

Ripley

A Community of Huron Kinloss



Community Toolkit



Credits

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

The Township of Huron Kinloss, with its population of just over 6500, is located in the southwest corner of the County of Bruce. Huron Kinloss is located on the east shore of Lake Huron and boasts some of the world's best sunsets and spectacular beaches. Huron-Kinloss has two friendly villages full of community spirit, Lucknow and Ripley. These communities are rich in history dating back more than 150 years. Both communities are home to active horticultural societies and both villages entertain visitors with their fall fairs illustrating the strong ties to the farming industry.



Economically, the Township of Huron Kinloss depends heavily on agriculture and agricultural services, and some food processing such as the Pine River Cheese factory. A number of residents work in Kincardine or Goderich, with the Bruce Nuclear Generating Station being the largest area employer.

With Tourism being economically prominent within the Township and the second largest economic generator in Bruce County, the experiences of tourists and our interactions with them are essential to our economic well-being. It is important to acknowledge that not all of our downtowns are going to be tourism destinations. There are many roles for our downtowns to play in the bigger picture of the entire tourism product. Some may be supply towns, others may be pass-through's to a destination and some have a specific tourism draw (like rock-climbing or beaches). Tourists and residents alike are attracted to places that offer unique and exciting experiences and are more likely to make return visits to places where they sense that there are interesting opportunities for interactions. Residents and visitors stay longer, spend more, return to, and speak well about places where they form strong, positive impressions.

Each community in Huron Kinloss possesses a unique character and history. Although they are part of the amalgamated Township of Huron Kinloss, the goal of these Toolkits' is to showcase each community's unique identity for the purpose of enhancing their distinctive characteristics and inherent charms. Each of the Toolkits presented are complementary to one another and contain consistent elements to indicate that they are part of the broader Corporation.



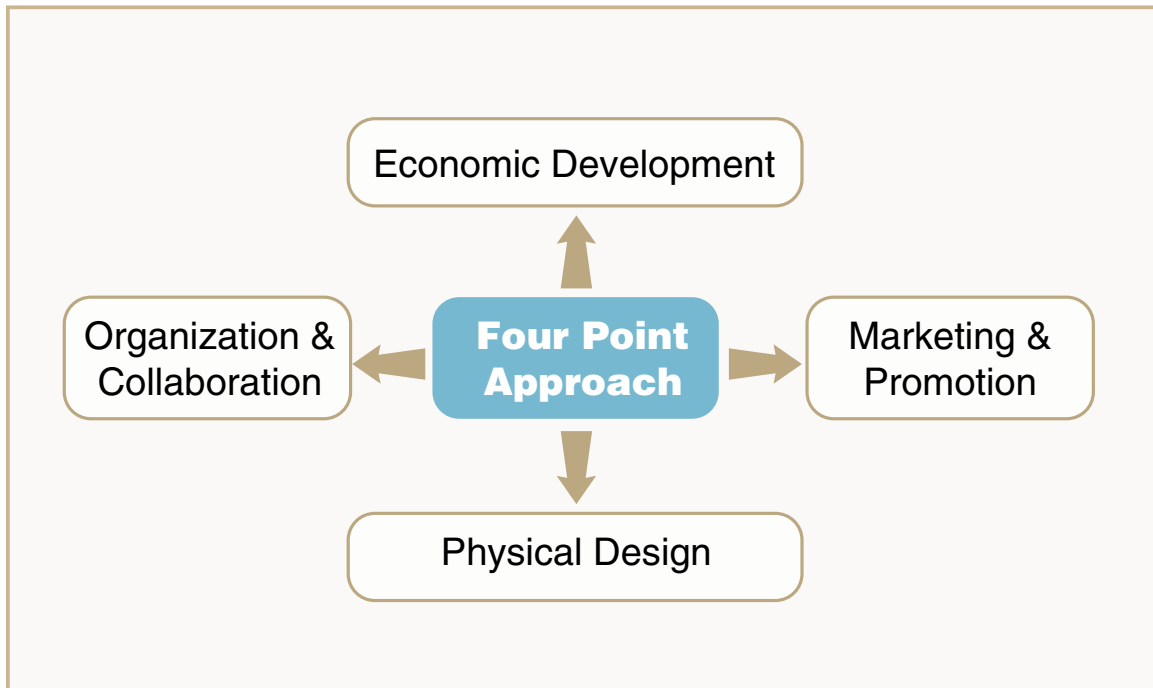
2 Why Mainstreets Matter

We all know where our mainstreets are, but do we know what they are and why they matter? Whether they are named First Avenue or King Street, are a County Road or Provincial Highway, what they represent is universal. Mainstreet is the economic engine, the big stage, the core of the community. Bruce County's mainstreets represent over 70 % of our commercial assessment and are our main point of contact with tourism dollars – our second largest industry. Our mainstreets tell us who we are and who we were, and how the past has shaped us. We do not go to our commercial strips to learn about our past, explore our culture, or discover our identity. Our mainstreets are the places of shared memory where people still come together to live, work, and play.

The Spruce the Bruce process is not a new concept, but has been specifically adapted for Bruce County. The bones of the program come from the National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States and their Main Street® program. The Preservation first got its roots in 1947 centred on protecting national historic sites and buildings. In 1980, they established the National Main Street Centre and over the past 30 years, the Main Street movement has transformed the way communities think about the revitalization and management of their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. Cities and towns across the United States and Canada have come to see that a prosperous, sustainable community is only as healthy as its core.



Main Street Four-Point Approach®



So what is Main Street®? When we talk about Main Street®, we are thinking of real places doing real work to revitalize their economies and preserve their character. The Main Street Four-Point Approach® is a unique preservation-based economic development tool that enables communities to revitalize downtown and neighborhood business districts by leveraging local assets - from historic, cultural, and architectural resources to local enterprises and community pride. The Four-Point Approach® is the basis of the Spruce the Bruce program and is a comprehensive strategy that addresses the variety of issues and problems that challenge traditional downtowns.



3 Purpose of this Community Design Toolkit

This Community Toolkit showcases Ripley and its unique identities and opportunities that, if applied consistently, will provide the community with the potential to enhance its downtown both economically and aesthetically. Ripley has the advantage of having three unique artisan shops in the downtown. These shops are the foundation for creating an artisan focused community that will help Ripley become a daytripping destination.

By focusing efforts and being strategic with both public and private undertakings, we have the potential to create an atmosphere that attracts more visitors, businesses, and creates a vibrant, self-sustaining community for our residents. This Toolkit is intended to foster leadership and creativity while at the same time providing some guidance in terms of next steps and how to move forward in a consistent and coordinated manner. It provides a summary of the community's identity; an action plan and some tools to help get started. In order to support a coordinated approach, it is recommended that all community partners from suppliers and community groups to Town Council and staff embrace this Toolkit and follow this guide as closely as possible, recognizing that it is a living document that will evolve with time.

