

NMRI

North Main Revitalization Initiative

A STRATEGY FOR REVITALIZATION OF THE NORTH MAIN AREA OF SHERIDAN

October 20, 2008

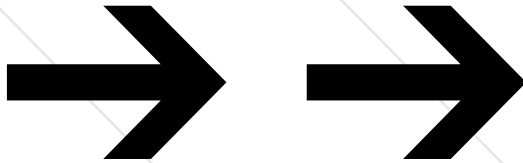
The North Main Revitalization Initiative

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This is a our chance to restore North Main to the beauty that it had when we were kids. Working together, we can bring new businesses, stores and restaurants to this part of town and help keep it a great place to live and raise a family.

-Mayor Dave Kinsky

A COMMUNITY VISION

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A COMMUNITY VISION

The NMRI Process

In May of 2008, City of Sheridan Mayor Dave Kinsley launched the North Main Revitalization Initiative, a community-based effort to spur revitalization of the entire North Main area of Sheridan including North Main Street and the adjacent neighborhoods. While the City of Sheridan helped organize and launch the NMRI process, the vision and success of this initiative has been driven by the people with the most at stake – those that live, work, and own businesses in this area.

During the summer of 2008, North Main residents and business owners hosted eleven community gatherings including neighborhood block parties and business open house events. At these events, over 200 North Main residents and business owners met to talk about the strengths and weaknesses of the North Main area and to begin to articulate a vision for revitalization.

In August, participants came together for the *North Main Summit*, where they discussed and sorted the 600+ ideas and comments that had been generated through the NMRI process. Participants then organized themselves into five working groups to develop vision statements and concrete action plans for North Main revitalization.

This report contains the vision statements and action plans developed by the NMRI working groups and by the North Main Steering Committee - a nine-member board representing each of the NMRI working groups.



Look and Feel Work Group at the North Main Summit

COMMUNITY



VISION



ACTION

A COMMUNITY VISION

NMRI Vision Statements

After reviewing and categorizing the 600+ comments and ideas generated by NMRI participants at block parties, business open houses, and at the North Main Summit, each NMRI Working Group developed a short statement articulating the vision expressed by the North Main community. Because the working groups did not collaborate on their vision statements, the commonalities between the statements are especially striking:

Where We Shop and Eat Work Group Vision:

North Main is the frame of the Bighorns. We will create an authentic western aesthetic, with green space and park-like settings—an oasis to draw and welcome travelers and a signal they are somewhere special.

Where We Live Work Group Vision:

North Main is a vibrant area of mixed-use development and welcoming green space with safe neighborhoods and thriving businesses.

Where We Play and Kids Work Group Vision:

Open space and recreational neighborhood parks throughout the North Main area that provide safe, and easily accessible play and relaxation areas for families and children.

Look and Feel Work Group Vision:

Reflect the pride and character of North Main Street by giving North Main an equal character and small-town treatment to that of downtown.

How We Travel Work Group Vision:

Develop an appealing, consistently maintained North gateway corridor into Sheridan, accommodating safe multi-modal travel. Enhance livability and business opportunities for the North Main neighborhood through improved transportation and parking alternatives.



West Side of North Main Near Taylor School

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Four Priorities

Participants in the North Main Revitalization Initiative have identified four priorities essential for revitalization of the North Main area of Sheridan. Unlike the revitalization projects and long-term objectives identified in the next section, these four elements may be considered the cornerstones on which a larger revitalization effort must be based.

Priority #1: Shape the WYDOT North Main Project to Jump-Start Revitalization

In 2010, the Wyoming Department of Transportation will begin reconstruction of North Main Street from Dow Street to Fort Road. This project will include replacement of water and sewer lines and installation of enhancements such as light posts and trees. This project presents a tremendous opportunity to shape the look and feel of North Main and to jump-start revitalization of the entire North Main area. NMRI seeks to assemble a design vision from the community of those who live, work and own businesses in the North Main neighborhood, thus encouraging the development of professional plans, drawings and a list of enhancements to be communicated to WYDOT for their project.

On October 2, 2008, members of the NMRI Steering Committee met with representatives of WYDOT to talk about both the aesthetic elements of the first phase of the North Main project and also to talk about alignment and safety of the Fort Road intersection. WYDOT and the NMRI Steering Committee discussed the potential for a stop light at Fort Road as well as the potential for stop lights or pedestrian crossing lights at 11th Street and 8th Street. In that meeting, WYDOT committed to work with NMRI Steering Committee to shape the aesthetic elements of the WYDOT project and also agreed to examine the traffic issues raised by the NMRI.



