



Assessment Findings and Suggestions Report

Johnstown, Pennsylvania
July 2021

ROGER BROOKS >
International



Destination Assessment

INTRODUCTION

In July of 2021, a Destination Assessment of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, was conducted, and the findings were presented in a two-and-a-half hour workshop. The assessment provides an unbiased overview of Johnstown—how it is seen by a visitor. It includes a review of local marketing efforts, signage, attractions, critical mass, retail mix, ease of getting around, customer service, visitor amenities such as parking and public washrooms, overall appeal, and the community’s ability to attract overnight visitors.

In performing the Destination Assessment, we looked at the area through the eyes of a first-time visitor. No prior research was facilitated, and no community representatives were contacted except to set up the project. The town and surrounding area were “secretly shopped.” Any person looking to relocate their business, industry, or residence will come to your community as a visitor first. Tourism is the front door to all your economic development efforts.

Once potential visitors find information about your area, are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale? In the Marketing Assessment, we reviewed your visitor website and print marketing materials.

A typical community has five opportunities to close the sale:

- 1) Personal contact (visitor information centers, trade shows, etc.)

- 2) Websites
- 3) Brochures and printed materials
- 4) Publicity (articles)
- 5) Word of mouth—the most effective means

We searched the internet for activities, requested and reviewed printed materials, and looked for articles and third-party information. As we prepared for travel to your community, we searched both commercial and organizational websites promoting the area, tourism websites, and read travel articles and guidebooks.

The marketing assessment determined how effective the marketing was in convincing a potential visitor that the area would be worth a special trip, a stop, or an overnight stay. The key to the marketing assessment is to see if you have a primary lure that makes you worth a special trip of a one-hour drive, or from further away. The question on most visitors’ minds is: What do you have that I can’t get closer to home? What makes you worth a special trip?

Where most communities falter is when they merely provide “lists” of what the community has, whether it’s truly “unique” or not. Nearly every community in North America promotes the usual list of diversions: local museums, shops and restaurants, plenty of lodging, golf, outdoor recreation, historic downtowns, scenic vistas, etc. Of course, nearly every visitor can do these things closer to home. So, what makes Johnstown worth the trip?

Always promote your primary lure first—what makes you worth that special trip. THEN, promote your diversionary, or “complementary” activities.

Would you go to Anaheim, California, if Disneyland wasn't there? Do you think that Universal Studios and Knotts Berry Farm mind that Disneyland gets all the glory? Of course not. Eighty percent of all tourism spending is with those secondary activities. Disney does the heavy lifting in terms of advertising and promotion, and the diversionary activities benefit as well.

In a nutshell, the marketing assessment looks for what makes your community worth a special trip, or a great place to live, or to do business. We look for details, details, details. Do you give a reason for visiting, and do you provide enough information to make it easy to plan a trip? Are the marketing materials good enough to close the sale?

The second part of the assessment process is the On-site Assessment. During this part of the assessment, we spent several days in the area, looking at enticements from the highways (signs, billboards, something that would get a visitor to stop), beautification and overall curb appeal, wayfinding (ease of getting around), visitor amenities (public restrooms, visitor information, parking), activities, overall appeal, retail mix (lodging, dining, shopping), critical mass, customer service, area attractions, pedestrian friendliness, gathering spaces, evening activities, and the availability of marketing materials and their effectiveness.

The area benefits from tourism when visitors spend money, and they do that in the local gift shops, restaurants, hotels, etc. Therefore, the On-site Assessment includes a candid look at private businesses as much as public spaces and amenities.

For every shortcoming or challenge we note during the assessment process, we provide a low-cost "suggestion," where possible, on how the challenge can be corrected or overcome. The suggestions are not termed "recommendations," as they were developed without consulting the community first about possible constraints, future plans, or reasons why the suggestions may not be appropriate. Hopefully this assessment process will open dialogue within the community, leading people to adopt some or all of the suggestions, taking them from suggestions to recommendations.

It's important to note that to increase the city's tourism industry, fulfilling one or two of the suggestions may have little impact, but implementing a number of them, if not all, can have a profoundly successful impact on the city's ability to tap into the tourism industry.

Implementation of these suggestions must be a region-wide effort, involving both privately owned businesses as well as local, county, and state agencies, where appropriate. Every local organization plays a role in tourism, downtown revitalization, or economic development efforts. A Destination Marketing Organization (DMO, CVB, Chamber, TPA, etc.) will not be successful if the tourism effort is not region-wide.

In many cases, issues may come up that you are already aware of and are already working on. In that case, the assessment validates those efforts. But more often than not, the assessment will point out things that you are aware of but can't mention or bring up without paying a political price. Local politics can be a killer of the tourism industry.



While marketing efforts are important, product development is the most important factor of a successful tourism industry. Visitors want activities, not just things to look at. How much time can a visitor spend enjoying activities—that cater to their interests—in your area? Does your community have truly unique attractions the visitor can't get closer to home? You must be able to deliver on your marketing promises, otherwise visitors might come once, but they won't come back. It's much more cost effective to bring people back, than to always go out and entice new visitors into town. "Been there, done that" communities eventually run out of visitors and find they don't have a sustainable tourism industry, or they simply become pit stops or gateways on the way to somewhere else.

After spending several days reviewing marketing materials and assessing the community, we have looked at all of these issues, and have developed some suggestions and ideas the community can discuss and possibly implement to help increase tourism spending locally.

SUCCESSFUL TOURISM TRANSLATES TO CASH

Tourism is successful when the community imports more cash than it exports. When residents spend their hard-earned money outside the community, the community is exporting cash—often referred to as "leakage." Tourism helps fill that gap, importing cash into the local economy without the necessity of having to provide extended social and other services. Visitors come, spend money, then go home. When you import more cash than you export, you have a positive "balance of trade." Communities with successful tourism

programs easily see that the industry subsidizes the community, whereas other communities find that they subsidize visitors—providing services visitors use without them leaving enough money behind to cover the cost of those services.

The primary goal of the tourism industry is to bring more cash into the local economy. This doesn't happen when visitors come into the community, get out of their cars, and take photographs. And it doesn't happen when visitors go swimming in the lake at your park all day, sunning, and eating the lunch they brought from home. And it doesn't happen when visitors hike down your trails, enjoy your interpretive centers, or stroll through your lovely arboretums. These are all great things to do, and, of course, you do want your visitors to do these—but, you also want to entice them into your shops, your cafes, espresso stands, restaurants, galleries, B&B's, and hotels, ultimately opening their wallets to make purchases. That is what helps your local economy, your small merchants, your hoteliers, and your tax coffers.

To entice visitors to spend money in your community, you need to have places for them to spend it—you need to have the right mix of shops, restaurants, entertainment, and lodging facilities, all in an attractive setting, as well as attractions that make them want to visit you in the first place.



THE THREE TYPES OF TOURISM

1. Visiting friends and family

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and/or family. If you did nothing to promote tourism, you would still have tourism in your community. However, when friends and family come to visit, do your residents take them out to eat, shop, dine locally? Or do they head to a neighboring community? Do your locals even know what you have to offer? An effective tourism marketing effort also includes educating locals as to what you have and how to find it through effective wayfinding signage, gateways and advertising.

2. Business travel

The second most popular reason for travel is business. Included in this category is educational travel: colleges and universities, as well as conventions and meetings, corporate travel, vendor travel, etc. Like leisure travelers, this group is looking for things to do “after hours” while in the area. The most successful convention and trade show towns are the result of their secondary activities or “diversions,” not simply because of their convention and exhibition facilities. Think Disneyworld, Disneyland, San Antonio’s River Walk, Banff, to name a few.

3. Leisure travel

The third, and most lucrative of all types of visitors, is the leisure traveler. They have no personal connections to the community, but are coming purely to enjoy themselves. They stay in commercial lodging establishments, eat virtually all their meals in local restaurants, and their top diversionary

activity is shopping and dining in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

The average leisure visitor is active 14 hours a day, yet typically only spends four to six hours with the primary lure. They then spend eight to ten hours with diversionary activities—things they could do closer to home, but will do while in the area. A good example of this is Branson, Missouri, the “live music-theater capital of the world.” This town of 6,500 residents hosts 7.5 million visitors a year. The primary “lure” is the 49 music theaters. The average visitor attends two shows a day over about





four hours. During the other hours of the day, the visitor will shop in local outlet malls, head to the water parks, theme parks, and other attractions, play a round of golf, hike, bike, fish, do some bird watching, and participate in any number of other activities they could do closer to home, but will do while visiting Branson.

THE THREE STAGES OF TOURISM

1. Status quo

If you take no action to develop the tourism industry, you will still have an element of tourism, simply because some travelers will pull off local highways or freeways for gas, food, or lodging, as well as the fact that the number one reason for travel is to visit friends or family. If you have residents, you will have some tourism.

2. Getting people to stop

The first priority for developing a successful tourism industry is getting people to stop. Imagine how successful businesses in the community would be if just 50% of the vehicles traveling through pulled off the highway and spent just 30 minutes in your community—buying gas, an ice cream cone, a sandwich, a gift or souvenir?

If there's a strong pull, imagine the money spent if visitors stayed two hours in the community, which nearly always translates to additional spending.

The first goal is to get those travelers to stop.

3. Becoming the destination

To become a destination community you must have attractions and supporting amenities that convince visitors to spend the night. And those attractions

must be different from what the visitor can get closer to home.

Overnight visitors spend four times that of day visitors, and nearly ten times that of visitors using your community as a pit stop on the way to somewhere else.

THE FOUR-TIMES RULE

Visitors will make a point of stopping or staying in a community if it has enough activities that appeal specifically to them and will keep them busy four times longer than it took them to get there.

In other words, if a person has to drive 15 minutes to visit you, do you have enough for them to do to keep them busy for an hour? (4 times 15 minutes) If a visitor has to drive an hour, do you have the activities and amenities to keep them busy for four hours?

The more you have to offer, collectively, the further visitors will come, and the longer they will stay, and of course, the more they will spend. This is why it is so important for communities to market more than just their immediate geographic areas. By marketing neighboring activities and attractions, you present much more for a visitor to do, and you make the visit worth the trip.

Visitors don't care about city limits or county lines – so market the broader package and you'll be able to keep people in the area long enough to translate to another meal, some more shopping, and hopefully, an overnight stay.

SELL THE EXPERIENCE, NOT GEOGRAPHY

Nearly every destination marketing organization is charged with promoting a geographic area, yet visitors couldn't care less about those boundaries. They are looking for activities that cater to their interests, and location is second to the experience. ALWAYS promote the primary lure first, then the location. People by the millions head to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Dollywood and other attractions. They are not going to Anaheim, Orlando or Pigeon Forge.

Always sell the activity - the experience - THEN the location.

LURES, DIVERSIONS AND AMBIANCE

Too often communities promote the list of diversions that nearly every community has. The primary lure is the activity that a visitor can't find closer to home.

Always promote your primary lure, then the diversions. Do not try to be all things to all people. Have you ever gone anywhere because they had "something for everyone?" Of course not—you go there because they have something specific for you. Find your niche and promote it like crazy.

Historic downtowns provide ambiance—they are not attractions, diversions, nor are they a primary lure. It's what's in the buildings that makes a downtown a destination.

The same can be said for scenery. Unless your vista is a world-class scene, such as Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon, scenic vistas create wonderful ambiance, but don't translate to spending, and they only last a few minutes. Then what?

All too often communities promote their heritage as a primary draw. How far would you travel to visit a mining museum? A timber museum? An agricultural center? A county historical museum? Heritage must be outstanding and pervasive throughout the community to be a primary lure, such as Plimoth Plantation or Salem, Massachusetts.

Thousands of communities are the "capital" of something. For instance, in California, Borrego Springs is the grapefruit capital of the world. Gilroy is the garlic capital. Modesto is the tomato capital. Gridley is the kiwi capital. Oxnard is the strawberry capital. Fallbrook is the avocado capital. But here's the question: Have you ever gone anywhere because it was the capital of a fruit or vegetable?

Your local heritage is important to the community and can set the ambiance, even becoming a diversionary activity. For local heritage to be a major attraction, it needs to combine activities with ambiance, and it needs to be pervasive throughout the area.

BE DIFFERENT OR THE BEST

Why should a visitor come to your community if they can enjoy the same activities closer to home? Too many communities promote "outdoor recreation" as their primary draw. Unfortunately, that is the same attraction promoted by nearly every community in North America.

If you are different, then you have a reason for travelers to choose to visit you. If you are the best, then visitors will generally flock to your doors.

If you have great hiking trails, then market their unique qualities. Be specific and paint the image





of how wonderful they are in the minds of your potential visitors. If you have one fantastic restaurant in town, let people know about it – a unique dining experience is something many people will travel far to enjoy.

Ashland, Oregon, previously a depressed timber town, began its Shakespeare Festival, which now runs nine months of the year and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors who spend an average of six nights in the community. The Shakespeare Festival made Ashland different from any other community.

Leavenworth, Washington, another dying timber town, adopted a Bavarian architectural theme and produces dozens of Bavarian events every year. Some now say the town looks more genuinely Bavarian than towns in Bavaria. It is now one of the primary tourist destinations in Washington state, hosting more than 2.5 million visitors annually. They offer a different experience, an experience that is pervasive throughout town.



Okanogan County, Washington is an outdoor recreational paradise—just like 37 of the 38 other counties in Washington. So why go to the Okanogan? Because they are the best. They researched guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, and pulled quotes they could use in their advertising efforts. Like, “Pinch yourself, you’re in Okanogan Country with perhaps the best cross country skiing on the continent.” This, and other quotes like it, make it worth the drive to visit Okanogan Country. The third-party endorsements show that they are the best.

Set yourself apart from everyone else, and you’ll see that by being unique, you’ll be a greater attraction.

CRITICAL MASS MEANS CASH

Although it may not be the primary reason why visitors come to your community, shopping and dining in a pedestrian setting is the number one activity of visitors. Besides lodging, it is also how visitors spend the most amount of money.

Do you have a pedestrian-friendly shopping district? If not, can you create one? Many communities have been highly successful with the development of a two or three block long pedestrian “village” including visitor-oriented retail shops, dining, visitor information, restrooms, etc., all in an attractive, landscaped setting.

The general rule of thumb in those two or three blocks (not spread out all over town) is 10+10+10: Ten destination retail shops, which includes galleries, antiques, collectibles, home accents and furnishings, artists in action, book stores, logo gear (clothing), souvenirs, outfitters, tour operators, activity shops such as kites, jewelry, wine or tobacco shops, and other specialties. The second ten is for food: ice cream, fudge and candy stores, soda fountains, sit-down dining, coffee shops, cafes, bistros, delis, etc. And the final ten are businesses open after 6:00 pm. This includes entertainment: bars, dance clubs, theaters (movies and performing arts), retail shops with activities (piano bar in a wine shop), etc.

