

SEYMOUR

Downtown Action Strategy



Seymour Economic Development Commission

July 2012

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The Issue

Seymour is interested in enhancing and strengthening its downtown area.

Downtown is the governmental, institutional, civic, and social focal point in Seymour. Yet, its role in the daily lives of residents has waxed and waned in recent times. The mobile lifestyles of modern society mean that people are willing to travel to other places for even the smallest items or for a broader selection of goods or lower prices.

As a result, downtown has adapted over the years in response to changing market conditions. Specialty retail stores have replaced stores that once offered men's or women's clothing or shoes. Antiques are now being sold near where people used to buy food and groceries. In essence, the very nature of downtown has changed in response to changing consumer spending patterns.

While Seymour residents still like their downtown, they want more. Older residents remember downtown as an active place and they miss the ability to purchase goods locally. Younger and newer residents wish there were more to do locally or there were businesses providing the goods and services they want. A lot of people wish there was more to bring them downtown on a regular basis.

This report presents action strategies to help enhance and strengthen downtown Seymour. It recommends specific actions which can help achieve the overall goal. This effort builds on the "Municipal Economic Development Plan" (MEDP) prepared for the Economic Development Commission in 2007.

Welcome Sign



Main Street



Executive Summary

Seymour is interested in enhancing and strengthening its downtown area. The following strategies are considered the key ways that this can be accomplished.

Continue Current Efforts

Businesses, property owners, tenants, residents, and the Town are already doing many things well in terms of enhancing and strengthening the downtown area.

Businesses work together and work with the Town and others for “First Saturday” events where special events are scheduled in the downtown area and merchants offer reduced pricing on those dates. The Culture and Arts Commission schedules street fairs and activities during most seasons of the year. Merchants maintain a website which helps people learn more about Seymour and local businesses. The Town supports “The Strand” theater which is used as a venue for movies and theater productions.

These events and activities should be continued.

Recognize and Strengthen Downtown’s Niche

There can be many roles for a downtown area and it is important to recognize which roles Seymour’s downtown can be competitive in and which roles might be less productive to pursue. Rather than think about the things downtown *is not*, it will be more productive to focus in on the things that downtown *can and should be*.

While downtown once provided a full spectrum of retail goods and services, several roles have been diminished with competition from other areas. At the same time, Seymour has carved out its own niche and the following categories offer opportunities to expand and strengthen what we already have:

- Specialty goods (antiques, jewelry, home furnishings, hardware, etc.),
- Arts / entertainment (movies, theater, music, etc.),
- Services (nail salons, travel agencies, dentists, etc.),
- Transportation (transit, rail, etc.), and
- Institutions (Town Hall, post office, etc.)

The following categories are opportunity areas where Seymour can attract uses and activities to enhance and complement the downtown:

- Convenience goods (ice cream, candy, etc.),
- Hospitality (especially restaurants to enhance the overall experience), and
- Recreation (fish ladder, riverwalk, kayak launch, etc.).

Due to the compact nature of downtown, it may not be fruitful for Seymour to focus heavily on:



- Comparison goods (clothing, shoes, appliances, etc.), or
- Major employment (major office or industrial employers).

The “Top Ten” List

The following recommendations are identified as the “top ten” things that Seymour can do to enhance and strengthen its downtown area. Additional information on these strategies is contained in this report.

“Top Ten” List of Recommended Actions	
1.	Appoint one person within Public Works as the downtown manager responsible for all overall maintenance.
2.	Establish a “downtown committee” (a joint public/private group) to coordinate downtown activities or encourage and support regular meetings of businesses / property owners (a business-only association).
3.	Enforce parking time limits for all <i>on-street spaces</i> to help ensure they “turn over” on a regular basis.
4.	Adopt a consistent “brand” message (such as “Best Little Downtown In Connecticut”) that highlights the diverse opportunities and the unique experience in downtown Seymour.
5.	Change certain use regulations (zoning) in the downtown area.
6.	Change certain dimensional standards (zoning) in the downtown area.
7.	Consider reducing parking requirements for the downtown area.
8.	Attract a sit-down restaurant possibly by subsidizing the rent and/or guaranteeing a rate of return to a business owner.
9.	Use the local billboards to market downtown Seymour and its “brand”.
10.	Extend trails and walkways to open up the riverfront and waterfalls in Seymour.

Throughout this action plan, the “top ten” recommendations are highlighted and annotated as follows:

	1. Recommendation	Annotation
		

Background

Seymour is located in the Naugatuck River valley in Connecticut – about halfway between Waterbury and Bridgeport.

The entire Naugatuck River valley became an economic powerhouse in America in the early 1800s due to the water power available, natural resources in the region, and the growing demand for manufactured goods. By 1850, the residents of this area received approval from the legislature to create the municipality we now know as Seymour.