Intersection of North Main and Fort Road

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Priority #2: Create a Master Plan, Develop New Zoning, and Adjust City Boundaries

If the North Main area is going to be revitalized, there must be a consistent master plan and coherent zoning and jurisdictional boundaries to facilitate appropriate development in this area. For this reason, the City of Sheridan should initiate the following three processes in the near future: 1) a master planning process for the North Main area including commercial development, transportation, and recreation; 2) creation of new zoning classifications to promote mixed-use developments and other elements of the NMRI vision; and 3) adjustment of City/County boundaries to resolve jurisdictional issues and streamline revitalization efforts. One element of the master planning and/or zoning processes could include creation of a North Main pattern book containing illustrations of preferred design elements for the North Main area. Each of these initiatives should be modeled on the NMRI community process and should involve the NMRI Steering Committee or the North Main Association if/when it is created (see Priority #3 below).

Priority #3: Create a North Main Association

North Main residents and business owners need a formal organization to help drive revitalization efforts. Given the work that has been done to date through the NMRI process, this new organization should be developed as an extension of the North Main Steering Committee. Long-term goals would include formal incorporation, development of a logo, marketing materials and website, and fundraising to support organizational goals. Responsibilities would include communicating and coordinating revitalization plans, continuing to set specific goals for development, monitoring progress of the revitalization projects and serve as a point of contact for North Main stakeholders, existing organizations and residences.

Priority #4: Develop Tools to Encourage Harmonization of Uses

North Main contains a number of high-visibility businesses that are contributing to a post-industrial aesthetic. The City of Sheridan should help develop tools such as voluntary land swaps and tax incentives to allow business owners with sub-optimal uses to relocate to areas in Sheridan more compatible with their business needs. Such voluntary harmonization of uses could improve the aesthetics of North Main and create consolidated tracts of land in the North Main area to attract new businesses, create new housing, and create new parks and recreational opportunities.

CREATING VISIBLE PROGRESS

Immediate Actions

In addition to the larger contextual changes that are needed to drive a successful revitalization, the NMRI Steering Committee has identified seven immediate actions that can be initiated in the near term and that can begin to make a real difference in the lives of the people who live, work, and travel through the North Main area. The goal of these immediate actions is to create highly visible change in the North Main area and to help build momentum for larger, more complex efforts set forth in this strategy.

Project #1: Acquire and Landscape the Port of Entry

The former WYDOT Port of Entry sits adjacent to the North Main interchange and presents a unique opportunity for a welcoming, landscaped area to help present a good first impression of Sheridan and the North Main area. Long-term, this site could be incorporated into a greenway system (see Objective #1 on page 11) and could be used for put-in and take-out of canoes and kayaks on a restored Goose Creek.

Upon the request of NMRI participants, Mayor Kinskey has already written to WYDOT and expressed an interest in leasing the site for a nominal fee to begin implementing this NMRI project.

Project #2: Establish a North Main Beautification Program

In the coming years, the WYDOT North Main project will help beautify the North Main corridor through installation of new lighting, trees, and other enhancements (see Element #1 above). In the immediate future, we can begin beautifying the North Main corridor by creating an incentive program to encourage private landowners to undertake landscaping and



Former WYDOT Port of Entry

CREATING VISIBLE PROGRESS

other beautification projects on property fronting on North Main. Structured correctly, resources from the City of Sheridan (e.g. funding and reduced landfill fees) could be used to leverage donations from private companies (e.g. reduced cost on landscaping materials and equipment rental) which could in turn be pledged as a cost-share for qualifying projects that private landowners willingly undertake on property fronting North Main. With this structure, city resources could be leveraged four- or even five-to-one and could help drive near-term beautification of the North Main area.

Project #3: Improve Traffic Safety in the Neighborhoods

Many participants in the NMRI process have complained about the excessive speed of vehicles in neighborhoods adjacent to North Main. A near-term and highly visible effort should be put in place to calm traffic in neighborhoods in the North Main area. Elements of this effort could include an increased police presence in North Main neighborhoods, additional traffic safety signs, reduction of neighborhood speed limits, and placement of stop signs and traffic calming structures. In particular, a number of residents have suggested construction of one or more landscaped roundabouts in neighborhoods adjacent to North Main as a demonstration of a traffic calming feature that could be implemented more broadly in neighborhoods in the North Main area.

