

Schuyler Development ▪ Vision 20 / 20

Community Wellness ☺ HomeTown Ownership

Part II ♦ Central Business District (‘heart of Schuyler’)

The Central Business District (*downtown*) is Schuyler’s center – its heart.

The importance of Schuyler’s Central Business District’s appearance and the image it projects to both residents and visitors cannot be overemphasized.

When people see visual images that reinforce and encourage positive ‘quality of place’ feelings, optimism becomes the ‘jet fuel’ stimulating both human energy and financial investment.

Economic Circumstances:

- hyper-competitive fast-paced global economy continues to impact rural America
- close proximity to Columbus (12 miles) places Schuyler in direct head-to-head competition for new employers, businesses, services and residents
- the communities of Schuyler, Columbus and David City are economically linked forming a thriving employment triangle of strength and stability
- Schuyler is handicapped competing for new industry without control of suitable sites and +10,000 sq. ft. commercial buildings; social costs vs. economic benefits must be weighed when considering the recruitment of potential new employers
- two flood plains present significant obstacles and limitations (*risk aversion*) to Schuyler’s future development and growth

Results define competitiveness. Average is not ‘okay’; and ‘okay’ is no longer good enough to compete. A small town is not insulated from outside competitive forces. Schuyler’s future economic growth will be determined by our successes in ***Retention*** ◦ ***Expansion*** ◦ ***Recruitment.***

Schuyler's Opportunity:

Focus resources on transforming Schuyler's *Challenges* into *Advantages* becoming a stand-alone *premier bedroom community* for area employers; recognized as a safe place for families to raise kids, known for nurturing entrepreneurial start-up businesses, culturally rich in diversity, 'excellence' in public education, a desirable retirement destination, and a great community to live, play and to reinvest in its future.

***"Work harder at getting better."* ~ Tom Osborne**

Schuyler's Challenges:

- run-off drainage and mitigating flood hazard
- Schuyler's downtown (CBD) projects mixed visual images
- aging housing stock and shortage of available new housing continues to adversely shape and hinder the growth of Schuyler's workforce
- *municipal code effectiveness* in a multicultural community necessitates a daily commitment to community outreach (*education, communication and compliance*).
- unfavorable perception of crime rate by business managers / owners
- sustaining the growth of sales tax revenue and property tax base
- expand middle socio-economic group - younger families (*community vitality*)
- *Community Wellness – HomeTown Ownership* (leadership renewal, active volunteerism, local residency of publicly financed positions)
- South Park lakes restoration
- convenient access to public services, recreation and living amenities (*quality of place*)

Schuyler's Advantages (*abridged*):

- ◇ central location to area employers and major highways
- ◇ population (stable, younger average age, educated, good work ethic)
- ◇ numerous employment opportunities within 30 mile radius
- ◇ **SEDPlan** (LB 840) funding to 2014
- ◇ increasing sales tax revenue and property tax base
- ◇ numerous small businesses and thriving entrepreneurial spirit
- ◇ construction of new high school classrooms and new elementary building
- ◇ new housing development (Kehrli subdivision)
- ◇ multiple local employers, facilities for the aging, quality local healthcare
- ◇ City's long-term street improvement / paving project
- ◇ partnering with *NeighborWorks Northeast NE* & Central Community College
- ◇ SCS' curriculum options, SCHS Alumni, Head Start
- ◇ Department of Utilities, Fire Department, St. Benedict Center
- ◇ continued website development (**SchuylerNebraska.net** & **SCHSpace.net**)
- ◇ Ministerial Association (Salvation Army, Food Pantry)
- ◇ South Park (Oak Ballroom, golf course & new clubhouse, new walking trail, swimming pool, upgrades at Merchant Field)
- ◇ tourism potential – one hour from Nebraska's two largest cities
- ◇ active civic groups continuing to give back to the community
- ◇ individual and corporate citizens reinvesting in Schuyler's future

***The status quo is not an option for future community wellness.
Building Schuyler's future necessitates re-evaluating yesterday's
foundations upon which today's status quo rests comfortably.***

Central Business District (CBD)

' heart of Schuyler '

Current CBD Situation: *"A face only a mother could love."* ~ Unknown

Most of Schuyler's Central Business District (*downtown*) buildings are aging. Several structures have been refurbished in recent years. Unfortunately, the appearance, condition and market value of the non-refurbished buildings have steadily declined. Many of these declining buildings are highly visible middle-of-the-block locations negatively impacting the overall general appearance of Schuyler's downtown, and of significant importance, are adversely impacting the market values of all CBD properties. As the condition of these structures slip further downward, the replacement costs and unfavorable images of these declining buildings continue to escalate upward.

Visual images are messages processed continuously in the human brain. Repetition of visual images reinforces mental pictures impacting perceptions that shape attitudes and beliefs influencing cognitive, emotional and human behavior.

Older, lower valued commercial structures tend to attract inexperienced and under capitalized entrepreneurs. Aging structures require timely maintenance. Too often, necessary building repairs and upgrades are not being completed. A few buildings, unfortunately, may have deteriorated beyond repair. Non-refurbished structures in our Central Business District continues to tarnish Schuyler's image hindering *Retention* ◦ *Expansion* ◦ *Recruitment*.

"The best investment is reinvesting in yourself." ~ Warren Buffet

Tactical Planning - *Strategic Actions*

- ◆ **CBD Program** (Purchase / Rehab / Resell)
 - ◆ Central Business District (CBD – *downtown*) commercial properties
 - ◆ vacant buildings ‘*For Sale*’ priced under \$45,000
 - ◆ purchase / rehabilitate / resell commercial buildings with LB 840 funds
 - wiring, plumbing, heating/ac systems upgraded to code
 - roof and foundation integrity
 - facade facelift
 - ◆ total budget: \$85,000
 - ◆ Schuyler Development Company identifies commercial properties for **CBD Program** and recommends to City Council
 - ◆ City Council authorizes all purchases and expenditures
 - ◆ revenues from resell of properties recycled back into **CBD Program**
 - ◆ **CBD Program** reviewed annually

“What you see is what you get.” ~ Geraldine (aka Flip Wilson)

Note: Tactical Planning - ***Strategic Actions Part II***
CBD Program (Purchase / Rehab / Resell) is aligned with both **The Schuyler Plan** (2004 Comprehensive Development Plan) and the **Schuyler Economic Development Plan** (2007 *SEDPlan*).

Progress is sometimes slow and most often uneven; however,

A New Beginning is well underway in Schuyler! ☺

Kem Cavanah
Economic Development Coordinator
Schuyler Development Company