While sweeping changes are not expected overnight, community-wide participation and implementation through small incremental changes that use the tools outlined in this document will, over time, allow the vision for downtown Ripley to be realized!



4 Roles

Role of the Community

- Be proud and take ownership of their community identity;
- Incorporate the community identity into their daily quality of life;
- Support the broader community, businesses and municipality to showcase the identity; and
- Seize opportunities to promote the identity to friends, family and people from outside the area.

Role of Businesses

- Be proud and take ownership of their community identity;
- Incorporate the community identity into their daily business life;
- Adapt and adopt the identity into their business (i.e. Façade alignment, business signage, themed sale days, etc.)
- Work with their local Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas to create special events themed around the community identity; and
- Support municipal infrastructure upgrades that align with the community identity.

Role of Municipality

- Be proud and take ownership of their community identity;
- Incorporate the community identity into daily municipal business life;
- Promote the individual identities in municipal marketing materials; and
- Use beautification and infrastructure projects such as streetscaping, signage, park development, municipal building facades, and urban design initiatives to enhance each community's identity.

Role of County

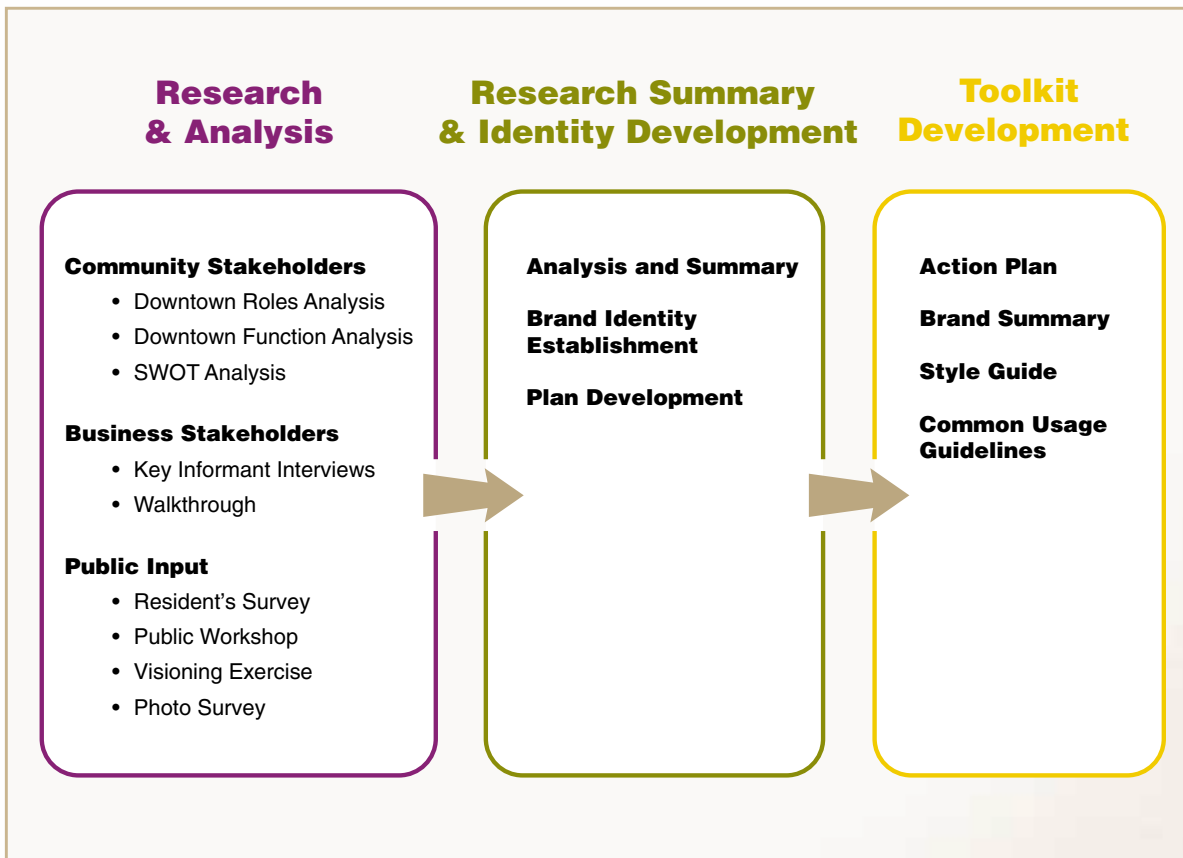
- Be proud and support the local identities and brands of communities in The County;
- Promote the individual identities in County marketing materials;
- Use the individual identities to create a unique tourism product offering; and
- Assist municipalities with the delivery of projects to enhance their identity.



5 Process

The Community Toolkit development process began in the spring of 2010 with the launch of the Spruce the Bruce Committee in Huron Kinloss. The Committee is composed of key staff at the Township as well as community stakeholders from both Lucknow and Ripley.

The Toolkit development process was a 10 month process involving an extensive research phase that culminated in the formation of this Toolkit. The Toolkit includes an Action Plan, Brand Summary, Style Guide, and Common Usage Guidelines which are essential to the revitalization of downtown Lucknow.



The Research

6 This is what you told us!

The key to any successful downtown revitalization program is to build a solid foundation. Research from the Main Street® program indicates that this foundation is centred on four pillars: Organization; Economic Development; Marketing and Promotion; and Physical Design.

In the summer of 2010 the Spruce the Bruce (STB) team collected background information regarding the health of downtown Ripley in order to develop a structured and focused downtown revitalization program. The team solicited feedback from a number of sources and this document represents a summary of those research findings.

The sources were:

- Community stakeholders which undertook Downtown Diagnostic exercises;
- Business stakeholders through Key Informant interviews;
- Public input through a Resident's Survey, Public Workshop and Photo Survey.

These research findings form the basis of Ripley's Brand Summary, Style Guide, Common Usage Guidelines and Action Plan for Ripley to support their revitalization efforts.



6.1 Community Stakeholders

The **Ripley Business** Community and the Spruce the Bruce Committee used three diagnostic tools to determine how the downtown was functioning. The first tool (***Downtown Roles***) asked participants to compare the importance of the current function of the downtown for both Commercial/Economic Roles and Social/Non-Business roles to that of 10 years ago. While this tool does not provide a lot of detailed information, it does provide a quick and effective assessment of how the downtown is performing its various roles and functions within the community. Participants were asked to rank the items as, increased, decreased or stayed about the same.

The second tool (***Downtown Function***) used 25 characteristics of a well-functioning downtown. These were broken down into four components - organization, marketing, economic development and design. Participants were asked to provide a score out of 4 for each characteristic.

The final tool was a ***SWOT analysis*** (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). Participants again were asked to assess the function of the downtown. Each area of the SWOT was divided up into four categories and a summary: organization, marketing, economic development, and design.