Project #4: Connect and Enhance the Pathway System

The pathway system is a key feature of the North Main area though a number of discrete shortcomings make it an underutilized asset. The City of Sheridan should renew its efforts to connect the pathway between 8th and 11th Street. This lack of connection diminishes the use of the pathway north of 8th Street in Sheridan. Construction of the pathway under the 11th Street Bridge should proceed without delay while the route between 8th and 11th is being decided. In addition, the City should work with the Recreation Department to construct a ramp connecting the pathway with the Thorne Rider parking lot so that the pathway north of the 11th Street Bridge can be easily accessed. Finally, signs showing the pathway network and advertising parking areas for the pathway need to be installed to increase knowledge and usage of the pathway.



CREATING VISIBLE PROGRESS

Project #5: Recruit Restaurants and Grocery Stores

The North Main area is home to a number of successful restaurants as well as Bino's Grocery. Participants in the NMRI want to support these businesses and also want to find ways to attract additional restaurants and grocery stores to the North Main area. Forward Sheridan and the City of Sheridan should work with participants in the North Main Revitalization Initiative to identify options for attracting additional restaurants and grocery stores to the North Main area. Options may include direct recruitment, creation of appropriate incentives to encourage private-sector development, and zoning changes to promote outdoor cafes in the North Main area.

Project #6: Enhance Recreational Opportunities

Currently, there are two recreation initiatives underway that have the potential to affect recreational opportunities in the North Main area. First, the City of Sheridan is developing a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Second, the Sheridan Recreation District is working to develop a recreation center in Thorne Rider Park. Both of these efforts should be shaped to provide maximum benefit to the North Main area consistent with the vision articulated by NMRI participants. As identified below, one of the long-term objectives for North Main is to draw people and businesses to North Main by the creation of additional recreational opportunities such as a splash park, disc golf course, covered picnic areas, and playground features.

Project #7: Create North Main Signage

To highlight the existing amenities in the North Main area, the City should install visible and appealing signage enhancements on 5th Street, 8th Street, 11th Street & Fort Road near the V.A. Hospital. Such signage would also create a highly visible way of demonstrating the beginning of a concerted revitalization of the North Main area. Signage enhancements should be designed through study and concept development working with NMRI participants and should clearly reflect the desired character of North Main Street. Signage should be designed so that it can be installed in the near term and also incorporated into the WYDOT reconstruction process (see Priority #1 on page 6).

CHARTING A NEW DIRECTION

Long-Term Objectives

In addition to priority elements and near-term projects, the NMRI Steering Committee identified six long-term objectives for the North Main area. While these objectives may take years to accomplish, they establish benchmarks to drive revitalization and to promote mobility, livability & economic growth in the North Main area in the years to come.

Objective #1: Build a Network of Greenways

The North Main area currently has significant park and recreational assets including the Sheridan Pathway System, Goose Creek, Thorne Rider Park, and City-owned lands adjacent to Thorne Rider Park. The community should build on these assets by seeking to develop an integrated network of greenways in the North Main area that would connect Thorne Rider Park with adjacent city-owned lands and include restoration of Goose Creek and extension of the pathway system north of Sheridan. Greenway development should also include pocket parks and other noncontiguous landscapes designed to promote both recreational opportunities and a common aesthetic throughout the North Main area. In developing new green spaces in North Main, the community should explore public-private partnerships including, for example, a partnership with the Whitney Benefits Foundation.

Objective #2: Develop a Business Park

Development of a business park in the North Main area could help attract additional residential and commercial development and could serve as a powerful long-term driver for North Main revitalization. The City and County, in partnership with NMRI and Forward Sheridan, should review available land and seek to develop a business park in the North Main area. This effort should taking advantage of City infrastructure connections and existing high-speed internet connectivity in the area.

CHARTING A NEW DIRECTION

Objective #3: Construct New Housing and Mixed-Use Developments

Participants in the NMRI process repeatedly called for development of housing and mixed-use developments using designs that will promote a “small-town feel” for the North Main area and provide opportunities for live-work-play environments. As a long-term objective, the City should encourage developments on North Main Street to place parking behind the commercial and residential buildings. Partnerships with the Veterans Administration and other area employers should be explored as a means to facilitate development of additional affordable housing in this area.

Objective #4: Establish a Primary School in the North Main Area

For the long-term vitality of the North Main area, the State of Wyoming, City of Sheridan, and local school districts need to begin planning for creation of a new primary school in the North Main area. Families in the North Main area used to be able to send their children to the Taylor School on North Main Street. With the closure of Taylor School, families in this area bus their children to Coffeen or Sagebrush Elementary Schools. With potential growth in the North Main area as well as north and east of Sheridan, a new school in this area will likely be justified in the coming years. Construction of a new school in the North Main area would improve the quality of life for North Main residents, help attract additional families to the North Main area, and serve as a community center and additional recreational hub for this part of Sheridan.

