



CANYONVILLE COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT REPORT

On-Site Visit: March 16-17, 2009

Oregon Main Street Program

Oregon Economic & Community Development Department



OREGON
ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT



***Community Assessment Report
For
Canyonville, Oregon***

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

Consultants Mary Bosch and Vicki Dugger met with the core Main Street



volunteers in the afternoon of March 16th to identify key issues and opportunities. The meeting was followed by a community driving tour with the balance of the day spent conducting a visual inventory and an assessment of downtown. Tuesday, March 17th included a walk through downtown and the Main Street corridor with business visits and a meeting with the City Administrator.

Consultants prepared a customized Main Street/community assessment presentation for the Town Hall meeting that evening in City Council chambers. Thirty-six (36) people attended the presentation that included:

- An overview of the Main Street Approach and each of the four points of design, promotion, economic restructuring, and organization;
- An assessment of downtown Canyonville's current strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and opportunities;
- A downtown visioning exercise;
- Identification of priority issues and opportunities; and
- A check-in with the group on who is ready to be involved with taking action to improve downtown (with the majority raising their hands.)

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

A general community assessment of what's going well and/or assets and what challenges face Canyonville is summarized below.

Assets of Canyonville:

- Adjacent to I-5



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- Downtown is within walking distance to the Seven Feathers Casino and many community amenities
- Downtown businesses serve local needs and appeal to visitors as well
- Canyonville's commercial base is relatively concentrated in a downtown and on Main Street from 5th Street to the Casino
- The Canyonville community is 'ready' for change as indicated by the excellent turnout for the town hall meeting



- Interstate 5 bisected the community effectively isolating and separating key community anchors like the Pioneer & Indian Museum and senior apartments
- Limited retail synergy on Main Street
- Need to improve preservation efforts, enhancing the historic buildings that remain
- Need business infill
- Need to strengthen and retain existing businesses
- Need more welcoming public spaces/ includes sidewalk amenities



Challenges Facing Canyonville

- New commercial growth on the west side of highway could threaten downtown's success over time



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ASSESSMENT: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES & OPPORTUNITIES

The following table identifies strengths, weaknesses and opportunities facing Canyonville, organized according to the four point Main Street approach (design, economic restructuring, promotion and organization).

Canyonville Downtown Competitive Assessment	
Design	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The downtown area is in a canyon with scenic hills as a backdrop. ➤ Downtown Pioneer Park has local character and is well-maintained and loved by all ➤ Downtown core is intact and a very walkable area ➤ Several mixed-use buildings exist downtown where shop owners live above their stores ➤ Historic building placards add authenticity and interest and potential for walking tours 	
Weaknesses	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Deferred maintenance on some downtown properties ➤ Street system is awkward with downtown 'dead ending' over the small bridge ➤ Many downtown businesses are not capitalizing on store windows, signage, etc to become more inviting ➤ A hodge podge of architectural styles in the downtown, including some western type store fronts that have seen better days ➤ Dark & mirrored glass windows & closed blinds make storefronts seem 'unfriendly' ➤ Several building gaps and limited 'browsability' in downtown with vacant lots, auto-oriented businesses & 'dead' storefronts ➤ Absence of design guidelines or standards to establish building and façade expectations 	



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Design (continued)

Opportunities

- Sidewalk connecting downtown to the casino, with enhancement including art, benches, planters, etc.
- Work to connect downtown to nearby attractions and facilities with well marked bike and pedestrian trails
- Design guidelines and ultimately, standards w
- Consider a broad definition of downtown's boundaries since the whole community's commercial area is relatively small and key anchors like City Hall are just outside the traditional downtown
- Design guidelines or standards to raise the bar for quality development



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Economic Restructuring

Strengths

- Casino is an economic engine for the town and beyond with 925 full-time employees and 1.1 million visitors a year; new resort-type RV Park; hotel reports 55,000 overnights a year
- Casino hotel rooms expanding from 146 to 298
- New investment is occurring with several businesses updating and remodeling including the vet clinic, Mexican restaurant and hair salon
- Downtown is supported by diverse markets from residents and highway travelers to casino-goers
- Multiple customer anchors downtown—Canyonville Christian Academy, elementary school, Umpqua Bank (home-base)
- New businesses are opening: Lily's Pad Children's Boutique and SOVA Cooperative Art Gallery
- Multiple active, energetic business anchors including hardware store and restaurants
- All daily shopping and service needs can be met in Canyonville
- Young people outnumber old people! (23% of population is 19 and younger and 20% is 65 and older)
- Local population and visitor growth is occurring
- Several specialty shops downtown appeal especially to visitors including Umpqua Indian Foods, Bea Mecca, two antique stores, quilt shop/jewelry store

