



SUMMARY REPORT FROM THE START UP TEAM VISIT



October 2013

Presented to

The Town and Community Leaders of Kingfield

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Healthy, thriving downtowns, village centers and neighborhood commercial districts are assets to communities endeavoring to grow their local economy, protect their authentic character and create or retain jobs.

INTRODUCTION

The Maine Downtown Center (MDC) is a program of the nonprofit Maine Development Foundation (MDF). Founded in 1999 in statute by the State Legislature and Governor, MDC helps communities throughout the state revitalize their downtown economy, preserve and enhance their appearance, and boost the image of their traditional business districts using a range of services and assistance.

Downtown revitalization is a proven economic development strategy nationwide and in Maine. Vibrant downtowns are dynamic and community-based resulting in historic building rehabilitation, business growth, job creation, diverse housing creation, tourism and cultural enhancement, and healthy walkable commercial districts. Currently 29 towns and cities across Maine are actively engaged with MDC in reclaiming the traditional role of their downtowns as the multifunctional, vibrant, heart of the community.

Downtown revitalization and historic preservation require leadership and innovative thinking, which when combined with engaged citizens and solid public policy result in an increased tax base, unique market edge, fierce community pride and a legacy of heritage for future generations.

We utilize the successful **Main Street Four-Point Approach®** developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center as its foundation for assistance. The Main Street Four-Point Approach® has a national reputation as one of the most powerful economic development tools for downtowns. This approach emphasizes economic development within the context of historic preservation and is based on principles of self-determination and direct community participation. The Main Street Four-Point Approach® focuses on four key areas of revitalization which are worked simultaneously:

- **Organization.** Involving all constituencies having an interest in downtown revitalization and management of both human and financial resources. Organization helps everyone work towards the same goals and maximizes involvement of public and private leaders within the community.
- **Design.** Implementing projects that improve the appearance and functionality of downtown buildings and physical environment. Design enhances a district's appearance and pedestrian amenities while preserving its historic features.
- **Promotion.** Creating programs that market your downtown to potential and existing customers, producing special events and festivals, and promulgating a positive image of downtown. Promotion brings people downtown by helping to attract visitors, shoppers, and investors.
- **Economic Restructuring.** Studying your community's economy and market opportunities and using the information to develop programs that strengthen and expand existing businesses and aid in recruiting new businesses to downtown. Economic restructuring stimulates business development and helps strengthen the district's economic base.

This comprehensive approach has long been proven an effective methodology for revitalizing traditional, pedestrian-oriented commercial districts in your downtown. In essence, the Main Street Four-Point Approach® stresses grassroots involvement in the revitalization process where the community works beyond just the downtown stakeholders, to develop a compelling vision for your downtown.

Each downtown program is locally driven, responds to locally identified priorities, and is locally funded. The MDC is committed to be a partner in this essential revitalization process for the future!

OVERVIEW OF THE MAINE DOWNTOWN NETWORK

As part of a three-tier approach to downtown revitalization in Maine, the MDC launched the **Maine Downtown Network (MDN)** in 2009 as an affiliate to our successful Main Street Maine program and Downtown Institute. The MDN program provides a range of services and assistance to meet a variety of community commitment and readiness levels with technical support through its staff and other experienced consultants.

The MDN is for communities beginning or strengthening a downtown revitalization effort and/or for those hoping to achieve Main Street status. MDN services help communities build an appropriate organizational and funding base for a comprehensive downtown revitalization program. Participation as a MDN community does not guarantee selection as a future designated Main Street Maine community, although it will help communities strengthen their revitalization efforts.

MDN communities are required to:

1. Understand, commit to and follow the Main Street Four-Point Approach® to downtown revitalization (Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Restructuring) established by the National Trust Main Street Center and promoted by the Maine Downtown Center.
2. Maintain and report on quantitative measures of success twice annually, specifically volunteers, volunteer hours, net new jobs, net-new businesses and submit these to the MDC.
3. Develop and/or maintain a volunteer board, including representatives of downtown business entities, the greater community and local government, to oversee the continuing development of the local downtown revitalization program for the terms of this agreement.
4. Engage staff, committee and/or board members and volunteers in ongoing training offered by the Maine Downtown Center. Travel expenses for such training shall be paid by the Local Program, unless otherwise provided by the MDC. Discounted registration shall be made available to MDN Local Program participants to attend Downtown Institute sessions and the annual Maine Downtown Conference.
5. Share lessons learned from your experience as a MDN Local Program and share documents and products with the MDC and other communities in instances where sharing will not compromise the work of the Local Program.
6. The Local Program will illustrate the acknowledgement of the receipt of the MDC's services by crediting its participation in, and as a beneficiary of, the MDN program through the appropriate methods (i.e., website, printed acknowledgement in public notices, press releases, project signs, publications, verbal recognition at public meeting, etc.)
8. Pay an annual participation fee MDC based on population.

The MDC will provide these additional services to MDN communities:

1. Designate a MDC Program Manager to act as liaison with the Local Program and to facilitate communications between the Local Program, the Maine Downtown Center, other Maine communities and the National Trust Main Street Center where appropriate.
2. Organize and conduct an initial “Start-Up Visit” whereby the Center’s Program Director and members of the Center’s Advisory Council, Senior Advisors and selected consultants will visit the Local Program to conduct an informal needs assessment. This visit is anticipated within 90 days of the date of this agreement. A customized Start-Up Visit Report will be provided by the Center via email. This report is designed to assist the Local Program in organizational development, work planning and project prioritization over the initial two year period.
3. Organize and conduct at least one training visit by the Center’s Program Director and/or member(s) of the Center’s Advisory Council Ambassadors to assist the Local Program as needed. A written summary via email will follow this visit identifying progress and providing suggestions for moving forward. This visit is suggested to be scheduled near the end of Year One or within the first few months of Year Two, based on availability of both the Center staff/Advisory Council Ambassadors and the Local Program coordinators.
4. Provide training opportunities for board members, committee members, staff and volunteers providing intensive and comprehensive training on the content and methodology of the Main Street Program at the local level. Trainings may include customized worksessions during the annual Maine Downtown Conference and through the annual Downtown Institute sessions, and may also include webinars provided by the National Trust Main Street Center, the Center and/or other organizations and agencies.
5. Provide resource and consultant information to MDN Local Program in topic areas specifically related to organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring.
6. Assist in the selection of a Downtown Manager, if appropriate, and provide orientation and training at the MDC office.
7. Provide for the MDN Local Program’s membership of \$250 in the National Trust Main Street Network for two years during the term of this agreement.
8. In general, facilitate learning among Maine Downtown Network and Main Street Maine communities and the general public.
9. Post success stories and testimonials from MDN Local Program on the MDC website and share links to the National Trust Main Street Center and other state coordinating programs.
10. Provide opportunities for special program participation, benefits and grant opportunities, such as the MDC’s Green Downtowns program.