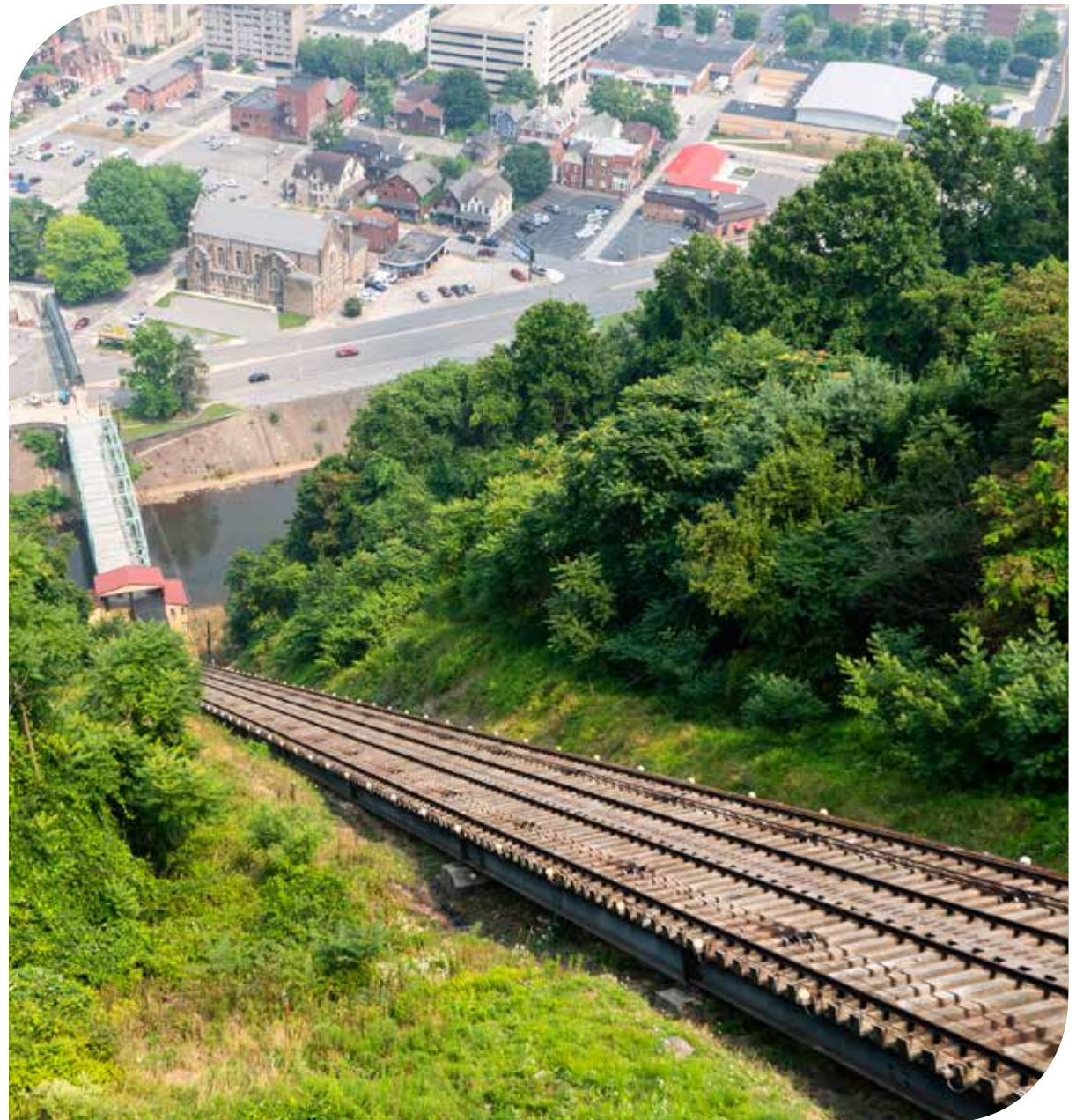
The important point is to group these businesses together to create the “critical mass” in a pedestrian-friendly setting. This will attract visitors as well as locals, and make it worth their while to stop and shop. People are always drawn to the critical

mass—the opportunity to have multiple choices, multiple experiences, all in a convenient and attractive setting.

TOURISM IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The goal of successful tourism is for people to come into the community, spend money, and go home. Tourism is one of the world’s fastest growing industries, and supports millions of jobs. Ninety percent of tourism industry businesses are small businesses of which 90% have less than 15 employees. Tourism provides the opportunity for entrepreneurs to get started, for small family-run businesses to thrive, for artisans and craftspeople to find a market, and creates a basis for unique niche-retail environment including wineries, artists, crafts, etc. Tourism provides a diverse market within the community, expanding its potential. Enhancing the community through beautification efforts creates an attractive setting for both locals and visitors, key in revitalizing a community’s downtown. And a tourism-friendly town will attract non-tourism industries faster than others—new businesses will see the community as a visitor before they make a final determination about the community. Tourism is the front door to your economic development efforts.

The benefits of a healthy tourism industry can rejuvenate a town, foster community pride, encourage economic diversity, and lead the way to a vital, successful community.



NEXT STEPS

The findings and suggestions in this report will provide many ideas, strategies, and goals to reach for. We hope that it fosters dialogue and becomes a springboard for the community in enhancing the tourism industry and other economic development efforts, leading to greater prosperity, rejuvenation, and enjoyment by all the citizens.

This report offers a first step in reaching that goal. To fully realize the benefits of this assessment, the community should take these findings and suggestions, discuss them and evaluate them, and develop a plan for implementation.

Developing a detailed plan would help to build on the results of this assessment, adding in-depth research, evaluation, and local input to develop a unique implementation program. The assessment process essentially provides a look at where you are today.

Building an Action Plan will provide your community with Roger Brooks' on-site expertise, working with you over several days for discussions, local input, presentations, and meetings, to create a written action plan that will give you the solutions and actionable steps to help your community become more economically vibrant and increase quality of life.

Your plan should be an "action plan" as opposed to a "strategic plan." You want a to do list, by organization, not just general strategies, goals and objectives.

The recommendations should provide the necessary steps for your town to be successful in

attaining its goals of a more diverse economy with an enhanced tourism industry and to become more attractive and enjoyable for both visitors and citizens.

A good plan will provide a program to get local residents and the business community pulling together, building the town's unique image in the minds of visitors and residents alike. The result of your efforts will be a prosperous, enjoyable community in which to live, work, and visit.



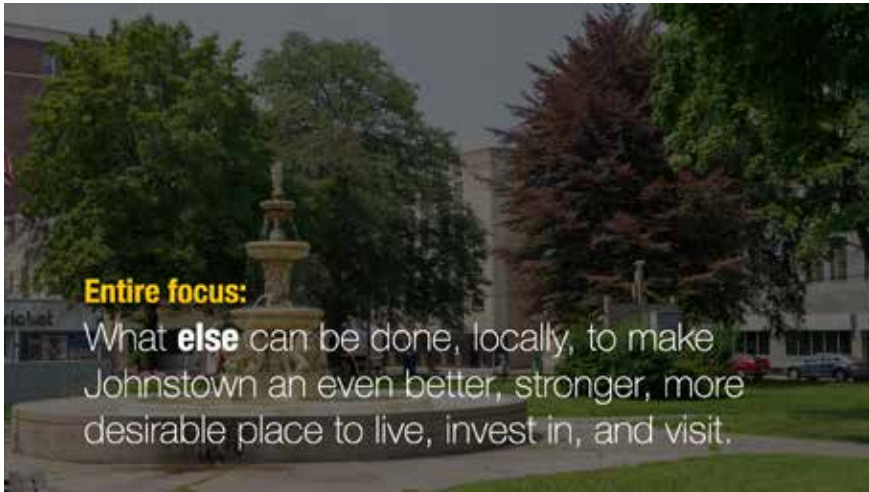


Findings & Suggestions



The assessment process:

- Marketing effectiveness
 - Visibility (finding information)
 - Effectiveness: Ability to close the sale
 - Competitive analysis
- On-site assessment
 - Signage, gateways, wayfinding
 - Overall appeal
 - Critical mass
 - Amenities: parking, restrooms, information
 - Attractions: things to see and do
 - Customer service, cross selling



THE AGENDA
A photographic look at Johnstown

- Promoting Anchor Tenants
- Promoting your hidden gems
- Finding the Johnstown brand
- Making downtown a priority
- The missing ingredient: Critical Mass
- Wayfinding: Time to start over
- First impressions: Downtown
- Curb appeal: The lack thereof
- Blade signs
- A modern parking system
- Readdressing parking time limits
- Invite us back!
- Other notes & first impressions
- Creating the Destination Johnstown Team

Our assessment process included reviewing Johnstown’s marketing materials, plus looking at your online presence, reviews on TripAdvisor and other information sites, as well as performing the “secret-shopping” on-site assessment. We looked at signage and wayfinding (how easy was it to find your attractions and amenities?), appeal, critical mass (were there places in the city to spend money?), your attractions, amenities, customer service, and more. We have a list of 60 key elements we review, and so far, we have assessed more than 2,200 communities in 45 states, across Canada, Western Europe, and Scandinavia.

We looked at Johnstown as: 1) a place to live and raise a family, 2) a place to work, invest in, or bring a business, and 3) a place to visit. This assessment process included no “heads-up” interviews or correspondence, no advance input on attractions or places to stay or things to do. For an honest visitor’s viewpoint, Johnstown was “secret-shopped.”

The entire focus of this process is to develop solutions to making Johnstown an even better, stronger, more desirable place to live, invest in, and visit. To accomplish these goals, we will cover these ideas and suggestions (bottom right).

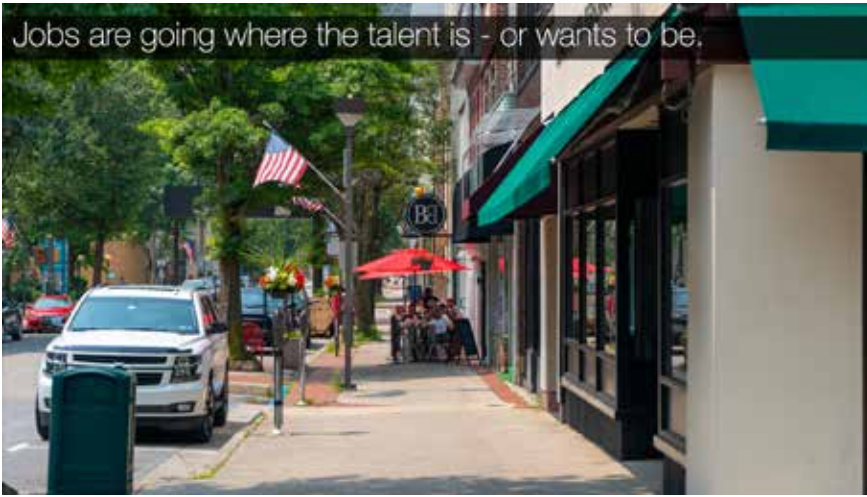


1. Promote your anchor tenants. Why is this important? Why promote your “Best Of’s” and your “Hidden Gems,” putting them front and center in your marketing efforts?

For the first time in American history, quality of life is the leading component for economic development. Prior to this, jobs would go where there were the available natural resources, such as iron, coal, timber, fish, agriculture, industry, etc., or where there was a transportation hub. But now, jobs are going where the people live, or where the people want to live because of quality of life.

Quality of life is leading economic development. We saw so many local residents heading down this beautiful road (bottom left) to walk in the mornings. That is part of what makes a great quality of life.

Tourism is now the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts. When site selectors, venture capital firms, commercial real estate brokers, investors, small business owners, and entrepreneurs are looking for a place to relocate or invest, they come first as a visitor. And the features that attract visitors also contribute to the quality of life for your residents.



Jobs are going where the talent is, or where the talent wants to be.

Community development (quality of life) is now leading economic and tourism development. Your mission is to become the most desirable place to live in America, or in Pennsylvania, or in Cambria County.

Marketing will bring visitors to you once, but what brings people back is the product you have to offer: your activities, attractions, amenities, ambiance, and people. So, while marketing is important, product development is even more important.

One of the best ways to be sure your visitors see what great activities and attractions you have to offer, is to create a "Best of Johnstown and Area" brochure.



Section I. Promote Your Anchor Tenants.

Suggestion 1: Create "The Very Best of the Johnstown Area" brochure.

One of my favorite "Best Of" brochures is the one done by Alpena, Michigan (top right, bottom left and right). Alpena is a town of just 10,000. We suggested that they promote their best places to eat, best attractions and their best retail shops. This is a 4 x 9 rack brochure with a number of different panels, each featuring a unique shop, activity, or restaurant.

Alpena invited each of the entries in their brochure, and asked them to pay \$400 each for their page. Select your "Best Of's" knowing that success breeds success for all local businesses. When visitors go into one of your best shops, they will also visit neighboring shops. Don't include lodging because they won't distribute these with their competitors listed. "Best Of" brochures are important because once visitors arrive they refer to brochures as their primary resource, even before they look online.

Snail mailed to every household with a card

The number one reason people travel is to visit friends and family. We hope you'll hang onto this brochure so when you have visitors, you'll share with them the very best of what Johnstown and its communities have to offer.

After all, we believe that every dining room table should be a concierge desk.

Sample criteria:

- Must be unique to you (no chains/franchises)
- Must have good curb appeal
- Must be open year round
- Must be highly regarded (80%+ positive peer reviews, regional publications...)
- Must be open until at least 7:00 pm
- Must be open six days a week



Alpena snail mailed a brochure to every household with a card (top left). Their residents learned about some of the best attractions, shops, restaurants, and activities in Alpena that they otherwise wouldn't know about.

The categories for Johnstown's "Very Best Of" brochure should include:

- Restaurants
- Retail shops
- Activities
- Attractions

You should have criteria for choosing your "Best Of's"—such as those top right.

You need to invite your participants for the brochure based on the criteria. It is a public/private partnership, so each participant will pay for their panel. This is so important, because people don't just want a list of what you have, they want to know what makes you worth a special trip.

We came up with a list of "Best Of's" based on our experience in Johnstown and area—we might have missed some, but this list could help get you started.

First, the Flight 93 National Memorial (bottom left). Even though it is a drive, it's a must-do activity while in the area. Next, the Boulevard Grill (bottom right). It's one of your top-rated restaurants on TripAdvisor.



Balance Restaurant downtown should also be in your “Best Of” brochure. It was highly recommended to us by everyone we talked to, and it is fabulous. If you had 20 more restaurants like that downtown, people would travel miles just to dine in Johnstown.

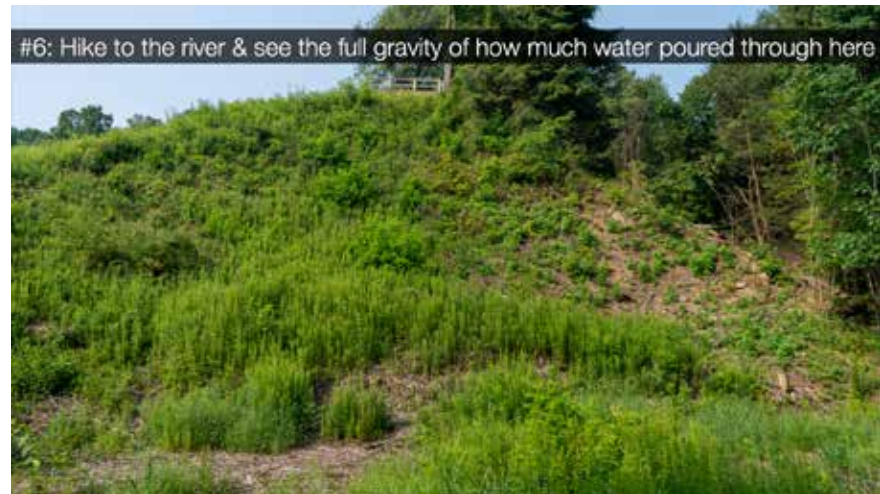
Suggestion 2: Your “Best Of” brochure should include a two- or three-page section for a self-guided Flood Tour Itinerary (top left). Even though the great flood took place over a hundred years ago, it is still a gripping story—one that people will find fascinating.

The itinerary should include where to start, and we suggest starting at the

Flood Museum (top right). Encourage visitors to watch the film. The next stop on the tour should be the Johnstown Flood National Memorial (bottom left). Visitors should be encouraged to watch the film here as well. These films are different, and they both do an amazing job of illustrating what happened.

After leaving the Flood Memorial, visitors should be directed to stop at the parking lot along the road on the way out (bottom right). There is a pathway that can take people to where the spillway was located.

Suggestion 3: Add signage at the parking area with walking directions and information about the spillway.



This shows the location of the former spillway that visitors can walk to (top left).

After visiting the site of the spillway, next would be to visit the south side of the former dam (top right, bottom left and right). There are some excellent interpretive signs at this location, and visitors can walk down to the river to see the remains of the former dam, and they can see how deep the lake had been before the dam broke and the flood occurred.



Next on the itinerary would be a visit to the old Clubhouse in St. Michael's (top left). This really shows the reality of where the club members lived and played in their exclusive, private area on their man-made lake.

After the Clubhouse, visitors should be directed to visit the Incline Plane interpretive gallery (top right). The photos there are fantastic, and the views from this vantage point show exactly where the flood came into the city.

From there, visitors should go to see the stone bridge that slowed the flooding (bottom left). You can really imagine the debris being carried by the

floodwaters piling up around the arches of the bridge.

Finally, visitors should go to the Grandview Cemetery (bottom right).



Visitors can complete their itinerary with a visit to the "Unknown Plot" (top left), and see the graves of the 867 people who died in the flood who were not able to be identified (top right and bottom left).

One out of every three who perished in the flood were never identified.

This flood tour itinerary brings home the entire story in a way that makes it personal to anyone who sees it. Even though the flood was so long ago, seeing the whole story like this brings it to life and shows how resilient and strong this city is. Immediately after the flood, in spite of the devastating loss of life and property, people of this city were working to rebuild.