Downtown Roles Tool

Using the first diagnostic tool, respondents reviewed the Commercial/Economic role of the town (including retail services, offices, restaurant and entertainment options, and visitor accommodation and services). Respondents indicated that the number of retail stores and services as well as visitor services has increased over the last 10 years while restaurant and entertainment options have decreased. They also indicated that the number of commercial offices has stayed about the same.

The Social/Non-Business role included items such as community meeting places, arts and culture, institutional services and residential diversity. In general, participants indicated that the Social/Non-Business role of the town has increased over the last 10 years, and that institutional services have stayed about the same.



Downtown Function Tool

The second diagnostic tool asked participants to give the downtown a score out of 100 by ranking 25 separate characteristics on a scale from 0 to 4:

- 0 Does not meet criterion
- 1 Weakly meets criterion
- 2 Meets criterion moderately well
- 3 Meets criterion reasonably well
- 4 Very strongly meets criterion

The first component was Organization. The average score for the five characteristics in this component was 2.4/4. This indicates that the downtown meets the characteristics for organization of downtown reasonably to moderately well. Marketing, the second component, had four characteristics and an average score of 2.7, suggesting that the downtown meets these characteristics reasonably well. Economic Development was the next category and contained seven components. Ripley reasonably meets this criterion with an average score of 2.6. The final component, Design, contained nine different components; Ripley met the characteristics reasonably well, with an average score of 3.3. In total, the average score for Ripley is 71.

This score indicates that the downtown is performing reasonably well and would benefit from selective revitalization initiatives with a focus on Economic Development and Marketing /Promotion.

SWOT Analysis

The third and final tool used was a SWOT analysis. There were some significant discussion points that arose from each of the areas in the SWOT and they are highlighted below.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Strengths: | Ripley has a strong Chamber and Service clubs. The town also benefits from a core of specialty crafting shops and a beautiful new streetscape. Respondents also thought Lewis Park was a great asset as it is located downtown. |
| Weaknesses: | Although there are three core specialty stores, the town needs a critical mass of crafting retailers to pull more people in due to the fact that it is not located of a main travel route. More people would also help to support some of the other neighbourhood retailers as well as fill some of the remaining vacant buildings. |
| Opportunities: | The three crafting stores provide a great starting point to build Ripley as a crafting hub. More consideration should be given to bringing together the artisan community, Service clubs and Chamber of Commerce. Ripley would also benefit from a buy local campaign. |
| Threats: | The cost for both private and public sector is a major factor in a complete revitalization. Cooperation from private landlords is also something that needs to be considered during the strategy. |



6.2 Business Stakeholders

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews in the form of a survey were conducted in July and August 2010 with business owners and operators in downtown. The goal was to determine what is currently working or not working in the downtowns as well as what changes they would like to see that would help to improve the business environment of the downtown area.

The first set of questions asked respondents to rate items as excellent (4), good (3), fair (2), or poor (1). The questions were broken down into seven categories: Physical setting, Transportation, Parking, Gateway/Entrances, Storefronts, Competitive position, and Joint marketing/promotion. The average for all items was **good**.

The next section asked respondents whether their business would benefit from any programs, grants or services including façade improvement grants, joint marketing ventures, and improvements to the physical infrastructure. Respondents indicated that they would benefit from all programs except improvements to the telecommunication infrastructure.

When the respondents were asked to provide suggestions for improving the retail environment, more and better festivals and events and better signage were the top two suggestions. Other responses included removing eyesore buildings, attracting more specialty and niche stores, more restaurants and entertainment facilities and improved parking.

Finally, respondents were asked why people were coming downtown; what would be the one thing they would like to see improved to downtown; and what they thought was preventing that from happening. The survey concluded that people are coming downtown to shop at the specialty stores, for the park and because they have friends and family here. However, **there are not enough businesses to draw lots of people and there are not currently enough people coming to support increased businesses.** Respondents believe that the poor economy is part of why this is happening. Signage off of Highway 21, and a few more key businesses such as a gas station, more crafters and a bakery would help to bring more people to Ripley. Signage to direct people to Ripley and Christmas lights were what respondents felt would be the best improvements to the Town.



6.3 Public Input

Residents Survey

Every household in Huron-Kinloss was mailed a survey in July 2010 asking them specific questions regarding the town they lived closest to (i.e. either Ripley or Lucknow). The questions touched on marketing and economic development elements in the downtown. The survey concluded with some basic demographic questions. In total, 2480 surveys were mailed out, 650 with the postal code N0G 2R0 (Ripley). In total, 42 households with this postal code responded to the survey resulting in a response rate of 6%.

Marketing

Residents were asked if they were familiar with any specific identity elements for both the Township and their community. They were also asked if they felt that these elements were recognized by visitors and if they thought these elements represented their community. Nearly 54% indicated that they were familiar with the identity elements for the Township and 42% indicated they were familiar with identity elements for their community. Those who were familiar with identity elements were asked to name the elements that they were familiar with. Most respondents indicated the Huron Kinloss logo on Township trucks and entrance signs.

As for the Village of Ripley, the 'Hub of Huron' was the most popular response and 75% of respondents felt that it does accurately reflect the community, but nearly 79% felt that visitors to the community do not recognize the Hub.

Residents were then asked what unique features of the community would draw people in as well as what positive images or aspects of downtown should be promoted. Generally, people felt that the specialty shops: Dalton Pottery, Glass Hummingbird and the Woodworking shop as well as Lewis Park were the main reasons why people were coming to Ripley and those were the items that needed to be promoted.



Economic Development

Respondents were asked about their shopping habits to help determine the local attitude towards the business environment in town as well as the overall economic health of the community. 28% of respondents indicated that they shop in downtown Ripley at least two times per week compared with 70% that are shopping in Kincardine at least two times per week. Surprisingly, only 30% of people are running quick errands in Ripley whereas 57% of respondents were running these same errands in Kincardine. 32% of respondents are taking care of personal care items (salon & esthetics) in town and 40% are participating in recreational activity in Ripley. 53% of respondents indicated that they work in Ripley. 64% indicated that they *rarely or never shop in Ripley*.

Kincardine was a more popular destination for shopping in general. Residents were asked the main reasons for choosing to shop out of town: better selection (69%) and better price (45%) were the most popular responses. 33% also indicated that the products they wanted were not available in Ripley. Most of those products included items that would be available at a gas station or drug store. Respondents were also asked if they would use extended hours for businesses - 67% indicated they would not.

The majority of people strongly agreed or somewhat agreed that the prices in the downtown shops were reasonable, the shops were open when they wanted to shop, they like the look and feel of downtown, and they tried to shop locally whenever possible (NOTE: this contradicts the point above re: retail leakage). However, most people did somewhat disagree with the statement that they prefer to shop outside their community's downtown. Further, respondents were asked what new businesses they would like to see in downtown. The top responses were restaurant/pub, gas station, pharmacy, and clothing store.

