

ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

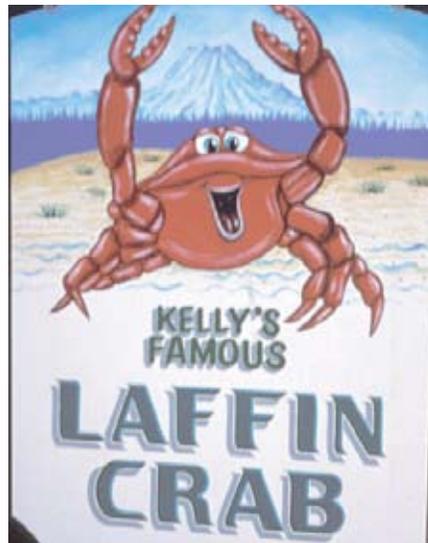
Suggestion:

Merchant signs should always promote the “lure” first - then the name of the business. The lure is what you have to offer that will pull people into the store. If you were looking for a place to stay and passed by the Stallion Motel (bottom left) and saw the sign for “touch tone phones” would it convince you to stay there? What does that say about the motel? Always promote your primary lure or best asset.

The Laffin Crab (below) was a great little store, but it went out of business. It was too hard to know what the store sold - was it a restaurant? A comedy club? A beach souvenir shop? It sold kites and windsocks.

The market (top right), originally didn't have the add-on signs promoting the primary lure. But after they added “Snacks, Sundries, Drinks” sales increased by nearly 35%. Besides attracting locals, visitors saw they had a reason to go into the market as well.

Always promote what it is you're selling first - then the name of the business. In the case of the Wood Merchant, the lure would be “Handmade Gifts & Furniture” not the name of the store (bottom, right). Avoid script lettering whenever possible.



Invest in Beautification (Nothing sells like beautiful places)

Suggestion:

Beautification is an investment with a tremendous return - it attracts customers, makes them want to linger, and builds customer loyalty.

A research study had four towns plant street trees every 30 feet along one block (bottom, left), and then surveyed sales in that block for a year, comparing them to sales in the rest of the town. Sales in the block with street trees increased 18% - three to four times that of the rest of the town.

LaRua in Whistler, BC, is a great example of their beautification efforts. Although founded as a ski resort, Whistler now hosts more visitors in the summer than the winter - and their beautification efforts are a big reason. People love to “hang out” in beautiful places.



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Suggestion:

Village Greenery & Gifts - the outdoor decorations are very nice. Consider adding even more. Other merchants - take note.

The Sweet Shop could easily be decorated to look like an “old time” sweet shop to fit the ambiance of the town. Take people back 100 years - they’ll love it and keep coming back for more.

Very nice window display (bottom, right). Is this shop more than a Sears Catalog store? If so, add signs - let shoppers know what’s there. Create a teaser to pull people in.



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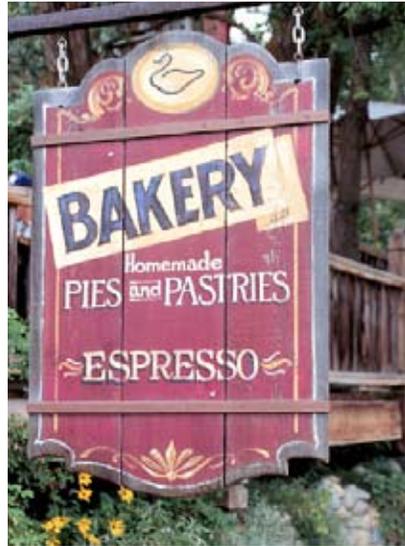
Suggestion:

Signage along the lines of this one (near right) would fit the ambiance of the town.

Suggestion:

Create “softscapes.” (below, left) Soften the transition from facades to concrete. Make it stunningly beautiful. People like to “hang out” in beautiful places.

Note the streetscape in the photo top far right, and compare it to the photo bottom right (before and after). See how the planters filled with flowering shrubs softens the transition between the buildings and the sidewalk. The create a more inviting, enjoyable ambiance.



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Suggestion:

Landscape planters and hanging baskets should be used throughout downtown. They should be placed every two meters apart to create a beautiful district. Leavenworth, Washington uses dozens of wine barrel planters (right) and with hanging baskets every meter or so, has created an outstanding destination.