The community has grown significantly over the past 160 years or so from 1,677 people in 1850 to 16,540 people in 2010. Many industries and businesses were founded and operated in Seymour during that time:

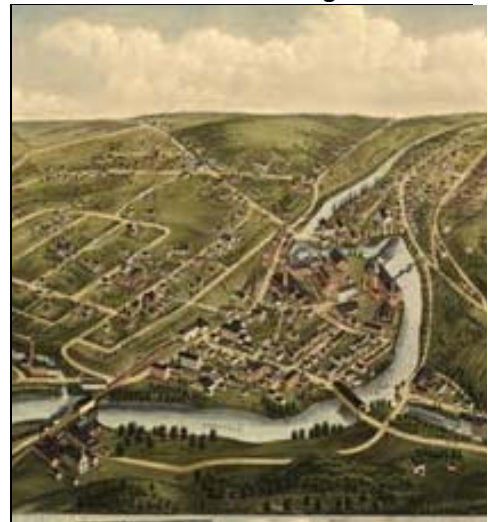
- A company that produced a type of telegraph cable that could be placed under the ocean so that clear communications from one continent to another was possible,
- A company that produced world-recognized fountain pens and pencils,
- A company responsible for the invention of polished copper, and
- Numerous other mills that produced paper, brass, copper wire for telephones and telegraphs, and silver for table silverware.

These businesses were located in or near downtown Seymour and downtown was the central focal point of the community. People lived nearby and did most of their shopping in the downtown area. Even though the train network and even a trolley line provided access to other areas, downtown Seymour met the daily needs of residents. Confined by the river and steep slopes on the valley sides, the compact downtown evolved with limited opportunities for expansion, yet with an intimate scale.

Historic Photograph



Historic Rendering

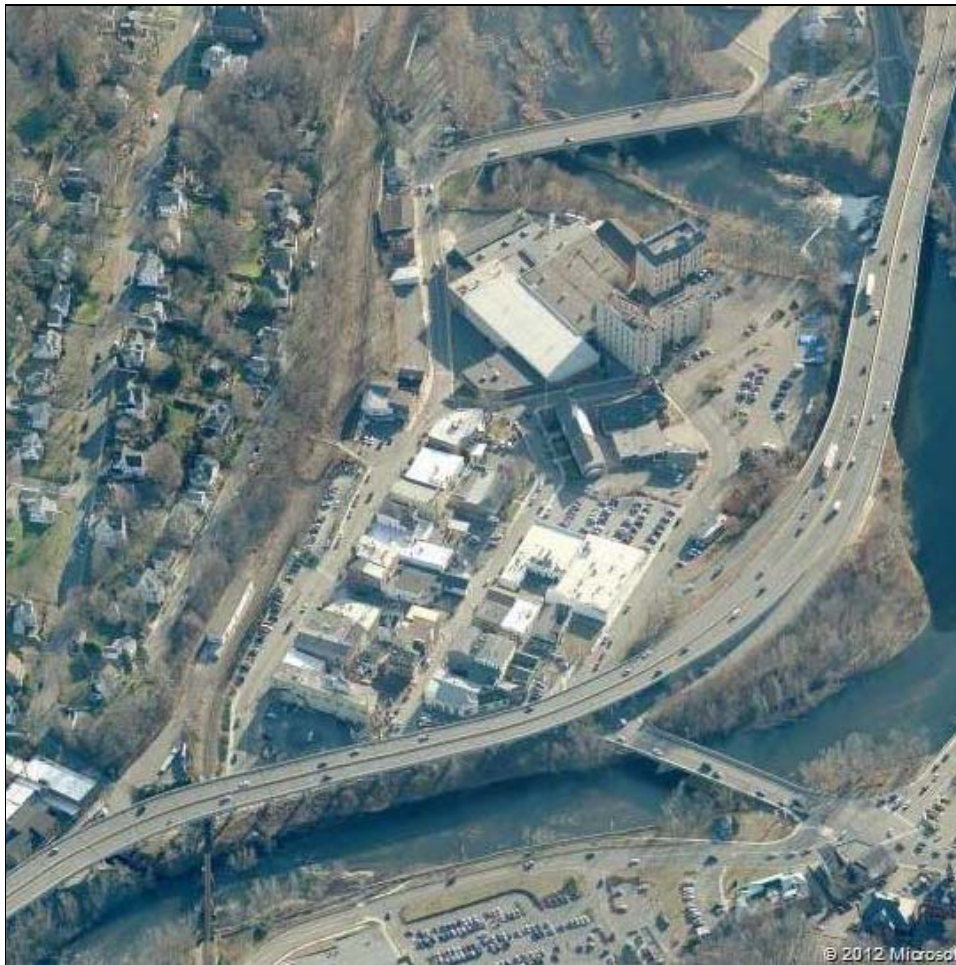


However, following World War II, an evolving world economy, proliferation of the automobile, and the expansion of the roadway network began to change the character of Seymour. Manufacturing businesses relocated to areas with cheaper operating costs. People found they could live in Seymour and work in other communities. People also began to travel to other communities for shopping and other purposes.

Then, the flooding that occurred along the Naugatuck River in August 1955 had a significant impact on a number of properties and businesses in the downtown area.

Construction of Route 8 in Seymour (1962) allowed people to easily travel to other areas for shopping goods and employment. By the turn of the century, almost 80 percent of Seymour residents commuted to the south and could find goods/services there.

Aerial View of Downtown



The Vision

Exploit Our “Niche”

Seymour residents like their downtown and want to see more happening there.

Rather than manage downtown on the basis of what it once was or what other places may be doing, it will be most productive for Seymour to recognize the key “niches” available for its downtown and focus on making those niches as successful as possible.

