Historic Preservation and Sustainable Development: What does it mean for Main Street?

By Joe Lawniczak, Design Specialist, Wisconsin Main Street

Unless you’ve lived under a rock for the past several years, you’ve noticed there’s been a lot of talk about “green” this and “green” that and sustainability and other similar catchphrases. But what does all this really mean? And more importantly, how does it relate to historic preservation and downtown revitalization, things we deal with on a daily basis in Main Street?

In this edition of the Wisconsin Main Street Newsletter, we will focus on five different aspects: 1) New construction versus existing, 2) What sustainable development is (and isn’t), 3) How historic buildings are “green”, 4) Preservation as Smart Growth. 5) Simple ways to make your business, neighborhood and community more “green”.

We will highlight the Larsen Green project in Green Bay as part of our awards spotlight, which is a “green” development on page 4.

Wisconsin Main Street wanted to provide you this information as a teaser to what will be presented at the Executive Director Workshop in West Bend in January 2009. This is only open to designated Wisconsin Main Street Communities. Watch your “inboxes” for more information.

New Construction Versus Existing

Chances are, most of what you’ve heard about the “green” movement probably relates to new construction. But it’s important to realize that it’s larger than that. Existing buildings, preservation, adaptive reuse and neighborhoods all play important parts in this “green” movement. Unfortunately, the groups that oversee much of the certification, regulation, and financial incentives have been slow to recognize this fact.

Author and architecture expert Scott Butcher stated recently that according to the U.S. Green Building Council, which promotes green building through their Leadership in Environmental and Energy Design (LEED) program, almost 1,300 buildings are now certified, with another 9,800 in the process of becoming certified. He says that while those are impressive statistics, there is a problem with this. Most of these are NEW buildings, not reused older buildings. Whitley Powers, AIA, principal of Studio A Architecture in Charleston, SC states that the sheer number of older, existing buildings represents a much larger opportunity to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions that contribute to global warming than the comparatively small number of new structures erected each year.

In his blog, Butcher used the Philip Merrill Environmental Center outside of Annapolis, MD as an example. He writes: When built, it was touted as the “greenest building in the world”. In fact, it was the first to obtain LEED Platinum status, the highest certification awarded. That is all great news, and far better than any new building built without such certification. But this building is a NEW building built ten miles from the former location in downtown Annapolis. There, many employees walked or rode bikes to work. Unfortunately, due to its location, the new building is no longer accessible for these alternative transportation methods, and employees are forced to drive. And driving, as it turns out, uses 30% more energy than operating a building.

Butcher continues: A September 2007 article in Environmental Business News stated that “the fact remains, however, that the additional energy use from more employees driving to work may well exceed the energy savings realized by the green building.” And this doesn’t even take into account the energy and natural resources used to build the facility: manufacture and transport of products, construction of the building, associated waste, etc. A recent study found that on average, it takes 40 years for a new green building to recover the energy used to build it. Furthermore, if a building was demolished to make way for the new building, that figure rises to 65 years because of all the wasted energy and natural resources that had been used to construct the previous building. Could you imagine starting a business and waiting 65 years to break even?

Butcher stresses that this is not to discount the importance of green buildings and the LEED program. He says they are vital for the sustainability of our environment. But he says green buildings are typically green unto themselves, and not necessarily to the environment as a whole. And the fact remains that the United States is hungry for new buildings. He cites a recent report by the Brookings Institute that estimated that approximately 1/3 of all buildings currently standing will have been demolished and replaced by 2030. This is a staggering figure – something that the environmental benefits of 11,100 new green buildings cannot even begin to put a dent in. Think of 2,500 NFL stadiums brimming with debris. That is the waste that will be generated as these buildings are demolished.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
What is Sustainable Development?

Donovan Rypkema, Principal of Place Economics and long-time Main Street advocate, summed up sustainable development in five distinct facts: 1) Sustainable development is crucial for economic development. 2) Sustainable development has more elements than just environmental responsibility. 3) “Green buildings” and sustainable development are NOT synonyms. 4) Historic preservation IS, in and of itself, sustainable development. 5) Development without a historic preservation component is NOT sustainable.