People love to be in beautiful surroundings - make downtown beautiful, and people will want to stop and linger. Even during the shoulder and holiday seasons, beautification can make downtown a desirable destination, as in York, Pennsylvania (below).

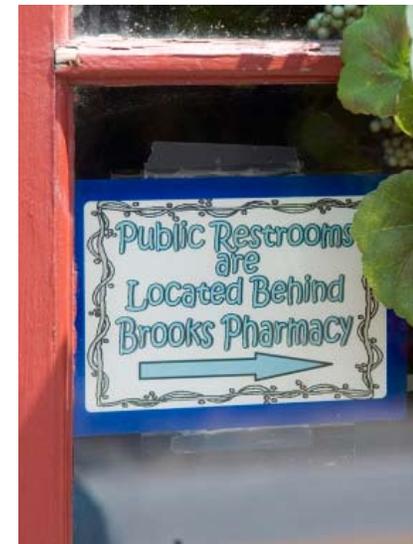


Wash rooms attract more than flies and other notes of convenience (The Rule of Visitor Amenities)

Suggestion:

The number one reason people stop is to use washroom facilities. Take advantage of that opportunity, and provide washrooms downtown, and promote them in your signs. Make sure they are located where people can spend time and money.

Make sure merchants don't use signs like the one shown below left. In Wickford, Rhode Island, G. Willakers Country Store added a small note on the entry door, directing visitors to wash room facilities (bottom center and right).



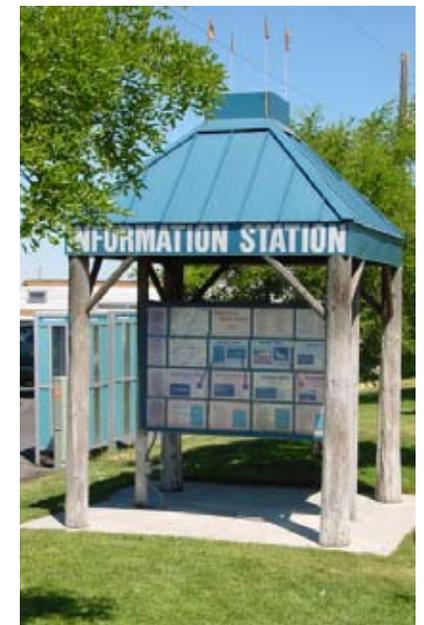
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Suggestion:

Visitor information should be working 24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year. Visitors don't just travel during business hours. Include brochure distribution, so visitors can easily take information with them.

Develop visitor information kiosks to be placed in several locations throughout town and work with other Southwest Alberta communities to cross-sell attractions and amenities. The more you have collectively, the further visitors will drive, and the longer they will stay.

Examples shown here: Teton Valley, Idaho (bottom, left) is developing 14 of these to be placed throughout the valley. Each one will promote the immediate area, and will cross-promote other attractions and activities in the valley. The Ashland, Oregon Chamber of Commerce developed the panel shown below, center. Volunteers in Moses Lake, Washington developed the "information station" (below and top right). While you could easily improve the graphics, they have the right idea in promoting "must see" attractions in the area. Make sure you provide brochure distribution so visitors can take information with them.



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Suggestion:

Visitor information can be found in a variety of kiosk shops, displays, and holders. Shown here: In Beatty, Nevada local organizations purchased a kit gazebo (bottom, left) and a local craftsperson built the map and brochure distribution kiosk inside the gazebo. In Stevenson, Washington, a simple kiosk was built and the chamber provided information to be placed in each of the eight panels (top, right photos). Oxnard, California added simple visitor information holders on the door and next to it (bottom, right).

Create kiosks that fit the ambiance of Fort Macleod.



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Suggestion:

The large plaza area at the Buffalo Jump (bottom, left) would be a great location for visitor information. Other good locations include public washrooms (bottom, right), local attractions, parking areas, lodging facilities, and right downtown.

Every attraction should cross sell to other attractions, diversions, and amenities. Work with your neighboring communities. Throughout SW Alberta there should be perhaps 30 to 40 kiosks, each cross-selling to other areas in the region while promoting activities and amenities around the kiosks.

Kiosks and information centers should be of a consistent design and look throughout the region so they are easily identifiable. They can range from just a few dollars, to several thousand. Jackson, Wyoming uses a wall-mounted rack (top, right) outside its visitor information center.