Weaknesses

- Store hours are highly irregular, making it hard to know when downtown is 'open for business'
- Business mix is not optimal and lacks critical mass
- Small population base (1,356 in 2008) and low median income (\$35,653 in 2008)

Opportunities

- Casino expansion – hotel, RV park and adding salon, day spa, 250 seat buffet restaurant; soon able to host large conferences and increase its attractiveness as a destination
- Casino is *eager to partner* with the community on marketing
- Improve store hours to better serve customer needs



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Economic Restructuring (continued)

Opportunities (continued)

- Improve business mix by filling many niches –restaurants, specialty apparel, CDs/DVDs, gifts, home furnishings, art/hobby supplies
- Business events are being organized
- Underutilized retail commercial space is an opportunity
- Identify new business opportunities among the entrepreneurial semiretired residents in the area
- Increase business to business sales and service among existing businesses



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Promotion

Strengths

- Several strong community/downtown events to build upon including Pioneer Days, Pumpkin/Music Fest, Christmas tree lighting and Sweetheart Stroll
- Marketing Committee is actively working on activities for more business exposure
- Free Shopper Publication to promote visitors
- Seven Feathers Shuttle Bus transports casino and RV visitors throughout town for free
- Over a dozen quality historic properties in downtown, many with identifying markers can be packaged for special event and seasonal walking tours
- Chamber newsletter and South Douglas County newsletters are good vehicles to get the word out about Main Street and downtown
- Cross-marketing activities are underway with nearby communities and the Land of Umpqua/Roseburg Visitors & Convention Bureau

Weaknesses

- Not a strong mindset among the business community understanding that 1.1 million casino visitors are customers
- Signage to the Pioneer & Indian Museum is nonexistent or very hard to locate
- Inconsistent and sometimes un-customer friendly hours

Opportunities

- Upgrade the downtown bulletin board to a nice information kiosk...
- Significant opportunity exists to draw more casino visitors to downtown
- Creation of a rack card/map of 'Top 10 Things to Do' while visiting Canyonville is on Marketing Committee To Do list
- Find ways to connect downtown to Casino and RV Park in every possible way. Cross-marketing examples include Coupon Books at the RV Park, put an advertising blurb on the casino hotel TV station, prepare rack cards on Canyonville businesses of interest to visitors
- Promote available variety of goods and services—brochures, rack cards are needed



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Promotion (continued)

Opportunities (continued)

- Potential to have a local site designated as part of the National Geographic Central Cascade Geotourism Project
- Interstate 5 rest stop is coming soon and will enhance exposure to Canyonville



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Organization

Strengths

- High level of interest in improving downtown
- Canyonville Main Street Association is forming
- A lot of civic engagement with several groups doing *many* good things
- Understanding that downtown needs attention and that Main Street is a good tool
- City support of moving forward with Main Street
- Wide variety of potential partners for downtown revitalization with wide array of skills and/or resources

Weaknesses

- Need for more coordination, communication and collaboration among the existing volunteer groups; some report 'getting people to communicate is hard'
- A sense that people are 'over meeting' and may burn out. Marketing and Main Street meet 2X/month each
- A lot of good energy going in too many directions
- Small group that must expand to be successful
- Some anxiety about change and losing 'small town' appeal

Opportunities

- Main Street is a chance to have the whole community participate in improving the 'heart' of Canyonville, including schools, civic groups, Chamber, churches, Historical Association, Lions, artists, students, seniors, businesses and property owners
- Pursue formation of a separate nonprofit organization (501c3) that will focus on broad-based leadership, project and fund development focused on downtown success
- Take Care of Oregon (cleanup) Days provides an opportunity to put volunteers to work in downtown
- Partner directly with Casino/Tribe and encourage their active participation in Main Street
- Look for new ways to engage volunteers that don't involve 'meetings'
- Strong potential for Main Street to provide the guiding framework for a downtown plan and positive change



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FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

At the conclusion of the presentation at the March 17th public meeting, community members brainstormed their vision for Downtown Canyonville over the next 3-5 years.