In a public meeting conducted as part of this planning process, attendees were asked how often they visited downtown and for what purpose:

	Business	Govt / Civic	Special Event	Live / work	Train	Total (# cards)
Most every day	7	5	4	3	0	8
Couple of times a week	12	12	11	2	2	14
Couple of times a month	15	12	8	1	3	16
Couple of times a year	2	3	1	0	0	3
Almost never	1	1	0	0	0	1
	37	33	24	6	5	42

Totals may not add horizontally since multiple responses allowed per card

The most common reasons for visiting downtown were to visit a business, visit a government or civic facility (Town Hall or the Post Office), or attend a special event.

These uses are the key “anchors” in downtown Seymour. An “anchor” is considered to be a use which provides baseline support to an area and attracts people who may then visit other places nearby. In a shopping mall, for example, a larger department store is often used to stabilize the development and attract people who would then shop at the smaller stores. In economic terms, an “anchor” at a shopping mall might be offered a lower rent in order to attract shoppers such that smaller tenants would be willing to pay more to be located there.

Most attendees indicated they visited downtown a couple of times a week to a couple of times a month. In other words, downtown is not presently a key element in resident’s daily lives. On the other hand, downtown is important to people and an area they are familiar with. As a result, it has a good foundation to build on in terms of attracting new businesses and activities.

Based on the above information on frequency of use and reason for visit, the following table outlines some of the potential roles for a downtown and which ones may be most fruitful for Seymour:

Role	Description	Seymour's Potential		
		Could Be A Primary Role For Downtown	Could Be A Secondary Role For Downtown	
Specialty Goods	Goods which are rare, unique or unusual in nature so that the consumer might be motivated by personal preference, desire, or exert unusual effort to obtain them.	Good	Good	Keep These
Arts / Entertainment	Movies, music, theater, galleries, studios, and other artistic performances or displays	Good	Good	
Institutions	Government, schools, places of worship, post offices, libraries, etc.	Good	Good	
Transportation	Transit, train stations, etc.	Good	Good	
Hospitality	Restaurants, clubs, bars, taverns, etc. that offer an eating and/or drinking opportunity.	Fair	Good	Recruit These
Housing	Place of residence	Fair	Good	
Services	Businesses offering personal or professional services (can include nail salons, travel agencies, doctors, dentists, etc.)	Fair	Good	
Passive Recreation	Passive recreation opportunities such as trails, observation decks, fish ladders, bird watching, etc.	Fair	Good	Allow These
Employment	Office / industry and other places of employment (can include business offices, architects, lawyers, etc.)	Low	Fair	
Convenience Goods	Goods readily available and purchased primarily on the basis of location (convenience), visibility, or immediate need (gasoline, milk, bread, cigarettes, and occasional groceries)	Low	Fair	
Comparison Goods	Goods purchased at infrequent intervals and typically compared before purchase on cost, brand, style, comfort (clothes, shoes, electronics, appliances, etc.)	Low	Low	
Sports / Active Recreation	Active recreation facilities such as arenas, sports venues, fields, etc.	Low	Low	

Enhance The Ambience

While many people make purchasing decisions based on price alone, a large number of people are also attracted by the overall ambience and feeling of the shopping experience. As pointed out in the MEDP report, “more people are seeking pedestrian-friendly options and experiences and this is creating opportunities for more specialized retailing in and around Seymour’s traditional downtown.”

It is interesting to note that some new retail developments are attempting to recreate the overall feeling of a historic downtown or village – something that Seymour already has! Downtown Seymour holds significant potential as a historic, civic place that is unique.

To enhance the overall experience, attention needs to be devoted to

- improving streetscape and storefronts,
- improving gateways and entry points to downtown,
- promoting compatible supporting uses, and
- working together for the common good.

Capitalize On Location

Downtown Seymour has an excellent location and needs to capitalize on its assets:

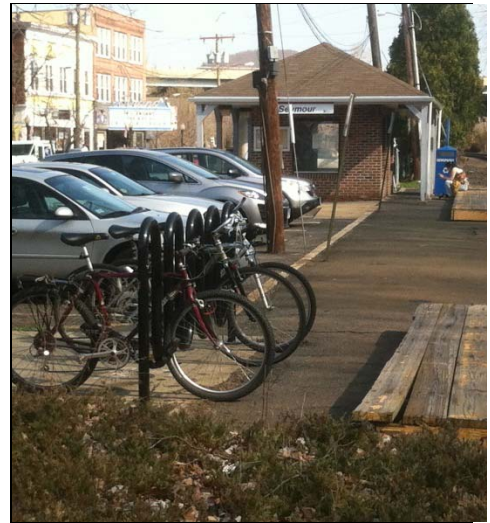
- Near population / employment centers (New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury),
- Good road access (Route 8, Route 67, etc.),
- Train service (to Fairfield County and New York City), and
- River access (Naugatuck River).

Seymour can and should capitalize on its locational advantages to support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and attract people to the area.

Main Street



Train Station



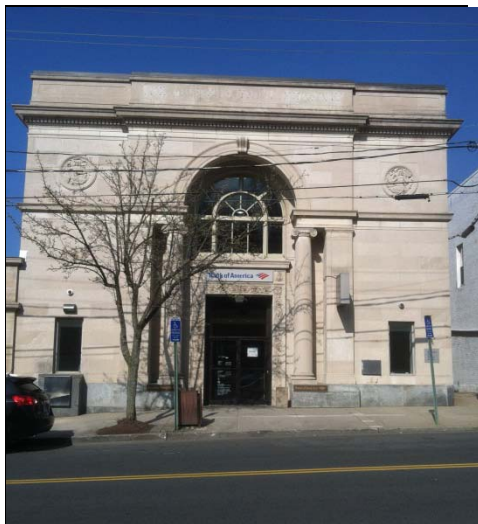
Increase Awareness

Seymour needs to increase awareness of its downtown area.