In summary, the Maine Downtown Network is what you make of it. Tap into the energy! Consider yourself part of a growing family of historically rich, civic minded, volunteer-driven cities and towns in Maine. Join forces with passionate people committed to protecting and enhancing their special sense of place and courageous enough to invest the energy necessary to convert their vision of a vibrant downtown to reality. Now let’s get to work!

THE START UP VISIT

In August 2013 a group of enthusiastic downtown supporters representing both the public and private sectors met with the Maine Downtown Center's team. Our discussion focused on past efforts, current activities and future visions. We began with an introductory gathering followed by an orientation meeting and walking tour taking the group into key businesses and buildings. We concluded our tour by sharing observations and discussing next steps as a Maine Downtown Network community. Our intent with this report is to share comments, ideas and suggestions from the team for consideration as you continue to work in the Main Street model for downtown revitalization, incorporating the Four Point Approach.



We were immediately impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of local leaders and the local press to the mission of downtown vibrancy for Kingfield!

ORGANIZATION OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR KINGFIELD

Effective downtown revitalization efforts require the energy, leadership, vision, passion and *positive attitude* of an organized, engaged and diverse group of downtown supporters. The role of this committee is to set the climate for the challenges and transitions you are facing. As you already know, but cannot be stated too often, your leadership as advocates for downtown is vitally important to help solidify support from not just the business community, but municipal staff, elected officials, community organizations and residents. All of these individuals and groups have a role in the future of your commercial core and it is important that each of them understand how the Main Street approach works. Local government needs to position itself as a partner (and sometimes facilitator and implementer), encouraging the leadership roles to be served by the private sector. A balanced three-way partnership between the merchants/property owners, municipality and the residents is critically important for sustainable success. As MDC Senior Advisor Bill King says, "It's all together for success!"

The Start Up Team members were very impressed with the people we met on our visit. You exude a "can do" attitude with the right amount of passion AND you are quite proud of what has already been accomplished. You appear to have representatives from the three constituencies that make up Main Street: business, city, and residential community and in good numbers.

It is important for other civic, faith, arts and education leaders who do not yet have a stake in downtown to be persuaded to get involved to help lead the effort. We encourage the delegation of tasks into committees organized along the Four Point Approach in order to keep the movement pulsing forward and prevent individual burn-out. As with many of our participating communities, often the committee chair, board president or paid executive director does much of the heavy lifting because they do it so well! We encourage balance within the leadership to spread both the enthusiasm and work throughout the committees and staff. This balanced leadership ethic will help groom others to smoothly pick up the pace when, and if, your top leaders wish to step back from their respective roles.

Public relations about your revitalization efforts should be constant – in the press, social media, on public access television and in educational presentations by your members. Make sure you have web presence on the Town's website and all others connected with you. Create a PowerPoint or video presentation for your committee members to use throughout the community and in the schools to educate and inspire teachers and students (K-12) and, subsequently, their entire families. Eventually you will want to develop a downtown logo and slogan statement based on a "five-senses" vision statement, and makes this available for use by merchants, businesses, nonprofits and the municipality throughout your downtown to continually reinforce the message and image. "Branding" downtown, while requiring careful thought and substantial input from the community, is a powerful marketing tool – if done correctly. And remember that you are required to identify yourself as a Maine Downtown Network Community, a program of the Maine Development Foundation's Downtown Center, and link our website to yours (www.mdf.org). Please utilize our Maine Downtown Center logo to indicate our partnership.

An adequate budget is necessary to accomplish your goals. Begin by answering basic questions such as: What needs to be done to improve the downtown? What could be done to help market the downtown? What would this cost? How will the money be raised? Fundraising is an ongoing challenge and opportunity. We encourage all our participating communities to "think in threes" for income sources: 1/3 from the municipality, 1/3 from downtown businesses and property owners and 1/3 from the residents/special events/earned income. A balanced fundraising plan is important to help spread the ownership and prevent a setback should any one source be cut or curtailed. You should work in tandem from bottom to top/top to bottom - establish your budget and a funding pyramid – then get busy!

Senior Advisor Bill King states: "You build an organization around issues and projects. You need issues to rally around and work on together. It gives an organization purpose and focuses people to make them work together. With projects your people will take their piece of the puzzle and find their friends and neighbors to help. They get invested and get things done while building and supporting an organization. Pick a few projects from your list and this Start Up Report. Try it and be looking for one or two issues on which to focus your organization skills."

At this stage, the downtown efforts are being managed with volunteers through the Town Manager. Creating a downtown-specific organization and obtaining your 501(c)3 nonprofit designation from the IRS will benefit you in fundraising. If needed, secure a relationship with a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that can assist as a pass-through funding agent while you are getting organized. This is the time to inventory all your assets and promote these as a fundraising marketing tool. A number of small gifts are as important as your top gifts when building your base of support. Create your one minute statement of mission, benefit and need. Develop the list of donor names with target donation amounts and delegate the right two-person team to each name on the list. Practice making "the ask" among yourselves; personalize your request with your own story about why you care. Remember to thank every donor in writing within 48 hours after their gift is received – larger gifts deserve a face-to-face thank you.

We urge you to develop a positive presence at Select Board meetings and invite one of them to serve on your board or a committee, perhaps as an official liaison. It is useful to rotate the spokesperson role at Council meetings in order to show the many faces of downtown and develop speaker leadership. The local cable access channel is an excellent medium to inform the region's citizens of your downtown revitalization efforts.

