.
7   in the City Council Chambers in the Civic Center at 500 East Third Street, Loveland, CO. Historic Preservation
8   Commissioners in attendance were: David Berglund, Jim Cox, Jon-Mark Patterson, Paula Sutton, and Chris
9   Wertheim. Staff Liaison Bethany Clark of Community & Strategic Planning was also present.
10
11 Guests: Amanda Rachuy, Olivia Lowe, and Dusty Berglund (student attending for Civics class)
12
13 **CALL TO ORDER**
14 *Commission Vice-Chair Patterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.*
15
16 **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**
17 *Commissioner Cox made a motion to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Commissioner*
18 *Berglund and it passed unanimously.*
19
20 **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**
21 *Commissioner Wertheim made a motion to approve the minutes from the March meeting, the motion was*
22 *seconded by Commissioner Berglund and it passed unanimously.*
23
24 **CITIZEN REPORTS**
25 None
26
27 **CITY COUNCIL UPDATE**
28 *Councilor Fogle* was absent.
29
30 **STAFF UPDATE**
31 *Bethany Clark* asked Commissioners to attend a walkthrough on Saturday, April 25th at 9:00am to understand
32 the Tour de Pants schedule, the layout around the lagoon, and to run through each Commissioner's duties.
33 Bethany asked Commissioners to meet at the large sculpture on the plaza to the south of the City Hall building
34 and be prepared to walk to the Peak Pocket Park. She informed Commissioners that the City's Earth Day
35 celebration is being held that day starting at 10:00am so crews may be setting up and parking might be tight.
36
37 Bethany also reported that the Museum is once again looking for volunteers for their annual History Days
38 for Second Graders. She went over their needs and asked anyone willing to volunteer to submit the
39 enclosed application to Jenni Dobson at the Museum.
40
41 **CONSIDERATION OF NEW BUSINESS**
42
43 **AUDIO WALKING TOUR**
44 *Bethany Clark introduced Olivia Lowe,* the coordinator of the People's Market, as well as an artist and historian
45 who is interested in working with the HPC on an audio walking tour. Olivia described how an app might work for
46 visitors downtown. Each building could have a 3 minute history tour, she said. Further, if someone would like to
47 take a long bike ride or walk they could access an hour long podcast about the history of Loveland, she explained.
48 Alanna Brake, a colleague and friend of Olivia's, would also like to help produce this tour with the cooperation
49 and support with the HPC and City of Loveland. Bethany Clark said the HPC has plans to move forward once the

50   downtown has been designated on the National Historic Register, with an update of the printed Walking Tour
51   brochure. They have discussed an audio/app portion of the tour, so this idea fits well with their plans, she said.
52   Commissioner Cox suggested involving Barry Floyd because he has done a video interview of the owners of the
53   Mercantile Building. There was a discussion about the project including the possibilities of "Fairy Doors" for
54   children to find and learn about the history of the building. It could be fun, interesting information, she said. Olivia
55   and Alanna would be willing to research costs and information. Amanda Nash volunteered to assist and said she
56   has done some research on the Walking Tour. HPC members agreed that this is a great idea and would like to
57   pursue it. They will put it on the May agenda if Olivia can put some information together by then.
58
59   Olivia also presented information about the *People's Market*.
60
61   **JOSEPHINE H. MILES HISTORY AWARD NOMINATION**
62   *Bethany Clark* reported that she received information regarding History Colorado's annual award. History Days in
63   Loveland seems to qualify for this award, she said. Jenni Dobson, Curator of Education at the Museum, is the
64   coordinator of the event. It is a monetary award and the event will be lacking funding soon. She proposed that
65   the HPC nominate the event for the award. Bethany explained the details necessary to complete the nomination.
66   After a discussion, the HPC agreed to support the nomination.
67
68   **TOUR DE PANTS/HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH EVENTS**
69   *The HPC* discussed their tasks and the vendors involved. Bethany asked for HPC members to attend the
70   City Council meeting on May 5th Proclamation of HP Month.
71
72   **Next Meeting's Agenda/Action Items**
73   • *Tour de Pants* Recap
74   • Audio Walking Tour – More Detail (Olivia Lowe)
75   • Viestenz-Smith (if appropriate)
76
77   **Commissioner Comments**
78   • *Commissioner Sutton* reported on her attendance of the Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park Planning
79   Open House. She distributed a questionnaire that was given out at the open house. She said she was
80   pleased that most of the historic structures will be incorporated into the park. The stone shelter
81   building sustained some damage but not much.
82
83   • *Commissioner Cox* reported that the DDA is moving forward. Recommendations for board members
84   will soon be going to City Council for approval. Interviews for the new director will begin next
85   Thursday, he said. Elections are in November. There was a discussion about TIF funds.
86
87
88   **Meeting adjourned at 7:38p.m.**

1 **City of Loveland**
2 **Historic Preservation Commission**
3 **Special Meeting Summary**
4 **May 11, 2015**
5
6 A Special Meeting of the Loveland Historic Preservation Commission was held Monday, May 11, 2015 at 5:30 P.M.
7 in the Current Planning Conference Room in the Civic Center at 500 East Third Street, Loveland, CO. Historic
8 Preservation Commissioners in attendance were: David Berglund, Jim Cox, Stacee Kersley, Jon-Mark Patterson,
9 Mike Perry and Paula Sutton. Council Liaison John Fogle, Staff Liaison Bethany Clark of Community & Strategic
10 Planning, and Director of Development Services Greg George were also present.
11
12 **CALL TO ORDER**
13 *Commission Chair Kersley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.*
14
15 **PROPOSED CITY BUDGET REDUCTIONS**
16 Greg George gave background on the proposed City Council ordinance to eliminate the 3% sales tax on food for
17 home consumption, which will be considered at their May 19th meeting. In preparation of that public hearing,
18 the Council requested that the City Manager prepare a proposal for reductions to the City budget that would
19 accommodate the loss in general fund revenues attributable to this tax. Greg George presented the proposed
20 cuts to be made in Development Services, with a target of $167,627 for his overall requested cuts. He explained
21 that the City Manager directed staff to reduce their budgets with three main principals in mind: to budget for
22 providing the best level of services possible on a continuing basis; to continue budgeting practices in a fiscally
23 conservative manner, and; to maintain the City as an employer of choice, so that we continue to attract and
24 retain high-quality employees. He reviewed the overall impacts on Community & Strategic Planning and the
25 Historic Preservation Commission budget of $8,900, which is proposed to be reduced to $1,900. Commission
26 members discussed the impacts this would have on their outreach efforts and required CLG training. The
27 Commission then drafted a position statement to be forwarded to the City Manager's office.
28
29 *Commissioner Sutton* motioned to submit to the City Manager the position statement, developed this evening,
30 in response to the proposed budget cuts as a result of the 3% food sales tax elimination. *Commissioner Berglund*
31 seconded the motion. *Commission Chair Kersley* opened the item for discussion and *Commissioner Patterson*
32 stated that he supports the motion and urges this to be adopted as the entire Commission stance. *Commission*
33 *Chair Kersley* called for a vote and Commissioners Sutton, Berglund, Patterson, and Kersley all voted in favor.
34 Commissioners Cox and Perry left the meeting before the motion was made and Commissioner Wertheim was
35 absent.
36
37 **Meeting adjourned at 7:45p.m.**

City of Loveland

STAFF UPDATE

Meeting Date: May 18, 2015

To: Loveland Historic Preservation Commission

From: **Bethany Clark, Community & Strategic Planning**

Format:

*If a more in-depth discussion or extensive questions on a specific item is desired, **staff requests that the HPC Chair establish if it is the Commission's consensus to have a longer discussion**. Staff will be happy to answer questions on any item with individual commissioners after the meeting.*

If the staff update indicates that staff will be pursuing a particular course of action, no comment from the Commission indicates that the Historic Preservation Commission is supportive of that course of action.

Staff Update Items:

DCI Training Series
Staff recently purchased a training module from Downtown Colorado, Inc. titled "Building Vibrant Downtowns with Young People". This is a four-part training series which aims to give communities tools for cultivating their future workforce, capturing young residents' ideas for downtown redevelopment, and building ongoing youth-adult partnerships to nurture young leaders. Because the Commission has been so interested in getting youth involved in preservation, staff believes this training will be helpful in understanding best practices in developing these partnerships. If the Commission desires, one part of the four-part series could be presented and discussed for the next four HPC meetings.

DCI Training Series

Building Vibrant Downtowns with Young People

Developed By Darcy Varney Kitching

Downtown Colorado, Inc., (DCI) is a nonprofit membership organization committed to building better communities by providing assistance to Colorado downtowns, commercial districts and town centers.

Every day Downtown Colorado, Inc., strengthens communities across Colorado by supporting local governments in their efforts to support small businesses and grow a sustainable local economy. We achieve this by providing advocacy, technical assistance training, and educational events, often with the voluntary services of our wonderful membership base of professional downtown revitalization experts. DCI approaches commercial district and downtown revitalization through a comprehensive framework of downtown management, marketing, design, and economic development.

On the cover: (Left) ENVD and Boulder High students discuss their "child-friendly" neighborhood plan. Photo by Lynn M. Lickteig. (Right) Casey Middle School students participate in Boulder's Civic Area Plan in 2012. Photo by Lynn M. Lickteig.

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Introduction to the Youth Engagement Series

In conjunction with its quarterly Downtown Institutes in 2013, Downtown Colorado, Inc., (DCI) hosted four youth engagement workshops, sponsored by a grant from Xcel Energy. The youth engagement series aimed to give towns tools for cultivating their future workforce, capturing young residents' ideas for downtown redevelopment and building ongoing youth-adult partnerships to nurture young leaders.

The inspiration for the series came from DCI members, whose concerns about the absence of young adults from community decision-making processes signaled a need for youth-focused learning opportunities. Indeed, a major issue facing downtowns in Colorado today is the lack of succession planning and leadership opportunities for the future. In many communities, youth exodus after formal schooling results in declining populations, which leads to school and post office closures, a decreased workforce and even potential obsolescence.

Helping young residents attain skills that are desirable in the local economy, training young people to start and manage businesses and giving them the opportunity to have a voice in downtown planning as future leaders of their community are all important steps to creating buy-in that will sustain rural communities. Inviting young people to contribute to the vitality of their hometowns develops in them a sense of pride and a reason to invest in their communities. Young adults who moved away for college can also return and invest their education in the improvement of the places they love. In short, engaging youth in community-focused opportunities is key to maintaining a healthy economy and a skilled workforce in rural Colorado.

DCI's 2013 youth engagement series taught community leaders how to engage youth in professional development, leadership training and volunteerism to support downtown revitalization around four themed modules: management, physical improvements, marketing, and economic vitality. This workbook summarizes the key points of each module, features tools provided by the speakers and includes information about excellent free, open-access online resources for further learning and use with community members.

We welcome your feedback on this workbook and hope it will serve you well as you tap into the talents of your young residents and learn with them about how to create vital downtowns, now and in the future.

"Inviting young people to contribute to the vitality of their hometowns develops in them a sense of pride and a reason to invest in their communities."

Module 1

Management: Activating Youth Engagement for Vibrant Downtowns

In this module, you will learn:
- ✔ How to identify and foster authentic youth engagement
- ✔ How to develop a youth engagement program in five steps
- ✔ The benefits of youth engagement
- ✔ How two communities created successful youth-engagement strategies
- ✔ Five specific ways to partner with youth for vibrant downtowns

Cultivating future leaders and planning for multi-generational participation in community groups fosters residents' pride and sense of place in their town. Broad, multi-generational participation also lies at the heart of democratic local planning processes; when young people are engaged alongside adult residents in decision-making about their towns, they not only connect to their community and learn about how to make downtown better, but they also learn about democracy writ large.

