

Grand Forks, British Columbia
Recovery Action Plan
June 2019



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INTRODUCTION

Roger Brooks, CEO of Roger Brooks International, Inc. and the Destination Development Association (DDA) was asked to facilitate an “Action Plan” development process in Grand Forks the week of June 10, 2019.

In 2008, Roger gave a presentation to the people of Grand Forks and the Boundary Region about community branding, tourism, and downtown development. At the time there was no real sense of urgency to take action and little came from that effort.

But the devastating flood in May of 2018 created a new sense of urgency—and an opportunity—to “make something happen” locally.

After the flood took place during the summer and fall of 2018, the city and Community Futures sought input from local leaders, businesses, property owners and residents, and then formulated an initial process and plan, much of which has been implemented. This has formed the foundation for the Action Plan process and implementations in this plan.

This process was to develop bottom-line action steps in a “where do we go from here” type of format. Brooks toured Grand Forks on Monday and Tuesday, June 10th and 11th, facilitated a public workshop “The 20 Ingredients of an Outstanding Downtown,” on Wednesday the 12th, and then met with local stakeholders to formulate an Action Plan, which was presented and discussed in a four-hour open-forum on Thursday, June 13th.

The following pages are the result of this boot-strap style plan with individual recommendations, who should take the lead in implementing each one, an approximate cost to implement, and where the funding might come from.

Because this plan was developed over such a short period, there was no time for extensive research on pricing and funding sources, so those should be refined as each recommendation is implemented.

Other than the future development of a programmed plaza, wayfinding system, and the contracting for a business recruitment professional, care was taken to make sure each recommendation would provide a low-cost remedy that will result in making Grand Forks an outstanding community in which to live, invest in, and visit.

As this is a boot-strap plan, there are not a lot of details on how to implement each of the recommendations. Most don't require a lot of additional information, but for others there is a wealth of information available in the Destination Development Association's Resource Center. This resource center has more than 75 how-to videos and PDF guides on just about every recommendation in this plan, plus photographic examples and dozens of “how they did it” case histories.

As you approach each recommendation, visit the library in the Resource Center at DestinationDevelopment.org. Membership is free for 2019, and there are also a number of small-business specific videos available for local business owners.

Should you have questions when it comes time to implementing one of the recommendations, there are discussion groups within the DDA Resource Center where you can get answers from Roger Brooks, his team, and from other members.

While in Grand Forks, Brooks noted that the business community seemed very frustrated that, a full year after the floods, little had been done to bring the town back to its pre-flood levels in terms of retail sales and services.

This plan was developed so that recommendations could be implemented within months, if not weeks, of its completion. When people see change—things actually starting to happen—it gives them hope and encourages them to push forward.

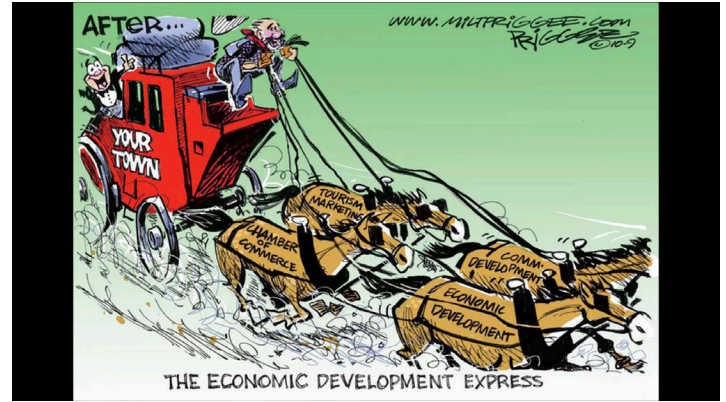
Every recommendation is important, and this plan is not one where you implement some, and ignore others. They all integrate together, and, like a jigsaw puzzle, if you toss out some of the pieces—or recommendations—you end up with a worthless puzzle or plan.

This is a three-year plan that should be revisited every few weeks. There is space to write notes and action steps, making this a plan that sits on your desk, not on a shelf gathering dust. It is a working document—a workbook. Recommendations are listed by the year they are to be implemented, with 2019 the “Getting Ready” year, and product development the focus in 2020, and then making downtown a draw for local residents and visitors in 2021.

The development of a programmed plaza is very important, but because it's a larger ticket item, its recommendations are separate and are not integrated into the overall plan's timeline. However, it would be easy to integrate the plaza development into the plan, and its timelines are already included.

When it comes to revitalizing a downtown, what comes first? People there on a consistent basis: 250 or more days of the year. Where people gather consistently, retailers follow. So a major priority of this plan is “activating” downtown as the place the local and area residents come to hang out and spend time, particularly after work and on weekends.

Finally, every resident, property owner, local official, and downtown business should watch the “Resurgence of Downtown” four-part video series available via streaming at DestinationDevelopment.org in the Resource Center. There are many, many ideas and case histories which can produce a lot of enthusiasm for local investors and businesses.

[illegible]



Create the Destination Grand Forks Team: Your board of directors

Timeline: June 2019

Lead: City of Grand Forks

Cost: None

Funding source: N/A

Details

- Downtown Business Association (board member)
- Chamber of Commerce (board)
- Council representative (trails proponent)
- Four from the biking/recreation sector
- One hotelier (lodging)
- Downtown business/property owner (on Market)
- Downtown business/property owner (not on Market)
- Community Futures
- City Events Manager
- City Planning Department
- Economic Development (new hire)

Details

This is your team/steering committee for:

- Tourism promotion and marketing
- Events and downtown activities
- Selection committee for wayfinding
- Trail and other recreation-oriented projects & marketing
- Brand Leadership Team: To focus on the brand
 - Product development
 - Marketing | social media | collateral development
- Downtown plaza development | consultancies
- Downtown "programming"
- Business recruitment assistance