Finally, respondents were asked to provide some general feedback regarding downtown retail environment. Most people like that Ripley is a quiet, friendly small town. There is a great 'hometown' atmosphere. Respondents also indicated that they would like to see the remaining buildings fixed up to match the beautiful new streetscape and filled with new merchants.



Public Workshop

The Ripley public workshop was held on Wednesday, July 28th at 7pm at the Ripley Community Centre. The meeting was well attended with approximately 16 people in attendance and a good cross-section of participants were present. There were two main components to the workshop: a Visioning Exercise; and Round Table Discussions.

Visioning Exercise

The **Visioning** Exercise was an opportunity for the residents of Ripley to express their wishes and desires and where they envisioned the community of Ripley developing over the next ten years. The exercise explored people's views on the potential revitalization of Ripley that could occur in that timeframe. The participants were asked to note what had changed, how the downtown looked and felt in the future and what they now loved about it. Each participant was then asked to volunteer their top three changes that had occurred to the downtown. Those 'changes' were then grouped and sorted by staff into four key spheres; Economic Restructuring; Marketing and Promotion; Physical Design and Social.

The priority area that emerged through this exercise for Ripley is Economic Restructuring and the need to support and enhance the business atmosphere in downtown Ripley. Specific ideas that were expressed by the community were thoughts like: support for farmers' market; additional places to eat; revitalized buildings; storefronts occupied; unique shops; etc. Another noticeable element to the Vision Exercise was that there was not much offered by way of Marketing and Promotion ideas for Ripley. It is difficult to isolate why ideas were not generated in this area and possibilities could be related to the lack of existing work in this area or that there is a lack of a brand that is identifiable to the general public.

Ideas that were generated towards Physical Design sphere related to the need for improved community facilities (i.e. arena, pool, trails, gym, gathering place, etc.) and downtown beautification. Most participants acknowledged the efforts that have been made by the Municipality with regard to downtown beautification and that increased community facilities (i.e. pool) would be difficult to obtain. However, the strong desire for community facilities versus business enhancement highlights the dichotomy that was acknowledged between creating a destination in Ripley and the desire for Ripley to be a hamlet community with basic amenities to services geared towards local residents.



Roundtable Discussions

The Roundtable Discussions were held the night of the public workshop and consisted of a presentation and discussion evolving three topic areas: Marketing & Promotion; Economic Restructuring; and Physical Design.

Marketing and Promotion

The Marketing and Promotion discussion highlighted a number of good qualities in Ripley. Words like Friendly; Safe; Welcoming; Pretty; Family; Rural; were used to describe the community. There was a strong recognition of the fact that a number of local artisans and crafters were located in downtown Ripley and that in addition to the annual Artisan and Crafter's Market, the surrounding area around Ripley has numerous local crafts-people. Challenges were highlighted related to the location of Ripley and the lack of traffic travelling through the core and that there is not an active campaign organized to tell the rest of the world what is available in Ripley.

Economic Restructuring

The Economic Restructuring discussion highlighted that there is a start of a base of visitor retail (i.e. unique shops) and an existing base of neighbourhood retail (i.e. support resident's needs). It was acknowledged that both forms of retail could be enhanced and that in order for the unique shops in the core to survive, there are needs to be a critical mass of this type of business which will draw visitors off the highway and into downtown. Issues that were acknowledged were the need for more incentive programs for small businesses in order to support their location in downtown; the need for always-open public washrooms; more restaurants; and the need to fill identified retail gaps: bakery; pharmacy; and gas station.

Physical Design

The discussion on the Physical Design component for downtown Ripley largely acknowledged the extensive streetscape work that has been undertaken. Lewis Park was mentioned by most participants as an asset to downtown Ripley. There was mention of improving some of the facades of buildings in downtown as well as making the buildings more accessible for an aging population.



Photo Survey

In June 2010, disposable cameras were handed out to a variety of people (i.e. student; senior; visitor; resident; business owner; etc) within the community in order to undertake a photo analysis of what defined their community. The participants were given 3 weeks to take photos of Ripley and all the cameras were returned at which time staff sorted all the pictures into like groupings. The themes that were highlighted through this exercise were:



Community Assets



Family



Local Businesses



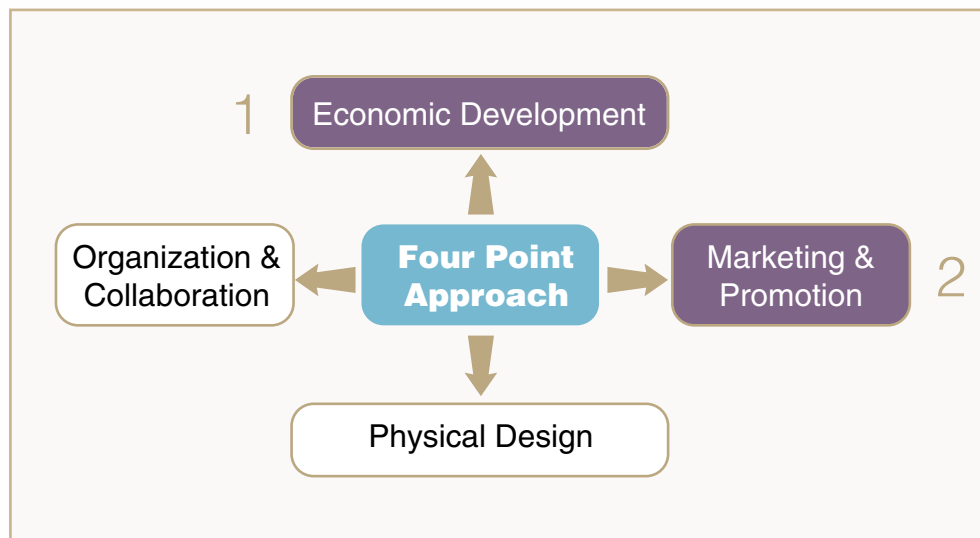
Rural Landscape

The photo analysis gave direction to the professional photos that were taken of Ripley that have been used to create the brand identity which are further developed in the next section.



7 Research Summary

Each of these research tools provides insights into achieving continuous downtown revitalization in Ripley. As noted, downtown revitalization is focused around four key pillars: Organization; Economic Development; Marketing and Promotion; and Physical Design. In Ripley, the initial priority area is primarily **Economic Development**. The secondary priority area is more difficult to discern. We heard strongly from the research that a coordinated approach to **Physical Design** especially as it relates to private businesses is important and we heard mixed reviews regarding the need for increased **Marketing and Promotion**.