Your "Very Best Of" brochure should include the Discovery Center and Children's Museum (bottom right).



Another "Best Of" is definitely The Ranger (top left). These soft serve ice cream cones are a foot tall! They are amazing. And while there, visitors can go play mini-golf next door. So much fun!

Of course, Bottle Works & The Ethnic Arts Center should be in the "Best Of" brochure (top right). It is one of the highlights of a visit to Johnstown. While we were walking towards the Center, a woman saw our big camera and said how glad she was we were taking photos there. She said to make sure to go up to the rooftop garden (bottom left) and to take a close look at the tulip mosaics on the side of the building. There are some ladybugs as part of the mosaic

on the tulips, and if you look closely, you can see them. When promoting the Center, be sure to mention these special details.

The Center also has a great gift shop filled with local art (bottom right).

The woman was enthusiastic about the Center, and mentioned that there isn't any crime there in that part of town. This gave us the impression that there is crime in other parts of Johnstown, or at least this is a common feeling among people.



We thoroughly enjoyed walking around Cambria City, and we learned that it is, indeed, part of Johnstown. The many different names of different districts makes it confusing for visitors—what is in Johnstown, and what isn't?

Suggestion 4: Develop a walking tour of Cambria City, highlighting the cultural and arts sites. A good example of how to mark a walking tour to make it easy to follow is in Carson City, Nevada (top right). They used a heavy-duty blue tape to mark the route.

Suggestion 5: Create a simple brochure or an app that visitors can use to tell

them about the sites in Cambria City (bottom left).

The wealth of different ethnic sites and architecture from all the various immigrants who settled here (bottom right) is amazing. It is fascinating to walk through Cambria City.



The different shops throughout Cambria City (top left and right) are truly unique and enjoyable.

We found the private contemplative garden (bottom left), and we were struck by its beauty and serenity. This is on private property, but the public is welcome to come and spend quiet time there. We thought it was wonderful.

There were so many things in Cambria City that were different and enjoyable. Even these seven dwarfs on the fence were cute to see (bottom right).

At the entrance to Cambria City from downtown Johnstown, consider adding another little sign, perhaps under the “Cambria City” sign that states “Johnstown’s Arts and Culture District.” That would make it clear that Cambria City is still part of Johnstown, and it would identify it as an arts and culture district.



We had to go back to Cambria City because our first time there we missed seeing the 9-11 memorial—the beam from the Twin Towers (top left).

Suggestion 6: The flag on top of the memorial has gotten very tattered (top right), so it should be replaced. Since this year is the 20 year anniversary of 9-11, perhaps this September, it could be replaced.

We spent hours walking around Cambria City, so of course we needed to find a place for lunch. We stopped into Ryan's Artisan Goods Cafe and Bakery (bottom left), and it was excellent. There weren't a lot of other people walking around Cambria City, but Ryan's was very busy, and we were glad to see that.

Ryan's Artisan Goods Cafe & Bakery should definitely be one of your "Best Of's."

And we had dinner at Asiago's Tuscan Italian Restaurant (bottom right), and it was fabulous. Another "Best Of." We had to make reservations at least one day in advance, because they are so busy. Johnstown could use some more fine dining—Asiago's is excellent, but it appears there is much greater demand for fine dining than they can handle on their own.



The Johnstown Inclined Plane (top left) is great, and it is another "Best Of." Most of the time we were in Johnstown, we wondered if it would ever be open. There were no signs at the bottom indicating when it would open, but when we went to the top, we did learn that maintenance is being done, so it is currently closed.

Walking through downtown, we came across the Craft & Vendor Shop (top right). It is great. We had fun looking at all the locally made products, and this shop should be one of your "Best Of's." This is a great way to showcase your local talent.

Suggestion 7: Consider changing the name of the Craft & Vendor Shop to "Johnstown's Public Arts Market."

Downtown Ebensburg (bottom right) is another "Best Of"—as a day trip from Johnstown. The downtown is intimate, pedestrian, and has some great sidewalk dining and shopping.



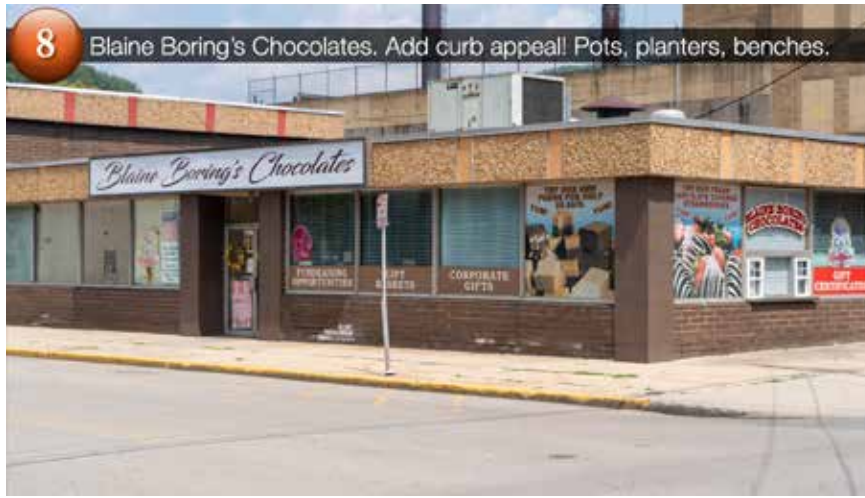
Floating the river at Stonycreek Whitewater Park / Greenhouse Park (top left) is a great “Best Of” activity. Notice that it isn’t just the park that is the “Best Of”—it’s the activity—floating the river. Even though this park is just outside the county, it is so close, and visitors don’t care about county boundary lines. This is a stunning park and beautiful area.

The hike to and through the Staple Bend Tunnel is another “Best Of” activity (top right). When we got there, it was pouring down rain, and we didn’t realize it was necessary to hike two and a half miles to reach the opening to the tunnel. This would be good to let people know about. So we weren’t able to

actually go through the tunnel, but we did read the interpretive signs, and they were very well done. It was amazing to learn the tunnel was hand-dug! It just shows the strength and determination of the people who live here.

This is becoming quite a list of “Best Of’s.”

George’s Record Store (bottom left and right) is fabulous! It’s America’s oldest record store, and it’s packed with great old records. Definitely a “Best Of.”



We had to buy chocolates at Blaine Boring's Chocolates (top left), and this store is another one of Johnstown's "Best Of's." Delicious!

Suggestion 8: At first we weren't sure if Blaine Boring's Chocolates was actually open to the public. Add some curb appeal to make it obvious and to attract customers into the store, pots, planters, a bench or two would go a long way to make the front of the store welcoming and appealing.

This list of "The Very Best of Johnstown and the Allegheny's" (top right) is amazing. A few of these need some work, like the Cambria City Walk, and a few need some work to live up to their potential (such as beautification), but

this is an amazing list of "Best Of's"—enough that could attract visitors from anywhere. And there may be some that we have missed. These need to be promoted.

Section 2. Promote your Hidden Gems

Suggestion 9: Create another brochure or add-on to the "Best Of" brochure, and this will promote Johnstown's "Hidden Gems." These aren't the "Best Of's," but they are great "while you are here" activities. You could start with B & L Wine Cellars. The reason it is not a "Best Of" is because it has very limited open hours. If it were open six days a week, it could very likely be a "Best Of"



Suggestion 10: We discovered the Johnstown Greenway Trail by accident (top left). It would make a great hidden gem. The only information we could find on the signage told about its funding sources, plus there was a good sign that told about the history. Add signage telling people where it goes, how long it is, and what you can see along the trail.

The Sergeant Michael Strank Memorial in Franklin is also a great hidden gem (top right). It is very well done, and although Franklin isn't part of Johnstown, it is so close by that visitors wouldn't care.

Hiking Stackhouse Park (bottom left) is another hidden gem.

For adventure, hiking or biking the Inclined Plane Downhill Trails would be another great Hidden Gem (bottom right).



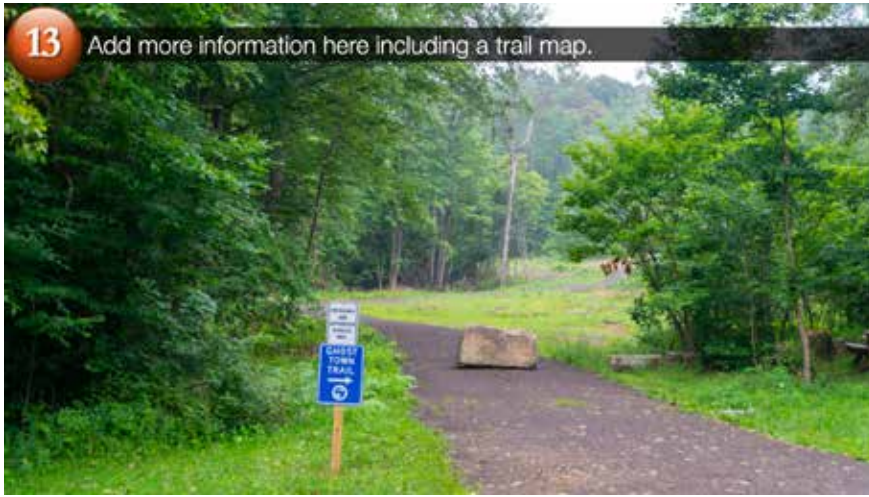
Suggestion 11: We saw two Inclined Plane Downhill Trails, and we didn't know what might make them different. Is one better for hiking, and one better for biking? Is one easier than the other? Add signage to let us know.

Another hidden gem is Luzerne Street in Westmont (top right). It is such a beautiful neighborhood with gorgeous houses. Walking down the peaceful street would be a real treat. Definitely a gem!

Suggestion 12: The International Flag Plaza is a great Hidden Gem, adding a splash of color to this area (bottom left). The signage tells about the funding,

but there's no sign that explains the meaning and purpose of putting all these international flags here. We thought it might be because of the immigrants from so many different nations who founded and worked in Johnstown to help make the city what it is today. Add signage to let visitors know.

Duman Lake County Park is a great hidden gem for stand up paddle boarding, kayaking, or canoeing (bottom right).



13 Add more information here including a trail map.



Not sure about marketing this: The Conemaugh Gap Scenic Overlook



"Deepest gap east of the Mississippi" - The problem: You can't see it!



14 Add more information: how deep is it? "Before" photos showing the depth.

While we were at the park, we saw this trail (top left). There wasn't any information about it, though, such as how long it is, where it goes, what you can see, or if it's ADA accessible. Suggestion 13: Add a sign with more information including a trail map.

We saw the Conemaugh Gap Overlook (top right, bottom left and right). It is the "deepest gap east of the Mississippi," yet there is so much overgrowth and you can't see the gap any more.

Suggestion 14: Add a sign with "before" photos showing how deep the gap is (without the overgrowth) as well as more information. This was interesting and is worth a stop if you can show how deep it really is.



15 Move this incredible story over to the Flood Museum. Not sure why here.



Gallina's Pizza (honest Italian!). Thank you Holiday Inn for the referral.



The Johnstown selfie spot (too bad it's not somewhere closer)



The Johnstown Veteran's Memorial

While we were at the Conemaugh Gap, we saw this interpretive sign (top left) which tells the story of one of the survivors of the huge flood, and her account of seeing people and debris floating by on the raging river below. It is extremely moving to read about the terrible things she saw. Suggestion 15: Move this to the Flood Museum where more people will be likely to read it.

One afternoon, we were trying to find a place for lunch, and it was after 2:00. We went to the Holiday Inn, thinking the restaurant might be open all day, but they were closed. The manager noticed us and recommended that we go to Gallina's Pizza & Restaurant (top right). We thought it was fabulous that he

gave us a suggestion (great customer service), so we headed to the restaurant. It wasn't very noticeable because there was no beautification outside, but we had lunch, and it was fabulous. This is a great hidden gem.

This spot (bottom left) could be good for selfies. It would be great if it were a little closer, but it still provides a good backdrop for selfies--you could include it as a hidden gem.

The Johnstown Veteran's Memorial (bottom right) is a beautiful spot and is also a great hidden gem.



16 The Underpass Gallery (awesome!) Do even more. Lemons to lemonade!



Shaffer's Frosty Freeze



17 Coney Island Hot Dogs (a local institution?) Curb appeal! Anything.

Johnstown's Hidden Gems

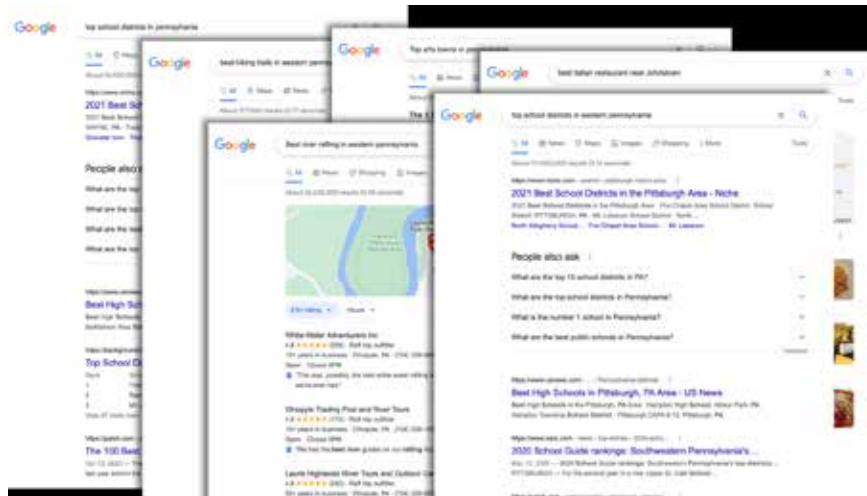
- B&L Wine Cellars
- Sgt. Michael Strank Iwo Jima Memorial
- Walking the Johnstown Greenway Trail
- Hiking Stackhouse Park
- Hiking or biking The Inclined Plane Downhill Trail
- Walking Luzerne Street in Westmont
- The International Flag Pavilion
- Kayaking Duman Lake
- Hiking the Ghost Trail
- The Conemaugh Gap Scenic Overlook
- Gallina's Pizza
- The Johnstown Selfie-Spot (behind the arena)
- The Underpass Gallery
- Shaffer's Frosty Freeze
- Coney Island (hot dogs and burgers)

The murals on these underpass pillars (top left) are great. They add color and vibrancy, and we think they are another hidden gem. Suggestion 16: Do even more. They are awesome.

Shaffer's Frosty Freeze (top right) is a popular institution! The ice cream cones are delicious! Another hidden gem.

Suggestion 17: Add some curb appeal to Coney Island Hot Dogs (bottom left). Some benches and pots would give the place a lot more appeal, especially for visitors who aren't aware of its status as a local institution.

Johnstown has so many great hidden gems (bottom right). When these are added to your marketing efforts as hidden gems, visitors will go out of their way to enjoy them. And we're sure you could think of even more hidden gems that we didn't find.



The goal of this assessment is to find ways to help Johnstown become even better. A good way to find those answers is to find out what Johnstown’s focus is should become.

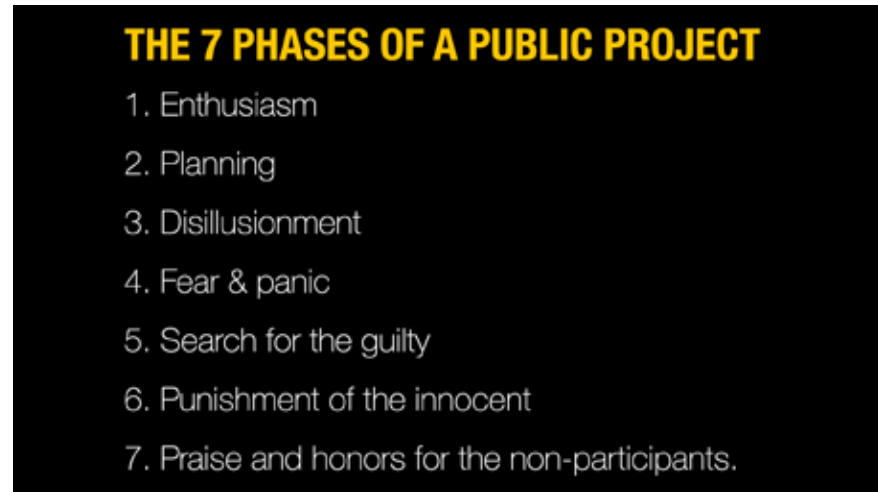
Section 3. Start with the Johnstown Brand

Suggestion 18: Decide what you want Johnstown’s focus to be--decide on Johnstown’s “second act.” Decide what you want downtown to be known for, and you’ll have an easier time recruiting the businesses that will fulfill that “brand promise.” If you want to be about families, downtown needs to have businesses and activities that have a family focus, such as a carousel, toy stores,

and a children’s museum. If you want to have an international focus, you need to have restaurants and shops that fulfill that brand and help you live up to those expectations, such as ethnic restaurants, shops, and festivals.