Activating and managing democratic youth engagement can take any of several approaches, from establishing a formal all-youth council that plays a parallel role to adult councils, to adding youth to existing adult boards and committees, or engaging youth involved in separate youth leadership programs in specific aspects of downtown revitalization. The important thing is that participation is *authentic*. Youth in governance, or youth engagement, can be defined as the ***authentic and meaningful engagement of young people in programs, organizations, and communities, where they have or share voice, influence, and decision-making authority*** (MacNeil, 2005).

How to identify and foster authentic youth participation

Authentic youth participation can be gauged by the degree to which young people are informed about and have a say in the activities in which they are engaged. Roger Hart's ladder of young people's participation provides one way of understanding various degrees of youth engagement (see Figure 1).

Hart makes it clear that the goal of participatory programs should be to involve young people in activities exemplified by the top five rungs of the ladder. The key determinant of "authentic" participation is *information*: youth must know why they have been asked to participate, what the program or activity

is about and how they can take part, and, most importantly, they must be able to freely choose whether or not to participate. Different degrees of participation are appropriate for different youth and different programs. The goal is not to strictly involve youth at the highest levels of their competence all the time, but to allow them room to experiment with and "try on" various roles within programs. The highest level in Hart's model, and the ultimate goal for communities, is shared decision-making, "when every member of the community, regardless of age or background, has the opportunity to be involved in the process and has an equal say in decision-making" (Driskell, 2002, p. 42).

The ladder metaphor is intended to help adult facilitators establish the conditions that enable children and youth to work at the levels at which they feel most comfortable. An individual may elect to work at different levels on different projects or during different phases of the same project. Also, some youth may not be initiators but are excellent collaborators. The important principle is for adult and youth leaders to facilitate opportunities for everyone to participate in an authentic manner by avoiding the three lowest levels, the rungs of non-participation (Varney, 2007).
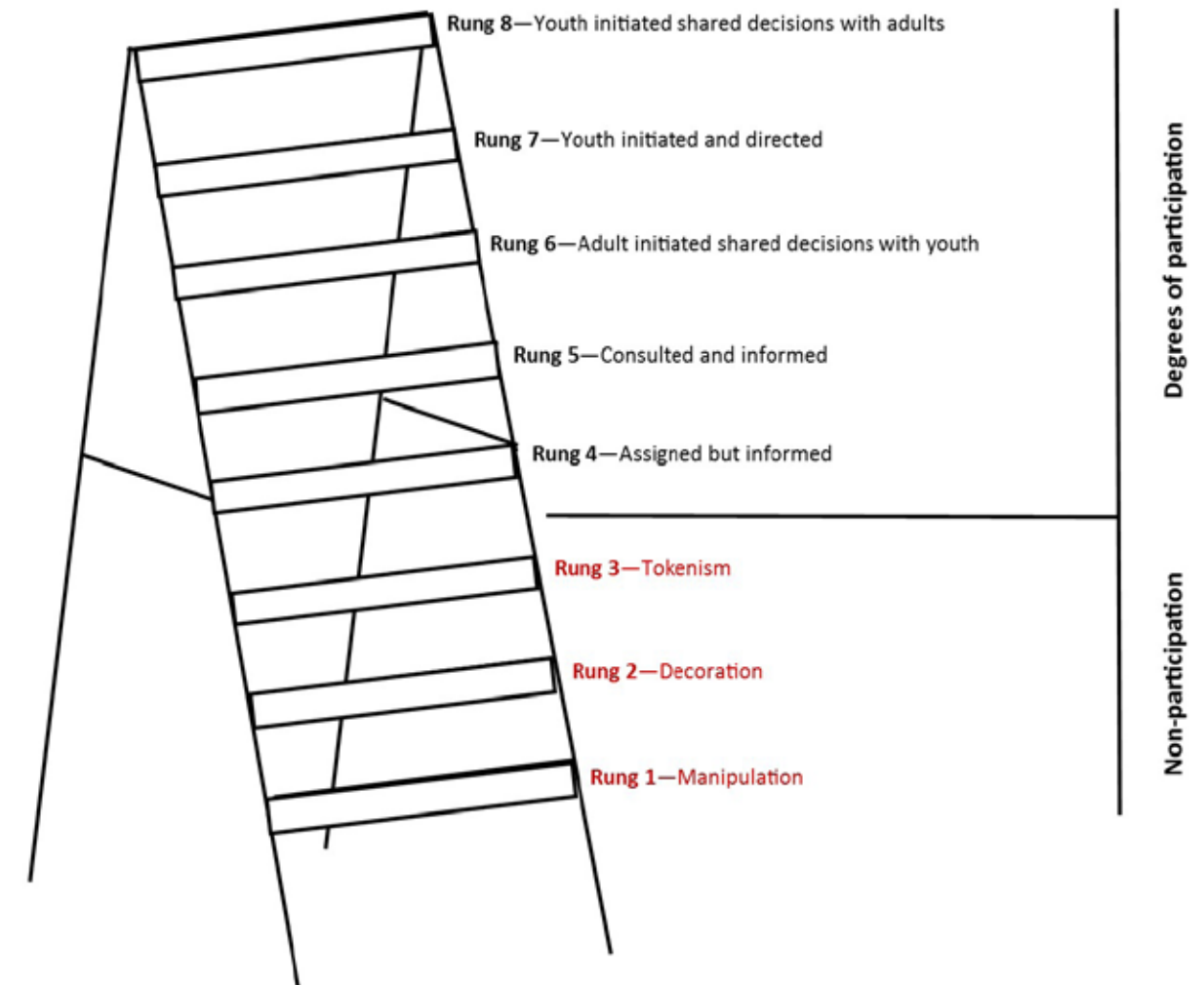
Non-participation is surprisingly common and easy to fall into, particularly when adults want decision-making processes to be efficient and neat. In his handbook, *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth*, David Driskell describes the pitfalls of the three levels of non-participation (p. 41):

Tokenism is when children appear to be participating but in fact have little or no choice about the subject or process of their participation. There may be a relatively high level of interaction, and the appearance of decision-making power, but in reality there is none at a meaningful level.

Decoration is when children are used to promote a cause even though they may have little or no idea of what they are doing or why. Little, if any, collaboration takes place and virtually no sharing of decision-making power.

Manipulation and deception happen when adults consciously use children to achieve their own ends without informing them about what they are doing or why. In manipulation, children often go through the motions of participation, with a seemingly high level of interaction and collaboration, while in reality they have little or no decision-making power (or even an opportunity to express their opinions in a meaningful way). Deception is when adults make claims about children's participation when in reality there was little or no actual participation.

Figure 1: Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8—Youth initiated shared decisions with adults

Rung 7—Youth initiated and directed

Rung 6—Adult initiated shared decisions with youth

Rung 5—Consulted and informed

Rung 4—Assigned but informed

Rung 3—Tokenism

Rung 2—Decoration

Rung 1—Manipulation

Degrees of participation

Non-participation

Here are a few scenarios describing how different levels of youth participation might look, according to Hart's ladder. See if you can tell on which "rung" each situation would fall. (Answers are listed below.)

1. The local Parks and Recreation Board committee is sending a delegation to a state meeting on preserving parks and open space. They appoint an articulate, well-presented teen to join the adults as a representative of the "voice of the local youth." At the meeting, there is no specific time for young people's ideas to be considered, but the teen is applauded for being there.

2. Local skateboarders are tearing up the steps of the town hall, so recreation planners decide they need a skate park. They convene a group of skateboarding youth, engage them in a design charrette and continue to keep them involved throughout the design and development of the park. The youth's ideas are instrumental to the outcome of the park.

3. Local planners want to know what young people like about their town and whether they plan to stay after graduation. They send out a survey to the local high school and explain to students what they are asking and why, as well as how the information will be used.

4. Several classes from a local school are given T-shirts with the town's new marketing slogan and are brought in to stand behind a nationally recognized speaker during an event while that person is captured by local news media, giving the appearance of their conscious endorsement of the event and the speaker.

5. A group of youth interested in the environment and nutrition decides to turn a vacant lot into a community garden to help other youth learn how to grow nutritious food and beautify downtown. They research all of the necessary permits and develop a

gardening program that attracts their peers and receives recognition from the mayor.

6. The downtown beautification committee wants to feature a "children's garden" in the center of town. They hire a landscape architect to design something "childlike," then invite scout troops and youth groups to do some planting. In the publicity, they say the garden was designed by children and shows how much the town's young people are invested in the public realm.

7. There is a water crisis in town and local planners decide to deputize local youth as water educators to help community members learn how to conserve water. They bring in youth groups, give them water conservation materials and have them put up posters and educate their families about how to help during the crisis.

8. Young people participating in a local leadership program develop a new way of using vacant storefronts downtown, collaborating with local organizations to design art projects that illustrate the town's strengths. Youth and adults work together equitably to fulfill the vision and execute the project.

(Answers: 1, tokenism; 2, adult-initiated, shared decisions with youth; 3, consulted and informed; 4, decoration; 5, youth initiated and directed; 6, manipulation; 7, assigned but informed; 8, youth-initiated, shared decisions with adults)

"**Y**outh participation programs should be designed to maximize the opportunity for young people to participate in the decision-making process to the fullest extent of their ability. There should not be a universal notion of what children can or cannot do at certain ages. Rather, opportunities should be provided for a diversity of ways for youth to be involved to maximize their capacity to take an active part in their communities" (Passon, Levi and del Rio, 2008, p. 76).

How to develop a youth engagement program in 5 steps

Authentic youth engagement can take several forms, but the most powerful approaches are youth-adult partnerships. The Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development characterizes youth-adult partnerships as:

Youth and adults working together in a positive, mutually respectful environment with the recognition that each group contributes unique strengths to the relationship. Youth and adults serve as resources for each other and learn together, each providing unique contributions to attain end results that would not have been achieved without the collaboration from the two groups. In short, there is mutuality of teaching, learning, and action.

David Driskell adds that in true youth-adult partnerships,

Adults are sensitive to their role and position in the process, are attentive to the views, opinions and insights of children and youth participants, and work to ensure that adults do not dominate the group discussion or manipulate it toward their own ends. These projects are the essential building blocks for creating more vibrant democracies and communities that respond to the needs of all residents (2002, p. 42).

Creating a forum for youth and adults to collaborate on issues of mutual interest in the community can be accomplished in five steps:

1. **Evaluate your capacity/assess the reasons for the program ("why").**
   a. Why start a program? In order to accomplish what?
   b. Identify and involve key leaders.
   c. Determine volunteer standards and expectations.

2. **Determine the program purpose ("what").**
   a. What will youth and adults accomplish together? In what time?
   b. Do you want to create a leadership program to connect youth to revolving opportunities or issues in the community? Or do you want to

have youth input on Main Street or another specific program?

   c. Do you want to create something brand new or connect with an established organization that has a youth program to find interested participants?

3. Decide on the target population ("who").

   a. Who should participate, based on the program purpose? What age range?

   b. What should the youth-to-adult ratio be?

   c. How will you identify appropriate participants, where will you find them and how will they get involved?

4. Create a budget.

   a. Ideally, this step is accomplished with participants to determine program priorities.

   b. How much money do you need, for what?

   c. Find funding from within the town budget, from state grants, private foundations, local service groups, or raise funds locally through events and online crowd-funding strategies.

5. Activate the program!

   a. It takes time to develop quality youth-adult partnerships. Engage participants in thoughtful feedback on the process and learn from each other.

Use the worksheet on the next page to brainstorm your approach. Remember,

Youth are a heterogeneous group, so projects ought to use multiple forms of communication to reach the widest possible audience (e.g. social media, radio, TV, local newspapers and magazines, word of mouth, etc.). It is also important to be flexible, with different levels of engagement at different times and in different formats, to enable youths to participate in a form that suits with their time, cultural and other social commitments. Training and support should be provided to the young people engaged in the project to assist them to engage other young people, with different organizations, and with the community in general (Ashenden, 2013).

Activate Your Youth Leadership
5 Steps to Building Successful Programs Worksheet

Step 1: Why?

Personal Why   Youth Why   Volunteers/Employees Why   Community Why

Assess "Why" in order to_____.

Key Stakeholders:

    1.

    2.

    3.

    4.

    5.

Step 2: What?

List what your program does or what you would like it to do ...

Where does your program(s) fall on Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation? (See Figure 1)

How will the program be evaluated by all participants?

Step 3: Who?

Questions to consider ...

    1. What age group(s)?

    2. Where will you find youth participants?

    3. How will they get involved with the program? Open to all, invitation, application process?

    4. How many youth can participate?

Step 4: Budget

Identify possible funding sources in your area ...

Who will request funding? (Adults, youth, combination?)

Step 5: ACTIVATE your program!

This material originally created by Yvonne Bryant.

The benefits of youth engagement

Youth engagement in the community benefits the participating youth, but it also has far-reaching impacts on adults, community organizations, and society at large.

1. Benefits to youth:
• Research suggests that youth engagement may increase the likelihood that youth will graduate from high school and avoid certain risk factors such as drug use or teen pregnancy (Zaff and Michelsen, 2002).
• It can increase certain skills and capacities in young people such as communication, problem-solving and decision-making, and may foster increased respect and concern for others (Camino and O'Connor, 2005; The Forum for Youth Investment, 2004).
• Youth engagement can foster a sense of belonging, identity development, and caring relationships with adults (Zeldin, Camino, and Calvert, 2003).

2. Benefits to adults:
• From participation in youth-adult partnerships, adults gain a sense of increased efficacy and belonging (Zeldin, 2004).
• They also gain a greater appreciation for the competence of youth as well as an increased confidence in the program due to the involvement of youth (Camino and O'Connor, 2005).

3. Benefits to organizations (including schools) and communities:
• Organizations or communities that engage youth may be able to make better, more informed decisions related to issues that impact them either directly or indirectly (Lansdown, 2001; MacNeil, 2006; MacNeil, 2000).
• Communities and organizations benefit when young people apply their unique skills, knowledge, and talents to solve problems and create new opportunities to further a social issue or cause, or otherwise contribute to the accomplishment of a group goal (MacNeil, 2006).

Photo by Darcy Varney, 2006

4. Benefits to society (long-term):
• When youth participate in meaningful ways in their organizations and communities, they are far more likely to be civically involved as adults, highlighting the potential long-term benefits to communities and to a democratic society in general (Independent Sector, 2002).
• According to the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), youth participation is an important component of a just society and a requirement for a healthy democracy. The CRC purports that "children are entitled to be actors in their own lives and to participate in the decisions that affect them" (Lansdown, 2001).

"**A** comprehensive plan or regional sustainability plan by its very nature addresses the needs and demands of future generations. But don't forget, some members of those 'future generations' are already here with us and many have strong opinions about the type of community they want to live in as adults. Young people's voices and ideas must be heard, respected, and incorporated into a community plan if the goal is for long-term sustainability, prosperity, and improved quality of life.... Today's rural high school students are your region's future business, civic, and educational leaders—but only if efforts are made to plan and develop your community into a place they will want to live in years from now" (Schwartz, 2013).

How two communities created successful youth-engagement strategies

Case Study: Cortez Heart and Soul

When the City of Cortez, Colorado, (population 8,474) received a Heart and Soul Community Planning Grant from the Orton Family Foundation in January 2012, it committed to engaging young people and providing youth leadership opportunities in the process. Heart and Soul Community Planning "aims to bring youth and adults together in ways that lead to all voices being heard and respected ... who better to contribute to a town's vision than those who will implement it?" (Orton Family Foundation, 2013).

The Heart and Soul team held two assemblies in May 2012 at the local high school to tell students about the process and to conduct a survey. The goal of the survey was to understand how many students planned to leave Cortez after high school, how many thought they might return someday and who would be interested in participating on local boards or committees, including the Heart and Soul leadership committee, city council, the school board, the parks and recreation board and others. More than 50 students responded that they wanted to get involved.

That fall, the Heart and Soul team invited the students who were interested in participating in a youth-adult "meet and greet" event with leaders of the local boards and committees. Everyone had a chance to mingle and introduce themselves; the adults spoke about the purpose of each of the organizations and the youth expressed their reasons for wanting to participate. To facilitate successful participation in an ongoing way and create a framework for authentic engagement, the group then hosted a youth-adult partnership training led by a local youth services and research organization. The training aimed to help the youth and adults understand each other better and to ensure that youth membership on the boards would not be tokenistic. One outcome of the training was a new ordinance allowing youth membership on the Recreation Advisory Board with full voting rights.

Activity #1
To build a safe, supportive space for collaboration and communication in a multigenerational group, take time to create a definition of "gracious space" together (see p. 18). Find worksheets and specific instructions for how to do this by going to theinnovationcenter. org/activities-toolkits-and-reports/get-ready > Foster Youth-Adult Partnerships > Defining Gracious Space, Realizing Gracious Space and How to Create Gracious Space in which Youth and Adults are Valued

In all, 18 teens became actively engaged in seven boards or committees in Cortez, including five on the Heart and Soul Community Advisory Team. Youth members on the Heart and Soul team helped expand the group's social media outreach, create and staff floats and booths at local community events, engage their peers in the values-based work of Heart and Soul planning, and bring youth and adults together to envision a healthy future for the city.

Over the course of the two-year planning process, Cortez succeeded in breaking down barriers between youth and adults by making space for them in the city's decision-making structure. Said program coordinator Cindy Houston, "It's a slow process – it doesn't happen overnight. It's a reconditioning of what we believe youth can do." And that takes time and the dedicated commitment of all involved.

Learn more about the Cortez Heart and Soul Community Planning process at www.cityofcortez.com.

Photos of youth engagement in Cortez Heart & Soul activities by Kirsten Sackett, 2012

Case Study: Growing Up Boulder

In 2009, the City of Boulder, Colorado, (population 101,808), Boulder Valley School District, several of the city's youth-serving organizations and a university-based research center teamed up to create "Growing Up Boulder," a partnership to integrate the perspectives of young people into Boulder's planning and design. They started by asking local middle and high school principals to recommend students with leadership skills—both high-achievers and others—who might be interested in serving on a youth steering committee.

About 75 youth turned out for a kick-off event at which they identified three topics for action: youth-friendly businesses, public art, and nightlife. In a city dominated by university students, tourists and high-income adults, the youth wanted to be treated fairly by businesses and have access to part-time jobs, they wanted to make a positive mark on the city through their own public art, and they desired safe and affordable opportunities for going out at night with their peers.

Three action groups formed around the topic areas, and youth and adults interested and skilled in each area worked together to create interview protocols for surveys, develop videos about the young peoples' findings and create other tools for action and information gathering. Growing Up Boulder (GUB) facilitators worked to keep the process youth-friendly at every step. They found that youth "most eagerly engaged with methods that facilitate expression and discovery, such as photography, art and field trips" (Derr, et al., 2013, p. 487). Conversely, it was most difficult to engage youth in the conventional methods of attending public meetings and participating in city council meetings.

Write the facilitators:
The biggest lesson is that engagement needs to be on youths' terms, with methods that they find exciting and relevant. While this may seem obvious,

Activity #2
Use this idea as an icebreaker at the start of a meeting: Take 15 to 30 minutes to pair up youth and adult participants. Have them discuss the list of questions on the referenced handout and reflect as a group. Download the handout and instructions here: theinnovationcenter.org/activities-toolkits-and-reports/get-ready > Foster Youth-Adult Partnerships > What were you like at 15 years old?

it can be challenging to implement consistently. The City of Boulder is a key GUB partner, and city council members and planning staff want to hear youth perspectives on predetermined issues related to planning and urban design. For youth, the timing and topic of these issues may not always seem relevant. The challenge is to find ways to balance city interests with methods and approaches that intersect with youths' lives (Derr, et al., 2013, p. 499).

One essential way to connect city interests with young peoples' ideas and lives, they discovered, was to engage youth on their own territory, going to classrooms or out-of-school programs where youth already gather and creating meaningful dialogue in a variety of ways. The facilitators found that going to youth directly was particularly important for reaching those from marginalized populations, "whose lives may be crowded with family obligations and out-of-school work, who may lack convenient transportation, and who may feel intimidated by formal processes" (Derr, et al., 2013, p. 500).

Throughout the partnership, GUB both mentored youth to participate in formal city processes and created alternative settings for meaningful participation. They found that only a small subsection of youth want to participate in formal processes and use research methods such as interviews and surveys. Many more participants eagerly participated when adults came to where they were and engaged them with methods "that cultivate voice through art, digital media and photography" (p. 501). Taking advantage of the resources and strengths of each GUB partner allowed the group to engage participating youth in digital storytelling, Photovoice, City as Play, and other creative methods, keeping many more young people engaged over a longer period of time than would have been possible by using formal, traditional methods alone.

GUB has had a powerful effect on many aspects of the City of Boulder's planning process, and participants have expressed their appreciation for being truly, deeply engaged in real, city-changing projects. The partnership stands as an excellent model for other communities seeking to create broad and deep youth engagement. For more information on Growing Up Boulder, see growingupboulder.org.

5 ways to partner with youth for vibrant downtowns

Working in partnership with your community's young people is an essential step toward creating a healthy, vibrant downtown, now and in the future. Here are five ways to get the youth-engagement ball rolling, with references to helpful worksheets from the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development.

1. Remember what it was like to be 15 years old. Creating successful youth-adult partnerships means taking time to get to know each other and build trusting relationships. One way to do that is to share stories with youth about what kinds of experiences, values, interests and feelings you had when you were young. Think back to when you were 15: What was important to you? What made you different? Who were the young people who participated actively in your community? What were they like and what did they do? Share your experiences and find common ground with young people in your community.

2. Create "gracious space" for youth-adult interactions. It is often difficult for young people to join in adult-dominated conversations about planning, visioning or economic development, but adult leaders can help by consciously making the spirit and setting of meetings youth-friendly. Gracious space begins with holding meetings in places and at times that are accessible to young people, and includes using meeting formats that facilitate equal interaction, such as circles. Together, groups can define what gracious space, in which everyone feels safe and supported, means for them, so genuine ideas and feelings emerge from the conversation.

Activity #3
Great tips for hosting a successful and fun community dinner are available at theinnovationcenter.org/ activities-toolkits-and-reports/ get-ready > Foster Youth-Adult Partnerships > How to Host Successful Community Dinners

3. Ask youth to take you on a tour of downtown. "Tours that are guided by young people are consistently one of the most valuable methods for understanding their perspectives on and use of the local environment," writes David Driskell in his 2002 book, Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth. In pairs or small groups, hit the pavement with teenagers who spend time downtown. Where do different groups of young people hang out? What places do they avoid? What would make downtown more appealing to them? Show your town's youth you value their presence and participation downtown by exploring it with them. See page 127 in Driskell's book (available at most libraries) for detailed guidelines for using youth-led tours as part of a community development process.