- 1) Moving forward with the Economic pillar, economic restructuring strengthens a community's existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. A strategic program helps to sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners and recruits compatible new businesses, specifically related to the artisan and crafting industry and new economic uses to build a commercial district that responds to today's consumer's needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps to boost the profitability of the downtown core. The first step to moving the Economic pillar forward is to develop the Plan.
- 2) The second pillar that needs focus is Marketing and Promotion. Although this pillar was identified as the next priority, much work needs to be done with economic development, more specifically, recruiting more artisan shops to help build a critical mass. Once this has been completed then a marketing and promotion plan should take place with the goal of attracting a daytripping tourist population.

Regardless of the priority area for a community (i.e. Organization), one of the first steps to any revitalization program is for the community to know who they are and what they want to be. Establishing a community identity that can be utilized in all areas of the improvement plan is the next step to Ripley's revitalization plan and will be based on the research and community direction that was summarized in this report.



8 Establishing the Identity

As referenced above, what became apparent from the research that was gathered was that residents acknowledge the identify 'Hub of Huron', but visitors do not recognize this identity nor associate it with Ripley. If Ripley wants to succeed in its revitalization efforts a coordinated and consistent brand is going to have to be put in place that is embraced by all stakeholders and recognized by potential visitors. This brand needs to move beyond an image or logo and needs to be consistently used and authentic to Ripley. The identity needs to capture enough interest an experiential quality in order to draw people to the downtown Ripley.

The Spruce the Bruce team has been working with local municipalities to develop a strategic plan for the entire County where each Town has a specific yet equally important function to play. With the core assets that exist in downtown Ripley, the Glass Hummingbird, Dalton Pottery, and the Woodworking Shop, the potential to develop Ripley as a daytripping tourism destination exists. It is important to realize that Ripley needs to work within the framework of potential for their downtown. With no existing accommodation in town, and limited potential to attract future accommodation, a daytrip destination is the most appropriate angle for Ripley to pursue.

The following Community Identity or Brand has been developed for Ripley. This brand was presented to various stakeholders in October / November 2010 and received a positive reception





The Plan

9 The Identity – Homemade and Hands On

The backdrop for Ripley's brand is homemade and hands on. Ripley needs to embrace the unique role that they have the potential to play - offering visitors an opportunity to experience some of the best local artisans and crafters – HANDS ON. Many communities have local artisans but few offer the opportunity for people to get their hands dirty by actually participating alongside the artist. Dalton Pottery and the Glass Hummingbird have seized this market niche by offering classes – a participatory experience to those that travel to their stores.

The opportunity to take classes and learn the trade offers a unique perspective on the traditional artisan model. Typically, whenever you go to an art studio, gallery or museum, you can't touch anything. The opposite is true for the crafters in Ripley. Come in and experience, engage and learn the craft!

The key to Ripley's approach needs to be **HOMEMADE**. The focus of the hands on experience needs to be learning the traditional, rural culture. Quilting, knitting, pickling, butter and candle making are all examples of the traditional core skills that are experiencing resurgence. Imagine a program like the Southampton Art School that focused on traditional rural skills. This in addition to the stained glass, wood working, pottery, painting and welding will put Ripley on the map.

All too often, communities get stuck promoting the place and not the activities. Visitors are more interested in things to do than in the actual location. People will travel farther to participate in an experience than they will to visit a quaintly named town that sounds a lot like quaint small towns closer to their homes. Make the experience tangible for your customers. The more Ripley has to offer, the longer people will stay. And the more likely they will be to return. Sell the experience and people will flock to downtown Ripley.





10 Developing the Plan

As noted, before tackling any of the revitalization pillars for downtown, both the community and the revitalization program must first get organized. **Developing the Plan** starts with articulating common goals and objectives as well as outlining the steps necessary for achieving them.

It is important to distinguish between a vision and a brand. Much has been written about brands in general; many 'branding' consultants have attempted to give relatively unknown cities, downtowns, and businesses clever branding treatments – catchy slogans about whatever the downtown wants to be. Brands seek to place in the prospective visitor's head a belief that "this is the place to go for.....". The key distinction between a brand and a vision is that a brand describes the image you want people to have of your downtown right now, while a vision describes what the downtown will look like at some point in the future.

Defining a Vision for downtown Ripley is essential as it establishes the 15-20 year perspective for the community and looks beyond the current planning documents to the kind of place that the community aspires to become. It takes that community identity (Homemade and Hands On) and conveys a sense of personality, character and identity for downtown. A Vision is a description of a desired condition at some point in the future. That Vision guides the mission, goals, objectives and actions of the revitalization plan and make the connective link between the desired / authentic Identity and the Plan to move the community there.



Vision

At the public workshop in Ripley, we undertook a Visioning exercise which established the ground work for the following VISION that has been established for downtown Ripley:

Downtown Ripley has the Homemade and HandsOn artisan experience that is unparalleled. Ripley is blessed with an artisan community and strong agricultural history which presents the perfect opportunity to pass on traditional rural skills as well as the unique artisan trades in downtown. Ripley will become the heart of rural culture by providing a hand's on learning experience that strives to keep these many traditions alive.



Mission Statement

A Mission statement takes Ripley's Vision and translates it into a stated purpose for the downtown revitalization effort; it can be viewed as the public statement for accomplishing the Vision and the pathway in order to get you there. The mission statement for Ripley is:

To create a critical mass of artisan shops that offer a homemade and hands on experience in downtown Ripley and to market and promote the village as the heart of rural culture.

Goal statements transform the Mission statement into priority areas for downtown. The Spruce the Bruce committee undertook a strategic planning session in September 2010 in order to transform the mission statement into strategic directions. The following Goals were established from downtown Ripley as priority areas:

- GOAL 1: To foster an environment of organization, leadership and management;
- GOAL 2: To investigate programs to attract a critical mass of artisan based retail;
- GOAL 3: To undertake specific economic development initiatives to foster increased retailers;
- GOAL 4: To develop a Marketing Strategy to promote to the artisan / crafter day trip, tourism destination.



11 Putting the Plan to Work

In order to enact change and begin to see some tangible results in Ripley, the Spruce the Bruce team recommends that Ripley focus its initial program on both the ***Economic Development*** and ***Marketing and Promotion*** pillars.

While any revitalization strategy requires broad-based support and organization of both the public and private sector in order to achieve success, it has been our experience that laying the foundation and ground-work for success on the organizational pillar should be completed before a broad-based program is developed.

The Ripley Spruce the Bruce Committee should focus for the first year on organizing, assessing, planning and then implementing. This is a critical mobilizing phase that develops the vision / mission, partnerships, strategies and actions and will begin to yield results that further mobilize the program. Through the 2010 Spruce the Bruce process a number of preparatory steps were accomplished including:

- identifying the resources;
- assessing the community;
- developing the community identity;
- developing the revitalization vision; and
- determining the short-term actions.

The next steps involve using a set of tools to deepen the understanding of the current retail services and businesses including supply and demand in downtown; community design activities focused on opportunities to improve physical assets; and cultural attributes and their potential strengths.