Location is always secondary to the primary draw--the one thing that puts you on the map. When people are looking for an activity online, they search for the activity first (bottom left), and then the general area. They look for the activity or the brand that has the activities they want.

There are 1,015 incorporated places in PA--what sets Johnstown apart from all the rest? What makes Johnstown unique?



Branding is not about logos and slogans. Branding is the art of setting yourself apart from everyone else--showing that you are different or clearly better from other communities in the same market area. A brand is the impression people have of your community based on what they hear about you and what their experiences are.

What does Johnstown have that the people you are hoping to attract can't get closer to home?

A brand is specific. "Something for everyone" is not a brand. It's generic. Have you ever gone anywhere because they have something for everyone? No. We

go places because they have something for us--something we want to see or do that we can't find closer to home. Brands have to be specific.

Since a brand is specific, it's essential that the private sector takes the lead in any branding project. You can't leave it to elected officials because elected officials have to be all things to all people, and brands can't be.

Some examples of well-branded cities include: Nashville, Hershey, Lancaster, Lititz, Napa Valley, Orlando, and Las Vegas. What do you think of when you hear these names?



Be sure to view the videos that are available in the Destination Development video library on branding and finding your unique selling proposition. These videos can help guide you and provide you with more answers to your branding questions.

Suggestion 19: We think Johnstown has potential for expanding their arts focus. We'd love to see you contact ArtSpace.org to be a potential partner if the arts is a direction to consider for Johnstown's brand focus. ArtSpace can take unused building and repurpose them into artist live/work space.

We worked in Michigan City, Indiana, and this building had been vacant and unused (top right). The city worked with ArtSpace, and now this building is full of artisans' live/work space. It's fabulous.

There's a lot of creativity in Johnstown. It's obvious in Cambria City, but it's not so obvious downtown. Perhaps, working with ArtSpace, one or two of the buildings downtown (bottom left) could be repurposed for art.

Some of your "districts" already have brands. For example, Richland (bottom right) is well-known as Johnstown's shopping district.



Cambria City is Johnstown's Cultural Arts District (top left).

Westmont is Johnstown's beautiful historic residential district (top right).

And what about downtown Johnstown? (bottom left) What should its focus be? Music? Art? Food? Families? Theater? Nightlife?

Section 4. Make Downtown a Priority.

All of the following organizations surveyed people in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, asking them what their priorities are in choosing a place to live:

- MoneySense.ca Best Places to Live in Canada
- Great Canadian Van Lines: Best places for families
- Wallet Hub
- Niche.com
- Livability.com
- Money Magazine
- USA Today
- Forbes

WHAT PEOPLE WANT

Those in their 20s, 30s, and 40s

IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE



What these surveys found is enlightening, and perhaps surprising.

#1: Safety, particularly for kids

#2: Good educational system and child care

#3: And engaged community and a sense of belonging (this is an important feature of an active downtown)



#4: Cultural depth: visual/performing arts/education/food (this is an important feature of active downtowns)

#5: Life and activity after 6:00 pm (this is an important feature of an active downtown) Most conventions and conferences are held in places where there is activity in the evenings. This gives attendees something to do after spending the day at the conference.

#6: Top-notch recreation--surpassing other areas

#7: Health: Clean air and water, good health care, access to fresh produce (particularly farmers markets)



#8: Transportation options: Transit/bike lanes/ride share/school transportation/walkability

#9: Housing affordability and quality

#10: Secure jobs or specific entrepreneurial opportunities--this is number 10. If the quality of life is good, these young people will come and find a job or make a job. No longer is the job the primary reason to move to a location--quality of life is most important.

Downtown is the litmus test for site selectors and investors. The health and vibrancy of your downtown is a key factor in attracting jobs, investment, and new residents.



Downtown should be your best recruitment tool. It needs to be a gathering place with a sense of community, activity, and vibrancy. It should be Johnstown's "Third Place."

Your First Place is your home (top right)--where you live.

Your Second Place is where you work (bottom left).

Your Third Place is where you go to "hang out." Where you spend leisure time with friends and family (bottom right).

Starbucks built their whole brand on becoming a "Third Place"--a place people can go, buy a cup of coffee, and hang out all day if they want to.

Successful downtowns and tourism reduce the tax burden on residents.



You want your downtown to be economically healthy so that the property downtown becomes valuable, businesses thrive, and local residents enjoy spending time there. When you spend money making your downtown thrive, it is an investment, not an expense.

Helping downtown become a thriving gathering place entails “Placemaking.” Placemaking is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design, programming, and management of public spaces. It capitalizes on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and talent, that will result in bringing people together and will promote health, happiness, and well-being.

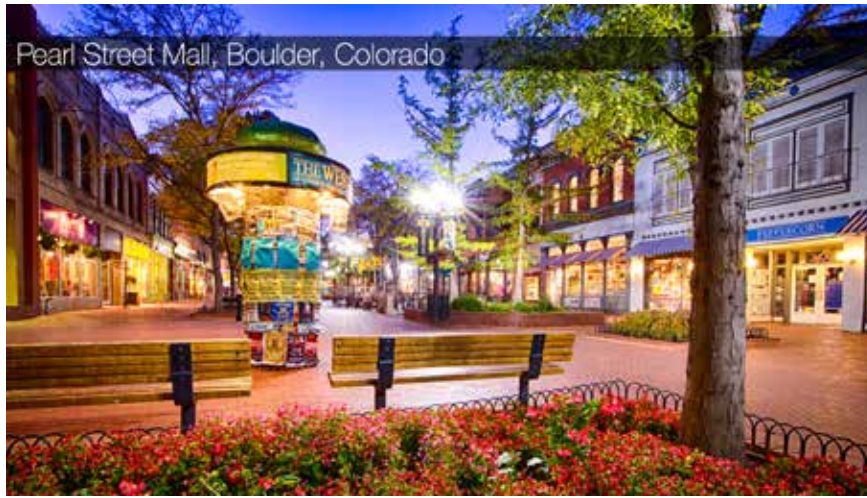
Suggestion 20: Create a Downtown Master Development Plan extending 10 years. Start with deciding what the focus of downtown should be. What do you want the feel of it to be. Based on that focus, what should downtown look like? What activities should be there? Then decide who should be responsible for taking care of it, and what you need to include in your public spaces.

The priority should be to make downtown a pedestrian-friendly experience. Downtowns are about people, not cars.



We are moving to the European standard, where the centers of towns are more pedestrian friendly, with plazas full of activities. Most of the cities in Europe were founded long before the automobile, and they were designed to be pedestrian friendly. People in North America are recognizing the value and enjoyment of pedestrian friendly plazas and downtown areas, and we are developing more and more of them. They promote community pride and community enjoyment--becoming the community's living room.

Some good examples of these are Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica (top right). New York City has removed lanes of traffic and installed bike lanes (bottom left) or pocket parks filled with activities (bottom right). That doesn't mean Johnstown should close any downtown streets to vehicular traffic--just that you need to create enough space and safety features for pedestrians.

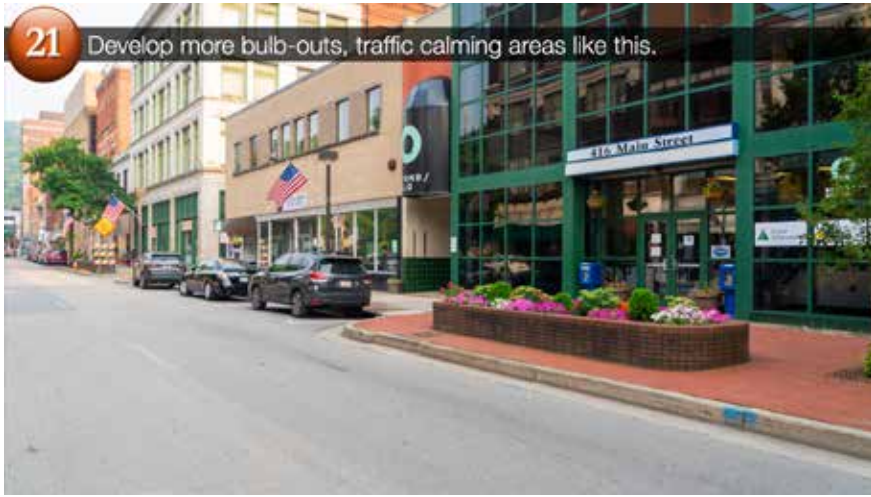


Pearl Street Mall, in Boulder, Colorado (top left) is another good example.

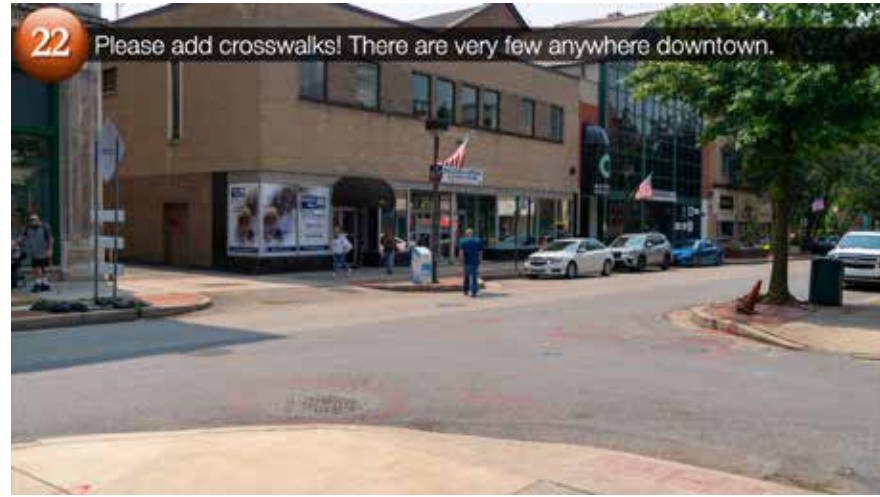
McKinney, Texas (top right).

Newport on the Levy (bottom left) across the river from Cincinnati.

Cities everywhere are widening sidewalks and narrowing streets to make their downtowns more about people than cars.



21 Develop more bulb-outs, traffic calming areas like this.



22 Please add crosswalks! There are very few anywhere downtown.



Suggestion 21: Bulb-outs on downtown streets help provide more pedestrian areas and support traffic-calming (top left). Develop more of them. Johnstown has enough parking that it isn't necessary to remove bulb-outs to create more. In fact, it would be best to take the three parking spaces in front of this bulb-out and make them free for 20 minutes or so for visitors to be able to run into the visitor information center.

Suggestion 22: Add crosswalks throughout downtown. There are very few now, and they are essential to help pedestrians feel and be safe (top right).

Shift happens. We are seeing a number of changes in our cities and towns,

and it'll be helpful to look at what these are and how Johnstown can use these changes to become more successful.

Downtowns are becoming more about Etsy-style shops than department stores. Individual, creative-style shops, such as the butcher, the baker, and the candlestick maker (bottom left).

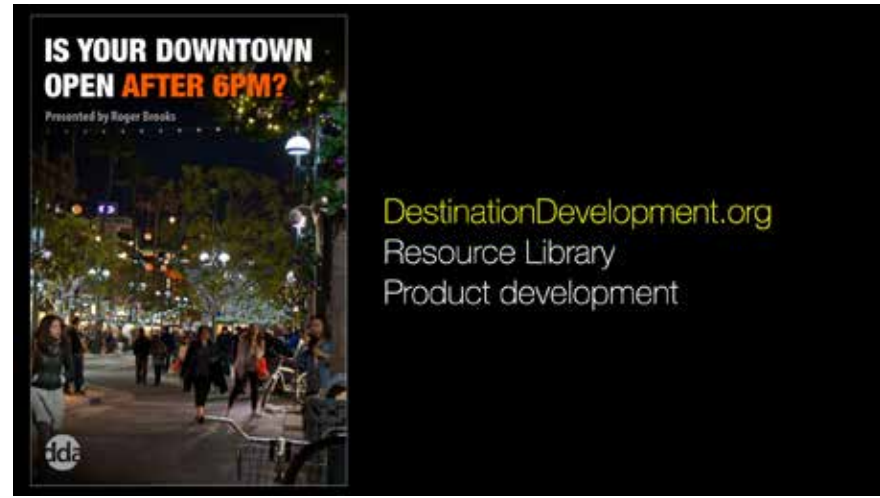
It's commonly thought that millennials are moving into downtowns, but that's not entirely true. When millennials start having families, they want the suburban life. There are more baby-boomers moving into downtowns now (bottom right).



Another shift is that downtowns are now about life after 6:00 pm--after work. Downtowns are the place to go after work and on weekends. We need nightlife and activities. We want a gathering place to relax, have fun, and be entertained with our friends and families.

Millennials are having their children in their late 30s and early 40s, and many of them are in two-income households. They are busy, so convenience rules the day. The average time for dinner is now between 7:00 and 7:30.

When visitors or conference attendees are done with their activities for the day, they want to be able to spend time in a vibrant place, with food and entertainment. They really don't want to spend every night locked away in their hotel rooms with nothing to do but watch TV.

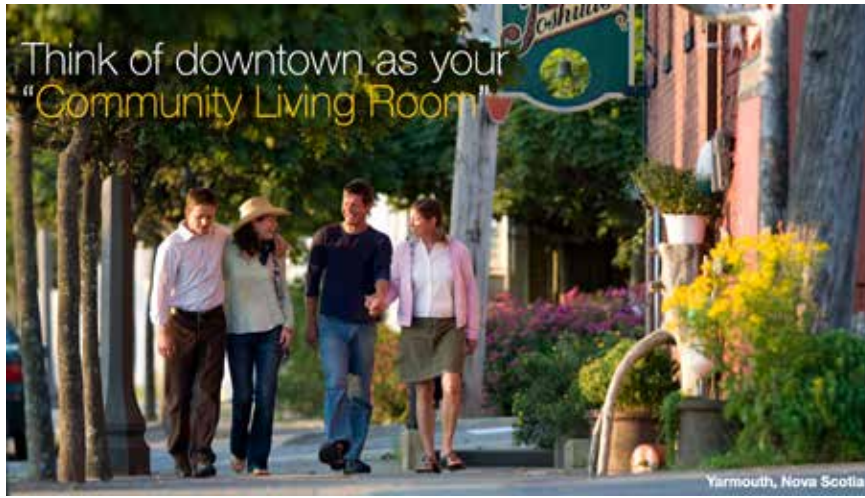


Because people's lives are so busy during the day with work and school, 70% of all brick and mortar retail spending takes place after 6:00 pm. Are your stores open? Look at Richmond. How late are the big box stores open?

Placemaking is about improving the quality of life for your citizens by creating a community gathering place where locals and visitors can spend time 300+ days a year.

Be sure to watch the Destination Development video from the Resource Library "Is Your Downtown Open After 6PM?"

The top priority for downtown is to make it a place to decompress. To make it your "community living room."



In order to revitalize a downtown and help businesses be more successful, the first goal is to give residents and visitors reasons to spend their time downtown. Make downtown a gathering place with activities. If you can get people to hang out in downtown Johnstown 250+ days a year, retail shops will follow. You'll have no retail vacancies. Wherever people hang out, retail follows.

One or two events a year, or a monthly farmers market, isn't enough activity to bring people downtown often enough to make a difference. You need ongoing activities. Think about what kind of activities you'd like to enjoy with

your friends and neighbors. Ask people what kind of activities would motivate them to spend time downtown.

Think about fire pits and seating downtown during the winter, perhaps with a food truck selling hot chocolate.

Why do we put chairs and benches in front of our homes? They make our houses feel welcoming. The same is true for downtowns.