4. Feed young people's desire to be community leaders. Don't know where to find youth who are interested in helping improve your downtown? Consider hosting a community dinner designed to bring young leaders to the table. Work with local food vendors and farmers to create a home-grown menu and promote the event through schools, community centers, after-school programs and places where young people are employed. Create a comfortable atmosphere in which youth and adults can get to know each other. Highlight issues or problems that concern youth in your community and offer opportunities for ongoing participation on downtown committees or working groups.

5. Give youth space for self-expression in the interest of community. Public art is an important component of placemaking, creating vibrant and distinctive downtowns. Make use of vacant lots and storefronts, blank walls and open spaces by inviting young people to create public art they design. Young leaders affiliated with creative organizations or classes can develop public art projects that speak to their values, cultural identities and community-building aspirations.

Free Online Resources for Management

Getting started on youth engagement and leadership:
*   The Orton Family Foundation's Engaging Youth in Heart & Soul Community Planning (an excellent overview of why and how to engage young people):
    orton.org/sites/default/files/resource/1667/Handbook%20YOUTH_041411_FINAL_0.pdf
*   Principles of authentic youth engagement: freechild.org/principles.htm
*   The Innovation Center for Community & Youth Development (excellent activities, toolkits and reports to help you get ready, plan, implement and sustain a youth engagement program): theinnovationcenter.org/
*   The Community Toolbox (a broad selection of leadership, community assessment and community intervention tools): ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx
*   Youth Civic Engagement Tools & Resources, National League of Cities (resources for starting and maintaining a youth council or authentic youth-engagement program): nlc.org/find-city-solutions/institute-for-youth-education-and-families/youth-civic-engagement/youth-civic-engagement-tools-and-resources

Developing downtown and community-wide strategies with youth:
*   Youth With a Voice: Engaging Young People in Rural and Small Town Community Development:
    nado.org/youth_voice/
*   Youth Participation in Community Planning, by Ramona Mullahey, Yve Susskind and Barry Checkoway:
    planning.org/education/youth/pdf/pas486.pdf
*   A Kid's Guide to Building Great Communities: A Manual for Planners and Educators:
    ontarioplanners.on.ca/pdf/kids_guide.pdf
*   Growing Up Boulder (great ideas for projects to do with youth, along with research on why youth engagement is important): growingupboulder.org/

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Photo by Darcy Varney, 2006

Module 2

Physical Improvements: Designing Colorado's Downtowns with Young Stakeholders

In this module, you will learn:
- ✔ The importance of engaging youth in downtown revitalization
- ✔ Physical improvements that mean the most to young people
- ✔ Specific strategies for youth voice and participation in downtown redevelopment
- ✔ Practical tips for fostering youth-adult partnerships

Young people bring new ideas, fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to downtown design processes, and their participation can add meaning and value for all involved. Authentic youth engagement is key: young people should have an active, ongoing place at the decision-making table, not just a one-time chance to weigh in on ideas for physical improvements. This module introduces readers to ways in which young stakeholders have made a difference in improving their towns' physical environments and how towns can start to engage youth in their downtown revitalization processes.

The importance of engaging youth in downtown revitalization

There are many reasons for involving youth in the improvement of their town centers, including the fact that young people's ideas tend to make places better for everyone. Write architects Stanley King and Susan Chung,

> When young people are included in planning, the designs show consistent characteristics: a humanity of scale, and a large range of activities that can be enjoyed in the new place. The involvement of youth in planning encourages civil behaviour and strengthens the community. Youth care for environments they have helped to design. Vandalism is noticeably absent (King & Chung 2009, p. 4).

When asked for their ideas, young people are remarkably creative: they think of new solutions to tough problems and see possibilities differently than planners, designers and older community members might. Youth are not hindered by professional expectations of design programs, and they bring a fresh perspective to design deliberations where others get stuck. In the redesign of New Kellam High School in Virginia Beach, VA, for example, students came up with ways to use the site for maximum energy efficiency and productivity, filling

courtyards with vegetable gardens and helping designers conceive of innovative learning community wings (Hulette, 2013).

The American Planning Association has found that, along with being creative and community-minded, young people are also eager to jump into the work of planning and design:

> Children and youth have their own kind of wisdom, and studies have shown a work ethic to back it up. Youth involved in planning projects take active roles in gathering data, surveying neighborhoods, and relaying their findings. And they seek to tackle a broad range of community challenges, not just those focused on young people (APA, 2011).

Participation is good for young people themselves, too. They benefit in a variety of ways, as stated by the Orton Family Foundation:

> Engaging young people can be rewarding on many levels. Young people who participate in community activities enjoy the opportunity to benefit personally by being socially productive: they develop a democratic or civic mindset and build leadership skills; they gain experience and confidence; they are directed towards relationship building; they gain respect and recognition from peers and adults; they are empowered to improve themselves and the communities they live in; and they enhance their resumes for future jobs or college applications (Orton Family Foundation, 2011, p. 3).

Further, young people, who are often marginalized in public space, actually depend upon downtowns and other active public areas to "see and be seen," learn how to act as members of their community and grow to value the quality, vitality and history of their hometowns:

> The city and its network of public spaces become an important scenario where teenagers develop their personalities and social roles. This is why participation of teenagers in the planning and design of the built environment and of their own places is so important, and why teenagers as a social group should participate in making decisions that affect their communities (Passon, Levi & del Rio, 2008, p. 74).

Young people's participation provides myriad benefits for youth and adults alike, and downtown areas are the ideal context for their engagement. Making towns work for all of their residents is the key to long-term vitality.

Physical improvements that mean the most to young people

Because youth are so attuned to community, they consistently create and gravitate toward places that bring people together and offer multiple ways of interacting. Action research with young people has found that youth are often attracted to "niches in the community [they] can claim as their own places in which to socialize, such as plazas, empty lots, street corners, coffee shops, and community centers" (Passon, Levi & del Rio, 2008, p. 78).

Data collected by the UNESCO Growing Up in Cities project first in the 1970s and then in the 1990s supports and elaborates on this idea, finding that young people rated six aspects of their local communities as most important (from Driskell, 2002, pp. 24-25):

Social integration: Young people feel welcome throughout the community, and interact with other age groups in public and semi-public places. They have a sense of belonging and of being valued. In practical terms, this means that young people need more than youth centers, recreation centers and youth-specific places in their communities. Towns can ensure social integration by bringing business owners and youth and adult leaders together to dispel misunderstandings and create new opportunities for interaction.

Variety of interesting activity settings: There is a variety of places for young people, including places where they can meet friends, talk or play informal games; play sports; join in community work; shop and run errands; be alone or away from adult supervision; and observe action on the street or similar public places.

Safety and freedom of movement: There is a general sense of safety, even in areas where crime exists, because young people are familiar with the local area and its adult residents, with whom they interact regularly. Because there is a sense of safety, young people are able to move about to meet friends and find interesting things to do.

Peer meeting places: Young people are able to claim corners and niches in the community as their own, where they can play and socialize—a street corner, a place in a local park or plaza, a coffee shop or store, a playing field, a community centre or an empty plot.

Cohesive community identity: Young people are aware of their community's history and take pride in its accomplishments. They are active participants in its festivals and cultural life.

Green areas: Green space is accessible to young people in some form, from flat green fields for organized sports to tree-shaded parks and safe overgrown 'wild' areas.

These characteristics, or indicators, from the Growing Up in Cities project mesh nicely with other findings about what people value most about their communities. The two-year Knight Foundation Soul of the Community study investigated community attachment in 26 places around the United States and found four specific factors that made places important to residents: the best places were **attractive**, **engaging**, **friendly**, and **welcoming**.

Not only are the features that youth favor the same as those that generally

Figure 2: Growing Up in Cities Indicators Nested within Soul of the Community Attributes

appeal to older community residents, but where those features are developed thoughtfully, places also tend to prosper economically. It is of great value to towns to invest in creating downtown centers that epitomize these characteristics (Loflin, 2013).

It is easy to see that young people's wants and needs neatly overlap with those of other community members (see Figure 2, above). When they are engaged in design and physical improvement decision-making, this becomes clear. Youth consistently envision places that work well for everyone. This is especially important in light of the increasing need for multigenerational planning, particularly in towns that are attracting retirees and wanting to retain families with children and young adults.

In a recent paper on family friendly communities, the American Planning Association stated,

The key community components that the elderly need to successfully age in place are the same as those needed by the young adults and the families with children: safe, walkable neighborhoods, a complete range of services nearby (child care, senior centers, parks, food stores, health care, etc.), an opportunity for civic engagement, affordable and mixed use housing, and adequate transportation options (American Planning Association, 2011).

When they participate in envisioning physical improvements for their towns, youth can help create solutions for all of these needs.

Specific strategies for youth voice and participation in downtown redevelopment

Planners and designers working with young people have developed strategies that help to break down barriers and create opportunities for cross-generational listening with regard to the creation of physical improvements. The following list describes some of those strategies. Readers are encouraged to consult the list of resources at the end of this module to learn about more strategies and develop their own ideas for what will work best in their local context.

Youth-led tours

As briefly described in the section "Five ways to partner with youth for vibrant downtowns" in Module 1, youth-led tours are a powerful tool for understanding how young people view and use the downtown area on a day-to-day basis. You might be surprised by how certain areas attract or repel young people in your town, and why. Writes David Driskell in his book, *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth*,

> Tours that are guided by young people are consistently one of the most valuable methods for understanding their perspectives on and use of the local environment. Viewing places first-hand often elicits new information and serves as a catalyst for more in-depth questions and discussion (Driskell 2002, p. 127).

Tours should be part of an engagement strategy involving other activities, such as drawings, interviews and building models of the desired community elements. See Driskell's book (available through your local library) for detailed information about each of these methods.

The "Place Game"

The Project for Public Spaces (pps.org) is an excellent resource for ideas about "placemaking," the participatory process through which cities and towns collectively shape their public realm to maximize shared value. PPS developed a place performance evaluation tool called the "Place Game" to help communities get started on the placemaking process. The Place Game is the perfect tool for engaging youth in discussions about what works and doesn't work in specific places, such as a downtown retail corridor. Young people can rate the place on a series of variables in the categories "comfort and image," "access and linkages," "uses and activities," and "sociability," and they can identify specific opportunities for improvement.

Copy the "Place Game" worksheet (see following pages) and distribute it to classes or youth groups involved in your downtown revitalization process, or use it in conjunction with youth-led tours of downtown.

SITE #: _____ Date: _____

Rate the Place:

COMFORT & IMAGE	POOR			GOOD
Overall attractiveness	1	2	3	4
Feeling of safety	1	2	3	4
Cleanliness/Quality of Maintenance	1	2	3	4
Comfort of places to sit	1	2	3	4
Comments/Notes:				

ACCESS & LINKAGES	POOR			GOOD
Visibility from a distance	1	2	3	4
Ease in walking to the place	1	2	3	4
Transit access	1	2	3	4
Clarity of information/signage	1	2	3	4
Comments/Notes:				

USES & ACTIVITIES	POOR			GOOD
Mix of stores/services	1	2	3	4
Frequency of community events/activities	1	2	3	4
Overall busy-ness of area	1	2	3	4
Economic vitality	1	2	3	4
Comments/Notes:				

SOCIABILITY	POOR			GOOD
Number of people in groups	1	2	3	4
Evidence of volunteerism	1	2	3	4
Sense of pride and ownership	1	2	3	4
Presence of children and seniors	1	2	3	4
Comments/Notes:				

Identify Opportunities

1. What do you like best about this place?

2. List things that you would do to improve this place that could be done right away and that wouldn't cost a lot.

3. What changes would you make in the long term that would have the biggest impact?

4. Ask someone who is in the "place" what they like about it and what they would do to improve it. Their answer:

5. What local partnerships or local talent can you identify that could help implement some of your proposed improvements? Please be as specific as possible.

