



LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation Eight Guidelines

Comprehensive: No single focus – lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events – can revitalize Downtown LaBelle. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street’s Four Points, is essential.

Incremental: Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that “new things are happening” in the commercial district. As public confidence in the LDRC district grows and participants’ understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, LDRC is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Downtown LaBelle area.

Self-Help: No one else will save your downtown. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they’ll reap by investing time and money in Downtown LaBelle – the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization efforts.

Partnerships: Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Downtown LaBelle’s revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other’s strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.

Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets: Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive building and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.

Quality: Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process – from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and “cut and paste” efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.

Change: Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on LDRC will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Downtown LaBelle will turn around. Change in attitude and practice are slow but definite – public support for change will build as the Downtown LaBelle program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned downtown program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

Implementation: To succeed, Downtown LaBelle must show visible results that can only come with completed projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization efforts are underway and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization efforts mature, and that constant activity creates confidence in the LDRC program and ever-greater levels of participation.