

PRESERVATION LEADERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOP

TEAM TOPICS

Historic Resources and Downtown Revitalization

"Downtown Revitalization" is the topic selected by the National Trust's local partners for the Preservation Leadership Training. Local donors, ARCH and the City of Ft. Wayne identified reuse of Ft. Wayne's historic resources as a desired element of any downtown revitalization efforts.

The City of Ft. Wayne's Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Comprehensive Plan and Development Strategy lists housing development and the reuse of historic structures in the central area as strategies for achieving plan goals. The Comprehensive Plan states the following three goals for the central area: 1) to maintain existing development; 2) to halt deterioration, and 3) to encourage reinvestment.

Downtown Ft. Wayne has developed over time into a government and office center with little retail activity. Several questions or issues have been raised in the development of the team topic. The heart of the question is how does downtown Ft. Wayne become a more vital and active area? How does the community of Ft. Wayne determine which buildings should be preserved? What can Ft. Wayne do to make it desirable for the private sector to invest in downtown's historic structures? How should Ft. Wayne go about developing housing in the downtown area? What linkages could be developed or strengthened to improve the image and economic strength of Ft. Wayne's downtown?

To address these and related issues, five team topics have been formulated for the leadership participants. Throughout the process teams should try to develop their ideas in terms of the role the private, public and non-profit sectors can play.

* Developing a class vision for downtown Ft. Wayne. What is the classes' vision for downtown Ft. Wayne. What role do the cultural resources play in that vision? What are Ft. Wayne's community assets? What are some design elements of the class vision for parking, signage, traffic, historic resources? What are the potential markets for that vision? Who would be attracted to downtown if the vision were implemented? What role might neighborhoods play in downtown revitalization? What process could the community of Ft. Wayne employ to develop their vision or adopt some of the ideas developed in the team topics?

Team Members - Richard Stenner, Lorraine Kaup, Pat Hrabik,
Tess Grimm, Ross Tilghman and Jan Nash

* Identification and protection of historic resources. What information is available on cultural resources, surveys, published information? Are the plans and ordinances regarding downtown properties easily accessible to the public, visitors or potential developers? How could the information dissemination be improved? How are resources identified, prioritized and communicated to the public and potential developers? Are present zoning and preservation ordinances sufficient to protect historic resources in the future?

Team Members - Stephen Bialk, Mark McKiernan, Laura Paxton, Verdaine Farmilant, Pamela Schmidt and Brigid Trimble

* Enhancement programs and policies. What programs are currently available to enhance historic buildings? How much annual funding is available? What promotional materials are available? How are programs communicated to the private sector? Are public sector policies linked to and supportive of programs? What programs are available in the private sector, for example, through local banks and the Community Revitalization Act? What programs or policies might be developed to improve or encourage private sector investment?

Team Members - Patrick Glithero, Thomas Kaup, Barbara Steele, Steve van der Woude, Scott Zimmerman and Wendy Swartz

* Housing and other uses for vacant and under utilized structures. Are existing land use regulations and building codes conducive to housing or other activity? What information is available on Ft. Wayne's housing needs and occupancy of upper stories in the downtown area? What does the class perceive are the benefits of downtown housing development? What are some of the obstacles to developing housing and proposed solutions? What are some other potential uses for the vacant upper floors of historic buildings?

Team Members - Diane Schwartz, Carol Rittenhouse Hoppe, Terri Groff, Alice Krueger, Lee Austin and Jean Spears

* Identification of key projects and strategies. Are there some key projects or strategies that can be identified and accomplished that would allow the community to move toward achieving the goal of downtown revitalization through the reuse of historic structures? What are those projects, and how might a strategy be implemented for one or two of the projects identified?

Team Members - Alan Pape, T. Gay Peters, Margaret Kauffman, Robert Kellems, Dotie Harvey and Karen Lienard