PLACE GAME

Design charrettes and workshops

These are a popular way to get youth input on design ideas, either with or without other community members present. Charrettes and design workshops are often part of larger processes involving other methods, as well; they may take place over one to three days with adult facilitation, resulting in drawings, annotated maps, models, stories, or other artifacts that designers can use in drafting plans.

In Santa Cruz, CA, the Museum of Art and History hosted a children's design workshop to come up with ideas for making its Abbott Square more attractive to the community. This resulted in two things:

> First, it showed that it's not really far-fetched to think that kids can talk about public space and contribute really meaningfully to Placemaking. Kids have great imaginations, and they can look at an adult problem and think differently about what they want to do with it. Second, it highlighted the museum's role as a community institution, as a creative and networked place, and so clearly spoke to that vision that the staff is working toward (Project for Public Spaces, 2013).

The workshop was targeted to children aged 5 to 10, but charrettes can be held with any age groups. An excellent resource is the book, Youth Planning Charrettes: A Manual for Planners, Teachers, and Youth Advocates, by Bruce Race and Carolyn Torma (1998, APA Planners Press). It is available through the American Planning Association (planning.org).

Two specific types of design workshops may be most conducive to engaging youth voices and creating change: "City as Play" and "Codesign."

"City as Play" workshops

Urban planner James Rojas pioneered the "City as Play" design workshop, which is "a simple yet effective activity that allows people to use the materials they have at their disposal to plan, create and share ideas and solutions for their community's infrastructure and [physical] problems" (catcomm.org/city-as-play). Rojas' method encourages creative thinking about what could be to stimulate new ideas and help groups of people understand where each of the participants is coming from in his or her experience. In a 2010 article in the magazine, Next City, Rojas described the process, which he facilitates under the name, "Place It":

> His signature "Place It" happenings involve gathering groups of people together, providing them with tubs filled with everyday found objects—Legos, bottle caps, pieces of wood—and then asking them to build their ideal city.

Some of the resulting works are pure fantasy, others, steeped in pragmatism. Either way, it's a bottom-up, egalitarian approach to city planning. 'People have always played with blocks, every kid,' Rojas said. 'When do the workshops at high schools, before the workshop starts, kids are already building. They just can't keep their hands off the materials. But adults, you have to push them into it—they take more time. I think it's just a really natural way of people thinking about the world in their heads' (Rosenberg, 2010).

A City as Play workshop follows six basic steps:
1. Organize materials, space, time and attitude (bring a receptive and generous spirit to the room).
2. Ask an inspirational question relevant to what is happening in your downtown.
3. Provide general instructions to participants.
4. Build: Give participants 20 minutes to build individual models that answer the question, using the everyday objects provided.
5. Share: Give everyone one minute to share what they built with the group.
6. Synthesize: Have each table mould the best elements of all of the ideas into a new model, then synthesize the ideas from each table into ideas that could inform decision making, or similar.

See the web site, catcomm.org/city-as-play/, for detailed information about each step and to watch an instructive three-minute video on the process.

"Codesign" workshops

Architect Stanley King and artist/environmental educator Susan Chung developed the "codesign" method over decades of participatory planning work with youth and adults in Vancouver, BC, Canada. Their innovative, highly visual and engaging method is described in detail in the freely available handbook, The Social Art of Architecture: Involving Youth in the Design of Sustainable Communities (youthmanual.blogspot.com/).

Codesign involves bringing youth and adults together to understand what physical improvements or changes are proposed in the community, helping young people understand that they are instrumental in shaping their community and giving them the chance to imagine an ideal scenario for the area of proposed change. A workshop typically has three parts and lasts about half a day. Facilitated by someone who can visually capture the young participants' ideas (an architect-artist, art students or others capable of doing so), youth work from reimagining their town as a brand new settlement to discussing their personal experience and perception of the town as it could be, then creating a "day in the life" activity timeline for their ideal image of the town and rating the ideas that emerge through the process of reimagining the town. Download the youth manual and see King and Chung's web site for

more ideas about how to engage young people in the design of sustainable communities.

School and playground design projects

A natural way for young people to participate is in redesigning their own school and play environments. The Colorado Center for Community Development at CU-Denver has had great success in this area, engaging students at all of Denver Public Schools' elementary schools in redesigning their playgrounds into "Learning Landscapes," with student-developed artwork and play and outdoor classroom environments shaped with student input. Landscape architecture students work with teachers and elementary students to realize collaborative visions for outdoor learning and play spaces. See learninglandscapes.org for more information about these participatory projects.
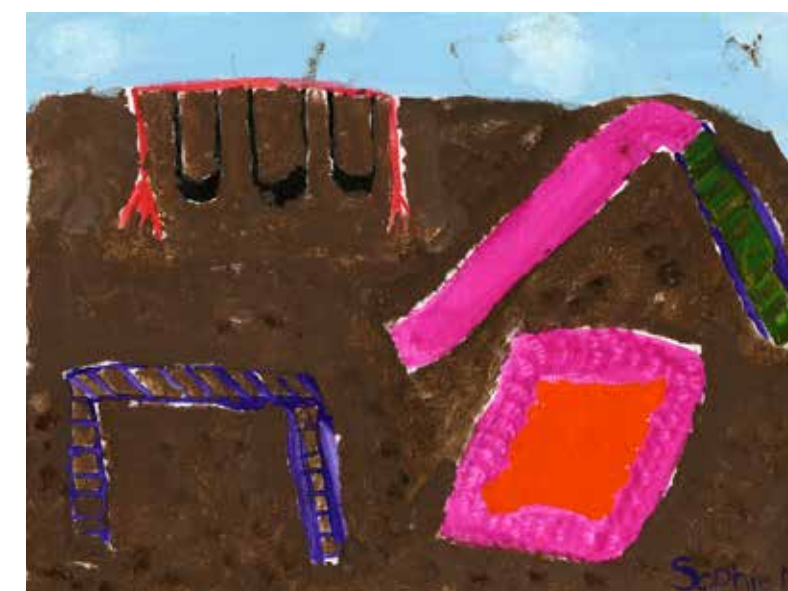
Practical tips for fostering youth-adult partnerships: Lessons from a Downtown Institute workshop

On April 26, 2013, Carole MacNeil, Ph.D., led a youth engagement workshop on effective youth-adult partnerships at the DCI Downtown Institute in Trinidad, Colorado. The participants came up with the following list of strategies and tips for ensuring effective youth engagement in any partnership approach:

- Make a personal invitation to youth participant(s)
- Escort the youth to the meeting
- Make sure that youth feel welcomed and appreciated
- Provide food
- Keep the lines of communication open
- Involve more than one or two youth (no tokenism!)
- Involve diverse youth, who can bring diverse perspectives
- Think about time and location of meetings (make it feasible for youth/ students)
- Help new members of the group (youth or adults) understand the purpose and context of the group and meeting
- Evaluate regularly how well the partnership is working (e.g., at the end of each meeting)
- Set clear objectives for the roles of youth and adults
- Identify technical advisors or liaisons to help youth learn the ropes
- Think about meeting and decision-making processes, to make the meetings more inclusive and participatory
- Ensure that youth have the information they need to participate effectively (for example, group norms, policies that need to be followed, budget considerations, etc.)
- Don't send youth off to do a task without providing guidelines/parameters (and a liaison)

In addition, research on effective youth-adult partnerships also suggests the following elements are important for the success of the partnership:

- Authentic and meaningful roles for all partners have been clearly defined
- There is shared decision-making
- Youth and adults each give respect and feel respected by others
- The partnership benefits individual youth and adults and the group as a whole
- Youth and adults learn from each other
- There are consistent standards and expectations for all partners
- There are opportunities to build the team and strengthen team dynamics (including fun!)
- There are regular opportunities to reflect, evaluate, and make "course corrections"

In any partnership approach, it is important to actively listen to, validate, act on and reflect on the ideas youth bring to the table and be mindful of the attitudes both adults and youth bring with them.

Adam Fletcher of the organization Freechild (freechild.org) developed a "cycle of youth voice" that clearly describes the importance of giving young people a genuine voice and stake in any partnership process and a series of steps for doing so.
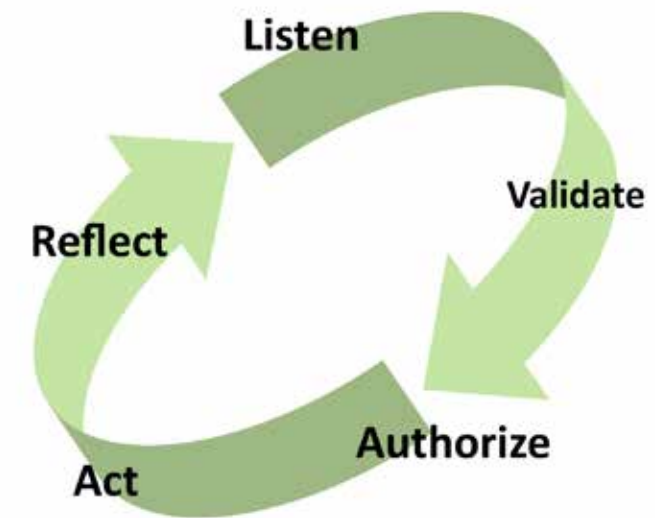
The Cycle of Youth Voice (reprinted here with permission—see freechild.org/ YouthVoice/cycle.htm):

1. **Listen to Youth Voice.** Actively engage with youth to listen to their ideas, opinions, experiences, knowledge, and/or actions.
2. **Validate Youth Voice.** Instead of hiding our true thoughts, it's the job of adults to honestly validate what young people say or do by honestly reacting to it, how we sincerely feel or think about it. If we think an initiative will fail, we should say so. Validation means disagreeing—or agreeing—as we honestly believe, and respecting young people enough to explain why and search for alternatives, if appropriate.
3. **Authorize Youth Voice.** Without authority, Youth Voice is just a hollow cry in a loud argument. By building the skills of children and youth to engage in democracy, adults can provide practical steps towards actual empowerment, instead of just words. As well as the skills, adults must engage young people in activities that are actually powerful, purposeful, and rewarding. As young people apply their new skills to practical action, Youth Voice gains the authority to make a difference.
4. **Act on Youth Voice.** Youth Voice doesn't just happen—it must be actively engaged. Taking action for Youth Voice requires children, youth, and adults working together to make the space, place, and ability for young people

to create change. Action can—and should—look different everywhere: from identifying the challenge, researching the issue, planning for action, training for effectiveness, reflection on the process, to celebrating the outcomes, Youth Voice is totally flexible—but the purpose of engaging youth is not. The purpose of Youth Voice is always to create, support, and sustain powerful, purposeful, and meaningful communities for everyone to belong to. An important caution: action is usually seen as the most important step. However, this makes positive outcomes the most important thing. Unfortunately, for many issues, positive outcomes rarely come, or if they do, not for the current generation of youth involved. For many young people, the next step can be the most important component of Youth Voice.

5. **Reflect on Youth Voice.** Reflection may be the most important ongoing step to engaging children and youth. When young people and adults critically assess and analyze Youth Voice, learning becomes a vibrant, intricate, and powerful tool for change. Reflection activities used should be appropriate for diverse learners—writing, acting, creating collages, and building activities are all good examples. Once your group has finished reflecting, those lessons should be incorporated into the next listening activity, to support a cyclical approach to Youth Voice.