He goes on to say that sustainable development includes many responsibilities: environmental, economic, and social, and that the social aspect also entails cultural responsibility. He states that for a community to be viable there needs to be a link between environmental responsibility and economic responsibility, for a community to be livable there needs to be a link between environmental responsibility and social responsibility; and for a community to be equitable there needs to be a link between economic responsibility and social responsibility.

As for environmental responsibility and how historic preservation contributes to it, Rypkema cites the following example: As Americans, we diligently recycle our Coke cans. It’s a pain in the neck, but we do it because it’s good for the environment. Here’s a typical historic downtown building – 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep. Let’s say we tear down one small building like this in your neighborhood. We have now wiped out the entire environmental benefit from the last 1,344,000 aluminum cans that we recycled. And that calculation only considers the impact on the landfill, not any of the other sustainable development calculations, like embodied energy. Razing historic buildings results in a triple hit on scarce resources. First, we are throwing away thousands of dollars of embodied energy. Second, we are replacing it with materials vastly more consumptive on energy. And third, recurring embodied energy savings increase dramatically as a building life stretches over fifty years.

How Historic Buildings are “Green”?

It is very important to understand that historic buildings are inherently sustainable. Preservation maximizes the use of existing materials and infrastructure, reduces waste, and preserves the historic character of older cities and towns. In other words, sustainability begins with preservation.

As Walter Sedovic, AIA once stated; “Before sustainability had a name, traditional builders incorporated sustainable elements into buildings. For one thing, they didn’t yet have the means to engineer nature out of buildings as we do today, and have since World War II. Working in sync with the environment was the norm, including siting, local materials, natural ventilation, shading, clean energy (e.g., mills), reflective roofing, cisterns, indigenous plantings...the list becomes long, and in many ways mirrors “new” standards espoused today. People often think that historic buildings are not energy efficient. The opposite, though, is more likely to be true: that many historic buildings are inherently very energy efficient.”

For example, as the Whole Building Design Guide spells out, awnings, especially retractable, are efficient and work with the seasonal path of the sun. Properly designed awnings can reduce heat gain by 65% and more. Operable windows substantially reduce demand for heating and cooling during temperate months. Effective use of existing windows is important. Opening the top sash of a double-hung window will allow warm air from the top of the room to escape. Opening the bottom sash on the shaded side of a room will pull in cool air while displacing warm air. Preserving high ceilings allows air to circulate (especially when ceiling fans are used), and allows natural light to enter deep into the building. Many early buildings took advantage of a combination of natural light and task lighting because they didn’t have the benefit of electricity. This method can be used today in many historic buildings by retaining these large window openings and by using low height directional lamps that illuminate work surfaces effectively.

In addition, historic masonry buildings are exceptionally durable and benefit from significant thermal mass. This thermal mass helps regulate the temperature inside a building by storing heat and cold within the mass of the wall. Historic windows, in addition to being major character-defining elements, can also be reused in an energy-efficient manner. This is contrary to some beliefs. In fact, many people believe wrongly that in order to gain LEED certification, older, historic windows need to be replaced. But this is not the case. It is true that a semi-deteriorated, single-glazed, double-hung wood window may have an R-value as low as only 1, compared to R3 for a new double-glazed, low-e, double-hung window. However, the primary cause of infiltration can be addressed with jamb insulation, weather stripping, trim repair, and the installation of an interior or exterior storm window, while still maintaining the character of the original unit.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has as its main objective to preserve land, and it has as its sub-objective to reduce waste-generation and increase recycling. However, they have been slow to recognize that preservation does exactly that. As Donovan Rypkema points out, when you preserve a historic building, you are preserving land. When you rehabilitate a historic building, you are reducing waste generation. When you reuse a historic building, you are increasing recycling. In fact, historic preservation is the ULTIMATE in recycling. Wisconsin Main Street communities have something that is extremely important to the green building movement: existing buildings. And the way to save existing and historic buildings is to reuse them.