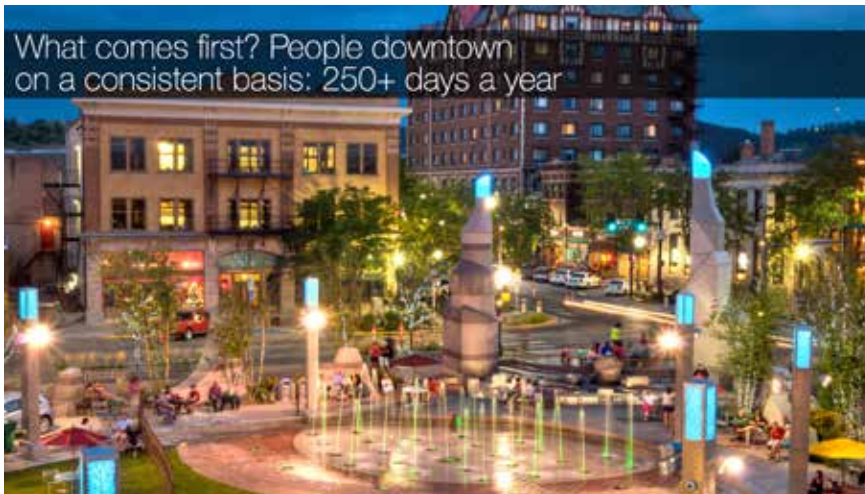


Outdoor dining (top left) is a great draw for downtowns. Seeing diners enjoy their delicious food encourages other people to sit down with a snack or meal and spend time there too.

Little gathering spots like this (top right) are great.

This little pop-up plaza (bottom left) is great. It takes up about three parking spaces, provides seating and games, and can be moved when necessary.

Outdoor entertainment (bottom right) is a fantastic way to attract people downtown. This is in Asheville, NC.



We can imagine having fire pits like these (top left) in downtown Johnstown.

Or places where you can host “The Taste of Johnstown” events (top right). Having buskers, street entertainers, food trucks, seating, and games downtown can bring downtown to life.

The key ingredient to successful retail downtown is being able to get people to spend time downtown 250+ days a year. The best way to do that is with programming.

That would be one percent of your population downtown on any given night.

Concentrate on Friday and Saturday nights for one year, then add Thursday, then add Sunday afternoon, then add Wednesday, and then add Tuesday. It’s a process, and it doesn’t have to be done all at once.



We want you to see what some communities are doing to bring their downtowns to life.

One great example of a successful plaza is in Waterloo, Ontario. They had a parking lot in front of a Shoppers Drugmart (top left) that they decided to close to parking (top right, bottom left and right) and create a plaza. The space is programmed year-round with activities, including ice-skating in winter, and the businesses are doing better than ever.

Sure, people have to walk a little further because of the loss of parking spaces,

but it's worth it. Initially Shoppers Drug Mart thought taking away their parking would kill their business, but it actually caused sales to go up 300%. The plaza and activities on it attract more people than ever before.



The plaza in Waterloo hosts free yoga classes (top left), and the yoga instructor's business has increased because she can sell the yoga mats and the free classes promotes more students coming to her other, paying classes.

Ice skating on the plaza in the winter (top right) is a popular attraction.

Another case history of a successful plaza is Rapid City, South Dakota. We recommended that they turn this parking lot (bottom right) into a plaza. Here is the plaza now on a Saturday afternoon (bottom left).

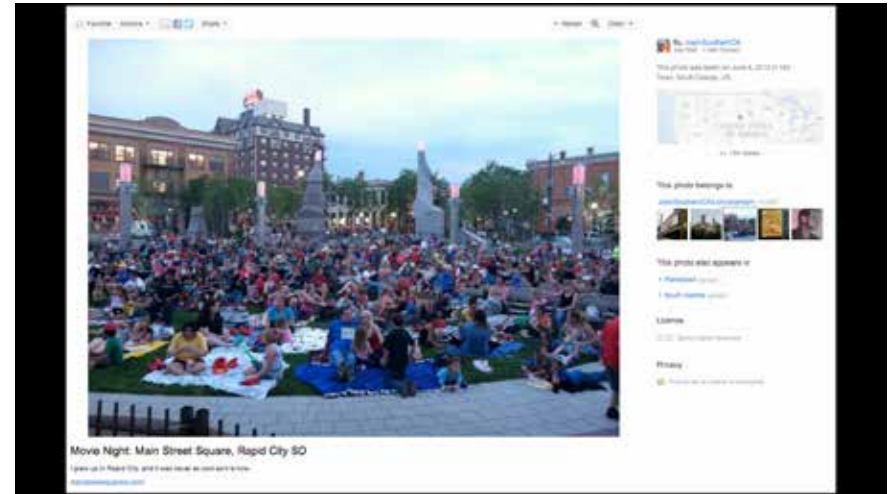


We recommended that they turn this parking lot (top left) into a plaza and take down the empty building on the right. The building was sold to a city “booster” who donated \$2 million to help build the plaza. Here is the plaza now on a Sunday morning at 10 am (top right, bottom left and right).

With the plaza in place, that building owner now makes two times as much per square foot of the building due to the activity generated from the plaza (top left). And he now has a waiting list of people interested in renting space in his building.

This photo was taken on a typical Sunday morning at the Main Street Square (top right). Now the plaza space is continually packed with people and activities.

They have a beer garden during events, restaurants on the perimeter, and car clubs have events downtown. Build the plaza first for your residents, and visitors will follow. Remember: If you hang out downtown, so will visitors.



The splash pad is 1,500 square feet and now they feel it is way too small. Due to its popularity, they wish it were as big as the whole circle area (top left).

The whole oval becomes an ice rink in the winter (top right), and their first year, they made \$130,000 renting ice skates.

Every night at 9:00 pm, Rapid City turns on the fountains on their splash pad, turn on the LED lights and have music playing (bottom left).

They also have movies on the square every Monday night. Online, someone posted this picture with the note, "I grew up in Rapid City and it never was as cool as it is now," (bottom right).

The splash pad operates 120 days a year, and the ice skating rink operates 120 days a year--there's 240 days of activity right there. You don't need 240 days of events, just 240 days of activity that brings people downtown.



More and more cities are recognizing the need for and value of having a programmed plaza in their downtown. Here are some others:

Central Park Plaza in Valparaiso, Indiana (top left).

Indian Creek Plaza in Caldwell, Idaho (top right),

Ovation Plaza in Edmonton, Alberta (bottom left).

Evergy Plaza in Topeka, Kansas (bottom right).



Create Play Plaza in Michigan City, Indiana (top left and right).

As we looked at downtown Johnstown, especially Central Park, we wondered if there was something that could be done to make the park become more of a gathering place with activities. As it is, it is a beautiful green space, but very few people ever use it. It looks pretty, but there's no activity. We never saw more than three people in the park at a time, no matter what time of day. Downtowns need a space where people can gather and engage in activities. We wondered if perhaps removing some of the lawn areas and using paver stones to make some plaza areas would be possible. Perhaps closing off one of

the side streets bordering the park would be possible. This would give space for food trucks, events, and activities, without having them take place on a lawn area which can become soggy.

Suggestion 23: Add a "welcome" sign to the park. We were assaulted with all the rules and regulations, but no welcome when we entered (bottom left).

Suggestion 24: The gazebo was chained up with a "no trespassing" sign--why the prohibition against using this part of the park? It gives the impression that downtown is so dangerous that people aren't allowed. Reconsider the necessity of closing this (bottom right).



Suggestion 25: Consider changing the focus of Central Park (top left) from simply a pretty place to look at from afar, to a people park--a place people can gather to eat outdoors, visit with friends, play games, and more. With paver stone surfaces, you can bring in a variety of activities. Imagine having a couple giant chess sets, more seating, food trucks and vendors.

You could leave in most of the trees and some of the lawn areas (top right), and it would still be a beautiful green space with the addition of paver stone areas as well.

Suggestion 26: This small park (bottom left) is also a very pretty green space. But no one uses it--it's only to look at. It could become a vibrant small plaza area with tables and chairs for outdoor dining.

Downtown is tourism's best friend. People come, spend money, and then go home.



The number one activity of visitors is shopping, dining, and entertainment in a pedestrian-friendly, intimate setting. That is usually a community's downtown. That is also where 80% of non-lodging visitor spending takes place. That's why Disney built "Downtown Disney" outside each of its parks--to get that 80% of visitor spending.

Are you getting that 80%? Probably not. We didn't see many visitors hanging out in your downtown. And if you don't spend time in your downtown, neither will visitors.

Women account for 80% of consumer spending, and in general, women like to shop in places that feel safe, are well lit, and are full of other people.



Think benches. Since women account for 80% of all consumer spending, make sure downtown and the shops there appeal to women: with beautification, safety, well-lit at night, and places to relax, especially for their partners (top left).

Benches should always be at the building facade, facing out (top right).

Suggestion 27: Add benches downtown--you could use about 40 of them! As it is, your building facades look stark and bare (bottom right). The street trees and planters by the roads look very nice, but you need to soften the transition between the buildings and the sidewalks. Do that with benches flanked with pots.



Just head up the road to Ebensburg.



There is **NOTHING** you can invest in (besides schools) that will create a faster or better return on investment than your downtown.



Take a look at downtown Ebensburg (top left). They do a nice job with their benches and pots.

Besides schools, there is nothing a city can invest in that will bring a better return on investment than downtown.



Section 5. The Rule of Critical Mass

One critical component of a successful downtown is having the right business mix. This is called critical mass: the 10+10+10 Rule. In order to have enough of the right businesses to attract people to spend time downtown, within a three-lineal block area, you need to have 10 places that sell food; 10 destination retail shops; and 10 places open after 6:00.

10

Places that sell food:

Soda fountain, coffee shop, bistro, cafe, sit-down restaurant, wine store, deli, confectionary.

10

Destination retail shops:

Galleries, antiques, collectibles, books, clothing, home accents, outfitters, brand-specific retail, garden specialties, kitchen stores, cigars, etc.

10

Places open after 6:00:

Entertainment, theater (movies, performing arts), bars & bistros, specialty shops, dining, open air markets, etc.

The "mall mentality"

Open hours	Consistent hours and days
Evenings	Open late into the evening hours
Clustering	Like businesses grouped together: clustering
Anchors	Recruit and promote the anchor tenants
Place	A central gathering place

If you want Johnstown or Cambria City to attract residents or visitors, and to become a destination, it's important to meet the rule of critical mass.

Consider how antique malls do ten times the business when they are grouped together. Or how auto malls do seven times the sales when they are together and not spread out all over town. Or how corner gas stations, fast food places, and food courts group themselves together. People are attracted to the choices and options, and it's much more convenient. So all the businesses benefit.

Although shopping malls are dying across America, businesses in a downtown need to adopt the "mall mentality," which includes being open consistent hours and days; being open late into the evening hours; clustering like businesses together; having one or two anchor tenants, and promoting them; and having a central gathering place.

28 As part of your Downtown Master Development Plan, there should be a business recruitment program

Point

Sometimes you have to orchestrate the effort.
Start with property owners, not tenants.
It only takes a one-third buy-in.



29 Impression: Downtown is primarily a social services district. Work on consolidating social service offices into one major office building.



Suggestion 28: As part of your Downtown Master Development Plan, you should include a program for business recruitment. In order to reach critical mass, sometimes you have to orchestrate the effort. You can do this by starting with the property owners. Once you have your vision for what you want downtown's focus to be, decide what businesses will help bring that vision to life. Talk to the property owners about it, and suggest that if, when their existing tenant's lease is up, they lease the property to one of the businesses on the target list. You will help them find the business, and you will help their existing tenant find a new location. Once you have one third of the properties meeting the goal, other property owners will see the advantages and the vision, and they will join in the effort.

Some towns even create overlay districts which restrict the types of businesses that can be on the first floor of their downtown. Some will restrict chains or franchises from locating in their downtown.

Currently, within three lineal blocks, downtown has only one or two destination retail shops, basically two restaurants, and no places open after 6PM.

Suggestion 29: Work on consolidating the social services that are downtown into one building.

6 DEVELOP A NEW WAYFINDING SYSTEM



Section 6: Develop a New Wayfinding System.

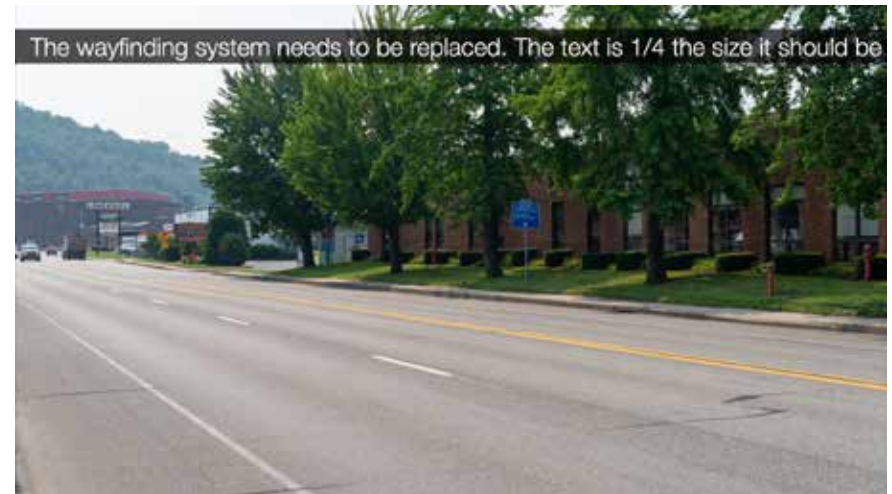
Redevelop the Johnstown wayfinding system. Locating parks, museums, attractions, all the different districts throughout Johnstown, trails, and more was very challenging. It was necessary for us to use our navigation system to find nearly everything. You need to make it easier for your visitors to locate attractions, amenities, districts, etc., without having to rely on a navigation system.

The wayfinding signs that already exist in downtown are not as helpful as they

could be—they need to be redone. The text is too small, and many of them don't finish the job.

When we finally found the Flood Museum, we never could find the parking lot that the sign was pointing to (top right). It seems to be pointing across the bridge and a distance away.

There aren't any crosswalks near the museum, which is a public safety issue (bottom right). If someone were to park across the bridge and walk to the museum, it isn't safe for them to cross the street.



Suggestion 30: Consider this parking lot for the museum's use (top left). If it is private, the city could perhaps lease the space.

Suggestion 31: This is where the sign for Flood Museum parking directed us (bottom left). There is no public parking here unless it is the gravel lot across the street and farther away. There are no crosswalks here either. And there is no sign that tells anyone that the lot is for visitors to the Flood Museum.

The wayfinding system is incomplete and the signage is too small for people to read while driving. It is doing you a disservice and making it more difficult for people to find what they are looking for.



Why develop a system?

- It educates locals & visitors about what you have.
- It delivers a pleasant visitor experience.
- It helps mitigate traffic flow.
- It introduces your brand.
- It creates a "sense of place" and a sense of arrival.
- It eliminates sign clutter and "broken" systems.

The existing wayfinding has mistakes and is incomplete. If you try to follow the signs to the Welcome Center, it just takes you out of town. The current system is broken.

Johnstown is not an easy city to navigate because of the terrain, two rivers, and several different "districts." Geographically, it's hard to find your way around. So a good wayfinding system is more important than ever.

Wayfinding is an investment, not an expense. Cities that build a good wayfinding system find that their retail sales and services increase by an average of 18%.

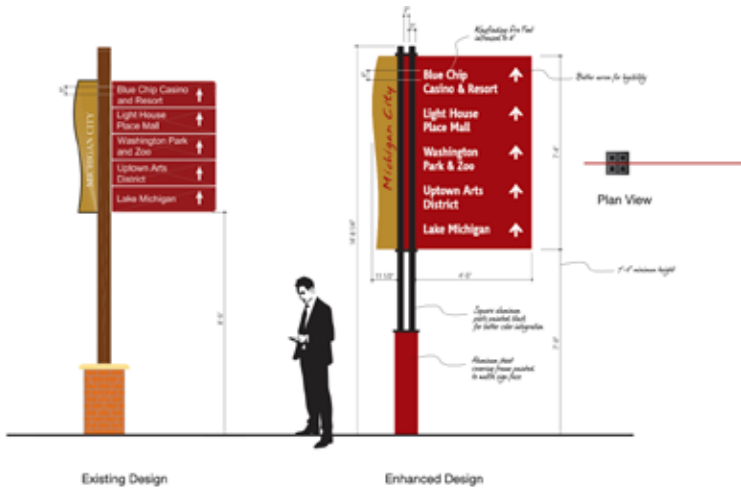


Appleton, Wisconsin (top left) installed these very effective and decorative wayfinding signs. They are mounted on existing poles, and they are easy to read. Their system includes an easy to follow map for pedestrians as well.