Online Resources for Physical Improvements

Books for purchase (or find them through your local library):
- *Creating Better Cities with Children and Youth*, by David Driskell (2002)
- *Kids as Planners*, by Kids Consortium: kidsconsortium.org/kidsasplanners_overview.php

Free resources online:
- *The Social Art of Architecture: Involving Youth in the Design of Sustainable Communities,* by Stanley King and Susan Chung: youthmanual.blogspot.com/p/youth-manual.html
- The Project for Public Spaces' "Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper" strategy for community design, which is a great approach to use with young people: pps.org/reference/lighter-quicker-cheaper-a-low-cost-high-impact-approach/
- The California Center for Civic Participation's *Youth Voices in Community Design*: californiacenter.org/docs/Youth_Voices_in_Community_Design_2004.pdf
- The Canadian Institute of Planners' *A Kid's Guide to Building Great Communities*: A manual for planners and educators: cip-icu.ca/Files/Resources/kidsguide.aspx
- James Rojas' *Interactive Planning Manual*: cce.csus.edu/conferences/childobesity/11/uploads/INTERACTIVE%20PLANNING%20MANUAL.pdf

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Module 3

Marketing: Using Social Media to Engage Youth in Promoting Your Downtown

In this module, you will learn:
- ✔ How to draft a "social media mission statement" in collaboration with youth
- ✔ The functions of different social media platforms
- ✔ Ways to attract earned media: social media gold

Young people are true "digital citizens" who conduct much of their lives online. They have Twitter, Facebook and Google+ accounts, blog on Tumblr, post pictures on Instagram and are interacting in new and innovative ways all the time. Engaging youth and enlisting their help in creating an interactive and compelling social media presence for your downtown is essential—but be sure to include youth voices from the start, rather than ask young people to carry out a preconceived plan. Youth are creative, energetic and knowledgeable about online trends; collaborate with them in authentic partnerships to create a successful social media strategy.

Social media platforms foster an active online community where users can discuss how to improve the local economy through crowd-funding for projects, shop-local campaigns, and promotion of community events. Young people can be instrumental in the success of downtown marketing, and involving them may help stem the persistent "youth flight" or "youth drain" problem that plagues many small towns today. As the Orton Family Foundation recently reported,

> When young people are given the chance to be heard and invited to play meaningful roles in their communities, they often outshine the rest of us with their ingenuity, creativity, resilience, and compassion. Studies have shown that this kind of youth involvement can lead to more young people remaining in or returning to their hometowns to pursue livelihoods and raise their own families (Orton Family Foundation, 2013).

Engagement through social media, digital storytelling and other digital means is a natural way to let young people know that their ideas and talents are valued and needed in their hometown.

This module details a four-step process developed by The Journey Institute, a Denver-based community-building education organization, for engaging youth in defining downtown groups' social media interests and discusses the ways different popular social media sites can be useful in carrying out a collaboratively developed strategy.

How to draft a "social media mission statement" in collaboration with youth

In social media, content is everything. What you post on any given social media platform communicates who you are. Take care to define your interests, motivations and intended impacts before posting, and you will be able to create meaningful content that moves your downtown revitalization process forward.

Warm-Up Exercise Idea: Create a "Community Sculpture"

This exercise comes from the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, which offers a wealth of resources for creating effective youth-adult partnerships at every stage of development, from pre-planning to sustaining a successful partnership. Their web site (theinnovationcenter.org) features many free tools you can use as icebreakers, warm-up exercises or entire-meeting activities.

The "community sculpture" exercise is a hands-on activity that helps participants discover the elements, relationships, and processes that are critical features of their community.

First, participants form a circle around one member of the group, who strikes a pose that represents some aspect of the community. Add one more person at a time, making sure that each new piece is physically connected to the larger sculpture, until everyone in the group is part of the final creation. If desired, the group can make a machine instead of a sculpture, adding movements and sounds that represent elements of the community.

Once the sculpture or machine has been built, reflect on the activity with the group. Ask:
- What piece did you add?
- What was easy about this activity?
- What was difficult about it?
- What does our sculpture tell you about our community?

This can be a great way to understand which aspects of downtown the different participants in the activity recognize and value, which will influence how they perceive what goes on downtown and the benefits of creating new opportunities there.

At the July 26, 2013, Downtown Institute, Dafna Michaelson Jenet of The Journey Institute (journeyinstitute.org) provided DCI with step-by-step instructions for creating a social media mission statement—a process that can be carried out with groups of young people or youth and adults together with some simple facilitation. This can be done in collaboration with anyone interested in downtown revitalization, from groups of youth who frequent downtown coffee shops to students who work downtown or business owners interested in attracting more young families to Main Street. It is important to get to know your audience and what they have in common to create appealing content they will respond to.

To get started, see the social media mission statement handouton page 39. Feel free to modify it to suit your community, rewording the prompt questions as appropriate. Make sure everyone participating in the exercise gets his or her own copy to work on. Assemble an interested group of participants, and start creating!

Using the Social Media Mission Statement Worksheet

Step 1: What do you do (downtown)—or, what do you want to do?

When you think about your community, the goals of your downtown revitalization and the people who work, live and play downtown, how can you define what you do? Use descriptive words and dig deeply, but work quickly. Participants can write several sentences, but should not be given more than two minutes to write (stick to this limit for the next two questions, as well). The emphasis is on getting down gut-reaction, intuitive answers. The gut response is generally the most powerful response.

Step 2: Why do you do what you do—or, why do you want to do it?

As before, work quickly, jotting down a gut-level response in two minutes or less. Be honest and authentic.

Step 3: What benefit will people gain by doing business (downtown) or supporting your cause?

This is a very important question. The mission statement is the foundation for all of your social media content; you have to know who the target audience is and how to answer their questions about what is in it for them. Think about the things that audience cares about. Always remember who you are speaking to or with. When doing this activity with youth, you can suggest that they focus only on youth in the community or that they focus on the whole community, based on how you present this to them.

SOCIAL MEDIA MISSION STATEMENT

The social media mission statement is used to set the stage for your social media content development and communications. It's what you will use to check your content against before you post. It can also act as a tool to help you generate appropriate content if you get a case of writers block. Our world is all about content, what are you creating?

Answer the following three questions: (Take ONLY 2 minutes per question. Set a timer–at the end of 2 minutes move on to the next question)

What is it that you do?

This is not asking for your job title. Think about the tasks you do, the people you help, the outcomes you are working toward.

Why do you do what you do?

Be authentic. If you do what you do because you took over a family business, or because it fulfills you, or it's your life dream, either by accident or because it is your best access to money, be authentic!

What benefit will people gain by doing business with you or supporting your cause?

This is not your sales pitch. Think about the daily life impact upon a person who chooses to work with you or buy from you. Is it quality of life? Tangible benefit? Relationships?

Bringing it together
Now read through your answers and see if you can boil them down to one sentence each. The three sentences together will compose your social media mission statement which conveys your interests and how you share them with others.

THE JOURNEY INSTITUTE

SOCIAL MEDIA MISSION STATEMENT WORKSHEET © 2013 The Journey Institute • www.journeyinstitute.org

Step 4: Bringing it together

After everyone has written down answers to the three questions, lead a five- to 10-minute discussion about participants' answers and agree upon one answer per question for the final mission statement. Ask participants to read their answers aloud (this could also be done in small groups, if you are working with a large group). Reading aloud is important, as some people will have similar answers and people can borrow from each other. Reading aloud in the group is especially important when working with youth, as they will all want to share their thoughts about their community.

Capture the descriptive words or main keywords in participants' answers on a flip chart, with one page or section for each answer. Take all three collaborative answers and boil them down into a cohesive mission statement. The key is to get very specific. This statement will guide everything you do on social media.

For example, if historic preservation turns out to be a key ingredient of the mission statement, you can create or find content to post on social media about that. It is not necessary to create all original content all the time. A great deal of content already exists on the internet that is ideal for generating discussions in your community. The key is to find it and post it in the right places to get conversations flowing.

So, this could mean that in one series of posts, you feature photos of your town's historic downtown buildings on Facebook and ask followers to comment about what the buildings mean to them. In another series of posts, you link to photos and articles about how other towns of similar size or age are reactivating their historic town halls, libraries, train stations, or retail corridors.

Take-away #1: There is no such thing as competition, only opportunity for collaboration.
- Collaborate on social media content with other communities similar to yours. Find "sister" towns. Look on websites, blogs, Facebook, and other social media platforms and see what you like that they are doing and what you don't like. Find the people you want to connect with on Twitter and follow their tweets. Find the way that works best for you to create connections and engagement among communities.
- Several small communities are making exciting changes to their downtowns with youth, including Biddeford, Maine, and Brownsville, Pennsylvania. To read short case studies of these towns' projects and find more resources, such as lessons learned, best practices and interviews with participants, go to the National Association of Development Organizations "Youth with a Voice" web site: nado.org/youth_voice/.

Take-away #2: Social media is not a megaphone, it is a platform for communication and engagement.
- The goal of social media is to have a conversation, not to yell out into the ether. When you just throw out a message without an invitation for engagement, people will ignore it.

The functions of different social media platforms

Now that you have an idea of how you will shape your social media mission statement, think about which social media platforms are most relevant to community members you want to reach. Be sure to ask community members which platforms they use. Youth may use several platforms for different kinds of information. This section describes three of the currently most popular social media platforms. As new platforms evolve, investigate how your community members are, or could be, using them to understand how to reach your audience effectively.

 Facebook is a living room

Imagine every Facebook post as a conversation you would have with your neighbor in their house. How would you frame your downtown initiative in that context? You would relay positive gossip about what is going on downtown, new ideas for promotional campaigns, and the like. If you put questions into posts, it gives people the opportunity to answer. For example, say you are looking around online and learn about an interesting Main Street project in Nebraska. Post about it with a picture on Facebook: "We think this is a great idea. How do you think it would work in our town?" Be specific. Have a conversation. Create a culture of communication.

A secret to using Facebook effectively: nobody wants to be the first to comment on a post. Who do you have on your committee who is ready to comment after you post? It helps everyone else feel comfortable commenting if someone already has. Have two or three go-to comment people. Make sure these people answer the specific question in the post.

 Twitter is a text message

Twitter is in people's pockets—on their phone or other mobile device. It happens on the go. If you think about tweets as text messages, you would send a message such as, "Hey, meet me downtown, there's this great event." So, how do we use this for marketing? Tweet something like, "Come to this great event downtown" and link to details on your website. The key to putting a link on Twitter is that it gets people away from the noise. People will follow your link, look around and learn more.

Hashtags are key: it doesn't matter if you don't have any followers on Twitter at all if you know how to use hashtags (#phrases). If you're in Rifle, you can create a hashtag to go along with your initiative, such as: "Main Street event in #Rifle #Colorado #free." People are using "#Rifle #Colorado" to post information about the town and its surroundings, but beware that "#Rifle" leads to completely different results! When you put your hashtags in a tweet, the tweet will be found by anyone who is searching those terms. Be careful about where you put the pound sign—use it judiciously, as each hashtag is a search term. Don't # every word!

Hashtags indicate your specific "in" to a kind of 24/7 networking party. You can join that party by searching for a hashtag. Any word is searchable on Twitter. Put two to three words together that are relevant to your work and search on them to see how people use them. Always search the words you want to hashtag before you use them so you are prepared for the network that will see them. It is worth looking around and knowing if the people on Twitter are who you want to reach.

LinkedIn is a boardroom

People have conversations on LinkedIn in the same way they would in an office. These conversations revolve around professional issues and ideas, such as economic development, retail development, and the like. Young people who are entrepreneurial and running businesses should promote them through LinkedIn to get lots of adult mentorship, attention, and participation. LinkedIn is the fastest-growing social media platform. It is where people put their best foot forward and present their best selves.