The following is a list of priorities named in the order they were received:

1. Bike and walking path from downtown to the casino (approximately one-mile long)



6. Beautification, flowers and landscaping

2. Signage off the freeway directing travelers to town
3. Basic clean-up and fix-up
4. Diversification of the business base
5. Fill empty buildings and provide infill development where there are gaps downtown

7. Persuade and encourage nonparticipating property owners and those who are 'burnt-out' to improve their properties; use 'carrots' not sticks, if possible
8. Put a new roof on the foot bridge at the park
9. Create a brand identity for Canyonville that promotes its hometown appeal and personality. 'Warmest of Welcomes' was suggested
10. Attract more businesses
11. Promote and advertise to customers outside of Canyonville
12. Increase community pride
13. Educate people who live and work here regarding what goods and services are available. Provide hospitality training
14. Open the freeway exit into downtown

The group was then asked to identify and vote on what one project they want to see accomplished or 'major progress' achieved during the next year. People voted with a show of hands and the top five



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vote getters follow with the number of votes appearing in parenthesis:

1. Bike/walking path (17 votes)
2. Encourage property owners to fix up (5)
3. Signage for travelers (4)
4. Fill empty buildings (3)
5. Beautify (3)

NEXT STEPS FOR CANYONVILLE MAIN STREET

There is a strong desire to see downtown revitalized and a number of motivated, skilled volunteers have come to the table making Canyonville a strong candidate to succeed as a Main Street community. With 36 community members participating in the March 17 Town Hall Meeting, the community appears ready to get started.

Much of the leadership up to this point has been driven by a very small group of four committed business owners/citizens. A broader-based community

effort is needed to capitalize on the strong groundwork that has already been accomplished.

A critical next step is to double the size of the group and organize as the Canyonville Main Street Steering Committee. Be sure to include one or more people from the City (a crucial partner) and others that have credibility and a good network within the community and who are ready to make a commitment. Invite the Tribe to identify someone who will participate. They are a key community and downtown partner. Think

beyond business owners so that it is immediately clear that Main Street is not a business association—it is a *community*

organization. Elect a chairperson, vice-chair and secretary to keep minutes.





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Consider forming two committees along the Promotion and Design elements of the Main Street Program. Most of the interests expressed during the town hall meeting fall into these two categories. Several people signed up at the Town Hall meeting to work on a project and they should be directly recruited for specific tasks. At every meeting, be sure to have a volunteer sign-up sheet and project list so that people can be directly engaged. A few basic 'good meeting' guidelines to follow to retain and expand the volunteer base include:

1. Be clear on who the meeting facilitator to focus discussion.
2. Always have a written agenda with times and topics.
3. Have nametags for people to get to know each other. Always conduct introductions.
4. Set the room up in a circle so people can have a face-to-face dialogue.
5. Start and end meetings on time.

6. Identify clear and specific next step tasks for a project.
7. Encourage volunteers to bring a friend or neighbor to the next meeting.

Be sure that Steering Committee members are participating in one committee and helping spearhead a key project.

One of the first issues to address should be developing project work plans to keep the volunteer group moving forward, help them stay focused and on task. An effective workplan should include the key issue, goals, activities and schedule of who is doing what. Below are next steps for getting organized on the top two community priorities (pathway and property clean-up) and a third, easy to implement marketing tool—rack card/brochure—identified as important by many business owners.



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1. DOWNTOWN – CASINO BIKE AND PEDESTRIAN PATH

Goal: Create a unique and welcoming bike/pedestrian path from the casino to downtown.

Outcomes: Safe, accessible alternative to driving; increased visitor/shopper traffic downtown; improved circulation in town; community pride.

Actions:

1. Organize a collaborative public-private project action team including Mayor Deaton, Douglas County, selected Main Street Steering Committee or Design Committee members, Cow Creek/Umpqua Tribe and other key players.
2. Gather and review prior plans for this project to determine what exists, what is relevant and what planning needs to be done.
3. Clarify who is responsible for what. What is the County's role? City's? Main Street's? Tribe? Community's? EX: Main Street might help organize downtown business input and explore/define ways that public art can be incorporated into the project.