This wayfinding sign in Modesto, California (top right) is also effective and decorative.

The system at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh is fantastic (bottom left).

Greenville, South Carolina has an excellent wayfinding system that is easy to read from a distance (bottom right).



Note the recommended scale of wayfinding signage (top left). This makes them easy to read from a distance.

Suggestions 32: Also develop pedestrian wayfinding for downtown.

This is a system used in French Lick, Indiana (bottom left). It's easy to read, easy to understand, and it's colorful and decorative.

This pedestrian wayfinding is in Asheville, North Carolina (bottom right).



33 Downtown maps, along this line, would also be helpful.



34 Self-funding "More to Explore" signage can help downtown retailers.



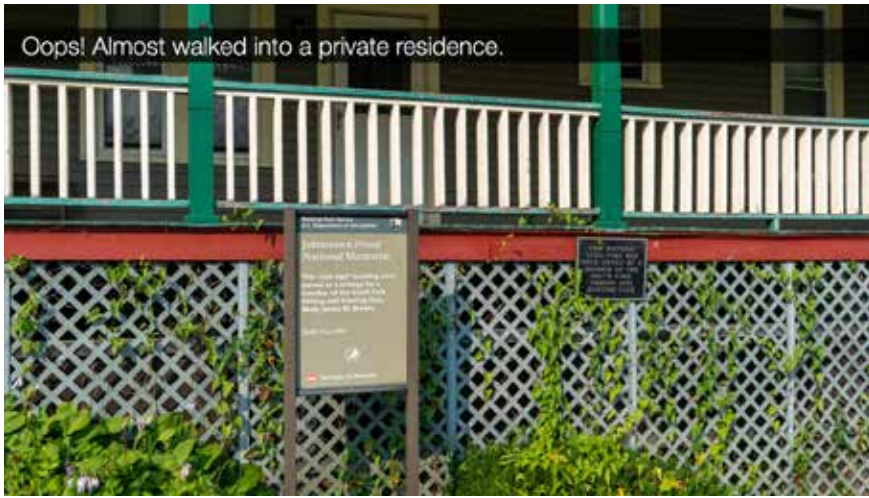
35 Add signage here in St. Micheal's to the Clubhouse. Left or right?

Suggestion 33: Create downtown maps to post as pedestrian signs, like this one in Greenville, South Carolina. They included parking lots to make it easier for people to remember where they have parked

Suggestion 34: Another helpful idea is to use "More to Explore" signs like these (top right and bottom left). These are self-funding--merchants pay for their removable section of the sign, and they point visitors down the side streets, letting them know what more is available.

Navigation systems are not a substitute for wayfinding signs. We use navigation systems for things that we know already exist. But wayfinding can let us know about things we didn't already know you have.

Suggestion 35: When we were looking for the historic clubhouse in St. Michael, we followed the signs until we came to this intersection (bottom right). Here, the directions stopped. Add a sign to tell us to turn right or left so we don't end up at someone's private residence.



When we were looking for the historic clubhouse, we did turn the wrong way and ended up in front of this house (top left), which was wrong.

Suggestion 36: Add a directional sign before the questionable intersection, on the right side of the street (top right), so that visitors don't end up missing their turn.

Suggestion 37: This map is in downtown Johnstown (bottom left). It shows an orange highlighted "shopping district." There isn't a shopping district here at all, so it would be best to take the sign down for now. Downtown has changed,

so it's important that your signs change too.

Developing a wayfinding system is a science as much as an art. It's not a public works project, and normal graphic designers don't have the specific expertise to create the right types of signs. When you are ready to have the system developed, be sure to contract with a firm that specializes in developing a wayfinding system, or environmental graphics. There are some excellent firms that do this type of work, including Axia Creative (bottom right), Corbin Design, and Cloud Gehshan.



7 THE PROBLEM WITH FIRST IMPRESSIONS

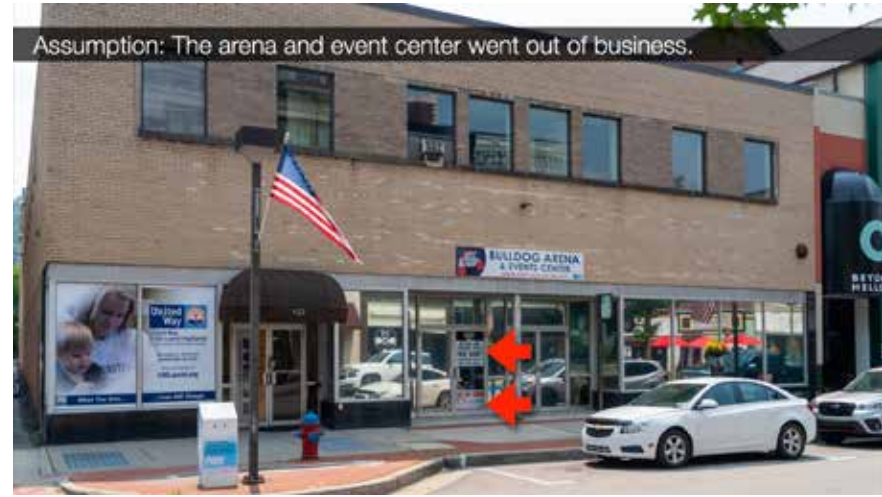


Section 7. First Impressions

The flowers on top of the parking meters (top right) looks great. By themselves, they would give a good first impressions of downtown. But when you look down at the weeds growing around the street trees and in the sidewalks, the beautification of the flowers is canceled out by the weeds. It looks like no one cares enough to take care of downtown.

This gives the impression that downtown is not safe.

We know that's not the case, but all the weeds make it look like no one cares what downtown looks like. Very often locals just get used to seeing the weeds, and they don't even notice it anymore. But you can be sure visitors notice.



Right in Central Park we saw the lid removed from this hole (top left). This is dangerous--Suggestion 38: Lock this lid down.

We saw the Bulldog Arena and Event Center (top right), and then were disappointed that there are signs that it is for lease. We assumed it went out of business.

Suggestion 39: We saw trash and debris everywhere downtown. We didn't notice such a problem in Cambria City, and we're not sure if the merchants do their best to keep it clean, or what. Work with homeless or disadvantaged

people to take care of trash pick up downtown. A person could be assigned a block to pick up trash regularly in exchange for a fee.

In many countries, shop owners and merchants take responsibility for the sidewalks in front of their stores. They sweep and wash them off daily. They have the most to gain from having a clean, welcoming entrance into their shops.



This is the kind of thing we saw over and over again in downtown Johnstown (all photos this page). The weeds, trash, and debris looked terrible.

Suggestion 40: If this sidewalk (bottom right) is the responsibility of the property owners of this abandoned building, force their hands. We couldn't even walk on this sidewalk because the weeds were so thick and tall. If the city must, it should clean this up and lien the property for the cost. But to leave it like this brings the entire image of Johnstown down.



These tree branches (top left) must have been sitting on this sidewalk for months, if not a year. Clean this up!

The weeds and broken sidewalks are everywhere (top right and bottom left). Clean up downtown!

Suggestion 41: This faded sign prohibits parking in this traffic lane (bottom right). Do people ever really park in this traffic lane? This faded sign should simply be removed.



This problem isn't just with public spaces, but private spaces are severely neglected as well. This parking lot (top left) is crumbling away and needs to be fixed.

At this parking garage (top right), there is a sign that might say "event parking" but it is so faded it's hard to read.

Suggestion 42: Develop new signage for public parking and other public sites. It doesn't have to be expensive. Most of these issues aren't major problems, but the accumulation of them makes Johnstown look like no one cares.

Suggestion 43: Add decorative trash cans downtown--every block. This would help prevent the trash problem.



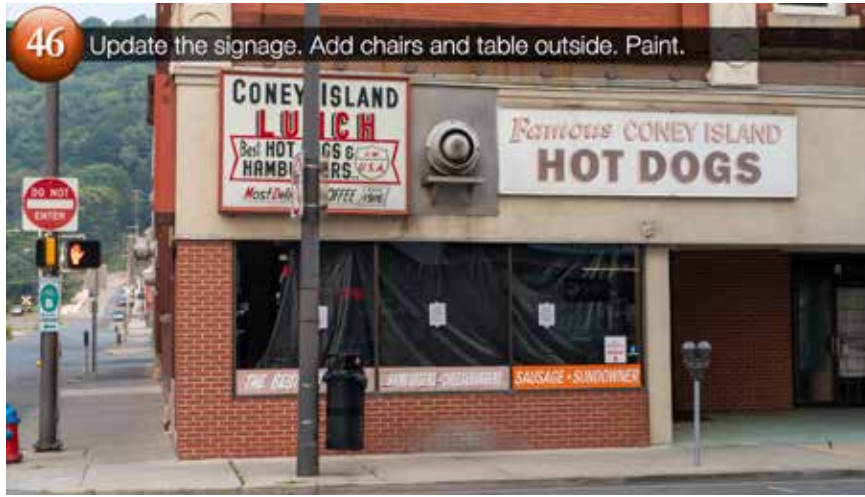
Suggestion 44: We saw the banners on this beautiful, old house (top left) about how they are trying to raise money to restore the building, which is great. The problem is that the banners are so old and faded, they look like they've given up. Put up new banners that give updates.

with pots of flowers on both sides of the doorway.

Suggestion 45: Add benches all throughout downtown. They should always be against the building facade facing out, and they should be flanked with pots.

Section 8. The Power of Curb Appeal

We cannot stress enough the importance of curb appeal. This is a great job (bottom left). The pots and hanging baskets, plus the attractiveness of the building facade itself, looks very nice. We would love to see benches flanked



Suggestion 46: Coney Island (top left) is undergoing renovations, but we suggest in addition to their indoor updates, that they update the signage as well. It looks too dated. Also, add benches or tables and chairs outside, along with pots of flowers.

Look down this street (top right). It looks very stark and bare. Suggestion 47: Add benches, pots and planters, outdoor dining with tables and chairs, and blade signs. Very few businesses downtown do anything to pull people into their doors.

Have you ever said, "That looks like a nice place to eat"? We all have. We judge restaurants and shops by how they look from the outside. Does this restaurant (bottom left) look like "a nice place to eat"? Not really. It might be great, but the sloppy plastic banner looks terrible, and there is no beautification to make it attractive.

How about this pizza place (bottom right)? It's hard to tell if it's even in business. The flower pots by the curb are nice, but there are weeds growing up at the base. If the construction sign isn't necessary, take it down. It's been there so long there are weeds growing up around the sandbags at its base.



Suggestion 48: Consider adding awnings to many of the retail stores and businesses downtown. This one (top left) was in Geneseo, Livingston County, NY. Awnings add a lot of curb appeal and soften the facades.

Another couple of examples of the beauty of awnings (top right and bottom left). This Italian restaurant (top right) looks even more intimate with the awning. And this one at Questa Lasagna (bottom left) can extend and retract (bottom right) depending on weather.



Merchants could create a buying co-op. If they work together, they can obtain a bulk discount for buying multiple awnings. They could work with a local design firm to coordinate the styles and colors of awnings. The city could also consider grants or low-income loans to help get it done.

One really good candidate for an awning is Galina's.

Section 9. The Rule of Blade Signs

Can you tell what shops or restaurants are in any of these buildings? (bottom left) In order to see what is there, we would have to walk out into the street,

into traffic, to look up at the building facades to see any signs.

Can you tell what is in any of these buildings? (bottom right)

What downtown needs is blade signs. These are signs that are perpendicular to the street, so that people can read them as they walk or drive down the street.



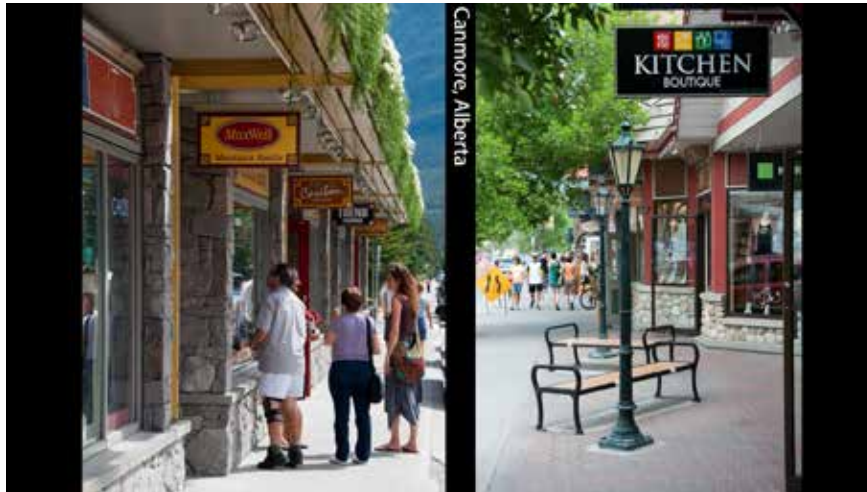
Suggestion 49: Can you tell what is any of these buildings? (top left) Develop a blade sign program for downtown. This could be a combination blade sign/awning program.

Suggestion 50: Do you have any incentive to continue going down this street (top right) when you don't see any signs telling you what is in the buildings? Add blade signs.

We drove by the Flood Museum four times before we could find it (top right). We had to ask someone where it was.

The sign for the Flood Museum is only visible from the other direction (bottom left). That isn't helpful! It isn't a wayfinding issue; the Museum just needs a little perpendicular sign above the door that states "Johnstown Flood Museum."

These are a good example of blade signs in Leavenworth, Washington (bottom right) that are on all of their shops. They make it easy to see what stores are available, let you know immediately what they sell, and entice you to continue down the street with the promise of more interesting shops.



Use blade signs. These are signs that are perpendicular to the street. When we are walking or driving down a street, we see things that are perpendicular to us. We don't see what is on the face of a building unless we drive very slowly and turn from side to side to see what is inside the shops. Blade signs make it easy for people to see what is in the shops ahead.

Nantucket, Massachusetts (top left) uses very good blade signs, as does Carmel, California (top right). Most successful downtowns have blade signs.

These (bottom left) are in Canmore, Alberta. There are some general rules for

blade signs: They should be no lower than seven feet, no higher than nine feet, and no wider than 42 inches. This will prevent sign clutter.

As with all of these examples, they don't have to be cookie-cutter. They can be very distinctive, decorative, and show off the business while sticking to general guidelines. You can work with your businesses to design and create effective blade signs. Be sure they promote what the business sells first, not just the name of the business. You can even put together a blade sign buying co-op to get discounts on the signs.



What kind of shop do you think “Laffin Crab” is? (top left) Perhaps a comedy club? a restaurant specializing in seafood? It’s no longer in business—they sold kites and windsocks, but who would know by the name of their store.

Always promote what it is you’re selling before the name of the store. Promote the lure to bring people in.

We weren’t sure what Lambcakes is (top right). It looks like a great shop. Do they sell only specialty cakes for weddings and events? Cupcakes? General bakery goods? We weren’t sure. Make it obvious! Just add to your signage

something like: Cakes and baked goods.

Gallery on Gazebo (bottom left) was confusing as well. At first we assumed it is an art gallery. But the window displays didn’t look like a gallery.

Suggestion 51: Merchants should make it obvious what they are selling. You don’t want to lose customers because they can’t tell that you have what they are looking for. Scott’s by Dam? (bottom right) What is that?



10 DEVELOP A NEW
PARKING SYSTEM



- Choices:**
- Passport (USA)
 - Pango (Israel)
 - PayByPhone (Canada)
 - Parkmobile (USA)
- Benefits to the city:**
- No cost to city or town
 - Parking enforcement: must have web-capable devices
 - Customer pays a convenience fee (think ATMs)
 - They provide the stickers and apply them
 - Cities see a 20% increase in revenues (average)

Section 10. Develop a New Parking System

Suggestion 52: Convert your parking system to a modern app and kiosk-driven system (top right).

Parking is an economic development mechanism. Funds received from parking should be reinvested in the district from which it was generated.

A lot of the meters in Johnstown are so old and rusty we were surprised they still work.

There are a number of different companies that can handle the change-over for you (bottom right).



You have three choices:

- Coin operated meters
- Pay by smart phone (Passport)
- Use a kiosk and pay by cash/credit card



My "first time" experience:

- I scanned the QR code. Within 20 seconds I had the app.
- It uses "location services" to determine my location.
- I gave myself a user name and password.
- I put in the zone and space.
- I then input a credit card.
- I told it how long I wanted to park (it included prices).