Keys to using these social media platforms, and others, effectively

- Link to other peoples' high-quality articles and content you find around the web. The content you link to must be directly relevant to your social media mission statement. It is research you are doing to figure out how to achieve your goals as a community.
- Post videos. These can be taken with a cell phone. Anyone can take them. Keep them under three minutes.
- Write blog articles. ALWAYS make sure your blogs are based on your social media mission statement and the keywords in it. Blog entries can be 500 to 1500 words. Anything longer loses people's attention, but there are no hard and fast rules. Try things out and see what works for your audience.
- Facebook posts are like coffee-table conversations. They should always have a picture attached. Pictures drive more attention. Grab your phone, snap a shot, save it or post directly from the phone, or pay someone to capture a

series of images. Use your own content—they should look like your community and should always include people. Key: Facebook posts have no word limit if a picture is attached. Always tag people in Facebook posts to spread the content. You can't tag people from a business page, so you have to add people's names directly in your post.
- Tweets: use hashtags and tag people in tweets. If you can find the name of the author of a link you want to post, include the author's name. This maximizes your voice. When you share someone else's content, it lets them know you are doing it in a subtle way and it gains you access to their audience. This builds relationship.

Marketing tip: It is vital to keep in mind that your downtown organization or initiative should have its own web site or blog in addition to social media accounts. Do not use a social media platform as your web site. The rules could change anytime (Facebook changes its policies regularly), which could put you in danger of losing audience or content and resources you have built. Wordpress offers many ways to create a free web site, so get one if you don't have one and drive people to your page through social media.

Ways to attract earned media: social media gold!

On Facebook, earned media is a "share." On Twitter it is a "retweet." On blogs, it is comments or links back to your article on someone else's page. Earned media is other people promoting your content to their networks. It is about creating conversations and creating community. Never forget that the main goal of social media use is to create face-to-face interactions. Social media is a platform to build engagement so that an individual will be interested in sitting down with you and having a cup of coffee face-to-face in your downtown.

When you write an original blog entry (which may take 45 minutes or more), it can be repurposed in many different ways to maximize your creative energy and efficiency. Numbered lists are very popular with readers and are easy to stretch out. If you wrote about "Five Things My Main Street is Doing to Engage Youth," for example, you could maximize the impact by doing the following:
- Post 5 separate tweets, creating a headline for each item in the list, with a link back to your blog.
- Do a series of 5 videos on YouTube with 5 different youth talking about one point each and how it is important for them. Always link back to the original article.
- Post 5 separate pictures of the things you are doing on Facebook. This is different from posting an album with 5 pictures—that is only one post. Each

time you post a picture, post an individual one. This is about getting more eyes on your content. After you post, make sure someone goes back and tags everyone who is relevant to the post.
• On LinkedIn, post about the ways you are engaging youth to create economic prosperity or whatever is the big impact of the initiative. But if your target audience isn't on LinkedIn, don't waste your time.

This strategy creates a lot of content for very little time-intensive creative energy. Every time you write something, break it down and place it around your different social media platforms in ways appropriate to that forum.

Other platforms of interest:

• **Instagram** is very popular with young people who use their smart-phone cameras to record their daily experiences and interactions. It is like Twitter for photos. You can hold competitions that prompt people to snap photos of some part of your town and get people talking about it. You can use hashtags on Instagram to help people find your content. This is useful especially if you are looking to engage tourists. Encourage people to photograph certain town symbols or landmarks, or even specific signs in shop windows that can earn them coupons or other rewards. See this campaign by Aldo shoes for a great idea of how this is done: youtube.com/watch?v=L1L5Y4QP_sk.
• **Foursquare** is a location-based social media platform where people "check in" from specific locations. Business owners can offer a special if people check in at their shop/restaurant. This is one more way to gain customer loyalty and to get other people spreading the word.
• **Community Almanac** is a site where towns can elicit stories from community members about the heart and soul of where they live. This could be a good way to initiate a conversation with youth or any other community members. (See communityalmanac.org/)

To determine which social media platforms are most relevant to your communities or audiences, ask them which ones they use. If you already have established retail on Main Street, for example, you could ask business owners to keep a log/signup at the register to ask customers which social media they use, and then contact them that way with links, coupons and promotional materials.

E-mail is social media, too! Any e-mail lists members of the community already use to reach out to their audiences are vital to tap into, depending on your social media mission statement. Other platforms help you see where the friends and associates of your contacts are looking/participating.

Free Online Resources for Marketing

• American Planning Association's Kids' Planning Toolbox blog, which regularly posts articles on innovative youth engagement tools and new ideas relevant to young people and planning: blogs.planning.org/kids/
• The Learn Local place-based education curriculum for teachers, planners and organizers is an excellent resource for working with youth on collecting community voices and values. Download the tools here: learnlocal.us/index.html

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Module 4

Economic Vitality: Creating a Catalyst for Youth Entrepreneurship

In this module, you will learn:
- How to start cultivating young business talent
- A three-step process for helping local youth identify and solve community needs through entrepreneurship
- Where to look for specific resources to help young people succeed
- How Grand County is engaging youth in economic development

Helping young people identify local opportunities and resources for creating their own businesses is an important part of sustaining a thriving downtown. Rural downtowns were founded by small business owners, and their entrepreneurial heritage is built right into the historic storefronts on Main Streets throughout the state. Small business and entrepreneurship remain the heart of small town economies. Young people have much to contribute to the ongoing economic vitality of their hometowns by learning about and participating in the small business world. This module discusses how to create pathways to small-business success for young people in rural communities, details a three-step process for helping youth identify needs and opportunities in town that can lead to small business ventures, and provides helpful resources for steering youth in your community toward entrepreneurship education and development.

How to start cultivating young business talent

More and more young people in rural areas are seeing entrepreneurship as a viable and desirable career path. Many youth start micro-enterprises very young based on specific talents, interests or ideas and grow into creating ventures that sell products to larger markets (think lemonade stand to screen-printing t-shirts). In recent years, the growth of online shopping has made it possible to do business from almost anywhere, without huge capital outlays for retail space, making business ownership easier than ever for young people (Schroeder, et al., n.d.).

Fostering opportunities for local youth interested in entrepreneurship is one way to stem the pervasive youth drain that is affecting many towns today. "In just over two decades, more than 700 rural counties across America lost 10 percent or more of their population," a recent study found (Orton Family Foundation, 2013). Despite the fact that young people are increasingly seeking out entrepreneurship training and opportunities, demonstrating a clear interest in investing in the future of their communities, many in rural areas indicate that they are not given a voice in community decision-making, which may lead directly to their decision to move elsewhere.

The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship in Lincoln, Nebraska, has surveyed high school and middle school youth in 39 rural communities in Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas over the past several years and found that,

> rural communities have persistently, if unintentionally, overlooked involving youth inthe shaping of their own futures. Through the absence of definitive strategies that focus and engage the young, rural communities have continuously failed to create constructs that offer young residents quality employment after high school or college, and substantive involvement in community improvement efforts (Schroeder, 2013).

A majority of the students surveyed, 72 percent, indicated that adults have never asked for their ideas about how to improve their community, yet a third of the respondents answered that they either want to stay in their hometowns after high school or that they would return after college if the right conditions were present. Those conditions could include an improved atmosphere for small business and more resources for training and hands-on learning to get businesses off the ground. Almost half of the surveyed students, 44 percent, stated an interest in owning their own business, and 14 percent already did (Schroeder, et al., n.d.).

"**The Value-Added of Youth**: In business terms, how to add value to a natural resource or product is often discussed. The findings of these surveys seem to beg communities to build upon the raw potential and energy of young people. Their willingness to remain in or return to their communities, their dedication to acquiring higher education and higher quality jobs, and their notable interest in entrepreneurship should add up to a formula for success with the right value-added activities. It is up to communities to design and enact plans that hone that social and intellectual capital into a more promising future" (Schroeder, 2013b, p. 2).

A Center for Rural Entrepreneurship report on rural renewal and youth engagement, based on the surveys mentioned above, details several ways in which towns can cultivate the full potential of their young population (Schroeder, 2013b, p. 3). Some recommended action steps given the results of these surveys are:

1. Combine vision with action. Invest time and resources into (1) youth priorities, and (2) making communities more attractive options for young people to live in, contribute and work.
2. Create a community plan for improvement that actively engages youth as integral, vital partners in planning efforts.
3. Encourage the development of small and medium-sized businesses that can offer small business ownership or quality level jobs to young people.
4. Create and ensure access to technical assistance and business coaching in the development of businesses owned by young people.
5. Introduce entrepreneurship education within the school system or as an extracurricular opportunity.
6. Create a mentorship program where students can shadow community entrepreneurs and gain hands-on knowledge.
7. Map the community's assets, especially with an eye to matching educational and training assets with young persons' educational and career plans.
8. Above all, consult and involve local youth and young adults in every phase of community economic development activities.

It is essential that towns implement these steps with young people across the education spectrum, from the elementary years onward, offering relevant experiences for youth at each age. Asset mapping and authentic youth engagement practices—including focus groups with youth, open-ended questionnaires, youth-led tours, and the like—should happen regularly to keep the insights and information fresh and relevant and young people involved. Leadership development programs that engage high school students in local leadership opportunities can cultivate business talent. Local economic development organizations can also partner with schools to turn their towns into a "learning laboratory" where students can learn how apprenticeships work, sell their products at local events, conduct interviews with local entrepreneurs, practice putting together business proposals, and discover new opportunities while taking part in community service activities (Schroeder et al., n.d.).

"**Y**outh in your community may well represent your greatest resource for economic growth and community sustainability. The challenge is to engage these youth, equip them with the skills and knowledge to be successful, support them and their enterprising ventures, and then invite them home!" (Schroeder, 2013a, p. 3)

When young people are engaged as valued, valuable members of the community, they can begin to envision their long-term futures unfolding there, rather than somewhere else.

"**T**he likelihood of young entrepreneurs returning to their home communities can be enhanced by connecting them with specific business opportunities, either a new business start up or purchase of an existing business. Community leaders working in concert with teachers can open a dialog with young entrepreneurs to determine their career goals and then work to match local business opportunities with those goals. For example, a community leader could approach a young person interested in owning a contracting business and let her know that the community needs such a business and would support her. There may even be an older owner of a contracting business who might consider working with that young person to purchase the business – with community support through a revolving loan program or the use of business succession tools such as life insurance" (Schroeder, et al., n.d.).

A three-step process for helping local youth identify and solve community needs through entrepreneurship

At the DCI Downtown Institute in Brighton, Colorado, on November 22, 2013, Dafna Michaelson Jenet of The Journey Institute (journeyinstitute.org) led a workshop called "Raise Your Hand," designed to help young people identify and solve community problems through entrepreneurship. You can replicate this workshop in your town with a group of young people or mixed youth and adults. The process takes about 90 minutes to two hours and requires some simple supplies: enough sticky notes for all participants to have about five, a pad of flip chart paper or similar and markers.

Step 1: Identify your community

Who are you? What makes you special? Unique? As a group, list key positive statements that identify what your community is or where it is headed. From the list, collaboratively create a statement that brings together the group's agreed-upon essence of the community.

At the Downtown Institute, participants identified their communities with words such as:
- green
- multi-modal

- historic
- hope
- active
- connected
- beautiful
- family friendly
- roots
- fun
- morals
- welcoming

From this list, you might develop a description such as: "Our beautiful, historic community prides itself on being family friendly, green and fun. It is a place where people put down roots and cultivate strong moral values; a place filled with hope. We are currently working to help residents stay active and connected by developing multi-modal transportation options."