We also encourage you to take advantage of the training and networking opportunities made available by the Maine Downtown Center, including the Downtown Institute – five sessions held throughout the year on a variety of topics specific to the Main Street Four Point Approach®. We strongly believe that an informed and well organized group, comprised of downtown retailers and business owners, local residents, nonprofit organizations and municipal government, has the singular ability to elevate Kingfield's historic village center to the year-round prominence it rightly deserves.

MDC ADVISOR COMMENTS ON ORGANIZATION

“Kingfield has a great group of interested people who can make the Main Street model work in their downtown. The three legs of the Main Street stool are well represented. Leadership is there as long as the town government will support Cynthia Orcutt and other independents. There is a good nucleus of successful businesses in both the lower and upper village. In the lower village there are some good landlords who want very much to make improvements to their property and downtown.”

Bill King, MDC Senior Advisor

“Kingfield presents as a very welcoming community. The 20 or so community members representing all facets of Kingfield, who participated for some of this visit, were all invested in and very eager to help preserve their community. Though there are differing views on issues between factions such as the newcomers/old-timers, the young/old; blue collar/artistic and others, there is a spoken acknowledgement of this and willingness to move on. Keeping a balance of community constituents working together will be critical for the success of this effort.”

Jayne Palmer, MDC Senior Advisor

Top Three Action Steps

1) **Engage more people:** There is good energy in Kingfield from a core group of passionate leaders. It is crucial that this group include substantial numbers of business owners and residents. Municipal and agency support for downtown is the essential backdrop for revitalization, but retailers and entrepreneurs must be in the leadership role. The wider the group of people you gather, the easier it is to build support and spread the word. All of these entities will benefit from a revitalized district and should support your effort, both programmatically and financially, so you need to bring them to the table now.

2) **Solidify your work plan for the next 12 months,** and start conservatively, prioritize goals and pick three or four top ideas such as:

- Organization: develop an e-newsletter to communicate with the community. Assign responsibilities and recruit new volunteers based on the goals.
- Design: hold a “Spruce up/Sparkle Up Downtown Day” Scrub windows! Eliminate weeds!
- Promotion: create a list of *Top 10 Things Visitors Should Know About Kingfield*; start now on planning your holiday events and public decor.

- Economic Restructuring: work with one key business owner to strengthen their business and explore new uses for any unused floor space.



3) Establish a solid web presence, *inviting people to discover historic Kingfield* and shop, dine and linger in this charming village center! This can be as simple as a two page website with a basic vision statement, contact information and upcoming events to allow everyone the ability to connect efforts.

Additional Organization Action Steps and Observations

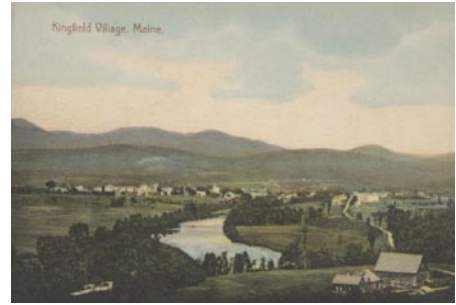
- Work together to create:
 - ✓ A common community calendar for the year (arts, school, Chamber, fraternal groups, etc.)
 - ✓ An asset inventory of why your downtown is special
 - ✓ Your committee also needs to cultivate an expanded list (ideally an email list) of interested parties to send updates, solicitations and invitations. Look for talented retirees and professionals with a few hours to donate.
- Convene and host one or two charettes (winter and summer) to determine a brandable vision for Kingfield. Blend your tourism and residential goals to your best advantage! Connect in a greater way to Sugarloaf.
- Make your meeting agendas very clear, transparent and well-promoted in advance. This is especially critical for newcomers who bring fresh, passionate, intelligent energy to the community and want to get involved but feel uncomfortable and uninformed.
- Have some fun times together, preferably after hours, at several different businesses. The Bath Business Barometer and Rockland's Mornings on Maine are excellent models of team building.



DESIGN OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR KINGFIELD

“Kingfield’s compact historic village is set in what feels like an agricultural clearing in the woods. It will be important to work to preserve the southern approach to the village both the open fields and the dense residential area with the trees overarching the road that leads immediately into the historic core of the downtown. This is very rare even in Maine.”

-Christopher Glass, Architect, MDC Advisor



The overarching slogan for the Main Street program is “economic development within the context of historic preservation.” Historic buildings provide the distinctive setting for downtown revitalization and, when combined with a beautiful natural setting, are a community’s greatest economic development assets. Your good historic building stock is relatively intact, with the exception of a few storefronts that have been modified over time. While many people do, it is important for the *entire community* to recognize the quality of these irreplaceable buildings, their character-defining value, and their potential to leverage the benefits of incentives such as the federal and state historic tax credits to restore and preserve them well into the future. Historic preservation is a proven economic development tool and will significantly raise the level of revitalization here to the status it deserves.



The historic Herbert Grand Hotel is the dominant historic landmark in downtown Kingfield.

Infill Development and Compatible Design

Infill development that is compatible with the historic fabric creates attractive places for people and art, as part of your creative economy/local crafts niche. You always want to be ahead of that development and in control of what new development will look like. It is strongly recommended, and a valuable exercise, to examine and compare all the plans, design guidelines and ordinances affecting downtown to ensure compatibility with your vision for the future. Integrated redevelopment that preserves and enhances significant structures (of which there are a few) and street character is an essential goal of this program. Structures should not only be compatible with the character of the surroundings, but also be oriented with the storefront facing the street and buildings abutting the sidewalk.

Research

An excellent team building education project is to collect, digitize and organize all the historic photos of your core buildings with the help of your local museum staff and docents, historical society, library, high school history department, and anyone interested in helping. You will *never* see buildings the same way again. This treasure trove of historic data should be utilized to assist property owners, your Design

committee and appointed officials in making façade design decisions. Base your design decisions upon those historic photos you gathered or find clues in the building. Your leadership in these efforts is imperative. Become the “Go To” resource for design.