Parking is Not Just For Lovers (The Parking Limits Rule)

Suggestion:

Towns typically post parking limits to prevent workers from taking up all the parking spaces. Unfortunately, parking limits also send visitors away before they're done spending money.

Fifteen-minute and one hour limits send shoppers away far too soon. They don't even allow time for a leisurely lunch.

On average, visitors will spend up to four hours in a destination downtown shopping and dining. For now, at least provide two hour limits, and as downtown becomes more of a destination, increase the time limits to four hours.

Try to be consistent with your parking limits.

THANKS FOR VISITING DOWNTOWN SPOKANE

While you were enjoying incredible world-class entertainment (the region's) or professional services, your parking meter was out of order. Don't worry! This courtesy parking ticket allows you to enjoy your visit to Downtown Spokane. 1hr allowing you to enjoy your visit to Downtown Spokane.

Date: 8/19/02 Time: 1:35 pm

Lic. Plaza: 044JBX Lic. State/Yr: WA

Veh. Color: 40435

After this grace period, we ask that you move your vehicle out of this block or we will be forced to issue a parking ticket. We suggest utilizing off-street parking lots and your long-term parking needs.

This courtesy has been made possible to you through the efforts of the Downtown Spokane Business Improvement District and the City of Spokane. Thank you for your continued support of Downtown Spokane.

White - City Canary - BID Tag - Customer

Making ce out of park

Did you know that there are more than 6,000 off-street parking spaces Downtown Spokane?

If you work Downtown, or like to shop here often, there are alternatives to parking at the short-term meters that can save you time and money.

Downtown easyPARK

If you enjoy leisure time Downtown shopping, dining out, or doing business, the EasyPark coupons from participating businesses are good for \$1 off of parking lots, garages and transit. Ask your favorite retailer or business for EasyPark validation.

CITYTICKET
a better way to commute

CITYTICKET provides an cheap alternative for Downtown employees by providing Arena parking and transportation to and from Downtown for only \$19 a month.

For information on EasyPark call 456-0580.
For CityTicket call 328-RIDE.



Spokane, Washington issues a warning ticket to visitors allowing them an extra hour to enjoy their time in downtown Spokane (left two pictures).



Other Notes on First Impressions

Suggestion:

Fort Macleod has a stunning downtown in terms of overall appeal and architecture. What a terrific opportunity.

Take a trip to visit Williamsburg, VA and Fredricksburg, TX. Fort Macleod has the potential for developing a destination downtown, similar to those historic communities.

Is this gallery (below, left) still in business? If so, let visitors know when it is open. Never used “closed” signs. Instead tell customers when you will be open: days of the week, hours of the day, seasonal hours.



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Suggestion:

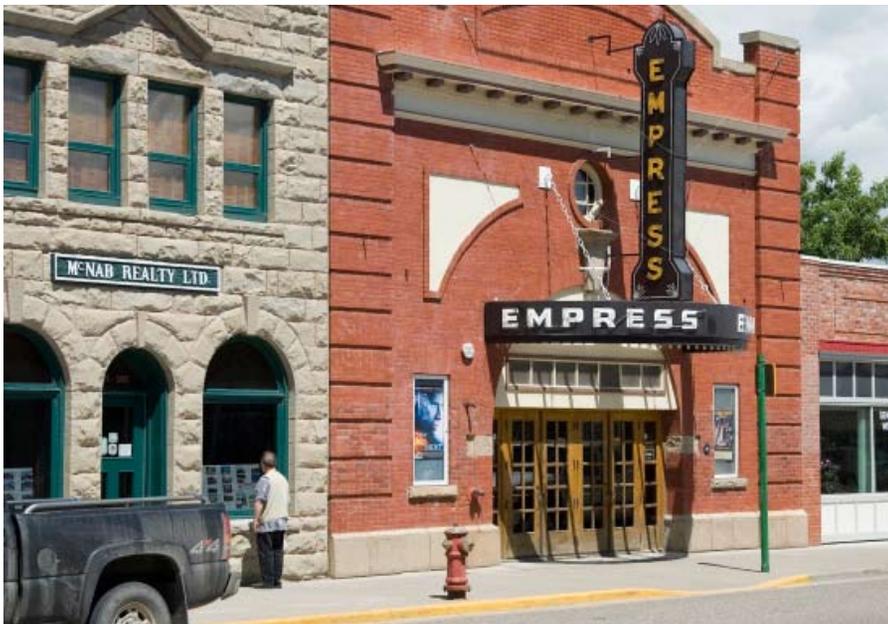
Is the Queen's Hotel still operational? This building has tremendous appeal. Perhaps it could be redeveloped as residential condos with first floor dining or retail? If it is operational, add hanging baskets, paint the facade, add planters and add decorative and effective signage. If it is a work in progress, then provide information about when it will be open and what kind of business it will be.