4. Create a project plan outlining all the planning, engineering, design, funding and implementation steps that need to occur, together with a practical timeline for accomplishing. Keep this in front of the project team and share with community leaders to keep them apprised of action. Revise as needed.
5. Research other communities that have used innovative approaches to creating pathways with unique local character/flavor. Examples include: Trolley Trail Plan, Gladstone-Milwaukie, Mosier Bike/Pedestrian Path, Public Art Plan for Downtown Klamath Falls (w/ Art Paths).
6. Explore funding sources to incorporate creative dimensions, especially community-based ones, to the path. EX: Oregon Arts Build Communities Grants, Collins Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation.



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2. CANYONVILLE CLEAN UP PROJECT

Goal: Clean-up Downtown Properties. In the short term, participate in the May 16 community-wide clean-up, spearheading the work downtown, as part of the Oregon 150 Clean up.

Outcome: Create visible and immediate results of volunteer effort in downtown Canyonville.

Potential Actions:

1. Identify 5-8 potential downtown clean-up projects from landscaping to building or site-specific improvements.
2. Contact property owners to determine who is willing to participate in the clean-up. Obtain permission in writing (Contact Myrtle Creek for sample of the form they use).



3. Select key sites and projects based upon feedback.
4. Give the downtown effort its own name and promote it as an initiative of Canyonville Main Street: *Participate in the 1st Downtown Canyonville—Less Than Extreme Makeover Event!*
5. Identify clean-up event project team captain from the list of volunteers who signed up at the March 17 meeting. EX: 1 person is in charge of power washing; 1 person is in charge of flower baskets; 1 person is in charge of removing old signs, etc. Each captain will help recruit worker bees.
6. Take before and after photos and submit to newspaper and keep for Downtown Scrapbook of success stories.
7. Organize food and refreshments for downtown volunteers.
8. Create stickers or some other visible sign that downtown volunteers can wear that day to show their participation in the effort.



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9. Get the name and contact info for every volunteer who participates and write a thank you note. Give them 3 options for participating in another downtown improvement project.
10. Celebrate a day of accomplishment and identify the next downtown property improvements to work on.
11. Contact Oregon Main Street and the consultant team for examples of innovative ways that communities have worked with challenging properties and property owners.

3. RACK CARD/ BROCHURE PROJECT

Goal: Create a simple brochure to promote Canyonville businesses of interest to area visitors.

Outcomes: Increase awareness of downtown Canyonville business offerings, increase foot traffic to stores and customer sales.



Actions:

1. Organize a Main Street Promotion Committee of at least four volunteers (EX: two established volunteers and two new ones), making this marketing piece their first project. Be sure to include Casino marketing staff who is eager to help with the project.
2. Layout the steps and timeline of the project plan from information-gathering and design to printing and distribution. Determine who will lead what tasks.
3. Gather half dozen examples of simple rack cards developed for towns that have a large visitor market—EX: Ashland, Newport, Silverton.
4. Determine key features and design elements and lay out a rack card mock up.
5. Develop project budget and determine how it will be paid for.
6. Implement in time to gain exposure during 2009 visitor season.



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APPENDIX: MAIN STREET BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Oregon Main Street Program was reactivated to help rebuild and revitalize Oregon communities. It provides assistance, training, technical services, and resources to communities interested in preserving, revitalizing, and establishing their downtown commercial districts.

The goal of Oregon Main Street is to help build high quality, livable, and sustainable communities that will help attract more business and investment. Oregon Main Street is coordinated with the National Main Street Center (a division of the National Trust for Historic Preservation) and partners from Oregon state agencies and organizations.

The Main Street Approach™ is a proven comprehensive approach to downtown commercial district revitalization. This approach has been implemented in over 1,800 communities in 45 states across the nation. By fully integrating the program's

four points (organization, promotion, design and economic restructuring) into a downtown management strategy, a local program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economic base.

The Oregon Main Street Program provides assistance to communities in Oregon whether they are just beginning to explore options for their downtown or seeking national recognition as a Certified Main Street Community. The services of the Oregon Main Street Programs are tailored to meet both the specific and typical needs of communities at each particular stage of downtown revitalization.

To find out more about the Oregon Main Street Program, contact Gary Van Huffel, Oregon Main Street Coordinator at 503-986-0134 or gary.vanhuffel@state.or.us.