We strongly encourage the individuals involved in the downtown effort to receive training in historic preservation in order to fully understand the essential role that historic preservation, and the accompanying incentives, plays in economic development. Currently in Maine, historic preservation projects are leading the real estate development and housing sectors. Including people within your committee or organization with a background in historic redevelopment, architecture and design is strongly recommended. For guidance, contact Robin Reed at the MHPC at 207.287.2132. In addition, a Downtown Revitalization Master Plan is the ideal platform to firm up and promote your mission and vision for downtown Kingfield.



Signage is always an essential aspect of good design and immediately invites - or rejects - customers. If you are not satisfied with how your existing sign ordinance is performing, get busy researching others around Maine and propose revisions or craft an ordinance that works for you – and the local enforcer. Provide incentives to achieve good, effective sign design and retire lesser effective or attractive signs.

Changes Over Time

Most often, changes over time detract from the original design integrity. We see many examples of this erosion in downtowns across Maine. Small changes and improvements can make a significant difference and will begin to build interest from property owners. *The Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings* (National Park Service and online) and the *Guidelines for Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings* (Maine Preservation) offer practical, common sense advice to building owners and contractors. You will begin to accomplish three things: 1) restore the authentic appearance of these character-defining buildings; 2) rehabilitate buildings with sensitivity to original design principles and the neighboring context, and 3) utilize all available incentive tools to stimulate preservation projects.



Land Use Legislation

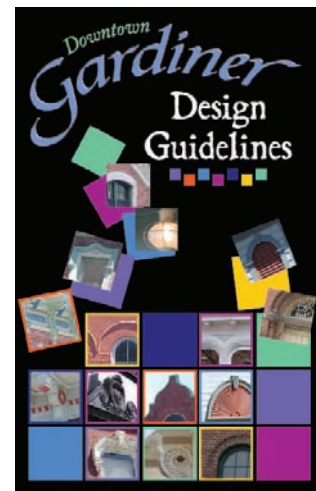
It is more important than ever for downtowns and village centers across Maine to pay attention to the role of design in attracting redevelopment. Raising your standards to a higher level to reflect the quality and diversity of your historic architecture will help attract redevelopment. In order to achieve this, effective design guidelines, review and enforcement are needed which will increase property values, pride and activity on many levels. The failure to do this is actually holding back the ability of the downtown district to thrive to its full potential. You should consider adopting local regulations regarding historic preservation with the intent of accommodating growth while preserving the unique historic qualities of downtown Kingfield. You will discover, once you actively begin working the Main Street Four-Point Approach, that your downtown will become even more appealing to new investment. Currently, your municipality has no strong protection mechanism or design review for historic buildings in the commercial core. The documented economic value of historic preservation should be fully embraced. Preservation projects create a domino effort, spurring additional investment in other properties downtown.

Demolition

Demolition of significant historic resources results in gutting the heart of your community of its heritage and distinctive character and is environmentally unsound. This, in turn, may jeopardize your strong position in the regional marketplace as a community and tourism destination with heart and heritage. Please refer to the *Guiding Principles for Green Buildings* developed by the Maine Downtown Center. Adopting basic Demolition Delay standards will engage citizen involvement in the critically important process of determine what's worth protecting for the future, and what isn't. Examples are found on the Main Street Resource Café on the Maine Downtown Center's webpage at www.mdf.org.

Maintenance/Stewardship of Historic Resources and Landscapes

Develop and adopt minimum maintenance standards for significant historic resources, whose demise may come from owners unwilling or unable to maintain them. The MDC and our preservation partners (Maine Preservation and the state agency Maine Historic Preservation Commission) have numerous examples of how this is accomplished in communities across Maine. Historic buildings need proper care and rehabilitation to correct deferred maintenance and/or unsympathetic changes that have occurred over time. Your design committee could serve as an advisory review board exterior building plans. Your advocacy and education efforts are essential here to engage property owners and maintain your greatest asset – your authentic commercial core.



*Owners most often wish to do "the right thing" for their historic buildings.
Help them by providing information, training and good guidance.*

If you have not done so already, we encourage you to develop or revise simple design guidelines for downtown buildings. Significant historic buildings should - at the very least – have their own binding design standards to appropriately and sympathetically guide new construction and architectural modifications that will occur downtown. Check out Waterville and Gardiner Main Street's efforts here – their publications are posted to their websites. A fresh coat of paint and some simple maintenance (like patching the roof and redirecting runoff) are easy opportunities for volunteers to pitch in to make an immediate difference. Design guidelines serve to inform, educate and encourage good design alterations that are sympathetic and compatible to the downtown context. They also inform good building stewardship practices and should discuss ways to incorporate savvy “Green Downtown” energy efficiency methods while retaining historic building fabric. Check the Green Downtowns section at www.mdf.org.



Your commercial building materials are predominately wood, which is a significant character-defining feature.

Parking

Our Start Up Visit Team did not review any current parking studies during our time there, though parking in one way or another can be challenge for downtowns. This often stems from employees parking in the front of businesses, an issue that the employer can and should control and model good parking behavior. A comprehensive parking study is a recommended action step, to analyze all parking opportunities and flex-time parking alternatives. Avoid having auto-related uses including drive-through windows and curb cuts that disrupt the feeling, perception and reality of a pedestrian-friendly corridor.

Community Development consultant, Rodney King, informed us of the following plans for Kingfield:

“MDOT is slated to reconstruct Main Street as part of its Route 27 reconstruction project. Since MDOT improvements in the downtown core are restricted because of funding, the town intends to pursue a 2014 CDBG Downtown Revitalization grant to perform those sidewalk and streetscape improvements that MDOT is unable to fund and/or perform in the downtown core. In anticipation of applying for these funds, the Town Meeting and DECD declared the core area to be slum and blight. “

MDC is in support of significantly improving the pedestrian deficiencies in the core area and leading to the neighboring commercial zone anchored by Tranten's General Store. We experienced firsthand the precarious and unsafe walking route from the Herbert to Trantens during our site visit. These include lack of and/or unsafe and inadequate sidewalks and curbing for pedestrian safety and handicapped persons, dangerous and undefined crosswalks in comparison to the heavy truck traffic, insufficient street lighting, inadequate and largely inaccessible public parking, and the absence of landscaping and tree planting. The mass of overhead wires create visual blight which would be improved through undergrounding or even relocating to the rear of buildings.

