



Understanding the Municipal Role in Main Street Revitalization

CT Main Street
April 24, 2009

William Warner, AICP
Director of Planning, Conservation & Development
Middletown, CT





Early 1990's

- Severe downturn
- Years of de-institutionalization at CVH
- Proliferation of Social Services
- Tragedy at annual sidewalk sale
- Mass closings Sears, Woolworth's, Food Mart, Kabachnicks, LaBoca and many smaller stores
- Over 60% vacancy rate on Main St.
- No one downtown at night or weekends
- Very low income census tract
- No connection between college / downtown / river

Setting the Stage

- Established a Downtown Planning Sub-Committee in 1993
- Created **Downtown Visions: 2000 and Beyond** – the first Downtown Plan
- Conducted a Downtown Market Analysis
- Instituted a Design Review and Preservation Board

Vision

“A thriving college town on the banks of the CT River”





Setting the Stage

Zone Changes

- Required retail frontage on Main Street
- Established maximum and minimum building heights and setbacks, new signage regulations
- Prohibited new curb cuts, free standing signs, drive thru's, adult uses, pawn shops, check cashing, tattoo and body piercing
- Prohibited new social services and store front churches
- Lots of flexibility in parking



Setting the Stage

- Successful application to Connecticut Main Street Program
- True Public/Private Partnership
- Established Main Street Board of Directors / 4 committees
- Hired a Main Street Manager
- Established Facade Improvement Program
- Created a Business Improvement District for ongoing funding





Getting the Ball Rolling

Small Victories

- Conducted a Slogan & Logo Contest and Main Street banners
- Planted over 500 trees along the gateways into Middletown
- Cleaned windows / sidewalks
- Repaired Public Clocks



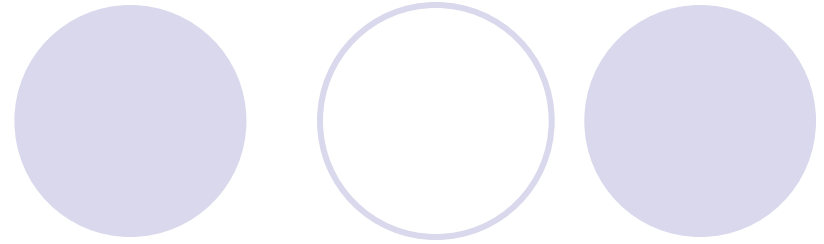
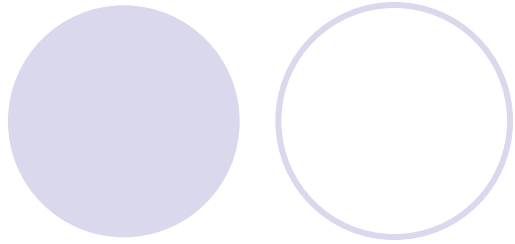


Getting the Ball Rolling Early Projects

- Created a “Village District” between downtown and Wesleyan.
- To reinforce the Village District – demolished former Police Station and constructed 3 single family homes
- Approved and funded a 9 unit artist cooperative with retail and gallery space on Main Street
- Worked with Wesleyan to establish the \$2 million Green Street Art Center.

3 New Homes in Village District





ERROR: undefined
OFFENDING COMMAND: !:LHs0X0BN0
STACK: