



# HURON RISING

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

19 SEPTEMBER 2018

# TONIGHT'S PURPOSE

- Provide a read-back of what we learned last week from 70+ of you
- Reflect and determine if what we heard was right
- Focus in depth and breadth of one or two problems
- Explore small wins and bigger systems of change
- Think ahead – what and who's next?

# THE BIG THEMES

- Civic pride and engagement – the sense that Huron is a good place
  - You have to prove it to yourselves
- Downtown needs help or a reimagine
  - It won't fix itself and may be beyond that
- Housing is a draw and an impediment
  - There's a market for poor housing and it's being fueled by supply
- Huron is diverse and cosmopolitan, but fights itself
  - New people and cultures have to wait a generation and that shouldn't be necessary



# CIVIC PRIDE AND ENGAGEMENT

- What's true about Huron and what people believe to be true are at odds
- Huron can and should invest in projecting out an image it believes
- First, it has to believe it
  - High quality of life, good place to live, excellent parks, facilities, care and services
- Huron needs a collective, visible, sustainable rallying point
- This is a measure of success as is outside belief of the same
  - More visitors, more conferences, better statewide perception

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- New populations, cultures, traditions and norms challenge the community
- Spaces, places, and cultural (positive) collisions create understanding
- Sustainable, robust programs or spaces are needed to make this happen
- The community needs to make a concerted effort to support entrepreneurship and community welcome for diverse people and cultures

# THE MARKET FOR DILAPIDATED HOUSING

- The percentage of dilapidated homes in Huron has grown substantially
- These homes are costly to remove and difficult to enforce change
- There's a market for this housing, making change even more difficult
- Whole blocks of homes can or could be removed at great taxpayer cost and with no obvious near-term replacement plan



# DOWNTOWN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Like dilapidated housing, repair and replacement costs are too great
- New businesses can't afford to locate
- Existing businesses can't afford to rehabilitate
- Downtown is a singular reminder of business and development failure
- Successful small towns have made successful downtowns happen

# DIGGING DEEPER INTO SYSTEMS

- Housing
- Downtown



# HOUSING

- Consider a concerted effort with the city, state, and developers to accelerate development of low-cost, high-quality affordable housing
- Strip the market of demand for dilapidated housing by providing better housing at equal prices and in high volume

# HOUSING

- Explore public-private partnerships to do this and don't concentrate them in only one area of the community
- Explore "compromised housing" tax rates to drive out poor housing providers
- Consider low- or no-tax and TIF approaches to developing affordable housing consistent with the renters' culture and family structure
- Look at this as part of a five-year comprehensive dilapidated housing replacement effort
- Measure new, affordable housing (homes and apartments) and shutdown of identified poor/dilapidated/unfit housing (e.g. replacement rates)

# WHAT ADDRESSING HOUSING DOES

- Lifts the market and gets bad housing providers out of business or creates equilibrium-disrupting pressure
- Gives renters and even owners in this segment a better alternative
- Provides the community – with the right zoning – an opportunity to immediately improve neighborhood housing quality
- Creates a market and expectation that low-cost housing can be high-quality
- Supports cultural diversity by acknowledging the needs of new families and establishing housing choices that are high-quality and culturally accepting



# DOWNTOWN

- Start locally with a vision for replacement of the least attractive segments of downtown, between Market Road and 3<sup>rd</sup> and Dakota
- Consider this corridor as a catalyst for downtown development, with that area being an epicenter for community engagement and activity
- Culture center, park, live music area, farmer's or maker's markets, mixed-use or new co-working spaces, new flats or townhomes
- Use as a first bet in a comprehensive downtown rehabilitation plan to be completed by 2021

# DOWNTOWN: THINK SYSTEMICALLY

- Downtown is Point B on a line from Point A in Southtown
- Move south from the epicenter and use the DOT transformation of Dakota Avenue as your connector: bike path pass-through, extensions throughout the community (river and parks to the east, fairgrounds to the west, southtown to the south)
- Downtown then becomes the rehabilitated focal point between these points of interest

# DOWNTOWN: EXISTING BUILDINGS

- Between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> and Dakota, in particular, catalogue costs of improvement and storefront viability
- Invest in existing business/building owners by cutting taxes or providing improvement grants to shore up good-to-better infrastructure
- Set a goal of including X% of eligible downtown buildings in Historic Registry (and thereby available for improvement grants via the Deadwood Fund) by 2021



# DOWNTOWN: INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS

- Provide no-cost or low-cost storefronts and start-up cash for viable businesses operating in homes, basements, or in less visible areas in town
  - Think like a venture capitalist
- Move away from “big bet” business recruitment to many small seed loans and investments that would be below bank radar and above “friends and family” or credit card cash (e.g. \$25-\$50k).
- Establish a business mentoring and incubator program: legal, financial, marketing, experiential, and psychosocial assistance to bring new businesses along
- Condition ongoing engagement in the program with being a downtown storefront/business owner for five years following funding, storefront, remodel, and incubator/mentoring intensive investment from the community.

# DOWNTOWN: INCENTIVES FOR BUSINESS

- Measure success through number of new businesses started and/or moved to downtown within three years after support
- Assess outcomes by looking at sales tax base increases within 3-5 years after initiation of the program
- Work with local merchants to tag zip codes of patrons to determine if you're getting more external lift within 3-5 years after implementation

# BUILD AN ECOSYSTEM

- Just making a “destination downtown” isn’t enough: it’s about a system that connects the community together
  - Through new and desirable destination businesses
  - Through people living and working downtown
  - Through a cultural and community hub that’s identified as such
  - Through common spaces that are catalysts for community
  - Through foot traffic that isn’t specifically commerce-based
  - With recognition that this is a marathon and not a sprint (but there’s room for a sprint now)



# MEASURE SUCCESS

- Community pride
- Community growth and median income
- Sales tax revenue
- New housing and elimination of market for dilapidated housing
- External perception of Huron as a community
- External award application (see Mitchell) and acknowledgement
- External funding for program concepts/ideas
- Five years from now: visits from the next Huron wondering how you did it

# SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS

- Put together two taskforces: Downtown and Housing
- Challenge the taskforces to provide large scale visions and best first investment bets to kick off a successful path by 31 December
- Ensure that these taskforces have a holistic focus, but don't get trapped (e.g. SDDOT is coming five years from now, let's acknowledge it, but don't let it stop progress on Thing A)
- Start somewhere and be willing to make a mistake or two
- Announce and pursue community funding/support and partnerships in Q1 of 2019
- Have one project completely done in each taskforce by the end of 2020 with the next one shovel-ready

# DON'T FORGET THE SOFT STUFF

- Keep stakeholders engaged all along the way
- Remember the entrepreneurial ecosystem: think sustainable businesses and populations that can help Huron grow
- Build programs and don't just make buildings. The latter require repair and replacement. The former produce people who need to be nurtured





I'M HERE TO BE HELPFUL

LET ME KNOW HOW I CAN.



THIS IS AN EXCITING TIME FOR  
HURON