Historic Preservation as Smart Growth

Most people believe that the “green” movement pertains solely to individual buildings. The case for preservation as sustainability extends to sustainable neighborhoods as well. As Donovan Rypkema states, the closest thing we have to a broad-based sustainable development is known as Smart Growth. Some of the goals of Smart Growth are to create a range of housing opportunities and choices, create walkable neighborhoods, encourage community and stakeholder collaboration, foster distinctive, attractive places with a sense of place, mix land uses, and take advantage of compact built design (density). Does that sound familiar? It should. It’s what we do every day in Main Street. Rypkema indicates that if a commu-
that they are available for future generations.

We need to use our cities, our cultural re-
doing community development, which is part of our social responsibility. He goes on to state that the very definition of sustainable development is the “...ability to meet our own needs without prejudicing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

We need to use our cities, our cultural resources, and our memories in such a way that they are available for future generations to use as well. Historic preservation makes cities viable, livable, and equitable.

To sum it all up, Rypkema states that the most effective scale for sustainable development to be addressed is at the neighborhood or local level. In other words, YOU are the sustainable development movement in your city. And future generations will thank you for it.


A warehouse in Larsen Green in Green Bay was salvaged and recycled instead of putting it in the landfill.

Simple “Green” Tips for Your Building, Neighborhood and Community

The construction and operation of the buildings where we live and work consume over 60% of the electricity used in the U.S., and account for one-third of total greenhouse gas emissions. Becoming more sustainable and energy efficient does not have to be a difficult process. There are a number of easy and cost-effective improvements, or changes in behavior that can be done individually or community-wide. Below is a list of just some of them.

For Individual Buildings
- Add weather stripping and caulk to doors and windows, chimneys, electrical outlets, etc.
- Add insulation where needed (attic, basement, crawl space)
- Install a programmable thermostat
- Inspect and properly maintain the building’s heating and cooling system
- Install Energy Star qualified appliances, light fixtures, light bulbs, etc.
- Install retractable awnings on storefronts and windows where appropriate
- Repair, reglaze, recaulk existing windows
- Install interior or exterior storm windows
- Install self-closing device on all storm doors
- Schedule an overall energy audit of your building
- Utilize operable windows for natural ventilation in temperate months
- Use “green” materials indoors (carpet, tile, paints with low Volatile Organic Compounds [VOC’s], etc.)
- Install faucet aerators (and low-flow toilets when possible)
- Long Term: Install solar system, redo landscaping to help with shading/windbreaks/etc., install a “green roof”

For the Office
- Utilize electronic communication, such as email blasts, e-newsletters, blogs, etc.
- Only print necessary documents
- Purchase products that contain recycled material

For Neighborhoods/Commercial Districts
- Provide pedestrian amenities and bike racks
- Encourage upper floor housing
- Provide opportunity for residents to buy local (farmer’s markets, etc.)
- Provide easy access to recycling programs

For the Community
- Install bike lanes
- Provide pedestrian amenities
- Improve mass transit
- Implement comprehensive recycling program
- Limit sprawl, determine growth boundaries
- Limit demolition of existing structures (residential and commercial)
- Encourage rehab and reuse of existing structures (provide financial incentives)
- Recruit new “green” industries

For Individuals
- Reuse and recycle whenever possible
- Use alternative transportation whenever possible (walk, bike, bus, carpool, etc.)
- Unplug unused electronics
- Turn lights off when you leave a room (or add a sensor)
- Buy local, organic, or recycled products
- Use non-toxic cleaning products
- Long Term: Purchase a fuel efficient car, support alternate/renewable energy sources, support new “green” technologies that create many new “green collar” jobs
- Purchase products that contain recycled material

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Two-time winner: Larsen Green Redevelopment Project

We are continuing the theme of “green” development in our Main Street Communities by highlighting the Larsen Green Project, which won two awards in 2007 for Best Creative Fundraising Effort and Best Volunteer Development Program/Project.

If you want more information on this project, contact Kelly Czypinski at On Broadway, Inc. at Kelly@onbroadway.org or call her at 920-437-2531.

When a large piece of industrial land in the north part of the Broadway district in Green Bay came up for sale, On Broadway, Inc. (OBI) knew that this anchor and piece of Green Bay history needed to be preserved.