To the extent that downtown Seymour can be “branded” so that it increases knowledge and awareness of what it has to offer, we can reach a critical mass of people who are likely to want to enjoy what downtown has to offer. Marketing of downtown to expand this brand awareness will be important also.

Expanding the breadth and depth of offerings in the downtown will help to make downtown more enticing as well. The more things people find to do in Seymour will mean they will be inclined to visit more often and tell more people.

Main Street



Columbus Street



On-Street Parking

On-street parking spaces are the “great treasure” of parking in village and downtown areas. Most people seek them out because of their convenience.

There is a good example of this in downtown Seymour. The Bank of America has hired a parking guard who ensures that parking spaces across from the bank are occupied by Bank of America customers.

The Action Plan

Address The Parking Experience

Parking is consistently mentioned as an issue in downtown Seymour. People perceive that parking is a problem and that downtown would be better if more parking was available.

Yet, a survey of local parking areas found that an ample supply of parking spaces was always available. In other words, there were always plenty of parking spaces for those willing to seek them out. The issue then is that parking is not located where people want it:

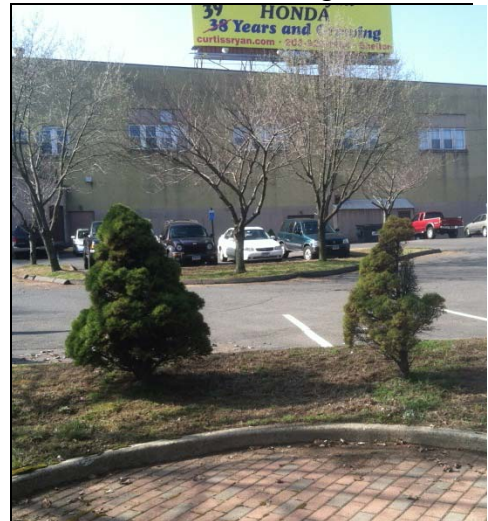
- immediately in front of their destination,
- within sight of their destination, or
- within what they consider to be reasonable walking distance.

Part of the “wonder” of a downtown environment though is that people typically park once and visit multiple destinations within a short walking distance. This is different than a suburban, automobile-oriented situation where people park and then get into their car to go a few hundred feet to another destination. The irony is that people often walk further in the suburban, automobile-oriented situation (for the multiple trips between the parking space and the front doors) but it feels like less since it is broken up by the car trips.

On-Street Parking



Off-Street Parking



Part of the solution to the parking dilemma is to learn what the concerns are and then address them:

<p><i>Parking is “never” available</i></p>	<p>People tend to feel that parking is available if they can get a prized on-street parking space near their destination some of the times they visit downtown. Anecdotal information suggests this might be about 10-20 percent of the trips. The key is to make sure that visible on-street parking is available and that it “turns over” on a regular basis.</p>
<p><i>I can “never” find parking</i></p>	<p>If parking demand cannot be met with on-street parking, it is important to provide for off-street parking and provide “wayfinding” signs to get people there quickly and easily.</p>
<p><i>“Parking is too far away”</i></p>	<p>People may feel parking is too far away if they cannot see their destination, if there is inclement weather, or if there is nothing to occupy their attention on the walk between the parking space and their destination. An attractive streetscape and active street-level uses which allow people to window shop is one way to reduce the psychological distance.</p>
<p><i>“Parking is unsafe”</i></p>	<p>Downtown Seymour is safe and so this tends to be a perceived issue (or a substitute for perceived inconvenience) rather than reality. The key factors for addressing this include minimizing the distance to parking, ensuring that adequate lighting is available after dark, and increasing levels of on-street activity.</p>

**Shorter Psychological Walking Distance
(Window Shopping)**



**Longer Psychological Walking Distance
(Blank Wall)**



While there appears to be adequate parking for the level of activity at the present time, is there enough parking available should the activity level increase? A brief analysis found that there are approximately:

- 126 on-street parking spaces on Main Street, Bank Street, Columbus Street, First Street, Wakeley Street, and DeForest Street,
- 160 off-street parking spaces in public lots (Broad Street, Theater, Wakeley Street), and
- Approximately 325 or more off-street parking spaces on private property.

This results in a parking ratio of about 1.5 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area (when compared to the 410,000 square feet of floor area in the downtown). However, if the Diversified Electric site and the residential towers and the associated parking is taken out of the equation, the parking ratio is about 2.0 spaces per 1,000 square feet of floor area (502 spaces for 245,000 square feet).

While this ratio is lower than may be typical of a suburban retail or office setting, it is not an unreasonable number for a downtown area. Seymour should seek ways to try and provide more parking spaces while maintaining the overall ambience and environment of the downtown area. Provided parking spaces (especially on-street parking spaces) turn over on a regular basis, this parking ratio could support the uses that are here since spaces occupied during the day by office workers would be available for others on evenings and weekends.