As few as 15 visitor-oriented retail shops with dining and treats within a couple of blocks can spur very strong retail sales and can totally revitalize a town. Communities that develop pedestrian-friendly, visitor-oriented retail villages end up succeeding and know that critical mass is the key. The Economic Development pillar should be the focus of Ripley's attention in the initial years, in recognition that the Marketing and Promotion program should only be undertaken once there is a critical mass of experiences and or visitor retailers to ensure a rewarding trip to downtown Ripley.

Developing a more detailed work plan which sets out the tasks and steps for the next six months to a year will take the knowledge gained from the exploratory phase and begin to develop a plan to move forward. It is important for the STB committee to tackle some visible, high impact, short-term projects throughout these preliminary months while the less visible supporting documentation is being developed. The following is an Action Plan of the next steps for Spruce the Bruce as it relates to downtown Ripley.



12 Action Plan

The next step to a downtown revitalization plan is to develop action items for each of the priority goals which ensure that the Plan remains dynamic and produces results. It is important to consider how the actions will touch on all four points of the revitalization strategy with emphasis placed on each in the following order: Organization or Leadership; Economic Development; Physical Improvement; and Marketing and Promotion.

GOAL 1: To foster an environment of organization, leadership and management;

1. **Organization and Leadership Action:** To create a Ripley specific Spruce the Bruce Sub Committee with representation on the HK Spruce the Bruce Committee.

Before tackling design, promotion, or economic development activities, a revitalization program must first get organized. Recruiting the appropriate resources by building support from a variety of stakeholders is essential. The Ripley STB Committee may transform an already existing committee, adding members and expanding their focus or it may be a completely new entity recruiting new members.

Primary Responsibility: HK STB Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 3

Budget Implications: None

2. **Economic Development Action:** To attract representatives to the Ripley STB Sub Committee from the business community and specifically any Chamber of Commerce or BIA representatives.

The Ripley STB program, must identify people who have a vested interest in revitalizing the commercial district. Involving a broad range of interests in the process will show various groups that they share a common goal and facilitate the overall objective of a healthy successful downtown. Each of these organizations benefits from an effective revitalization effort dedicated to creating a vibrant commercial area and responding to the community's economic and social needs.

Primary Responsibility: HK STB Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 3

Budget Implications: None



3. **Physical Improvement Action:** To attract representatives to the Ripley STB Committee from the Lewis Park Development committee or Fall Fair committee.

As noted above, you can't lead a community-wide effort without the support of others. Community groups already interested in the promotion and beautification of Ripley need to be involved in the revitalization effort.

Primary Responsibility: HK STB Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 3

Budget Implications: None

4. **Marketing and Promotion Action:** Communication of this action plan to other stakeholders (i.e. Lions, Rotary and soliciting their assistance with specific action items.

Grassroots organizing starts with articulating common goals and the steps necessary for achieving them. and disseminating this information to the widest audience possible. you will need to build momentum for the revitalization effort among community stakeholders to create public support and involve enough people to get board-based participation.

Without the support of and involvement of all groups, it is doubtful that any revitalization program will achieve long-last success

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Sub Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 1

Budget Implications: None



GOAL 2: To investigate programs to attract a critical mass of artisan based retail;

1. **Organization and Leadership Action:** Create an Artists recruitment committee as part of the Ripley Spruce the Bruce Sub Committee.

Creating a critical mass of artisan businesses in the downtown is essential to the revitalization effort in Ripley. This is the foundation of making Ripley a rural cultural day trip destination. A recruitment committee will help to attract the right artisan businesses that fit with the *Homemade and Hands On* identity.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of HK

Proposed Timing: Year 3 – once background studies are complete

Budget Implications: None

2. **Economic Development Action:** Complete a cultural inventory and mapping of artists and crafters in the area. (Program is available from Ministry of Culture and Tourism)

The cultural inventory and mapping will locate other crafters and artists in the surrounding area that could potentially move into the downtown. This will identify what their craft is as well as where they are physically located.

The resources for Cultural Inventory and mapping exercise are available through the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MCT). A grant application for the mapping has been submitted. This should be completed concurrently with a Business Retention and Expansion study.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of Huron Kinloss / Consultant

Proposed Timing: Year 2 and 3

Budget Implications: Yes – potential funding through MCT



3. **Physical Improvement Action:** Investigate the development of initiatives like artist and community cooperatives, incubators, galleries and markets in downtown.

Many communities provide a one-of-a-kind attraction in downtown in order to differentiate themselves as well as provide an anchor to the downtown. An important component to Ripley's revitalization success as a day-tripping destination is to provide this one-of-a-kind attraction that will be a 'people generator' in the downtown. There are numerous examples of cooperatives, incubators, galleries and markets that can be investigated so that the right fit is determined for Ripley. The Glass Hummingbird in Ripley has already initiated a business model that embraces this type of cooperative thinking. However, the scale of this cooperative needs to be addressed in order for this initiative to become that anchor that downtown needs. More often than not, these types of initiatives are spearheaded by the private sector or through some form of public / private partnership.

Primary Responsibility: RSTB Committee / Township of HK / Ripley Business Community

Proposed Timing: Year 3-5 – once background studies are complete

Budget Implications: Depends on model and partnerships

4. **Marketing and Promotion Action:** Develop an active program for recruitment of compatible artisans identified in the cultural inventory.

Even though there might be a number of artists in close proximity to Ripley, the benefits of being located close together in a downtown setting might not be known to them. The Ripley STB Committee needs to develop a recruitment program and the supporting materials to this program. This package should outline these benefits and highlight the advantages to creating that critical mass of visitor retail in downtown Ripley in order to attract economic prosperity and spending to the community (and to the artist themselves).

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of HK / Consultant

Proposed Timing: Year 4-5 – once background studies are complete

Budget Implications: Yes



GOAL 3: To undertake specific economic development initiatives to foster increased retailers;

1. **Organization and Leadership Action:** Begin the Business Retention and Expansion study in conjunction with the cultural mapping and inventory.

Coordination is the key. It is important that any economic development initiatives be coordinating with the cultural mapping and artisan attraction projects. The potential for cost savings and for efficiencies to be achieved during the research collection phase of both goals warrants their coordination. Communication and coordination between both groups completing the studies needs to be considered.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of Huron-Kinloss

Proposed Timing: Year 1

Budget Implications: None

2. **Economic Development Action:** To undertake and implement a Business Retention and Expansion Study (BR+E available through OMAFRA).

Vital background information for to any comprehensive downtown economic development program is the completion of a Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E) Study. The BR+E provides an excellent tool to support and grow existing businesses while enabling the community support for their local businesses. This tool is valuable in understanding the local economy and business climate, and providing essential information for a community's economic development strategic plan. This will help to identify what artisan businesses could complement the existing ones and therefore create a critical mass.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of Huron Kinloss / Consultant

Proposed Timing: Year 2 and 3

Budget Implications: Yes



3. **Physical Improvement Action:** Contact owners of vacant land holdings and buildings to discuss the potential for rehabilitation and/or development of their properties.