Objective #5: Create Additional Recreational Opportunities

Given the existing recreational areas in North Main and the existence of unutilized and underutilized property in this area, the North Main area should seek to become identified as a recreation hub in this region of Wyoming. Such recreation enhancements will serve existing residents, increase visitation to North Main (with attendant commercial benefits), and serve as an attractor for new residential and commercial development. Recreational enhancements may include, but are not limited to: indoor/outdoor fun center, mini golf, ice cream stand, golf driving range or indoor simulated golf course, water park, laser tag, go-carts, par 3 golf course, arcade, teen center, climbing wall, ropes course, zip line, paint ball, skate park, inclusion/requirement of green-space in large property development, and pathway upgrades such as workout stations and benches.

CHARTING A NEW DIRECTION

Objective #6: Relocate the County Jail

The county jail on North Main is perceived to detract from the safety and marketability of the North Main area. To facilitate revitalization of the North Main area, Sheridan County should evaluate long-term possibilities for relocating the county jail. The County should evaluate the possibility of converting the existing building into courtroom facilities with associated short-term (24-48 hour) detention of inmates. In addition, given the high visibility of the property and interrelationship with the county jail issue, Sheridan County should work with North Main residents and business owners to develop plans for reuse of the adjacent property that it recently acquired from Kentucky Fried Chicken.



Sheridan County Jail - North Main Street

Conclusion

Revitalization of the North Main area of Sheridan will be neither quick nor easy. It will be accomplished only through diligence, vision, and the efforts of the public and private sectors. Still, the first steps of revitalization are already underway. The City of Sheridan has expressed its commitment to the long-term health of this area by launching the NMRI process and initiating on-the-ground projects such as paving of North Gould and extension of the pathway system around Mavrakakis Fishing Pond. This report lays out a blueprint for tangible actions that will help the North Main area take the next steps. By identifying essential priorities, immediate actions, and long-term objectives the residents and business owners of North Main have painted both a compelling vision and a road map for revitalization of the North Main area.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: NMRI Meetings

DATE	EVENT	PARTICIPANTS	LOCATION
May 15, 2008	Drummond and Silla Block Party	12	1400 Block of Spaulding
May 29, 2008	Heritage Towers Lunch Event	18	Heritage Tower
June 13, 2008	Layher Block Party	17	1300 Block of Ridgeway
June 18, 2008	Heritage Towers Dinner Event	27	Heritage Tower
June 19, 2008	DeBolt and Hayer Block Party	13	1200 Block of Spaulding
June 24, 2008	Senior Center Event	5	Sheridan Senior Center
June 26, 2008	Trails End Event	45	Trails End Restaurant
July 30, 2008	Bella Graphics Event	50	Bella Graphics
August 5, 2008	Moores Block Party	16	1000 Block of N. Gould
August 12, 2008	Volunteers of America Block Party	15	1000 Block of Saberton
August 13, 2008	Powder River Basin Resource Council Block Party	16	900 Block of N. Main
August 21, 2008	NMRI Summit	110	Best Western City Center
Aug. - Oct. 2008	NMRI Work Group and Steering Comm. Meetings	Approx. 30	Trails End Restaurant
Sept. 16, 2008	"Where We Play" Work Group/Rec. Dist. Meeting	Approx. 5	Old Highland Park School
October 2, 2008	NMRI Steering Committee/WYDOT Meeting	Approx. 30	City Council Chambers
October 20, 2008	Report to the Community	NMRI Steering Committee	City Council Chambers

APPENDICES

Appendix B: Steering Committee Members

NAME	WORKING GROUP
Jim Tyra	<i>Where We Shop and Eat</i>
Kay Rivers	<i>Where We Shop and Eat</i>
Deb Hirschman	<i>Where We Live</i>
Nancy Silla	<i>Where We Live</i>
Tim Lenz	<i>Where We Play and Kids</i>
Dave DeBolt	<i>Where We Play and Kids</i>
Wendell Robison	<i>How We Travel</i>
Nancy Drummond	<i>Look and Feel</i>
Robin DeBolt	<i>Look and Feel</i>

Appendix C: Project Facilitators

NAME	AFFILIATION
Brian Kuehl	<i>The Clark Group, LLC</i>
Lori VanBuggenum	<i>The Clark Group, LLC</i>
Melissa Butcher	<i>PB Consulting</i>
Ed Armstrong	<i>Armstrong Design Studios</i>
Jenny Craft	<i>Center for a Vital Community</i>