Another strategy would be to work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to construct a parking structure (adjacent to the Strand Theater) for commuters using the train station. A three-level parking structure could have the entrance/exit on Main Street next to the Strand Theater and provide 35-40 spaces per level (120+ spaces total). Since Main Street drops down to intersect with Route 67, it would be possible to add some street level uses facing Main Street as part of the parking structure. Since the floor-to-floor height of a parking structure only needs to be about 10.5 feet (to provide about 7.5 feet headroom), such a structure could be situated on this site and still keep the internal ramps at about 5 percent grade. This type of facility would help support rail service and the downtown.

Possible Parking Structure Design



Possible Parking Structure Design



Keep Doing These Things

1. Maintain a clean and attractive streetscape to shorten the psychological distance from parking spaces to uses.

Consider Doing These Things - Simple



2. Establish parking time limits for all on-street spaces to help ensure they “turn over” on a regular basis (the two-hour time limit seems reasonable).
3. Consistently enforce parking time limits for all on-street spaces using local police or a parking attendant.
4. Encourage or require active street level uses to support “window shopping” by pedestrians and shorten the psychological distance from parking spaces to uses.
5. If necessary, use creative ways to animate the street level (such as short-term or seasonal occupants or displaying student artwork in storefront windows).

On-street parking spaces are highly prized.

Since attracting customers, patrons, and clients to downtown is important, these spaces should not be occupied by commuters, employees, or tenants. Enforcing a time-limit will help ensure “turn over” of spaces.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced

6. Increase the street lighting along streets and in parking lots.
7. Maximize the number of on-street spaces (possibly considering one-way streets and/or narrower travel lanes as a way to do this).
8. Seek ways to increase the number of off-street parking spaces in locations that do not interrupt the streetscape or the overall downtown experience.
9. Provide ample “wayfinding” signs informing people of where to find parking spaces.
10. Work with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to construct a parking structure to meet the needs of commuters at the train station.
11. If businesses are willing to share the cost, use a golf cart as a shuttle to help people get back and forth to parking areas.
12. Consider the possibility of establishing a parking authority in the future, if needed.

Maintain The Overall Appearance

The overall appearance of downtown is a key element of its ability to attract customers and create a memorable or enjoyable experience. As noted in the 2007 MEDP, the “downtown has many attractive buildings, is well-scaled for the pedestrian, and does have a charming historic character and fabric.”

In studies of downtown areas, people have said they would visit more often based on enhancing appearance (cleanliness, landscaping, etc.). Therefore, maintaining and enhancing the overall streetscape will support what we have and help spur private investment. Efforts can include:

- Regular street cleaning and waste pickup,
- Quaint and charming character (brick sidewalks, gaslight style lamps, park benches / street trees / flower boxes),
- The use of consistent sidewalk materials,
- Enhancing gateways and providing “wayfinding” signs, and
- Decorating the highly visible sides of buildings (The Strand Theater and the strip retail building on Wakeley Street).

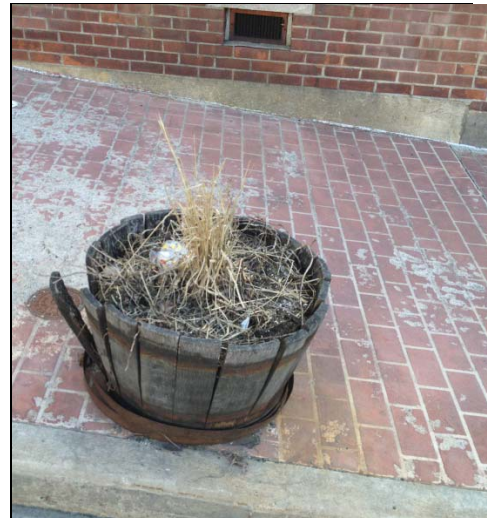
Keep Doing These Things

1. Continue to use Public Works crews to keep area clean and eliminate signs of neglect:
 - Trash = Monday and Friday.
 - Weeds and sweep = Friday.
 - Railroad slope also = monthly or quarterly.
2. Continue regular downtown cleanup (such as Earth Day).

Earth Day Cleanup



Attention Needed



Consider Doing These Things - Simple



3. Appoint one person within Public Works as the downtown manager responsible for overall maintenance.
4. Apply for grants for streetscape improvements through such programs as the “Main Street Investment Fund” or the “Small Town Economic Assistance Program.”
5. Expand maintenance to include benches, light poles, plantings, flower boxes.
6. Adopt streetscape specifications for consistent materials (sidewalks, curbs, street trees, etc.).
7. Create a “wish list” of downtown improvements and request private funding and/or donations.
8. Sponsor school projects to grow flowers which would be planted downtown.
9. Establish an “adopt-a-spot” program to encourage citizen participation in beautification and litter clean-ups of designated downtown areas.
10. Investigate other ways to get residents and people with “community service” obligations involved in downtown projects.
11. Consider creating and installing bigger street name signs that are unique to downtown Seymour.

