



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Joan Davenport, AICP, Director

Planning Division

Joseph Calhoun, Manager

129 North Second Street, 2nd Floor, Yakima, WA 98901

ask.planning@yakimawa.gov · www.yakimawa.gov/services/planning

NATIONAL MAIN STREET CONFERENCE SUMMARY REPORT

Seattle, WA // March 25-27, 2019

Colleda Monick, Community Development Specialist

SESSION: It's Hard But We Can Handle It: Tools for Building Community, Consensus, and Collaboration in a Difficult World

This session delved into techniques for creating an atmosphere of YES in a world of NO, using the case study of Eureka Springs, Alabama – *Bike Eureka*. Developing a team, strong strategies and cultivating an entirely different culture, were some of the big picture takeaways. Wolven, the Executive Director of Main Street Eureka Springs was the presenter and she used her own real life experiences to paint a picture of how working with a collective and a common consensus can drive change.

SESSION: Economic Development on Main Street

This session took a deep dive into the specifics of the economic role that Main Street Organizations play in a community through different types of projects, trends; what and who are driving these shifts and how to get there.

SESSION: Civic Leader Forum: How to Build a Strong Local Economy

Keynote speaker Ed McMahon, Board Chair of the National main Street Center and Fellow at the Urban Land Institute made a powerful case for why local, place-based economic development is the key to long-term economic and social prosperity.

SESSION: Artists on Main Street: A Model for Creative Community Development

The session featured three speakers on who spoke on Minnesota's program that provides training and support for artists who want to address local community challenges through creative placemaking strategies. The group highlighted several projects that activated downtowns, increased pedestrian activity, and created welcoming spaces.

SESSION: Inside Out: Creating and Maintaining Authenticity

This session focused on two different Detroit metro places on how they maintained authenticity while meeting the changing needs of their communities all on while keeping an eye on preserving a cherished place that doesn't negatively impact or diminish its authenticity to a community.



SESSION: Stimulating Economic Development through Preservation: A Case Study

Seattle developer and preservationist Kevin Daniels told the story of the Mark Tower and how the Seattle skyline helped preserve the adjacent historic sanctuary. The session focused on the importance of building a coalition of local and national support when preserving historic spaces, the unique way a new Seattle development became a catalyst for preserving existing spaces, and sparking new uses, along with how commercial projects can both complement and celebrate historic structures.

SESSION: The Land of OZ: Pulling Back the Curtain on Opportunity Zones

Opportunity Zones 101 crash course delving into the program through a panel discussion of experts that looked at investors, eligible projects, and how communities can leverage this program.

SESSION: The “Opportunity” in Opportunity Zones

A deeper dive into Opportunity Zones presented by Opportunity Alabama. The presentation focused on how the state has been taking advantage of this program, who the major players are, and how to build the local funding ecosystem necessary to attract Opportunity Zone capital to your community.

In summary, my greatest takeaway from these sessions was the ‘*Main Street Impact*’. Nationally, Main Street communities are driving downtown rehabilitation, investment, business retention, economic development and small business development. Reinvestment Ratio for Main Street programs is \$26 to \$1!

Downtowns can provide a sense of place, a sense of community, showcase historic assets, and provide layers of product offerings. Small businesses are driving job growth. Older buildings draw more shops, restaurants, and entertainment venues.

Things like walkable neighborhoods, less auto-dependence, a sense of community, gathering spaces, a greater number of households without children, and trends towards being more environmentally conscious are steering communities and businesses when it comes to making decisions about business.

Opportunities like loan funds, and rent subsidies can assist in a downturn market, along with proactive marketing of vacant properties. Historic Tax Credits (Federal and State), New Market Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, Community Block Grants, Brownfields, and Opportunity Zones are all possible incentives.

Main Streets work because they provide a sense a place, a sense of community, historic assets, and show the power of people.