It told me the following:

- Not to worry, the meter won't show any time, but we know you paid for the parking.
- It will text me 15 minutes prior to running out of time.
- If the meter allows for more time, I can "recharge" it - pay for more time.

Total time: Less than three minutes



This kiosk has a solar panel on top



In new lots they use these zone/space markers, saving the cost of meters.

They also have kiosks, or you can call if you don't have a smartphone app.

These systems can provide the customer with three choices to pay for their parking: Coin operated meters; pay by smart phone; use a kiosk and pay by cash or credit card.

Using these systems, even for the first time, is easy (top right). Most lots have all three choices, making it even easier for any customer.

The fee for use of the system is usually added onto the parking fee, so the consumer pays a small additional amount for the convenience.



Once a customer has downloaded the app and used the system once, it's very simple to use again. These systems will usually notify the customer by sending them a text when they are close to their expiration time, and the customer has the option to pay for additional time directly from their phone.

Benefits for the consumer (according to Parkmobile): No "feeding the meter"; 15 minute text reminders; the mobile app is free; opt-in local information; consumers can find businesses in close proximity to their parking space; they don't have to pay for extra time unless they want to.

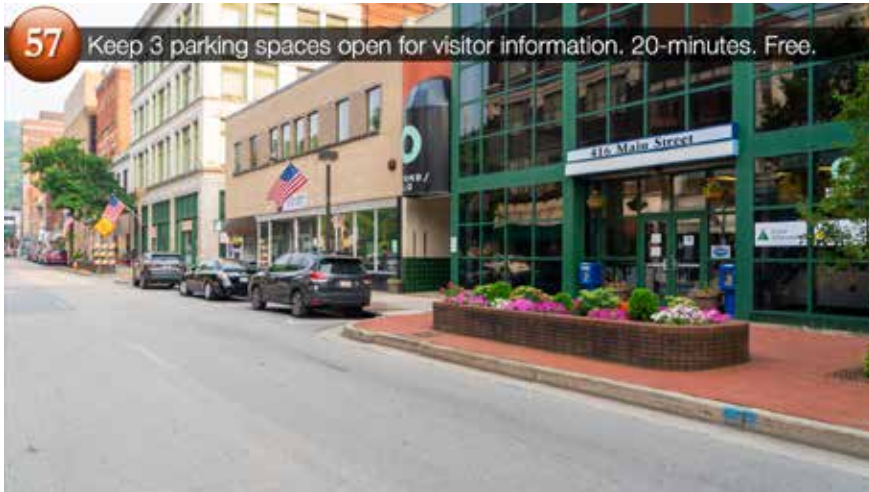
Section 11. Rethink Your Parking Time Limits



If I come downtown to have lunch at a restaurant, and then I want to go into a couple of shops, and then, possibly, there's a farmers market I want to shop at, I need more than two hours--the average amount of time a consumer usually needs in a downtown is four hours. So when your parking limits them to two hours, you are chasing away your customers before they are done spending money.

Suggestion 53: Extend your parking limit to four hours.

Suggestion 54: Right outside the Holiday Inn, in the parking lot (bottom right), the signs say "Tow Away Zone." Is this for people who are not Inn customers? Make it clear.



For your downtown parking, you could have parking limited to three hours, but have signs letting people know where they can find all-day parking. Are your parking garages all-day parking? If so, post signs on them to let people know.

Suggestion 55: Is the parking garage right next to the Holiday Inn public parking? (top left) Make it clear if it is for the public or not. Let people know if it is all-day parking and how much it costs by putting up easy to read signs.

Suggestion 56: Add the cost of parking clearly at this public parking garage

(top right).

Suggestion 57: Keep three parking spaces open for visitor to use when they go into the visitor information center. It should be clearly marked: 20 minute limit for visitors. Free.

Section 12. Create Invitations -- Invite Us Back



Great job here, inviting us back on August 1st! Excellent.



58 Now add a readerboard at the gazebo or in the park



59 When is the Farmers Market? Let us know the day and time.



Great job here as well! Wish we could be here for this music!

This banner (top left) lets us know about “Sunday on the Square--Street Party on Gazebo Place--August 1st 2-6PM.” This is fantastic. Thank you so much for letting us know about this upcoming event. This is an invitation to come back, and it’s so important.

Suggestion 58: Add a readerboard at the gazebo (top right) or in the park that lets people know about all the events coming up over the next few months. That way, people can plan ahead, and if they can’t make it downtown for Sunday on the Square, perhaps they can make it to another event.

Suggestion 59: We saw the banner promoting the Farmers Market (bottom left), and it’s great that you have a Farmers Market. But let us know when it is--the days and times.

We saw the readerbord at the Roxbury Bandshell promoting Slagle Rock & Sue (bottom right), and that’s awesome. Good job letting us know what’s coming up.

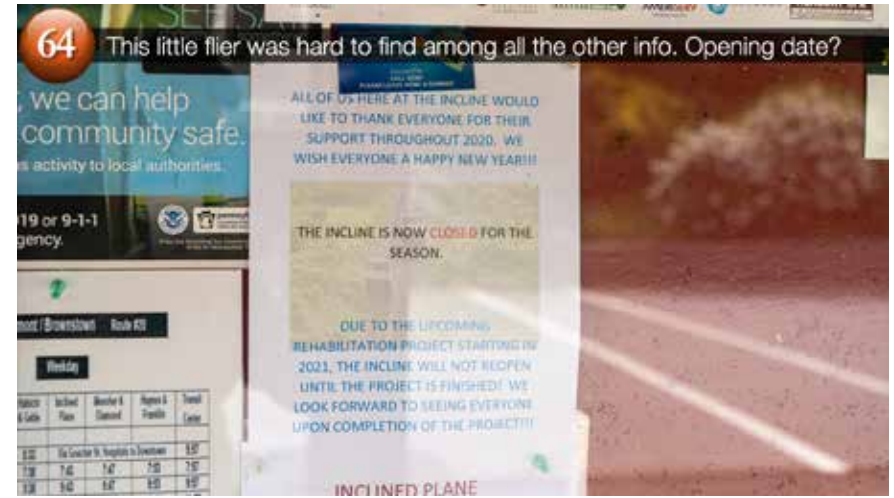


Suggestion 60: Post upcoming events on the opposite side of the sign as well (top left). Or you could simply welcome us to the Bandstand here. Don't waste this space.

This is a beautiful bandstand and a great stage (top right). The only concern is that next to the bandstand is this skating rink (bottom left) that is locked up and has very worn-looking signs that state that it is under construction. It looks like it may have been under construction for years because of the worn out signs.

Suggestion 61: If the skating rink is going to open at some point, add signage that tells us when. Invite us back.

Suggestion 62: At the bottom of the Incline, in downtown, there is a sign that tells about "new" attractions at the top. This sign looks very old, so it's easy to assume that it's out of date and there will be no "new" attractions at the top. If this is as out of date as it looks, remove the sign. If this information is still good, refresh the sign.



Suggestion 63: There is no information at the bottom that tells why the Incline is closed, what kind of work they are doing to it, or when it will reopen (top left). Add signage that lets us know when it will be open. Invite us back.

Suggestion 65: The brewery (bottom left) looks great! We weren't sure if it is open to the public, when it might be open, or if they serve food. Add signage to let us know and invite us back.

Suggestion 64: We went to the top of the Incline and looked through several small notices that were posted (top right), We found this notice that the Incline is closed for the season. Add more information--when will it reopen? Is it normally open year-round? What work is being done? Invite us back!

Suggestion 66: Add a readerboard at the Arena (bottom right) to let us know about upcoming events.



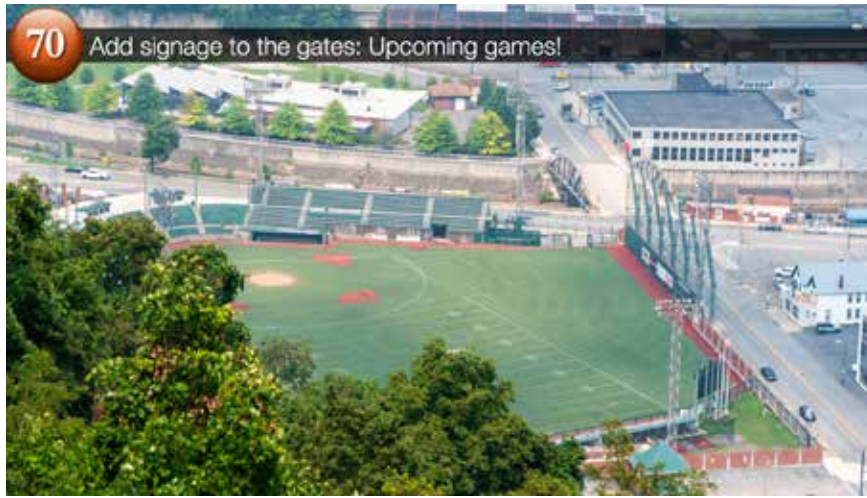
Suggestion 67: The Peoples Natural Gas Park looks amazing (top left). We didn't know if anything ever happens here. Add a readerboard to let us know what concerts and events will take place.

A readerboard doesn't have to be expensive. A simple sign or even a sandwich board--just something that can give the public information about upcoming events and invite us back.

Suggestion 68: It's obvious this bridge is being painted or having work of some kind being done (bottom left). That's great. Take the opportunity to use

the bridge covering as a giant sign that can say "Welcome to Johnstown, the Renaissance City." Or "Welcome to Johnstown. Great Things are Happening Here."

Suggestion 69: Do events take place at the VOMA? (bottom right) If so, put up a sign to let us know about them and invite us back.

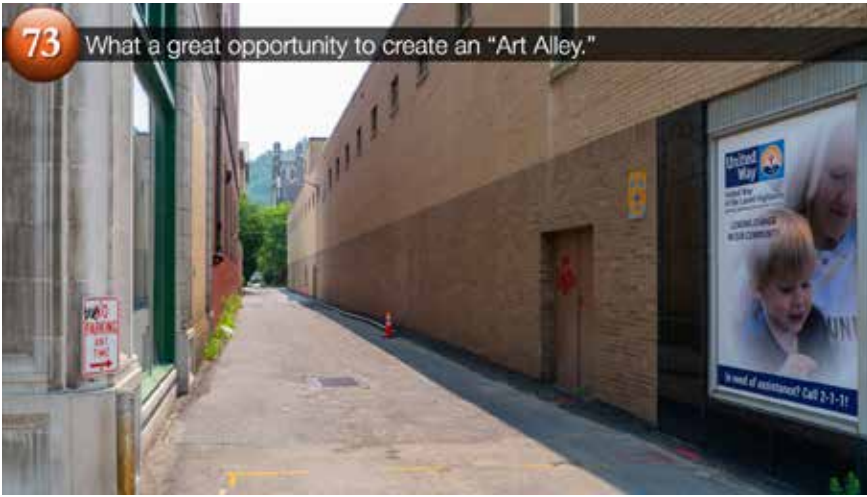


Suggestion 70: This is a fantastic ball field (top left). We weren't sure if any games were coming up, until last night the lights were on and it was obvious. But we hadn't seen any signs or readerboards outside that would let us know about upcoming games. Add signage to invite people to the games!

Suggestion 72: At the conference center (bottom right), which looks very nice, it's almost impossible to read the sign. The letters are too light and blend in with the background. If they were painted a darker color, like the green the arrow is pointing to above, they would be much easier to read.

Section 13. Other Notes and First Impressions.

Suggestion 71: We saw these signs for a "Heritage Route" all over the place (bottom left). But we could never find any information about the Route. If this no longer exists, then the signs should be taken down.



Suggestion 73: We came across this alley (top left) and immediately thought it would be a great opportunity to become an "Art Alley."

- No profanities
- Clean up after themselves

In Rapid City, SD, they have a gritty alley right in their downtown. They allowed graffiti artists to go ahead and paint several blocks of this alley to add some artistic expression and color to this part of town.

So the artists went for it. The art is all different, and it's fascinating to walk through these alleys and look at all of it.

They have four rules:

- No swastikas
- Protect other artists' work



Now, Art Alley in Rapid City is a tourist attraction (top left). There are even art docents who will take people on tours and explain as they go.

Consider a similar art alley in Johnstown.

We found the airport (top right), and it looks great. Consider adding a sign that lets people know that commercial flights are available.

Suggestion 74: The name of the airport is so long that it's hard to remember. Consider shortening the name.

Suggestion 75: This beautiful historic building (bottom right) is on the National

Historic Register. We thought it was open for visitors to look through, but when we went inside, we found that it is used as a half-way house. For such a historic building, even though there is certainly a need for these social services, this is probably not the highest and best use of the gorgeous building. Consider trying to find a different location for the half-way house--not in a building that is on the National Historic Register--and finding a different purpose for this building so that it can be used for the benefit of downtown Johnstown and all the residents, helping to make downtown a more enjoyable place to spend time while preserving its history. Since it is currently not open to the public, definitely do not market it.



A few other notes:

At the top of the Incline, we were amazed at the views, the interpretive panels inside, and the whole place was exceptional (top left and right). Amazing.

We also found the Country Club (bottom left and right), and it looks very nice.



The Country Club is a beautiful facility. We were ready to go for a swim (top left).

We saw this gorgeous house right outside the Country Club (top right), and saw that it was for sale. We looked up the price and were shocked. We thought it would have been four times what it was! Housing costs are definitely good.

The Incline Plane looks like so much fun (bottom left), and we're looking forward to riding it after it reopens.

The river looks so tempting to float down on an inner tube (bottom right). It could be a great business opportunity for someone to rent inner tubes during the right season.



Section 14. Create the Team. Destination Johnstown.

Suggestion 76: Create the Destination Johnstown Team to take these suggestions, discuss them, and decide which ones to turn into recommendations and take action.

Johnstown is in competition with other communities in Pennsylvania, your surrounding states, and other communities across the country, and even around the world. It takes a powerful, combined effort of people in different organizations, working together, to make a big difference in your economic

development efforts. Our organizations tend to work in silos (top right), each with their own goals. When we work together with common goals, we can be more productive and achieve greater success.

Tourism organizations, downtowns, chambers of commerce, and economic development organizations need to work together. In fact, tourism is the front door to your non-tourism economic development efforts, and downtown shopping is where visitors spend most of their non-lodging tourism dollars.



Engage and activate your Millennials



Cater to the Millennials and you'll get GenXers & Boomers

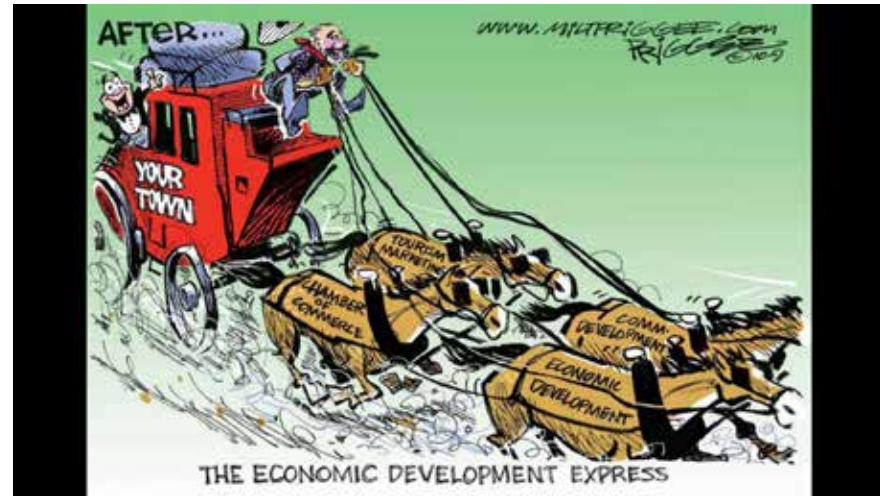
- Visit Johnstown
- Economic development
- Arts council
- Community Foundation for the Alleghenies
- Educational institutions
- Chamber of commerce
- Downtown (BID or Association)
- Planning Department
- Mayor or council representative
- City Manager
- Health official (local hospital)
- Young professionals
- Major employer (private sector)

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Engage your millennials in this effort. They have so many ideas to contribute. In fact, if you cater to millennials, you'll attract your GenXers and Boomers as well.

We suggest keeping your "Destination Johnstown" team to 13 maximum, if possible, and include someone from each of these organizations (bottom left).