Having a specific person identified with downtown maintenance will elevate the overall importance of this function and help businesses and property owners and others coordinate efforts.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced

12. Work with Connecticut Light and Power to convert streetlights to “LED” technology for better illumination and lower energy usage.
13. Establish and enforce prohibitions on car maintenance (oil changes, etc.) in parking areas.
14. Coordinate with Metro-North to address train station cleanliness and odor.
15. Encourage Diversified Electric to fix the retaining wall.
16. Create a façade improvement program that combines technical assistance from an architect who specializes in facades with a low-cost façade improvement loan or a façade improvement grant program.
17. Dress up gateways (landscaping, flower planters, signage).
18. Provide more “Welcome to Downtown” signs.
19. Consider installing seasonal message “banners” on local light poles.
20. Provide “way-finding” signs to help people navigate to and around downtown.
21. Place directory signs in key places (provide directory handouts for all businesses).

Implement Consistent Branding / Marketing

Branding and marketing of downtown Seymour are key considerations in the success of the downtown. A “brand” is a mental image that people use to categorize something and differentiate it. By establishing a “brand”, we can establish an image that people think of when they hear the term “downtown Seymour.”

Branding pro-actively creates the impression we want and gets clients and potential customers to categorize downtown Seymour in a positive way. By creating a positive brand even before people interact directly with downtown Seymour can create a sense of excitement and expectation and also create demand and interest. The earlier a positive “brand” image can be defined and assigned, the greater the potential for success of that image.

Experience has shown that a unique and recognizable brand contributes to the success of a business or other endeavor since it:

- Delivers the message clearly,
- Connects emotionally,
- Confirms credibility,
- Motivates the buyer, and
- Helps solidify user loyalty.

These results are possible when the “brand” is unique and appealing and one that people can easily associate with. The brand should be integrated into and through every point of public contact. Once the brand is established, consistency is key since consistency drives the impression into the minds of the customers.

One of the reasons that larger retailers and shopping malls may be more successful than downtowns is that they have invested in a brand that people identify with. Downtown Seymour should do the same.

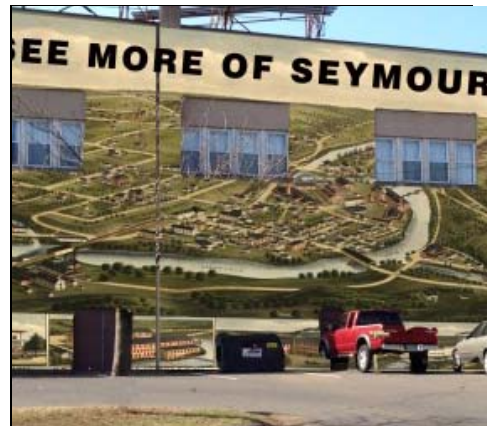
Keep Doing These Things

1. Maintain / enhance / expand the downtown website (www.shopsatseymour.com).

Passive Wall



Active Wall



Consider Doing These Things - Simple



2. Adopt a consistent “brand” message (such as “Best Little Downtown In Connecticut”) that highlights the diverse opportunities and the unique experience in downtown Seymour.
3. Create and implement a “social media” program that uses approaches such as “Facebook”, “Twitter”, “Foursquare”, and others to generate interest and activity in downtown Seymour.

Having a consistent “brand” message will create positive brand awareness and result in efficient marketing for downtown.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced



4. Use the local billboards to market downtown Seymour and its “brand”.
5. Strive to develop a master marketing database / customer list to be able to inform people of local events.
6. Share marketing expenses among all local businesses and property owners.
7. Consider establishing painted murals or (murals printed on canvas) for the blank walls at gateways to downtown.

It is unfortunate that the billboards in Seymour advertise businesses in other areas.

The billboards could be an effective way to market Seymour to the thousands of people who drive by each day.

Current Billboard



Potential Billboard?



Continue Special Activities And Events

During the course of preparing this Action Plan, many people commented that they enjoyed attending the diverse activities and events that occur in downtown Seymour. More than half of the people that participated in the survey said that special events were a key factor in drawing them to downtown.

Local businesses and the Culture and Arts Commission are doing a good job organizing events and activities. These activities should be continued and expanded.

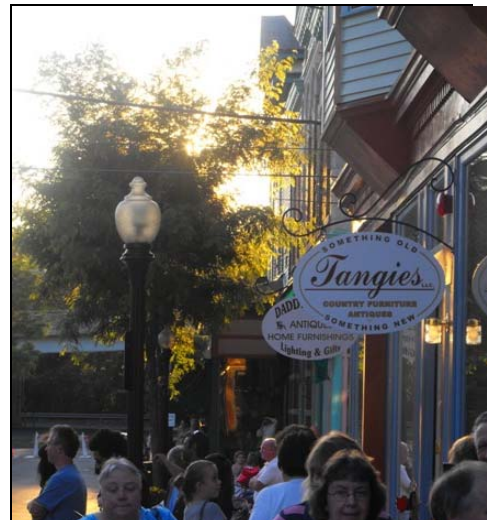
Keep Doing These Things

1. Support the Culture & Arts Commission.
2. Continue First Saturdays.
3. Continue to support the Strand Theater.
4. Continue parades / special events such as:
 - Smoke In The Valley (craft beer and chili festival),
 - Pumpkin Festival (September),
 - Pink Day (October),
 - Cruise Nights (14 dates May to September),
 - Summer Concerts (7 dates June to September),
 - Live Theater at the Strand (3 events / 11 dates/times),
 - Trick or Treat (October),
 - Carol Singing,
 - Road Race,
 - Founders Day (May).