Suggestion:

The Empress is a wonderful facility. Fort Macleod's brand could be built around the Empress. "The Musical Theater Capitol of the Southern Alberta Rockies."



Never used "Closed" signs (right). Let customers know WHEN you will be open.

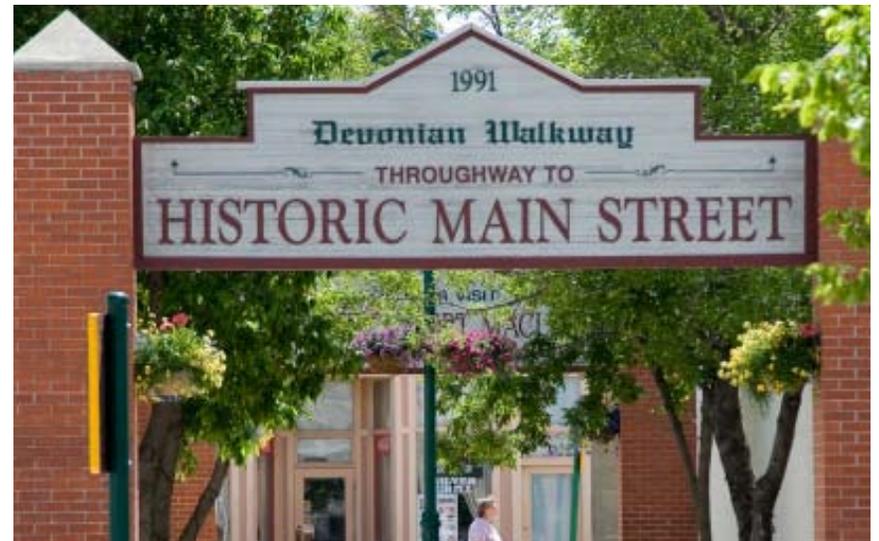


ASSESSMENT AND SUGGESTIONS

Suggestion:

The “gateway” to the fort is exceptional. Great idea creating a direct route from downtown to the attraction.

The gateway could be made into a gathering area. Lease the space to a vendor and have them add tables, chairs, umbrellas, and sell ice cream or lattes. The more gathering places you have, the longer people will linger in the shopping district, increasing local spending.



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Suggestion:

The Fort is beautiful and very well maintained. It makes a great impression.

Suggestion: The bulletin board should always be selling upcoming events. If not events at the Fort, events downtown or at the Empress (bottom, right).



Suggestion:

The little plaza area by the parking lot (top right) could be a great spot for vendors during the peak months, featuring hand-crafted items, artists in action, farmers market, etc.

Suggestion:

The sign (bottom left) is very nice. Consider posting hours and/or events beneath it. Put it to use.

Museums should always tell stories. They are fascinating and keep visitors captivated for longer periods (top, left). Use stories that evoke emotion.



Great Stories Make the Campfire Memorable (The rule of telling stories)

The average museum visit lasts between 20 and 40 minutes. If you can captivate the visitor for two hours, spending will increase. Displays of artifacts, with facts and figures, are usually not very interesting to museum-goers and create a “been there, done that” attraction. However, if you can tell stories about those artifacts, either orally or written, those artifacts will come alive, becoming real and memorable. Stories keep visitors interested longer, which translates to more spending in town.

Suggestion:

Before I contribute for the Musical Ride, tell me what it is, when it is. Post some photos or an interpretive display (top, right). Always inform the customer and you will see donations, visits, and extended stays increase.

Suggestion:

Where is the largest piggy bank? Is this it? (bottom, right) If so, where do we put the money?