Vacant land holdings, derelict buildings and absentee landowners are always an issue in any downtown revitalization effort. When disinvestment, poor maintenance and abandonment leave a downtown pockmarked with vacant and dilapidated buildings often the community seeks a quick solution. While there is no single trick to solve all these problems a patient process involving thoughtful planning and advocacy is important. Innovative ideas from zoning by-laws, reinvestment incentives, business attraction initiatives, and adaptive reuses need to be explored through the BR+E.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of Huron Kinloss

Proposed Timing: Year 3 – once background studies are complete

Budget Implications: Yes

4. **Marketing and Promotion Action:** Establish opportunities for workshops/classes on business planning, etc. for local businesses.

Within the County there are already organizations that support this type of education and function. Forming partnerships with organizations like the Bruce Community Futures Development Corporation (BCFDC) and the Saugeen Enterprise Centre which currently organize various workshops and small business investment strategies within our region is essential.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Township of Huron Kinloss

Proposed Timing: Year 4 – once background studies are complete

Budget Implications: Yes



GOAL 4: To develop a Marketing Strategy to promote to the artisan / crafter day trip, tourism destination;

1. **Organization and Leadership Action:** Undertake strategic and coordinated initiatives through the development of a Marketing Strategy for downtown to promote Ripley as rural cultural hub.

The Marketing Strategy will be the foundation for future joint marketing for the Ripley Business Community. Since the goal is for Ripley to become a daytrip destination, the entire business community needs to be on the same page. This strategy will streamline the marketing process so that visitors will come and receive the full experience, from craft, refreshments, and potentially accommodation. The underlying theme will remain Homemade and Hands On.

The Ripley Business Community with the RSTB Committee must be willing to design and lead a long term campaign that is unlike the work to date. Several areas of emphasis are suggested for the marketing strategy:

- Promoting the downtown merchants as celebrities;
- Promoting the experiential institutions as downtown anchors;
- Promoting local history as the context for experience;
- Promoting a 24/7 mind-set among all of the downtown stakeholders;
- Managing and creating different criteria for new businesses (e.g. actors in the experience);
- Becoming a concierge: scripting the trip; organizing the trip; and creating itineraries for locals and visitors alike.

These areas of emphasis provide the downtown Marketing Strategy with a framework in which to create events and opportunities to produce excitement and sales.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley Business Community / Ripley STB Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 5

Budget Implications: Yes



2. **Economic Development Action:** Through the Business Retention and Expansion Study undertake a Market Analysis to aid in the development of a targeted Marketing Strategy.

A target market analysis is a critical aspect of the Marketing Strategy. OMAFRA offers various services related to analyzing the market for downtowns. The Business Mix Analysis (Community to Community Comparison and Market Threshold Analysis) as well as the Trade Area Report are commonly known as downtown Market Analysis Tools. Both tools are valuable in understanding the local economy and business climate, and providing essential information for a community's economic development and marketing strategy. Essential to this assessment is to identify any gaps in the retail and service sector and highlight complementary businesses that will strengthen the products and service offerings in Ripley maintaining the Homemade and Hands On identity.

These tools provide detailed information on the potential visitors demographic and psychographic data which will guide the advertising campaigns.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley Business Community / Consultant

Proposed Timing: Year 3

Budget Implications: Yes

3. **Physical Improvement Action:** Assist in the development of an incentives program through the creation of a Community Improvement Plan.

Community Improvement Planning is one of the sustainable community planning tools found in the Planning Act and can help municipalities address some of that challenges related to changing economic trends in our downtowns. It provides a means of planning and financing development activities that effectively use, reuse and restore lands, building and infrastructure. Community Improvement Plans (CIP's) can be a tool for significant rehabilitation, development and land-use change.

In Ripley, development of an incentives program for building facades, signage, structural, accessibility improvements, etc. should be considered through the development of a CIP. Downtown buildings define the street and are a major contributor to the character of the community. Clean, interesting and well-maintained buildings communicates a sense of pride, commitment to quality in the community and encourages people to stop and enjoy the downtown. Such a program will go a long way to address the physical design issues of private businesses on Ripley's mainstreets and bring these businesses up to the standard of the outstanding public areas that surround them.

Primary Responsibility: Township of Huron Kinloss / Ripley STB Committee

Proposed Timing: Year 1

Budget Implications: Yes



4. **Marketing and Promotion Action:** Create an advertising campaign for the downtown businesses based on the Marketing Strategy.

As noted, the downtown businesses are the community's celebrities! Once the Marketing Strategy has been outlined, the next step should be an advertising campaign (i.e. radio, print media, online, billboards, etc.) for the downtown businesses. This campaign should reference the overall Strategy to provide consistency and direction amongst all marketing initiatives. The completed target market analysis will be critical in detailing like: where ads should be placed; what tone should be used; who should be the main focus; when the campaign should run; and how for how long.

Primary Responsibility: Ripley STB Committee / Ripley Business Community

Proposed Timing: Year 5

Budget Implications: Yes



Action Plan Summary

These Action Plans will become the road-map for the revitalization of Ripley's downtown. As the Ripley STB committee moves forward with the implementation of its revitalization work, it should ensure that the activities include a mix of quickly achievable actions as well as those that will take longer to realize.

Beginning the process of implementing the Action Plan is the next step for Ripley and it is necessary to create an effective work plan for the Ripley STB committee that meets regularly and provides feedback to the HK Spruce the Bruce committee about the progress of the Action Plan. It is vital to regularly monitor the Action Plan, revise the goals and develop annual work plans – based on the progress made, obstacles encountered and changes happening in downtown. An annual update or report is an effective tool to ensuring that the downtown Action Plan is continually evolving.



Action Plan Timeline

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
GOAL 1: To foster an environment of organization, leadership and management;					
Develop Ripley STB Sub Committee			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves business community representatives			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves Lewis Park Development Committee			•		
Ripley STB Sub Committee involves stakeholders (i.e. Lion's, Rotary)			•		
GOAL 2: To investigate programs to attract a critical mass of artisan based retail;					
Create an Artist Recruitment Committee			•		
Compile a cultural inventory, and area map of artists and crafters	•	•			
Research the development of community cooperatives, incubators, galleries and markets			•	•	•
Recruitment of Compatible Artisans Program identified in the cultural inventory				•	•
GOAL 3: To undertake specific economic development initiatives to foster increased retailers;					
Start a Business Retention & Expansion Study (BR&E) with cultural mapping and inventory	•	•			
Implement BR & E Study		•	•		
Rehabilitation of vacant, derelict buildings and absentee landowners			•		
Implement workshops for business planning				•	
GOAL 4: To develop a Marketing Strategy to promote to the artisan / crafter day trip, tourism destination;					
Commence strategic and coordinated initiatives of Marketing Strategy as rural cultural hub					•
Initiate a Market Analysis to aid in the development of a targeted Marketing Strategy			•	•	
Incentive Program through a CIP for facades, signage, structural, accessibility improvements etc.	•			•	•
Create an advertising campaign for downtown businesses based on Marketing Strategy					•





The Tools

The images and colours shown are for illustration purposes only, and are intended to illustrate a desired style and effect, not to define a specific product or colour palette, and are not intended to serve as working drawings or templates for production.