Step 2: Sticky note anti-group-think activity

Give everybody a small stack of sticky notes. Give them three to five minutes to write ideas on their sticky notes of opportunities being missed or challenges being faced by the community as defined in Step 1. *Important*: only one idea per sticky note. When complete, gather all of the sticky notes and sort them into themed columns.

At the Downtown Institute, participants identified a number of issues and opportunities, including:

Issues/challenges	Opportunities
Youth go out of town to have fun	Progressive thinkers
Lack of leadership	Dedication, creativity and camaraderie
Lack of engagement by people of all ages	Historic preservation
Not enough attractive civic/public space down-town	Partnerships with other towns in the region
Distrust of outsiders	Amazing youth, and adults who recognize that
Population attrition	Enthusiasm to enhance community
Lack of jobs	Authenticity
Empty downtown buildings	Uniqueness
Lack of support for families, lack of childcare	Trust
No healthy restaurants or places to eat	

Step 3: Review the columns and select the top three themes

The top three themes will typically have the most sticky notes, but the group should decide which three identified themes mean the most to them. Identify a corner of the room for each individual theme. Ask the people in the room to join one theme and form a group to develop an action plan on that theme. The plan should focus on three outcomes with action steps and deadlines and the first action step should take place before they leave the room.

At the Downtown Institute, groups of participants worked as if they were from the same community, coming up with ideas that they could take home and work on with local youth. The ideas they developed had more to do with youth engagement than entrepreneurship; that is an important place to start when thinking about young people's local opportunities. Once good local youth engagement practices are in place and there are respectful youth-adult partnerships with regular, ongoing gatherings, work with business-minded youth to determine what kinds of enterprises they want to develop, what they want to see in town and what kind of training, mentorships and apprenticeships would help them achieve their goals.

Keep in mind that your town's potential young entrepreneurs may not be the same people you would naturally imagine participating on an important board or commission. They may not be model students, because they might be more preoccupied with their entrepreneurial projects than keeping up in subjects that don't matter to them. They may not excel in math or English, but may be talented artists, musicians or vocational students. And they might already be in business, either running their own micro-enterprises (and employing fellow students or family members) or creating spinoffs from their own family's business (Schroeder, et al., n.d.). "Young entrepreneurs enjoy the creative process so much that, while others are focused on sports and extracurricular activities, young entrepreneurs are focused on their business dreams" (Schroeder, et al., n.d., p. 4).

The three top themes that emerged at the Downtown Institute were **physical space**, **funding** and **youth engagement**.

The **physical space** group discussed ways that young people could serve on local commissions and boards having to do with the physical environment, including the Planning Commission, City Council and the like. They thought of ways for youth to volunteer in the community on painting, cleaning and helping with historic preservation, and conceptualized a youth summit to discuss potential local hang-out spaces and activities. A key question that emerged was, "What do you think other towns have 'outside' that you want here?" Ultimately, their action plan consisted of these steps:

1. Contact student councils about the youth summit idea and propose a date, location, leaders; plan the event.

2. Post on social media.
3. Hold the summit on a school day, pizza included.

The **funding** group also landed on a youth summit as a way to engage young people in developing a local strategic fundraising plan, including developing crowd funding ideas, finding grants and sponsors for various events and activities, and holding contests. Crowd funding, grant writing/sponsorship and contests emerged as main action items.

Youth summits and focus groups can attract entrepreneurial youth, particularly if an emphasis is placed on innovation, inventiveness, creativity, marketing of local products, and small business development. Your town could hold contests for the most creative solutions to specific local problems or for the best new downtown logo, T-shirt design or local product to market throughout downtown. Let youth guide the direction for such projects, and great new ideas will emerge.

The **youth engagement** group discussed the importance of having a youth commission in town as a way to ensure young voices would be heard consistently. They acknowledged the need for incentives to inspire youth to participate, including providing food at meetings and offering opportunities for participants to earn extra credit in school for their service, but they also identified that youth want to be acknowledged and valued in their communities.

Authentic youth-adult partnerships that promote young people's potential while engaging them in the real work of the community are an essential component of cultivating young business talent. When young people know they have a seat at the table and a voice in local decision-making, they are more likely to share their talents and invest their energies in developing enterprises in their hometowns.

Where to look for specific resources to help young people succeed

Two Nebraska-based organizations that focus on small town entrepreneurship, community and economic development, and youth engagement, offer many excellent resources for towns seeking to stem youth drain and bolster local business development: the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship (energizingentrepreneurs.org) and HomeTown Competitiveness (HTC) (htccommunity.org). The HTC approach—which focuses on increasing philanthropy; retaining youth through leadership, philanthropy and entrepreneurship; and identifying and building on local assets—was analyzed in a 2006 study published in the journal Community Development and was found to be very effective in increasing community assets and stimulating and reinforcing other local projects (Emery & Flora, 2006).

The Colorado-based Young Americans Center for Financial Education (yacenter. org) offers entrepreneurial business curricula for elementary and high school students. See the "Entrepreneurship" section of their web site, or the link in the list on page 54, for more information.

Case Study: Grand County Engages Youth
By DiAnn Butler

The young people of Grand County have a desire to be more involved in community decision-making, especially as it relates to issues like job opportunities, community improvement and recreation.

More than half of the middle school and high school students indicated they would like to live in Grand County in the future. And, over 80 percent of the respondents said they would volunteer if asked by an adult to help with a program to improve the community.

Those were some of the findings of a Youth Assessment Study that was recently completed by the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship under the guidance of the Grand County Office of Economic Development (GCED).

One of the seven core goals of the Grand County Office of Economic Development is the Education and Training of the Future Workforce in Grand County. With that goal in mind, it has been an objective of GCED to involve youth whenever possible in activities addressing economic growth in Grand County.

The opinion of high school students was sought during the Downtown Colorado Inc.'s Downtown Assessment project in Kremmling. Their answers and opinions were among the most candid and revealing of the day.

In the summer of 2014, the Center for Rural Development was contracted to conduct a countrywide youth assessment, develop a five-year youth engagement action plan and facilitate a youth entrepreneurship summer camp in the summer of 2015.

The Youth Engagement Action Plan Retreat was held in January and the attendees decided to focus on getting more involved with specific local government entities like the town council and the chamber of commerce. They also decided to work towards presenting an idea to their local school boards to develop a business internship program that could be used to satisfy the community service requirement for high school graduation.

During the Youth Engagement Process, it has been significant to learn that young people are very aware of their communities and they have a desire to see improvements. They want to improve their quality of life and they want to do so through community involvement, with viable employment opportunities and an increase in recreational options.

That passion dovetails nicely with the goal of educating and training a future workforce. It has the beginnings of a mutually beneficial relationship. DiAnn Butler is Grand County Economic Development Coordinator. More information is available at grandforbusiness.com.

Photos of Grand County Youth by Patty Alander, 2014

Free Online Resources: Economic Vitality

- Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, Energizing Entrepreneurial Communities: energizingentrepreneurs.org
- The U.S. Small Business Administration and Junior Achievement have partnered to create the site, "Mind Your Own Business," which features checklists and probing questions for young people thinking about starting a business, business planning basics and more: mindyourownbiz.org/about/index.shtml
- The Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship features essential articles, links and programs for young entrepreneurs: nfte.com
- This list of financial education resources from Charles Schwab is invaluable for any young business person: schwabmoneywise.com/public/moneywise/parents_educators/educational_resources/more_educational_ resources
- The Young Americans Center for Financial Education developed an *Owning a Business Toolkit*, available here, along with resources and links for young people throughout Colorado interested in entrepreneurship: yacenter.org/entrepreneurship/toolkit/
- Young Entrepreneur magazine online: www.youngentrepreneur.com/
- Colorado's *Business Resource Book* is a compendium of the state's guidelines, legal requirements and advice for potential business owners: coloradosbdc.org/resources/resource-book

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Conclusion: Summary of Initial Lessons from the Youth Engagement Series

DCI's 2013 youth engagement series taught rural community leaders how to engage youth in professional development, leadership training and volunteerism to support downtown revitalization around four themed modules: management, marketing and communications, physical improvements and economic restructuring. The workshops were premised on the idea that engaging youth in community-focused opportunities is a key to maintaining a healthy economy and a skilled workforce in rural Colorado.

Several attendees took that concept to heart, reporting back that the workshops gave them the tools and confidence to expand opportunities for young people in their towns. So far, we have heard from four communities that are directly implementing the ideas in the youth-engagement workshops: Ridgway, Lake City, Brush, and Victor. In these communities, nearly 90 young people have benefitted from youth-engagement programs that were started or enhanced following the DCI youth-engagement workshops in 2013.

Towns are encouraging new ways of creating opportunities for youth. Diedra Silbert from the town of Ridgway provided an example when she responded to our recent survey on the impacts of the workshops, saying, "The DCI sessions were helpful to me personally because working to include and empower youth is extremely important to me and as a new employee of the Town, I wasn't yet aware of the Town's commitment to this. Discussions from the training you offered highlighted this and got my supervisor and me on the same page about the importance of including youth wherever we can make that happen."

Ms. Silbert was inspired to help Ridgway expand their youth-engagement efforts beyond parks planning and youth-oriented activities; she hosted a high school intern in her office, providing a valuable professional development opportunity that did not exist before the DCI trainings. Wrote Ms. Silbert,

"In Ridgway last Fall, a high school junior interned with me, working on Main Street and Creative District projects. She is an amazing and talented gal who came to us and asked if she could do this because she's potentially interested in government as a career. She was oriented to each Town department by the department head, wrote a journal of her experiences in the first part of the internship, and submitted a written and visual/oral proposal to our Town Council on her recommendations about what the Town could do to increase youth involvement at the end of her internship. She also helped me put together a survey for businesses and got the ball rolling by interviewing the first five businesses. Sadly, she couldn't fit another semester of interning here into her schedule, but we hope she might be back next year!"

Opening local government and decision-making bodies to the idea of working with young people and giving them the tools and understanding about how to create authentic youth-adult partnerships were main objectives of the DCI youth-engagement workshops. Clearly, Ms. Silbert and her colleagues got the message and were inspired to try new ways of working with young people as a result.

Leaders in Lake City, Colorado, also implemented the ideas from the workshops, creating a whole new service learning and professional development program for young residents. Kristine Borchers, executive director of the Lake City Downtown Improvement and Revitalization Team wrote,

"We have created a Community Youth Corps that completes meaningful service projects in Town Park, works with downtown business owners and the Trails Commission to improve pathways for consumers, residents and visitors, partners with federal land management agencies with projects, and much more. This is a workforce development project and students go through a resume-writing and interview process as well."

In Brush, Colorado, leaders engaged in the revitalization of a downtown landmark, the movie theater, were inspired by the DCI workshops to bring youth into the process in a new way. Marketing Specialist Tyler Purvis wrote,

"For a while we have had the FBLA advisor as a part of the Economic Restructuring Committee, and tried to utilize the students in different capacities, mainly for civic events. However this past fall, we wanted to bring the students in more and invited them to the meeting where they were able to express their own thoughts on matters. From this, they have taken initiative and become some of the main drivers in a local campaign to save a historic theatre from having to close because of the new digital requirements being implemented. This has created excitement and discussion among civic leaders, and we would like to further tap into a greater youth engagement effort."

Authentic youth engagement takes time and often requires major changes in the mindset of local leaders. By making the tools in this workbook available to the DCI membership, we hope to inspire town leaders to create more and more ways for young people to develop professionally, create and take advantage of local employment opportunities and stay in or return to their hometowns.