Rapid City created "Destination Rapid City" to work on their downtown (bottom right), with a mission to work together to create and sustain a vibrant downtown center for the benefit of Rapid City's residents and visitors.



YOU WANT DOERS NOT DIRECTORS: Crafting the Perfect Organizational Board
Presented by Roger Brooks

DestinationDevelopment.org
Resource Center: Video Library

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The Destination [YourTown] priority list

78 **Next up:**

- Go through these suggestions
- Create an Action Plan
- Turn suggestions to recommendations

When you bring together your organizations, so that you are working towards common goals, you will turn your economic and tourism development efforts from this (top left) to this (top right).

Suggestion 78: Go through this assessment and these suggestions. From them, create an Action Plan, where you will turn the suggestions into recommendations.

Suggestion 77: Be sure to watch the DestinationDevelopment.org Resource Center video “You want doers not directors” (bottom left). It will help in crafting the perfect organization.

1850's - The canal system, the steel industry
1880s - The shift from the canal system to rail
1889 - The Johnstown Flood
1890 - Rebuilding and back on track
1900 - Population at nearly 60,000 people
1936 - The next great flood (47 years)
1940s - The FloodProof city
1950s - Decline of the steel industry
1977 - The next flood killing 85 people (41 years)
1992 - Losing the primary employer
2021 - The next renaissance begins (44 years)

Has there ever been a more resolute, resilient city in the history of this country?

Hats off to Johnstown for the determination, fortitude, & resilience to become an amazingly successful city - **again**.



WHAT WE FOUND
AMAZING
ABOUT JOHNSTOWN

We found Johnstown to be an amazing, resilient city. In looking at the history of Johnstown (top left) and the determination the people here had to overcome the hardships and disasters they have faced, we are so impressed. Johnstown is America's Renaissance City, a city of determination, fortitude and resilience to be successful.



Here's to making Johnstown an even better, thriving place to live, work, invest in, and visit!



Johnstown Marketing Assessment

The following pages contain an assessment by our secret shoppers, who researched the area from a distance, reviewing marketing materials to see if they could find the area, and if the materials were convincing enough to make them want to visit.

Websites

I found numerous websites that assisted in my planning.

TripAdvisor – https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g52908-Johnstown_Pennsylvania-Vacations.html

Top Things to Do in Johnstown, traveler ranked. I've added some notes as I visited the individual websites.

1. **Johnstown Inclined Plane** – <https://www.inclinedplane.org/> - I am greatly disappointed, although I understand why, that this website indicates this attraction is closed until spring 2023 for a rehab project. There is an Italian restaurant on property that will be open through the rehab. Asiago's Tuscan Italian Restaurant.
2. **Johnstown Flood Museum** – <https://www.jaha.org/attractions/johnstown-flood-museum/> - As I began researching my trip to Johnstown, I kept reading about the catastrophe when a neglected dam burst and 2,209 people lost their lives. In honor of the lives lost, and what is known as a triumphant recovery, they created this museum. It looks awesome. More review below.
3. **Heritage Discovery Center** – Discussed in conjunction with the JAHA website.
4. **Grandview Cemetery** – <http://grandviewjohnstownpa.com/index.php> - I grew up visiting historic cemeteries, and I really didn't think about it being one of the top attractions within a community. It looks well maintained and that warms my heart. From their website, "Grandview Cemetery created

in 1885 was preordained to fulfill a vital mission after the Great Flood of 1889, and to date continues to provide the Greater Johnstown Area with a beautiful, serene setting for your loved ones final resting place."The history found within those gates are said to be humbling understanding the magnitude of the devastation that made this cemetery necessary.

5. **Cambria County War Memorial Arena – <https://www.1stsummitarena.com/>** - The website link through TripAdvisor is broken. I did a google search to find the correct URL. It is an event arena, and I

6. **B&L Wine Cellars – <https://www.bandlwinecellars.com/>** - This looks amazing, and they do such a good job advertising their awards, and their social media pages. I love their tagline, "Local Wine pairs well with Great Friends", and that they call themselves "Your Hometown Winery". But they have a typo on their homepage under hours for Bon Air, "Open Cetrtain Fridays for Music." I think they need to fix that. B&L Wine Cellars Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/BandLWineCellars> is up to date and has a lot of information.

7. **Greenhouse Park – <https://www.contwpsupers.us/>** - It's odd that the website link on TripAdvisor takes me to the home page of the Conemaugh Township Supervisors, then you must click again to access the information regarding the Greenhouse Park.

8. **Point Stadium** – The website on TripAdvisor is a broken link. According to the reviews, I can determine that it is a baseball park complex.

9. **Johnstown Symphony Orchestra – <https://www.johnstownsymphony.org/>** - Wonderfully inviting and I wish there was an event during my trip. I loved their "Sights, Sounds & Stories" tab. I enjoyed how they encourage involvement from visitors to their website to submit stories and experiences based on their prompts.

10. **Wagner-Ritter House and Garden** – Part of the below mentioned JAHA.

Top Restaurants in Johnstown

1. **The Boulevard Grill – <https://blvdgrill.com/>** - Pretty standard restaurant website.

2. **Rey-Azteca** – URL broken, unfortunately it appears as if it's permanently closed via Google.

3. **The Phoenix Tavern – <http://www.thephoenixtavern.com/>** - Again, standard website for a restaurant, but the wings they have on the homepage look AMAZING.

4. **Asiago Tuscan Italian Restaurant – <https://asiagostuscanitalian.com/>** - Found at the Incline Plane area, it is open during the rehab the Incline Plane takes place. I think this website is leaps and bounds above the standard restaurant websites. It is so inviting, and the food looks superb. More than that, the gallery slideshow includes real people laughing, eating and drinking.

5. **El Jalisco – <http://johnstoweats.com/el-jalisco/>** - There isn't much on their Johnstown Eats page, other than where it's located, and times of operations. It does tout that it is authentic with mild flavor, and even recommends the "Special Dinner" which definitely offers a variety of the options they proffer.

6. **Coney Island Lunch – <http://coneyislandjohnstownpa.com/>** - Although there is a menu on this website, it almost appears more of a workspace than a restaurant. Very bizarre for a restaurant website.

7. **Scott's by Dam** – Could not find the URL for this restaurant. The URL from TripAdvisor leads to a broken link.

8. **Harrigan's Café & Wine Deck – <http://harriganscafewinedeck.com/>** - Located within a hotel downtown, it looks to be a winner of a Wine Spectator Award, and has numerous reviews referring to their menu as exceptional.

9. **Our Son's – <https://www.facebook.com/Our-Sons-Family-Restaurant-120792921265125>** - I have no idea if this restaurant is open anymore. The last post of the restaurants Facebook page is from October 2019.

10. **Santo's Pizza – <https://www.facebook.com/Santos-Pizza-441027659276557/>** - This restaurant has a Facebook page, last updated late June.

Johnstown Eats - <http://johnstoweats.com/> - I came across this website as I was accessing the websites via TripAdvisor, I came across this website. It has a list (alphabetical) of all the restaurants within Johnstown, and where a URL is available you can click through to the individual restaurants websites.

Johnstown PA Website – <https://cityofjohnstownpa.net/>

I found the photo in the header that fades out as you scroll down great! Often

websites use a solid color as their background, only using photography in galleries. But Johnstown managed to include a wonderful city view scene and then their various attractions in the scrolling gallery.

The coloring, font, text size, and overall website format is welcoming. It doesn't assault the eyes by having too many varied fonts, etc. I also really like that they have the current local weather posted as well. That is handy, and just great information.

Visit Johnstown - <https://www.visitjohnstownpa.com/>

Second to the unicorn website I found (Where Adventure Lives – see below), this website is very inviting. I think this organization does a great job at ensuring the best of Johnstown is featured.

I enjoyed the Trips & Tours drop down menu, because can choose which way you want to explore. By Car & By Motorcycle, By Water, and By Trail. The only recommendation would be to include a new option to explore RV. With as many RVers or Digital Nomads there are now, this would be a draw to the region, and Johnstown in particular.

The Events Calendar is awesome, I wish the text could be larger, However, it really helps to have options for how to view the events. Month, Week, Day and Year. What a great concept. This website truly appeals to residents AND visitors.

The coolest thing I found, was the Cambria County Bucket List 2.0. (<https://www.visitjohnstownpa.com/sites/visitjohnstownpa.com/files/ccbl2.pdf>) I would absolutely print this out and take it with me. They also have an Instagram page, and Facebook page that feature this bucket list. And both are kept up to date and encourages participation. AWESOME PROGRAM! IG @ccbucketlist2.0 and Facebook @ccbucketlist.

Facebook Page - <https://www.facebook.com/VisitJohnstownPA/>

Much like their main website, the Facebook page is kept up to date, with great photography, that I like to think includes photos from residents, not just the Visit Johnstown employees. I enjoy how engaging this organization is.

Overall, I highly recommend this website and the Facebook page to assist in planning your visit to Johnstown.

Cambria County Chamber of Commerce Website

There is now Johnstown specific website for a Chamber, it takes you to

Cambria Region Chamber. Visually speaking, this website is pretty standard. It has all the information you need to do business, and how to contribute.

I found the Live-Work-Play very enjoyable. It featured things to do in the region, and parks, forests, and trails. Those trails that are missing from the next website. I love the graphics you find at the top of the page, it features the entire Alleghenies, but it is definitely information I need as I plan my trip. It refers to another website, which is my absolute favorite website I found in my planning.

Accessing the Live-Work-Play page, happens when you explore the Our Community dropdown menu. Additionally, to the graphics on this page, there is an amazing video, very well done featuring various members of the Johnstown Community helping sell it to visitors. As you scroll, after you watch the video, you can access a walking guide to downtown Johnstown. As I discovered, this walking map is part of an amazing wellness program that the Cambria Regional Chamber & 1889 Jefferson Center for Population Health are sponsoring this program that will take place each Wednesday from Sept. 2nd – Oct. 21st. At 12pm anyone who wants to join, can meet at the Cambria County Library to take part. It is awesome, but visitors could use the walking route as a simple map to different attractions, as it highlights the following as points of interest on the route:

- The Stone Bridge
- Johnstown Train Station
- Johnstown Flood Museum
- Iron to Arts Corridor
- Central Park
- Alma Hall

Where Adventure Lives - <https://whereadventurelives.org/> - The purpose of this website, and those who contribute really need recognition. "Where Adventure Lives' content is open sourced to community leaders within Johnstown, Pennsylvania. The purpose of the website is to educate non-locals (ME!!) on all Johnstown has to offer. If you would like more information, have a suggestion, or just want to connect, we welcome your thoughts and comments."

It is marvelous! The website is visually appealing, and so inviting. It is the ONE website of all those I researched and found that truly made me want to visit Johnstown. PHENOMENAL. They feature pages on all of the following activities:

- Arts
- Downtown
- Events
- Living
- Mountain Biking
- River Rafting and Tubing
- Trails

I truly commend the minds that thought this website needed to exist. I think all the websites need to link together, and for visitors, this website needs to be promoted. For events, and day to day information, I still think the other websites need to exist. But I want to visit Johnstown, thanks to this website.

Cambria County Pennsylvania Website - <https://www.cambriacountypa.gov/>

This website was recommended via my Google search as somewhere I can find tourism information for Johnstown. However, it doesn't offer all that much in way of tourism information. It tells some history of the region, and does have links to some attractions, but overall, I was not impressed with the tourism information you can access through this site.

I did find a link to the Trails & Outdoor Recreation page, I was surprised to find it is empty with the exception of the following; "Trails and Outdoor Recreation are vital to the economy of Cambria County and the health and well-being of our residents." But there is nothing else on the page.

Discover Downtown Johnstown Partnership - <http://www.discoverjohnstown.org/>

I couldn't figure out what this organization does but found that it is a non-profit organization that is actively working on several initiatives for on Downtown Johnstown and their sustainability. My first impression of the website was that it was done on the cheap. The balance in the font size was not bad but could be improved upon.

There is a horizontal menu, that needs to have larger font to make it easier to read. I also didn't like how they had borders around the center of the page. If the page is all one color, there is no reason to then add a border to it, it would look "cleaner" and flow better without it. The header is slightly distorted and should probably be a larger height to make it more appealing.

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/discoverdowntownjohnstown/>

They do a great job on their Facebook page, it hasn't been updated since their last movie in the park, but I do enjoy the variety of information they post on a regular basis. I would recommend more interaction with the residents, posting questions, getting people excited for their movies in the park and other events.

Johnstown Area Heritage Association - <https://www.jaha.org/>

Using the acronym JAHA's mission is the "Preserving and presenting the nationally significant heritage of Johnstown"

This association has done a MARVELOUS job on their website and offerings. In my opinion, the most brilliant part of this website is that they have created a Johnstown Heritage Pass, which I would compare to the CityPass various large cities across the nation offer. Additionally, they offer a 20% off discounted ticket if you buy the pass ONLINE.

This pass includes entry to the Center for Metal Arts, Heritage Discovery Center/Johnstown Children's Museum, Johnstown Flood Museum and the Wagner-Ritter House & Garden. Even if you have to make reservations for 2 of the location prior to redemption, they look like AWESOME activities. Within the JAHA website you can learn more about each attraction that contributes to their mission, the one exception is the Center for Metal Arts, which I reference below.

The JAHA website itself is welcoming and provides up to date information of local events, not just those found within their association. The font is easy on the eyes and the photographs are intriguing.

Center for Metal Arts - <https://centerformetalarts.org/>

Although very visually appealing with the great photography of parts of the art creation process, I was disappointed there isn't an About page to tell visitors what they can expect. There are various pages that tease part of the history and how it came into existence. Especially since this property is included in the Johnstown Heritage Pass, I would like to know what a tour or visit includes. Do visitors get to try some of the techniques, a little hands on? Or is it a walking tour with narrative? This is important information to have.

Explore PA History - <http://explorepahistory.com/attraction.php?id=1-B-2C1>

This is not the type of website I generally use in a Marketing Assessment.

However, I stumbled upon it via the Cambria County websites I found. What I found useful as a potential visitor is there “Greater Johnstown/Cambria County Convention and Visitors Bureau Attraction Details page. It summarizes different “attractions” found in the region, along with the distance calculated from Johnstown city center. That is a helpful list, although I found a few links that were broken, and it was frustrating to try to then find out whether the business was still open or not. A list like this would be helpful for potential visitors, particularly the distance part. Not often do I find that built into a website I’m researching for an upcoming trip. It saves time for a potential tourist.

My Impressions

If Johnstown was located two hours from my house, would I make a special trip there based on what I saw, read and learned?

- I would absolutely visit this community. I grew up in a family that visited historic sites frequently. The idea I could hit multiple attractions that have historic significance is amazing.

If I were driving through Pennsylvania (on my way to somewhere else), is there any place you’d stop? How much time would you spend at each (or the one) place you’d stop? If so, where? This can be as simple as a restaurant, a scenic viewpoint, anything.

- I’m not sure I would stop at Johnstown multiple times, but I would definitely stop there in passing to grab a bite to eat and visit one of the attractions. The Bridge looks awesome. I’d love to see it change colors. I think the Incline Plane would be fantastic to visit, and I would also take time to explore the trails in the area. When I’m on a road trip, I often stop where I can stretch my legs, quite literally, and take short walks/hikes on my break.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL PRINT MATERIALS:

Bentley University’s Center for Marketing Technology found that 81% of visitors like to use printed brochures while traveling. So print materials are still a vital component of your marketing efforts.

We suggest that you create the following brochure in print AND have them

available in PDF downloadable format on your websites. There is more information about each of this in this report.

1. The Very Best of Johnstown

Market your top:

- Restaurants
- Retail shops
- Attractions
- Activities

Use specific criteria to select the ones that are truly your “best ofs:”

- Must be open year round (at least 8 months)
- Must be open 6 days a week
- Must be highly regarded by third-party sources (reviews, etc.)
- Must have good curb appeal
- Must be open until at least 7:00 pm
- Must be unique to Johnstown and the area (no chains)

Invite the participants. Each should have an entire panel of the brochure, and they should pay for their panel. The panels should not look like ads, rather they should include professional photographs, specific, descriptive text, and be informative.

2. Hidden Gems of Johnstown

This could be a privately produced small book that promotes those places and things to do that are unique to Johnstown and less well known. This could include places like Duman Lake County Park, trails, selfie spots, and more. It could also include short itineraries.

The Hidden Gems would be sold as a small book to visitors.

This report contains more details and instructions for creating these additional marketing materials on pages 15 to 32.



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