MDC ADVISORS COMMENTS ON DESIGN

Christopher Glass, Architect, MDC Senior Advisor

- The downtown itself is a wonderful assembly of buildings that are all almost all from the same era. Most are wood construction and most are a combination of vernacular and colonial revival styles. One thing that differentiates Kingfield from many towns is that there doesn't seem to have been a major fire that took out the wooden buildings in the center of town.
- The various remodeling city happened to storefronts have generally been sensitive to the architecture and the design of signs on the buildings has generally been appropriate to the character of the downtown.
- The only significant intrusion is the canopy over the pumps at Anni's store.
- The other virtue of the town plan is that the commercial buildings all front on the main street. Downhill from the main street is the river and uphill the Main Street is the residential district with its churches and schools and of course the great Stanley Museum. You can grasp the whole plan and the relation of the town to both its river and its houses practically in one glance.
- North of town are the businesses more appropriately scaled to the automobile and foot traffic. This district is separated from the historic core of the downtown by the presumably permanent presence of the cemetery and the river bend. Therefore, the visual distinction between the modern shopping district to the north and the historic core is likely to remain. In most towns there is a gradual blurring as one progresses away from the historic core which tends to weaken the impact of the historic district.
- To the west the road goes by the original railroad station which is now the in town manufacturing area. So again there is not the blurring of town to suburban roadside businesses that often occurs.
- And to the east, of course, there's the river with its intact dam and graceful bridge. As I said at the meeting, most Maine river and harbor towns historically treated the water as an industrial feature surrounded it with fishing docks and sawmills and grist mills. With these extractive industries moved out of the towns the opportunity exists to make the Riverfront a destination attraction for townspeople and for tourists. The fact that elements of the original mill exist suggest a possibility for re-creating the mill on the foundations.
- The fact of the pending National Registered nomination could provide the foundation for interpretive guides for the whole downtown, both the Main Street and the residential and church areas church areas. As we discovered, the town is very walkable, except for the few places where there aren't sidewalks.
- Altogether Kingfield is a splendid survival of the optimistic settlements of the 19th century. The creation of buildings like the Herbert and the lawyer's office across the street show an ambition to make the town if not the equal then at least the rival of towns further down the river.

Top Three Action Steps

1. Some very low cost volunteer-driven efforts could go a long way: basic clean-up efforts, weed removal, more colorful plantings, painted exteriors and washing storefront windows.
2. Encourage year-round attractive window displays; create incentives such as seasonal contests and awards. Transform your historic village center into an irresistible charming holiday village.

3. More benches and places for people (especially seniors) to stop and rest are recommended. Benches are inviting and necessary, permitting people to linger longer downtown to shop, meet, chat and eat. Recycling containers are strongly recommended and send an environmental message.

Additional Design Action Steps and Observations

Adopt design guidelines and demolition delay regulations to protect the irreplaceable historic character of downtown Kingfield. Your quality of place is immediate and memorable. Protect this. Currently you are vulnerable as no protection against unwanted alterations or demolition exists, which jeopardizes Kingfield's downtown revitalization vision and future.

Changing to LED lighting will be a significant cost savings. Lighting manufacturers state that installing a heat sink at the top of poles under the luminaries will help absorb the energy produced by the LED lights, thereby preventing overheating and early burn-out. Efficiency Maine in the past has subsidized commercial businesses with a portion of the cost to change over to LED lights.

Design is not about buildings alone. This component of the Four Points addresses everything visible: plantings, street furniture, bike racks, banners and flags, public art, trash and recycling receptacles, lighting, storefront windows, even in-store merchandising. Consider creating a Downtown Garden Club whose task is to plant and maintain flowers, pull weeds, plant green spaces and even winter gardens with an eye toward the aesthetic. A cohesive and quality design appearance, with individual creativity, is what you are aiming for. This will help project a solid sense of business, caring and broad downtown cooperation.



*Kingfield's historic water trough at Main and Depot.
Photo courtesy the Daily Bulldog*

PROMOTIONS COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR KINGFIELD



Through your association with the Maine Downtown Center, you have a vast array of resources available to you through the Main Street Resource Café section of our website (www.mdf.org, Maine Downtown Center) and through the National Trust Main Street Center's members-only section online. You will find a substantial amount of practical advice, innovative ideas and guidance to help you continue to refine a solid promotion strategy for downtown Kingfield. Our goal is to help you increase the "feet on the street!"

Remember, also, the importance of retail events. These serve triple duty: 1) they bring shoppers to downtown, 2) they get shoppers inside stores spending money, and 3) they can galvanize merchants to your downtown mission, vision and efforts. Many of our participating Main Street Maine and Maine Downtown Network communities have created annual signature retail events that have become extremely successful. If you don't already, you should try an "Early Bird" sale as a retail promotion for the first day of hunting season; details are available through the Maine Downtown Center. These events are easy, fun, successful and are great media photo opportunities! Please visit the "Success Stories" section of the MDC webpage for great ideas from other Maine towns and cities! Please also share yours with us.

"Signature" events are *vital* important. More events, seasonally at a minimum, will help continue the buzz. Promotions require a high level of volunteer commitment, leadership and energy to be effective; therefore, we encourage you to start small. Even smaller promotions accomplish a variety of goals, including media buzz and volunteer participation. Focus on your authentic assets – arts, creative manufacturing (e.g., bags and coffee), home crafts, etc.

Promoting "heritage retailing" is becoming increasingly effective for downtown retail districts and celebrates Maine's creative community. According to the National Main Street Center, heritage retailing is "the term for buying local and providing those purchasing opportunities to visitors and community residents alike." Buying local can be implemented on a variety of scales from large to small, and one of its many positive aspects is that any community or individual can participate. Buying goods and art made locally keeps revenue in your community and, if these products reflect the history or character of your community, they will play an important role in your development of a heritage retailing strategy. Use your collective media buying power to promote your unique position in the regional marketplace.