Local Event



Local Event



Consider Doing These Things - Simple

5. Program more events downtown and publicize them widely.
6. Allow sidewalk food vendors (hot dogs, ice cream, etc.) on First Saturdays to complement (but not compete with) existing businesses.
7. Allow sidewalk vendors for other events.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced

8. Expand events (such as “Decorator Tuesdays” or “third Saturdays”) to encourage more activity and awareness.
9. Program more events at the Strand Theater.
10. Consider using the Strand Theater for music concerts (such as Infinity Hall in Norfolk).

Local Venue



Farmers Market



Update Policies And Regulations

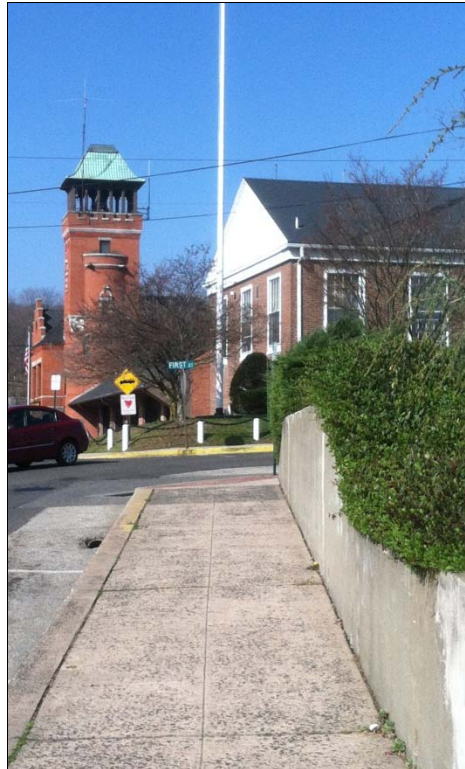
Land use policies and regulations can facilitate or deter activities in downtown. Since zoning regulations were often adopted in Connecticut communities at the height of the “automobile era”, they do not always work well when applied to a downtown area and prospective investors can be faced with some daunting challenges.

Fortunately, Seymour understands the importance of the downtown and for having policies in place to promote positive outcomes.

Keep Doing These Things

1. Continue to promote downtown development and redevelopment.

Town Hall






Policies



Consider Doing These Things - Simple

- Amend the Plan of Conservation and Development to recommend establishment of a village district (as authorized by CGS Section 8-2j) to protect unique character.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Change certain use regulations in the downtown area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allow outside dining with a Special Permit, Limit first floor uses to retail / restaurant / personal service and other pedestrian oriented uses unless a Special Permit is granted, and Require mixed use buildings unless modified by the Commission through Special Permit. 	<p>Outside dining will help attract people to downtown. Active street-level uses will animate the street and ease the psychological distance for pedestrians. Mixed use buildings will spread out the parking demand and provide for a more active downtown.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Change certain dimensional standards in the downtown area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate or reduce minimum lot size requirement (currently 10,000 SF), Adopt a front yard "build-to-line" requirement of zero feet for new buildings unless modified by the Commission, Eliminate or reduce the minimum lot frontage/width requirement in the downtown area (currently 60 feet), Eliminate or reduce the minimum side yard setback requirement in the downtown area (currently 5 feet). 	<p>Current dimensional standards bear little relationship to what exists in downtown and may prevent appropriate development.</p>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consider reducing parking requirements for the downtown area so that the Planning and Zoning may modify or waive the parking requirements based on information presented by the applicant. 	<p>Parking regulations adopted for automobile-oriented uses can hinder downtown areas and should be waived or modified.</p>

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced

- Amend zoning regulations to identify the Central Business District (CBD) zone as a Village District and incorporate statutory provisions for administration of a village district.
- Require display windows comprising at least 70 percent of the first floor façade area facing public streets / sidewalks.
- Establish design guidelines / aesthetic code to help guide applicants.

Maintain Anchor Uses

There are many “anchors” in downtown Seymour today. As indicated earlier in this action plan, an “anchor” is considered to be a use which provides baseline support to an area and attracts people who may then visit other places nearby. All of the anchor uses should be retained and new uses should complement each other so that the overall downtown experience is a positive one.

As noted in the 2007 MEDP, the overall potential of downtown Seymour is hampered by a lack of restaurants and other complementary uses. Restaurants are especially appropriate for the downtown since they complement and support almost all of the desired uses and activities in a downtown. Since restaurants can thrive in close proximity to other restaurants, there is significant value in attracting multiple restaurants. Recruiting one or more new restaurants would signal a new era for the downtown and fill a long desired void for more eating establishments. Strong action by the Town may be needed to attract a restaurant (rather than a passive marketing approach, the Town may need to consider leasing space for a restaurant and then subleasing it at a lower rent for a period of time).

The waterfront is an obvious amenity. The ability to provide access to and views of the river and the waterfalls is a tremendous opportunity for attracting investment in and around downtown.

Downtown Anchors



Keep Doing These Things

1. Keep Town Hall downtown.
2. Keep the Post Office downtown.
3. Keep the train station downtown.
4. Continue to support the Strand Theater.
5. Continue to promote events and activities downtown.
6. Continue to promote downtown development and redevelopment.
7. Continue to work to attract new stores and activities.

