

Best Practice

Maple Creek Heritage District/Main Street Revitalization Program

CONTACT

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THE PRACTICE

The Maple Creek Heritage District/Main Street Revitalization Program is an initiative that blends heritage conservation and cultural planning, with tourism and economic development. The objectives of the initiative are to restore the defining architectural heritage elements of the community, celebrate local culture & heritage, beautify the streetscape, elevate community pride, improve quality of life, support vibrant cultural expression, heighten tourist appeal and encourage investment. Prior to embarking on this initiative, a great deal of preparatory work was undertaken by the town of Maple Creek.

THE PROCESS

Several steps were involved in the process to complete this project. Community consultation during the development of the Official Community Plan, the Main Street Revitalization Visioning process and the Community Cultural Planning Initiative was undertaken. The Town featured heritage conservation and cultural activity as part of the Official Community Plan. A Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee was established. A bylaw was passed that officially designated the Maple Creek Heritage District. The Town was actively involved in the Cypress Hills Destination Area Development Plan and its implementation. The Town established a new Tourism Maple Creek Committee and Maple Creek Arts Culture and Heritage Coalition. A successful application to the SaskCulture Municipal Cultural Engagement and Planning Program, and the Main Street Saskatchewan Demonstration Program was completed.

THE RESULTS

Several results were realized as part of this project. There was improvement to the appearance of the downtown core. The Town has experienced increased tourist traffic. There is an increased number of heritage buildings undergoing rehabilitation work. There is increased cultural activity downtown. The biggest challenge of this project is ensuring all the funding is in place and that there is buy-in from all stakeholders. It is important to find ways in which the various programs and initiatives can interface and complement each other.

LESSONS LEARNED

When someone tells you that a heritage building is too rundown to be saved; they are almost always wrong. When someone tells you that the community isn't big enough, or it won't work here; they are almost always wrong. When

someone tells you that it is too expensive, or you will never find the money; they are almost always wrong. Community and Economic Development is not a onetime initiative. It is an ongoing process that continually finds ways to bolster and diversify quality of life and the local economy. 80% of economic development comes from a community's existing business core. Tourism is a real industry. Cultural activity is directly linked to economic development and community sustainability. Heritage buildings are assets, not liabilities.