Recall the earlier mention about downtown branding. The promotional component of the Four Points is where we encourage you to develop and share your branding image and urge everyone to use this widely: merchants, partner organizations, and the municipality, on websites, banners, shopping bags, marketing materials and public signs including way-finding, directional, entry gateways, facility identification and town entry monuments. (For a PowerPoint on Promotions, Marketing and Branding, visit the MDC website at mdf.org/SessionVResourceList.php.)

Sister Cities are another good way to connect merchants and residents to communities with some connection to Kingfield. You don't have to have just one. Not only does this encourage international heritage tourism and school connections, but it provides publicity and good will between communities.

Take the lead through events to build pride in your built environment and tap into MDC's Green Downtowns program. Well managed historic downtowns are the epitome of sustainability and are the link between the natural and built environments. These are increasingly important factors with Americans, particularly with heritage tourists, which we urge Kingfield to focus on attracting. Find opportunities to work with your museums, schools, historical society, library and private teaching facilities (all ages) to create lesson plans centered on the substantial history and significant historic architecture of Kingfield. Promotions need to attract people; good design will hold them. Work with the Design Committee to ensure that the surroundings – the sense of place, the quality of place – will bring them back again, perhaps even longer. A great idea is to market your events statewide, beginning with the Maine Office of Tourism's website (visitmaine.com) and the MPBN statewide calendar.

The Design and Promotions committees might consider working together on projects such as:

- Adding an architectural walk to highlight your built environment/assets

- Creating an architectural scavenger hunt downtown and in the residential neighborhoods where your historic architecture is impressive and authentic. Participants have to visit specified sites in town, get their “passport” signed at each stop and enter for a prize drawing. It acts as a “familiarization and getting to know you” exercise.
- Developing a monthly historic building trivia contest, including churches and residential
- Printing a coloring book based on historic downtown and residential architecture
- Creating a list in a simple digital and hard copy rack card of the *Top 10 Places Visitors Must See*

MDC ADVISORS COMMENTS ON PROMOTION

Jayne Palmer and Bill King, Palmer-King Consulting, MDC Senior Advisor

A beginning step toward revitalization of a community’s downtown is most easily begun with the Promotions Committee. Promotions are easily visible, serve as the catalyst to get volunteers involved and bring people to your downtown where they can have an enjoyable experience. The Main Street model recommends three types of Promotions : 1. Retail – that bring people into the stores to “ring the cash register”; 2. Special Events – such as “Kingfield Festival Days”; 3. Community spirit/image building – these promotions build pride and community cohesiveness. (See Main Street Promotions Committee Handbook)

- Kingfield Festival Days needs a larger supporting committee or it is danger of becoming a “thing of the past” – new blood brings new energy and ideas. If town hall is solely responsible, people take it for granted and become quite negative about the promotion by either criticizing the time/money the town spends on it or by not supporting it – each volunteer added becomes an instant supporter of your overall work.
- The current Christmas celebration provides a great core upon which to build. You have the perfect community setting to enlarge upon the theme of an “Old Fashioned Christmas”, so again add more members to the committee. Partner with all in town organizations/churches and others to produce a (inexpensive) Christmas calendar of happenings in town between Thanksgiving and New Year’s Day.
- Each promotion should make a little money or at least break even. Look for sponsorships beyond just the businesses to support these promotions. Each sponsor widens your community visibility, support and offers a potential pool of volunteers.
- Partner with other Kingfield organizations to gain recognition, more support for your mission and usually more volunteers.
- Use your assets in most of your promotions to build community awareness and pride.
- Build on your Art Walks but keep them well spaced and diverse.

Suggestions for possible new promotions:

- Add a Christmas social event so that shopkeepers, town hall employees and the residents get to know each other in a fun setting, remember success will come when all facets of your community take part and are recognized for their role. (*See Addendum A for holiday promotions ideas.*)

- Add cash mobs; they can be great for “shop local”, but they need a flare/twist for ongoing success.
- Consider a fall promotion and connect your local Farmers Market
- HAVE FUN!

Develop more events to fill the five weeks of the Christmas season which runs from Thanksgiving to New Years. Make sure to celebrate New Year’s Day. Christmas Calendars available in all stores and offices incorporating all the events put on at Christmas time by Churches and Non-profits like the library and the Stanley Museum help to stimulate people for the Christmas season. From the effort of putting together this Christmas calendar should result in an annual calendar of events. The Network organization could become the repository of all Kingfield event information which will keep them well connected with all other organizations. This helps to find volunteers in those groups. WSKI TV should be most helpful in publicizing calendar events.” *(See Addendum A for holiday promotion ideas.)*



Add the Stanley Museum to as many promotions as possible. The Stanley Museum is a destination attraction and ongoing educational resource for the community. They would do well to promote a local old car show with emphasis on steam. The numbers of car shows in Maine is staggering. These people come from away and they like to travel and show their pride and joys. An antique car club will help you organize. Make it an annual event!

Top Three Action Steps

1. Make a calendar of “happenings/promotions/events” and who is involved on each project. Use this as a guide to when to add new promotions and as an evaluation of current happenings that may need to be expanded or changed. (If an event is working, protect it and add enhancement but not major change)
2. A “Gift of Kingfield” gift certificate might be a good project. Local gift certificates work all year long to keep business in your downtown.
3. Focus on your authenticity and assets and build on those. Events are an excellent way to engage more volunteers! Connect your great natural setting with your downtown. Develop a marketing plan for cultural/nature based tourism. Remember to always feature local food traditions, a very important asset.