Consider Doing These Things - Simple

8. Move Farmers Market from the community center to downtown.
9. Create a "street dining event" where a variety of restaurants from other areas are invited into downtown as part of a street fair and music fair.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced



10. Attract a sit-down restaurant possibly by subsidizing the rent and/or guaranteeing a rate of return to a business owner.
11. Consider expanding housing in and near the downtown area.
12. Consider ways to renovate and enhance The Strand Theater in order to expand its ability to host diverse events and attract a wide range of people.
13. Promote redevelopment of industrial sites (such as New Haven Copper / Diversified Electric) in ways which will support and enhance the downtown area.

A sit-down restaurant will significantly enhance downtown Seymour and the events and activities already occurring here.

Waiting for a restaurant to open or passively marketing to restaurateurs may not create results.

If Seymour is serious about enhancing downtown, taking the bold step of recruiting a restaurant and subsidizing it (if needed) may be necessary to show that downtown Seymour is a new place.

Enhance The Overall Experience

In addition to the other categories mentioned, there are other ways to expand the choices available to visitors and to enhance the overall experience:

- Open up access to the waterfall and the river (tourists, fishers, kayakers, etc.),
- Connect to greenways and trails,
- Provide facilities to support pedestrians,
- Accommodate people with pets.

Keep Doing These Things

1. Complete the fish ladder / walkway project.

Consider Doing These Things - Simple

2. Provide signs directing people to the river.
3. Continue to advocate for the Naugatuck River Greenway through Seymour and through downtown.
4. Consider removing the chain link fence at the Legion building (corner of Bank and Wakeley).
5. Provide “doggie litter bags” for visitors.

Pet-Friendly Accommodations



Greenway Trail



Street Trees / Street Bench



Canvas Awnings / Garbage Cans



Consider Doing These Things - Advanced



6. Extend trails and walkways to open up the riverfront and waterfall in Seymour.
7. Pursue state funding to create public bathrooms through such programs as the "Main Street Investment Fund" or the "Small Town Economic Assistance Program."
8. Ensure that all parts of downtown are as handicapped-accessible as possible.
9. Seek to create a focal point / public gathering space.
10. Pursue and support funding for the Naugatuck River Greenway in Seymour.
11. Carefully monitor potential roadway changes on Wakeley Street / Bank Street as a result of potential Connecticut Department of Transportation modifications to exit 22 off Route 8 northbound.
12. Extend sidewalks out to adjacent neighborhoods as much as possible.

Many people do not realize how close the river is to downtown and what a significant attraction it can be.

Seymour should extend trails and walkways to open up access to the river and the waterfall in Seymour.

River Trail Opportunity



Continue Team Building

The organizations needed to implement the vision are as important as the vision itself. Seymour should continue to work with local and regional organizations and encourage increased cooperation in order to implement the vision for downtown Seymour.

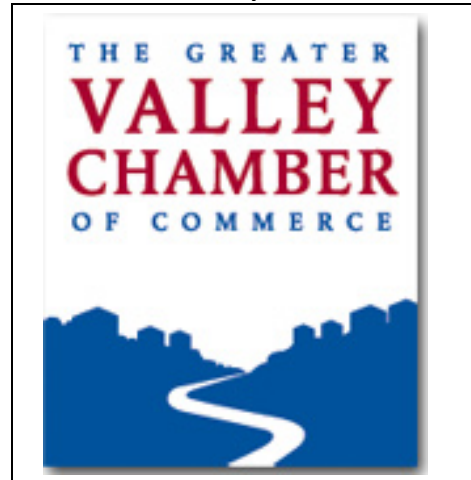
Keep Doing These Things

1. Continue to work with and support local businesses and activities.
2. Continue to work with the Greater Valley Chamber of Commerce.
3. Continue to work with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development.
4. Continue to work with local legislators to get state and federal funding for local programs.

Local Businesses



Greater Valley Chamber



Connecticut Main Street Center



Connecticut Department of Economic And Community Development



Consider Doing These Things - Simple



5. Establish a “downtown committee” (a joint public/private group) to coordinate downtown activities or encourage and support regular meetings of businesses / property owners (a business-only association).
6. Participate in events of the CT Main Street Center - Downtown Revitalization Institute.
7. Invite specialists from the CT Main Street Center - Downtown Revitalization Institute to Seymour to help advise on enhancing and strengthening downtown.

A “downtown committee” is important to coordinate the events and activities that are critical to the success of downtown.

Without such an organization, things may fall between the cracks and people will feel that “other people” are responsible for key initiatives when the actual responsibility should be shared.

Consider Doing These Things - Advanced

8. Consider establishing a “special services district “ or a “business improvement district” as a way for all property owners and businesses to participate in making downtown successful.
9. Consider the potential to become a “Main Street” community with assistance from the CT Main Street Center.
10. Consider establishing a Seymour Economic Development Corporation.

Conclusion

The recommended actions in this Action Plan will help Seymour enhance and strengthen its downtown area. This report builds on the many things which are already being done and identifies specific things to produce results in the future.

The map on the facing page summarizes some of these recommendations.

It is important to note that the goal of enhancing and strengthening the downtown is more of a journey than a specific destination. The circumstances of downtown will undoubtedly change over time and Seymour must be willing to adapt and implement new ideas for the downtown to be the type of place that Seymour residents have indicated they want it to be.

With the preparation and implementation of this report, that journey continues with the support of the Town of Seymour, people involved in the downtown, and all the residents of the community.

Map



**Economic Development Commission
Town of Seymour, Connecticut**