



Summary and Findings

19 September 2018



Tonight's purpose

- Provide a read-back of what we learned last week from 70+ of you
- Reflect and determine if what we heard was right
- Focus in depth and breadth of one or two problems
- Explore small wins and bigger systems of change
- Think ahead – what and who's next?



The big themes

- Civic pride and engagement – the sense that Huron is a good place
 - You have to prove it to yourselves
- Downtown needs help or a reimagine
 - It won't fix itself and may be beyond that
- Housing is a draw and an impediment
 - There's a market for poor housing and it's being fueled by supply
- Huron is diverse and cosmopolitan, but fights itself
 - New people and cultures have to wait a generation and that shouldn't be necessary



Civic pride and engagement

- What's true about Huron and what people believe to be true are at odds
- Huron can and should invest in projecting out an image it believes
- First, it has to believe it
 - High quality of life, good place to live, excellent parks, facilities, care and services
- Huron needs a collective, visible, sustainable rallying point
- This is a measure of success as is outside belief of the same
 - More visitors, more conferences, better statewide perception



Diversity and inclusion

- New populations, cultures, traditions and norms challenge the community
- Spaces, places, and cultural (positive) collisions create understanding
- Sustainable, robust programs or spaces are needed to make this happen
- The community needs to make a concerted effort to support entrepreneurship and community welcome for diverse people and cultures



The market for dilapidated housing

- The percentage of dilapidated homes in Huron has grown substantially
- These homes are costly to remove and difficult to enforce change
- There's a market for this housing, making change even more difficult
- Whole blocks of homes can or could be removed at great taxpayer cost and with no obvious near-term replacement plan



Downtown & economic development

- Like dilapidated housing, repair and replacement costs are too great
- New businesses can't afford to locate
- Existing businesses can't afford to rehabilitate
- Downtown is a singular reminder of business and development failure
- Successful small towns have made successful downtowns happen



Digging deeper into systems

- Housing
- Downtown



Housing

- Consider a concerted effort with the city, state, and developers to accelerate development of low-cost, high-quality affordable housing
- Strip the market of demand for dilapidated housing by providing better housing at equal prices and in high volume



Housing

- Explore public-private partnerships to do this and don't concentrate them in only one area of the community
- Explore "compromised housing" tax rates to drive out poor housing providers
- Consider low- or no-tax and TIF approaches to developing affordable housing consistent with the renters' culture and family structure
- Look at this as part of a five-year comprehensive dilapidated housing replacement effort
- Measure new, affordable housing (homes and apartments) and shutdown of identified poor/dilapidated/unfit housing (e.g. replacement rates)



What addressing housing does

- Lifts the market and gets bad housing providers out of business or creates equilibrium-disrupting pressure
- Gives renters and even owners in this segment a better alternative
- Provides the community – with the right zoning – an opportunity to immediately improve neighborhood housing quality
- Creates a market and expectation that low-cost housing can be high-quality
- Supports cultural diversity by acknowledging the needs of new families and establishing housing choices that are high-quality and culturally accepting



Downtown

- Start locally with a vision for replacement of the least attractive segments of downtown, between Market Road and 3rd and Dakota
- Consider this corridor as a catalyst for downtown development, with that area being an epicenter for community engagement and activity
- Culture center, park, live music area, farmer's or maker's markets, mixed-use or new co-working spaces, new flats or townhomes
- Use as a first bet in a comprehensive downtown rehabilitation plan to be completed by 2021



Downtown: think systemically

- Downtown is Point B on a line from Point A in Southtown
- Move south from the epicenter and use the DOT transformation of Dakota Avenue as your connector: bike path pass-through, extensions throughout the community (river and parks to the east, fairgrounds to the west, Southtown to the south)
- Downtown then becomes the rehabilitated focal point between these points of interest



Downtown: existing buildings

- Between 3rd and 4th and Dakota, in particular, catalogue costs of improvement and storefront viability
- Invest in existing business/building owners by cutting taxes or providing improvement grants to shore up good-to-better infrastructure
- Set a goal of including X% of eligible downtown buildings in Historic Registry (and thereby available for improvement grants via the Deadwood Fund) by 2021



Downtown: incentives for business

- Provide no-cost or low-cost storefronts and start-up cash for viable businesses operating in homes, basements, or in less visible areas in town
 - *Think like a venture capitalist*
- Move away from “big bet” business recruitment to many small seed loans and investments that would be below bank radar and above “friends and family” or credit card cash (e.g. \$25-\$50k).



Downtown: incentives for business

- Establish a business mentoring and incubator program: legal, financial, marketing, experiential, and psychosocial assistance to bring new businesses along
- Condition ongoing engagement in the program with being a downtown storefront/business owner for five years following funding, storefront, remodel, and incubator/mentoring intensive investment from the community.



Downtown: track progress

- Measure success through number of new businesses started and/or moved to downtown within three years after support
- Assess outcomes by looking at sales tax base increases within 3-5 years after initiation of the program
- Work with local merchants to tag zip codes of patrons to determine if you're getting more external lift within 3-5 years after implementation



Build an ecosystem

- Just making a “destination downtown” isn’t enough: it’s about a system that connects the community together
 - Through new and desirable destination businesses
 - Through people living and working downtown
 - Through a cultural and community hub that’s identified as such
 - Through common spaces that are catalysts for community
 - Through foot traffic that isn’t specifically commerce-based
 - With recognition that this is a marathon and not a sprint...
 - *But there’s room for a sprint now*



Measure success

- Community pride
- Community growth and median income
- Sales tax revenue
- New housing and elimination of market for dilapidated housing
- External perception of Huron as a community
- External award application (see Mitchell) and acknowledgement
- External funding for program concepts/ideas
- Five years from now: visits from the next Huron wondering how you did it



Suggested next steps

- Put together two taskforces: Downtown and Housing
- Challenge the taskforces to provide large scale visions and best first investment bets to kick off a successful path by 31 December
- Ensure that these taskforces have a holistic focus, but don't get trapped (e.g. SDDOT is coming in five years, let's acknowledge it, but don't let it stop progress on Thing A)
- Start somewhere and be willing to make a mistake or two
- Announce and pursue community funding/support and partnerships in Q1 of 2019
- Have one project completely done in each taskforce by the end of 2020 with the next one shovel-ready



Don't forget the soft stuff

- Keep stakeholders engaged all along the way
- Remember the entrepreneurial ecosystem: think sustainable businesses and populations that can help Huron grow
- Build programs and don't just make buildings
 - Buildings require repair and replacement
 - Programs produce people who need to be nurtured



I'm here to be helpful

Let me know how I can.

This is an exciting
time for Huron



Thank You For Participating in Huron Rising