In 2004, OBI hosted a town hall meeting to discuss the possibilities and gain insight into what the area residents envisioned would happen to the site. The vision focused on additional housing opportunities, mixed-use development to support creative people, opportunities to connect the waterfront to the neighborhood and most importantly, how to save the smokestack, an important landmark for the facility.

In spring 2005, OBI coordinated a team of volunteers with a variety of expertise and experience to develop a plan to gain control of the 22-acre site. By accomplishing this, it would take the property off the market for industrial uses and allow OBI to work with interested parties to make the redevelopment vision generated by the community a reality.

On June 11, 2007, OBI purchased the land, including several buildings from Birds Eye Foods to redevelop the site into a mixed-use development that will cater to the creative sector.

This redevelopment opportunity added an additional eight blocks of commercial property to the north end of the Broadway district. The site has already attracted two development opportunities; an owner occupied local insurance company, a ShopKo Express and the relocation of the Greater Green Bay Area Chamber of Commerce. The purchase of the site has reinforced the organization’s dedication to the area, and has provided a mechanism that will ideally provide a stable source of funding. The overall redevelopment of this site will take a few years and is broken up into seven construction phases.

One of the early challenges for OBI was the $700,000 required to demolish the non-historic buildings on the site. Some members of the Larsen Governing Board got creative in looking for a solution to reduce this number.

Rather than heading straight for the wrecking-ball, the board looked at salvaging and recycling the buildings. The process takes longer than straight demolition, but the benefits to the environment and to the organization are good economics.

As of January 1, 2008, the effort has generated more than $330,000 through savings and sales. The overall salvage/demolition square footage for this project was about 230,000 sq. ft. and took only five 30-yard dumpsters. By reusing elements in other ways, like grinding the concrete into gravel, OBI will also be able to offset costs for other construction projects, such as new streets. The goal is to keep the entire development a green, sustainable neighborhood development. It’s on target to be 92 percent recycled.

Site plan for the Larsen Green Project. It is broken up into seven construction phases. It is intended to be the first LEED Certified Neighborhood Development in the state of Wisconsin, providing a sustainable environment both economically and ecologically.

The Recapturing Your Downtown Conference October 15-16

The Recapturing Your Downtown Conference will be held October 15-16, 2008 at the Jefferson Street Inn in Downtown Wausau. This conference is designed to provide tools to communities to help their downtowns prosper.

The conference will open with a kickoff reception at The Fillmor, 310 N. 4th St. on the evening of October 15. Sessions on October 16 will feature keynote speakers: Jack Schultz, who wrote the book, “Boomtown USA: the 7 1/2 Keys to Big Success in Small Towns,” Lt. Governor Barbara Lawton on the Economic Effect of Art in Downtowns and Blaise Winter who will talk on “It’s Game Time - A time to Rally and Embrace Challenge.” Breakout sessions will include Creating a Downtown Brand that Soars above the Rest, Financing improvement projects 101, preserving the “heart” of your community, starting and operating a downtown grocery store, retail ideas for downtowns, working with foundations and boards, a study on the effects of farmers markets on downtowns and finding the right design elements for your downtown.

This training opportunity is sponsored by Wisconsin Main Street, city of Wausau, Wisconsin Public Service, Vierbicher & Associates, UWSP Small Business Development Center and UWSP Extension office.

The Jefferson Street Inn is located in the heart of downtown Wausau’s River District and is a full service, luxury hotel featuring 62 suites and executive guest rooms.

There is a $99 fee for the conference. The deadline is October 6. For more information, go to http://www.uwsp.edu/conted/conferences/downtown or call (800) 898-9472 (press 0 and ask for Dorothy.)
Main Street Tidbits: Things you should know

Donate to Wisconsin’s flood damaged downtowns
The National Trust for Historic Preservation has developed a tool to assist flooded Main Street Communities in Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri, and is pleased to announce that they have a new way for peer Main Street communities to help, through this on-line donation site managed by the National Trust.

The site is run through PreservationNation.org where 100% of the funds will go directly to state organizations, who will then distribute 100% of the funds to towns in the most need. If you would like to contribute to the rebuilding efforts in the flooded Main Street towns in Wisconsin, please visit this page http://my.preservationnation.org/wmsa

In Wisconsin, the donations will be divided equally for the four flood-impacted Wisconsin Main Street towns of Ripon, Beloit, Fond du Lac and Pewaukee. The funds will be distributed by the Wisconsin Main Street Alliance. These communities were selected based on information provided by the executive director in those communities.

