

# **Creative Communities Exchange City of Pittsfield Downtown Renaissance Checklist**

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The City of Pittsfield is a community of approximately 44,000. This project provides a review of the actions taken by the Department of Community Development to enhance the viability of downtown as a desirable place to live, work and visit. Utilizing a wide range of municipal tools and resources, as well as creative public/private partnerships, Pittsfield has established itself as a cultural destination in the heart of the Berkshires. Using a zoning overlay district, the city set the stage for action and investment. The City then became an active investor in key downtown projects and businesses. Thirdly, the City invested in the downtown infrastructure. All of this work has been designed to bring people back downtown to live, diversify our economy, and help city businesses compete for and attract the human capital that is critical to their ability to grow and succeed.

## **Checklist**

- ✓ **Identify & recruit leadership**
  - Municipality
    - Mayor
    - Council
    - Decision making boards & commissions
    - Other departments
  - Community stakeholders
    - Potential developers
    - Non-profit organizations
    - Downtown property and business owners
    - Volunteer organizations
    - Major employers
  - Federal and state legislative delegations
  
- ✓ **Create vision and turn into a brand**
  - Define & articulate vision
  - Define who ultimate decision maker is for vision
  - Bring in objective, experienced creative design firm/team
  - Set clear parameters for process and decision making
  - Involve the public
  - Be prepared to arbitrate

- ✓ **Identify & evaluate local ordinances that could impact ability to achieve vision**
  - Dig deep, ask lots of questions and run lots scenarios
    - What uses are allowed “by-right”; what requires a special permit
    - Does zoning allow:
      - People to live downtown
      - Live where they work
      - Businesses and residents to be located in the same building
      - Creative products to be made (i.e. manufactured) downtown
      - What are parking requirements? Can they be reduced? Can parking be shared?
      - Can businesses use city sidewalks? What permits are required?
      - What permit(s) and/or permission is required to hold a festival?
  - Involve and develop a working partnership with a wide range of departments and staff of city boards and commissions
  
- ✓ **Develop plans to secure funding**
  - Prepare overall master plan for achieving vision, set goals and actions
  - Identify the most important projects required to make vision a reality and determine:
    - What each will cost
    - Who will make them happen
    - How long it will take
    - Where they will happen
    - What actions are required to make each happen
  - Develop strong working relationship with Federal and state legislative delegations and state agency heads and staff, including:
    - Getting their buy in to vision
    - Winning their confidence in community’s:
    - Willingness to make the investments and commitments necessary to achieve vision
    - Ability to administer programs and grants and implement projects
  - Identify and pursue funding
  
- ✓ **Identify partners and recruit**
  - Define responsibilities
  - Develop sustainable funding sources
  - Continually evaluate and refine roles and responsibilities

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