Additional Promotion Action Steps and Observations

- Expand your efforts to coordinate and collaborate with the entire western mountains region in a very meaningful way.
- To grow the shoulder season business, promote “staycation” opportunities and market with local lodging and dining properties. Connect with Sugarloaf on events and promotional marketing. There is great opportunity to grow the spring and fall business by building on existing promotions. All these events need more statewide visibility.
- Capacity: Kingfield is extremely fortunate to have as its signature destination business the historic **Herbert Hotel**. We believe there is much greater capacity to leverage the Herbert into essentially a year-round community event center and market it as one of the great western mountain destination dining/lodging inns. Dinners, teas, music events, breakfast meetings, special events are a small list of events that would have spin-off benefit to the downtown business community. Work to get the people who are already coming to stay longer and make sure that they become repeat customers. This is a marketing effort that is far less expensive than attracting first time visitors and has less impact on the community. Look closely at who your current visitor is (you should know who they are) and market specifically to them.
- **Add music** to any happening, especially if you can use the school music programs.
- Please take time to investigate these excellent free resources:
National Trust Heritage Tourism Program:
<http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/heritage-tourism/>
Cultural Heritage Tourism:
<http://www.culturalheritagetourism.org/>

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING OBSERVATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS



The historic buildings, unique character and cultural attractions contribute to the area’s success in attracting “creative class” businesses. Your committee in partnership with the Town of Kingfield needs to ensure that the public and private sectors of downtown continue to create a vibrant and livable mixed-use environment that builds on your sense of place. Your commercial core needs to be viewed as a place that supports and expresses the creative and innovative energy of its human capital, and a place that attracts

and welcomes all members of the community. “Quality of Place” is featured in the *Making Maine Work* report as one of the top investment imperatives in our state. And, the MDC’s goal for downtowns across Maine, Kingfield included, is to be ahead of the curve in understanding and supporting downtown’s role as the signature economic engine in Quality of Place.

Strengthening your village center’s position in the marketplace is a never-ending challenge. It’s straightforward: people need a reason to come downtown. Reinforcing downtown as the community’s gathering place - the cultural, commercial, civic heart of the region - is the mission of the Maine Downtown Center and, we expect, yours.

Revitalizing both the historic downtown and the vibrant commercial district just north of the village presents a challenge, but again those present seem committed to protecting both. There are numerous community assets that go unnoticed. These provide a tremendous opportunity to draw visitors and future residents/ businesses if promoted.



We loved this place and wanted a tour!

Business retention and recruitment requires the work of downtown ambassadors. Package your amenities and assets and go after the businesses you lack to further strengthen downtown Kingfield in the regional marketplace. A good book to read and share is, "Niche Strategies for Downtown Revitalization," by N. David Milder. "Niche Strategies" shows readers how downtown areas can grow and prosper by focusing their efforts on specific groups of customers or of goods and services.

Properly designed surveys, of which there are many for downtowns, are vitally important tools to provide a basic understanding of your downtown in the regional marketplace. This is energy well spent, within reason and budget; however, it is important for a variety of reasons to not simply turn this over to paid consultants and students to accomplish. Your ER committee, perhaps bolstered with students and other volunteers, needs to roll up its sleeves and dive in – after receiving training on how to best approach people for information. This is where professional guidance can channel, champion and help you analyze your efforts. An example worth investigating is the ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out) group who enjoy conducting a variety of intercept surveys.

Once your basic surveys are conducted and analyzed, you should consider conducting a residential survey. As you well know, many residents rarely or never come downtown. It will be very beneficial to discover what would change their lack of interest in downtown. Visit our website to access links to tools and recent PowerPoint presentations on innovative market analysis for downtowns today. These are powerful tools. If you have already conducted some market analysis, consider reviewing the results of that analysis and convene a meeting of as many of the business owners on the street as will participate (along with the owners/leasing agents of the vacant space). Test with them the recommendations coming out of the existing data. Is it valid? Will these types of businesses support or deter from the existing business mix? What types of businesses are missing from the list? Use this discussion to identify the two or three types of businesses that would best enhance what is currently present. Within each of the types explore (1) if

there is anyone in town who might develop such a business; (2) if there are similar businesses elsewhere in Maine or New England – or in Maritime Canada - who might consider an additional location.

If you move to option (2) above, be very specific. Name the business. Research the business: owner's name(s), size of store, population served, how long in business, etc. Using what you know about these businesses, and data about Kingfield demographics, traffic patterns, and the available space, compile an information package to leave with the prospective business owner(s). Call ahead and set up a time to meet. Send someone who represents the assets of Kingfield well and who understands why this would be a good fit. Talk through the materials and leave copies with them. Send a thank you letter being sure to include contact information. Follow up in a couple of days. Follow up in a week. Send a summary of the key advantages to a Kingfield location. Follow up in two weeks. Add them (with permission) to your database for e-news that goes out. Follow up every two-three weeks for as long as there is space available and they haven't told you to "go away". If the space rents, let them know and tell them that you hope there will be another opportunity, because you truly believe they would be such a good fit.

To address this issue, and enhance engagement of more business owners in the downtown, efforts should be made to strengthen the relationship between businesses, promoting an atmosphere of teamwork and cooperative spirit. Some meetings might be a combination of presentation and roundtable discussion, but every meeting should include sufficient time for a roundtable to encourage dialog among the businesses. Agenda topics can be decided by the group, but might include topics such as:

- Effective window displays
- Whether and how to utilize social media such as Facebook or Twitter
- Working with the municipality to improve parking, street cleaning or other issues of concern
- Sources of financing
- Hours of operation
- Upcoming events and promotions

Business opening events are successful because they have access to a communication source and they know how to craft a public relations message (or spin) to help obtain the reaction they want. To achieve the most sizzle, the ER and Organization committees will want to join forces. Business openings and expansions should be big events with ribbon cuttings, food, press releases, photo-ops, etc. Take any and every opportunity to promote good things happening downtown! Think about entities that are successful in pushing an agenda or message.

Recommendation: Put extra effort into filling the upper floors of downtown buildings. The downtown development pros often do that first so they can take their time about finding the right lower floor tenants while building customers for first floor businesses.

Marketing the historic tax credits is another strategy to stimulate downtown development - by contacting real estate-oriented new owners, encouraging residential development, getting a few smaller projects started at the same time and marketing downtown as a whole during the process. A thorough understanding of every historic building (over 50 years old) is necessary to effectively market preservation-based incentive tools to potential developers. For more information on this, visit the MDC online Resource Library (www.mdf.org), or contact Mike Johnson at the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (287-2132) or Greg Paxton at Maine Preservation (847-3577).