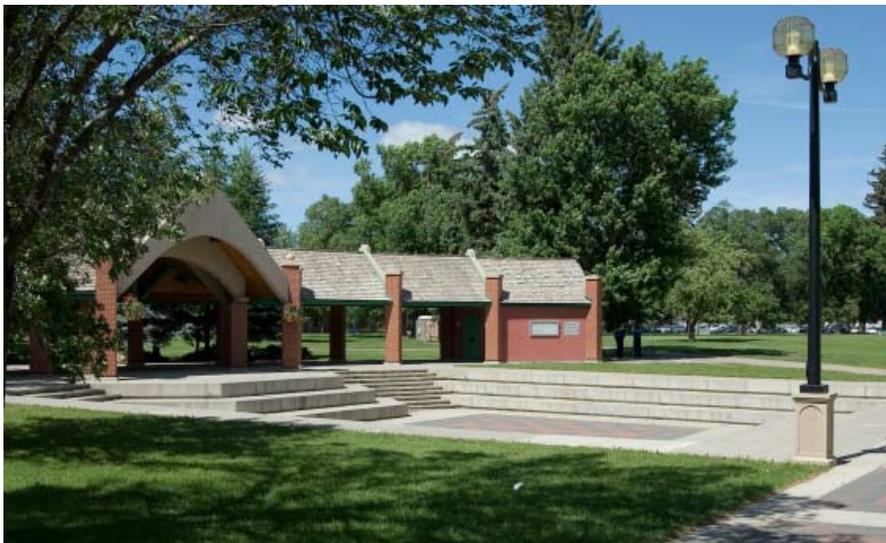
A Wild Idea (Build an Amphitheater!)

Suggestion:

Inside the Fort walls would be a perfect location to develop a state-of-the-art amphitheater. It is made to order. Fort Macleod could become the Musical Theater Capitol of the Alberta Rockies.

Imagine an amphitheater here. Make this space work for you. Turn it into an outstanding plaza for reenactments, shows, theater in the round. Even a performing arts venue like that in Lethbridge (bottom, left) would be a start.

While park areas are nice, plaza areas designed for activities will be a far better draw. People are drawn to experiences, not just nice places.



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Suggestion:

Create gathering spaces to hold events, shows, and activities.

This fountain area in Olympia, WA, (bottom right) attracts thousands of visitors during sunny weather. The fountain can be shut off for other events on this 70 foot circle.

The Great Northern amphitheater in Helena, MT, (bottom left) bustles with activity in warm weather, when visitors love to get ice cream at the adjacent ice cream shop and merry-go-round.

Providing places to hold events, or for people to gather, helps create a hub of activity. Events, activities, shows draw people to the area. When there is a lot going on, people want to be there and that, ultimately, results in increased spending.



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Note:

The amphitheater in the photos to the right is on the Capitol Campus in Carson City, NV. The amphitheater is used to hold events, and the grounds are frequently used as a respite for downtown shoppers or workers during lunch breaks.

The simple stage below is used for all kinds of performances, with spectators sitting on the lawn. Fort Macleod could be a hub for performance-based activities, making it a major destination that would pull visitors from a hundred kilometers, if not further.

The Oregon Shakespeare Festival, in Ashland, Oregon operates six days a week, nine months of the year and attracts nearly 500,000 visitors - who spend an average of four nights in the town. Ashland is nowhere near large population areas even remotely close to the size of Calgary. Fort Macleod has a terrific opportunity.



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Suggestion:

Kalamazoo, MI, (bottom, left) has built several outdoor amphitheaters downtown. Besides being used for events, people love to gather in attractive surroundings, where there are chairs, tables, lighting, trees, and flowers.

The Fort could become a major attraction. It is ideally suited as a performing arts plaza. The ambiance of the Fort adds such a unique atmosphere - adding performances and events would make it even more of a draw.

The creation of gathering places and entertainment will make you the place to stay. It will attract more shops, more dining, and quality lodging facilities.

It will also attract conferences, reunions, retreats, and trade shows.



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Suggestion:

The murals (top right) are very nice, but consider using trompe l'oeil instead (bottom photos).

Trompe l'oeil (French for "fool the eye") can add amazing variety and interest to buildings. See the work being done on the building below left - and the finished building (below, right). This building is actually a rectangular box - all the shadows and reliefs are hand painted.