For more information, check out the latest issue of the Main Street News from the National Main Street Center.

Federal Grants First Steps
For those who have ever considered or are considering applying for a federal grant, it’s imperative that every Main Street organization and local municipality have the front administration work completed. The initial process is lengthy but in the end can be rewarding. Submitting grant applications electronically has become as easy as the search process is, once you are registered!

Steps for registering:
2. Register with CCR Central Contractor Registry (CCR) http://www.ccr.gov/
If you desire to apply for Federal Grants register with Grants.gov http://grants.gov/applicants/organization_registration.jsp

Grant Library Now Available
R.A. Smith National, Inc. has created and launched an electronic directory of state of Wisconsin and federal grant programs. To access this directory go to www.rasmithnational.com and select “Grants and Funding Directory” icon. At that point you will have to request a password from them by providing your name, organization, etc.

Welcome new executive directors and a heartfelt good-bye to some veteran directors

Please welcome the following new executive directors to the Wisconsin Main Street Program.

**Kelly Czyzynski** started as the executive director of the On Broadway program in Green Bay on August 18. Prior to that she worked for the Borders Group. She is currently the president of the Northeastern Wisconsin Arts Council. She can be reached at Kelly@onbroadway.org

**Rebecca Eby** begins her job as the executive director of the Viroqua Partners on September 23. Prior to joining Main Street, she worked for the Title Company. She can be reached at infodesk@viroqua-wisconsin.com.

**Rogeta (pronounced “Roger”) Halvorson** started as the executive director of Prairie du Chien Downtown Revitalization on Sept. 15. For 12 years, she worked as a transition director for Staubach Commercial Real Estate Company in Dallas, TX. She then moved to McGregor, IA where she renovated a 1889 home and worked in her family’s wine business. She can be reached at pdcmstreet@centurytel.net

**Cheryl MacDowell** is serving as the interim director of the Platteville Main Street program. She was the president of the Main Street Board of Directors and is an owner of a downtown retail store. She can be reached at pymainst@yahoo.com.

**Carolyn Roberts** joined the Main Street Portage Program on August 18 as the interim director. She previously owned a store in downtown Portage. She can be reached at mainstreetportage@verizon.net

With all these new directors, it is also time to say good-bye to some executive directors. They will all be missed.

**Beth Rodewald** of Marshfield announced her resignation on September 12. Her husband, Adam, got a transfer to another newspaper in Oshkosh, and she will be joining him there. Her last day is October 3rd.

**Ingrid Mahan** of Viroqua will be joining the Edward Jones office in Viroqua as of October 1st. Ingrid has been with Viroqua Partners for 14.5 years.

**Pam Ritchie** of Prairie du Chien finished her last day on August 15. She is working as the executive director of the Prairie du Chien Opportunity Center.

**Adam Brann** of Portage resigned at the end of July.

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Paul Knuth, Rhinelander
Virginia Haske, Beloit
Gerald White, Algoma
Tim Anderson, Madison
Darryl Johnson, Milwaukee
Judith Wall, Prairie du Chien
Dawn Rog, Rhinelander
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Lisa Kuss, Clintonville
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Wisconsin Main Street News

Upcoming Wisconsin Main Street Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>Program Assessment, De Pere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Accreditation Site visit, Watertown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Program Assessment, Monroe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Pewaukee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Prairie du Chien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Prairie du Chien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Rice Lake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Executive Director Workshop, West Bend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Introduction to Main Street, Madison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Program Assessment, Lincoln Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Tech Visit, Monroe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Prairie du Chien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Program Assessment, Chippewa Falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>National Main Streets Conference, Chicago, IL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Monthly reports, West Bend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Monthly reports, Wausau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Executive Director Workshop, Rhinelander</td>
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<td>September</td>
<td>Executive Director Workshop, Darlington</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items listed on this calendar are subject to change. Please contact the Wisconsin Main Street office at 608-267-3855 for more information.