Brand Summary

Keywords

Traditional Rural Skills

Country Charm

Hands-On Artisans

Homemade Rural Culture

Experience

Materials



Heritage Brick



Stained Glass



Barn Board



Decorative Iron



Wrought Iron

New development in Ripley should strive to utilize the existing historic building stock with a flair for the creative in any new initiatives. Bringing the artist perspective in to building design will explore ways to personalize buildings and encourage variations that enhance the Homemade and Hands On theme. Bringing a presence to the street by including elements like large windows for displays and architectural features will animate the street.

Buildings should utilize strong horizontal lines and angular planes. Building materials are concrete, stone, wood, glass and wrought iron as appropriate that emphasizes the uniqueness of each building and the personality of its owner / proprietor.

Materials: wood, rustic metal, clay, glass, and wrought iron

Graphic Elements such as banners, perpendicular signage or advertising should pay careful attention to the artisan theme. Street furniture and improvements should reference the local talent through public art displays, and focal features.



Summary Direction

Colour Palette



Black
Pantone: Black C



Orange
Pantone: 1385 C



Light Green
Pantone: 584 C



Dark Green
Pantone: 5763 C



Grey Blue
Pantone: 7546 C

Primary Font

Britannic Bold

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz123456789

Complimentary Font

Nimbus Sans P Light Condensed

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz123456789

Nimbus Sans P Regular Condensed

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz123456789

Nimbus Sans P Light

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz123456789

Nimbus Sans P Regular

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhIiJjKkLlMmNnOoPpQqRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz123456789



Common Usage Guidelines

Gateway Entrance Signage



Street Banners





Signage
Headers



Existing Streetlight



Benches

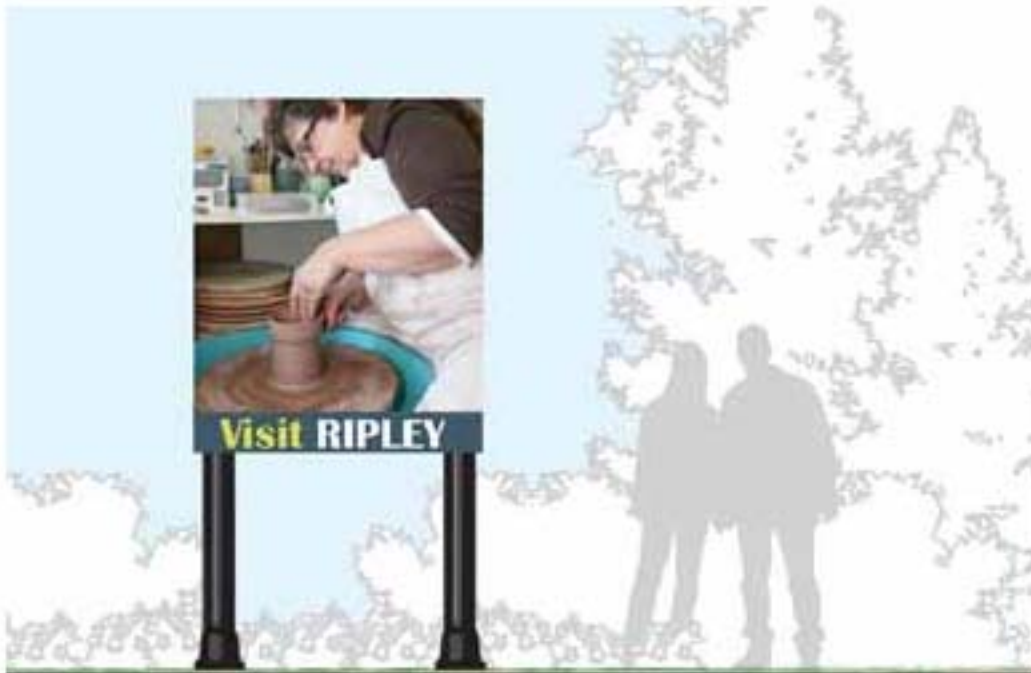


Bike Racks

This unique bike rack provides the service required with an artistic flair and community input.



Economic Development Boards



Façade

Existing buildings could enhance the store fronts with architectural features that highlight the artistian flavour of the community.



Gatlinburg, TN



Midland, ON



Minnesota



Example of Historic Mural



Chemainus, BC



Façade



Existing



Artists rendering



Public Art

The opportunity for the community of Ripley to create public spaces and displays of art, this will reflect the local talent and industries.



Kensington Market pole - Toronto, ON



Needle & button - NYC, NY



Edmonton, AB



Spools - Hamilton, ON



Corvallis, OR



Summary

In summary, STB has developed with the community of Ripley a Toolkit that creates the basis for a successful revitalization program for downtown. Ownership is the key to developing an authentic and believable brand identity for a community. All members of the community have a role to play in developing and fostering the brand identity and in moving the Action Plan forward. The methods employed to create this Toolkit combined with positive community feedback ensures that this Toolkit is destined for success if applied consistently.

This Toolkit is a starting point and illustrates possibilities. For more information or support with your local project please contact the Township of Huron Kinloss or the Spruce the Bruce team at sprucethebruce@explorethebruce.com.

P.S.

In closing, we offer the following inspiration.

1. Creating successful downtowns is about more than planning and many great plans get bogged down because they are too big, too expensive and simply take too long to happen. Short-term actions, like planting flowers, can be a way of not only testing ideas, but also giving people the confidence that change is occurring and that their ideas matter. Short-term actions need to occur at the outset and then be evaluated while longer term planning is in progress.

Ripley Quick Wins!

1. Cultural Inventory and Mapping
2. Gateway and Highway Signage
3. Weekend workshops featuring rural culture and heritage
4. Artist's incubator on Huron St.

2. Money is not the issue. All too often money is used as an excuse for doing nothing, which is why you hear people say "It can't be done!". In fact, too much money or money spent on consultants actually discourages the inventiveness and creativity required to create a great street or downtown. When money becomes an issue, it is generally an indication that the wrong concept is at work. So don't worry about the money, just get started!

3. You are never finished. Creating a great place is not about developing a plan or a design. It is based on community passion and vision and on an ever evolving Action Plan. Part of any plan has to be the management of the downtown. No matter how good the buildings look or how many hanging baskets are hung, the downtown will never be successful unless it is well managed by the Ripley Spruce the Bruce Committee.