Utilize your new connections to the Maine Downtown Center's resources (staff, Advisory Council, Senior Advisors, website, annual conference, Downtown Institute and the other participating Main Street Maine

and Maine Downtown Center communities.) Also, take advantage of your membership with the National Main Street Center and tap into their vast online resources and list serve.

Top Action Steps

1. Provide and encourage a “merchant forum” where they get together among themselves to share and get to know each other as supporters, not competitors. The merchants must be organized so they have a forum to talk about their problems and develop a group approach to promoting business in downtown Kingfield.
2. Conduct intercept surveys. You want to find out who the shoppers are in both villages. You need to find out what they are coming for, where they come from, what they would like to see available in Kingfield, where they buy those items now and who they are. You might consider both summer and winter surveying. Survey examples are readily available from other Main Street and Downtown Network communities. You might want to survey the business owners and employees to see what they would like to see in their downtowns. This is an excellent volunteer project.
3. Access to local food downtown is increasingly important to the downtown marketplace. Consider creating a winter location downtown for your local Farmers Market.
4. Stating the obvious, we believe Kingfield’s business connection and economic relationship with all-things-Sugarloaf could and should be stronger. We urge greater ambassadorship between the community and the mountain to tap into the money-exchanging potential.



We applaud the Town and community leaders of Kingfield for your leadership in becoming a Maine Downtown Network community.

We look forward to our continued relationship with you!

ADDITIONAL MDC ADVISORS COMMENTS

ADDENDUM A - PROMOTION

Bill King, Palmer-King Consulting, MDC Senior Advisor

We recommend that you always start by working on the **downtown attitude**. You have to build a positive “can do” attitude in those who work, shop, play, and live in the downtown. Get a button machine and make “I love Kingfield” buttons. Give out a bunch of them and when they begin to appear start selling them for a dollar a piece. The next step will be flags at every store front in support of promotional events or even seasons. Encourage merchants to create their own logo then put it on a flag. You are looking for movement on the street which infers new activity. Then do flowers in baskets or pots from light poles in the spring. You might also do flower boxes or flower barrels on the sidewalks. Sell them to the merchants but leave maintenance to the people who care for lamp post flowers. Include the maintenance cost in the price of the flower box. In Bath in the fall, Main Street Bath in cooperation with the Garden Club and Historical Society has a fund raiser, sells several thousand dollars worth of potted chrysanthemums. Get the school art departments involved doing murals for downtown building walls (e.g. 4’x8’ sign board - *not* historic unpainted brick walls.) Let the kids do the work. They can be painted in the classroom and then put up on blank walls or even bridge abutments. Let the kids and teachers put them up. They get invested resulting in little or no graffiti problems and you get new young people involved in the downtown.

The Christmas shopping season is a great time to build traffic. Christmas in Kingfield is already a charming event and becoming better known. Can you envision a downtown that is so well decorated that everyone for miles around just wants to see Kingfield all lighted and decorated for Christmas? That is the goal! Remember the holiday shopping season is usually for five weeks and that is five weeks of opportunity for merchants to sell their products and services AND their downtown. Here are a number of proven ideas to try:

- Gather your local organizations and faith communities together with the Town, arts groups and Chamber to decorate all the downtown trees, spaces and buildings with lights. Make sure it is a volunteer project for club members. Hold store facade decoration contests for merchants with good prizes (e.g., dinner for four at a nice local restaurant.) Let shoppers make the decision on the winner. Let them vote in any downtown store and for that vote they receive a chance to win a prize. They place their votes in simple voting boxes in each store. This gets people downtown and in the stores. It also shows you where people are coming from and can be the basis for developing a marketing mailing list.
- You also can do in-store decoration contests or even better a window display contest.
- Put Santa in the Herbert lobby (or an empty space) for a couple of days with gift wrapping done by a non-profit organization who wants to raise a little money at Christmas.
- Produce a calendar of Christmas events for the entire area. It makes friends of the other non-profits and helps to find volunteers for downtown projects. This is where you will start manufacturing the community calendar for the whole area. This gets all the non-profits including churches coming to you.
- A Christmas parade is a big crowd pleaser.
- You need a social event so merchants can meet each other and the city people. Do an “Elf Party”. It is designed to get merchants and their employees to meet and get to know each other better and to better understand the other guys business. Restaurants gift the food and show their specialties.

Everyone brings a small gift which is distributed through a drawing of tickets issued on entrance. Kids and employees particularly love it and you know what it does for the attitude problem!

- There should be consideration given to downtown merchant group advertising during the holiday season with all your ads on the same page under a downtown Kingfield banner. Run these groups ads at least once a week for the five weeks of the Christmas season. Consider group ads on cable TV and radio.
- Do a “Gift of Kingfield” gift certificate. Banks or retailers can sell them in \$20 denominations. Merchants take them as payment for Christmas gifts then redeem them at a bank for \$19.50. The fifty cents goes to the coordinating organization. It is a great fund raiser and it keeps business out of the malls and in the downtown. Imagine the local health clinic buying such gift certificates as Christmas presents for all its employees”
- The holidays should be a major focus for a community celebration. Anything you currently do should be considered for expansion. Some additional ideas you may consider:
 - Lengthen the celebration to five weeks and bring together all organizations in town
 - Kick it off with open houses and fanfare
 - Post your holiday events on the Maine Downtown Center’s webpage and promote the statewide “Take ME Downtown For the Holidays!” campaign
 - Include more children’s activities: invite the schools to do concerts/small plays and create student art work to be displayed in vacant windows (this can happen throughout the year)
 - Get lots of press coverage! Invite the press and media in. Send them news releases.
 - Produce a small brochure (tri-fold) for events during the holiday season, involving all nonprofits in the community
 - Get the merchants together for a holiday brainstorm!
 - Decorate more with lights (ask each store to pay for those in front of their space); the municipality can take care of the entrance and other areas. Also ask residents in a “fundraising letter” to contribute to decorations (it works!)
 - Have a Christmas decorating contest and let the shoppers vote. They then become eligible for donated prizes
 - Celebrate each other and this beautiful, unique place on earth.



(All photos in this report were taken by Roxanne Eflin and Christopher Glass and provided by the Maine Downtown Center)