

MINNESOTA  
MAIN  
STREETS

BY RETHOS

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# Access Your Downtown's Potential

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Rethos is seeking proposals from towns in Southeast Minnesota interested in participating in a Downtown Assessment for district revitalization. Three communities located in counties served by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation will be selected. Each community selected will receive an in-depth tailored report with action steps to implement new initiatives and opportunities for people who live and work in their downtowns at **no cost**.

## What is a Downtown Assessment?

A Downtown Assessment is a comprehensive study of the places and people that are part of your downtown district today. It lists and categorizes the assets your community already has (businesses, buildings, public spaces, people, organizations, events, and more) to create strategies you can implement in your community to start building short- and long-term community vitality.

- By tapping into local knowledge, Rethos staff works with a local leadership team to uncover your community's distinct assets, develop your strengths, and promote your competitive edge.
- Rethos spends time in your community talking to groups and individuals about their experiences, expertise, and hopes for downtown and uses virtual tools to get feedback.
- Ultimately, a Downtown Assessment helps you develop a plan to change the way people think about, talk about, plan for, and use your downtown district.

### Who can apply?

- Your community must be located in one of the counties served by the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation: Blue Earth, Brown, Dodge, Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, LeSueur, Martin, Mower, Nicollet, Olmstead, Rice, Sibley, Steele, Wabasha, Waseca, Watonwan, Winona
- *Community cannot have had previous membership in Minnesota Main Streets by Rethos.*
- There is no population requirement—communities of any size are encouraged to apply.

### Where will the Downtown Assessment take place?

- This assessment will specifically look at your downtown district. This may follow specific zoning your community already has or will be considered with Rethos to identify the core downtown district.
- A Downtown Assessment will not cover an entire community's boundaries, only the specified downtown or neighborhood district.

### Why should my community apply for a Downtown Assessment?

- What's your community's story? What makes it distinct? How will it continue to thrive in the future? These can often be tough questions, and answering them is central to sustaining, activating, and promoting the vibrancy of your community. A Downtown Assessment directly addresses those questions.
- Unlike other studies considering what might not exist in a district or focuses only on one sector of business, history, or activity, a Downtown Assessment focuses on what's available to your community in a variety of options, from high investment to low resources needed in time, money, and energy.
- Rethos' Downtown Assessment uses a bottom-up community engagement approach to get honest input from all stakeholders in the downtown district—including city staff, elected officials, building owners, business owners, non-profits, and the general public.
- The final product of a Downtown Assessment is an activation plan that outlines reasonable goals for your downtown district and stakeholders to implement to move the needle forward on economic development initiatives and revitalization in your downtown district.

### When will the Downtown Assessment take place?

- Applications will be due March 31.
- Assessment information gathering will happen in late spring and summer 2022, with final reports taking place in fall 2022.



### How much does a Downtown Assessment Cost?

- Downtown Assessments typically range in cost from \$5,000-\$10,000, but thanks to a grant from SMIF these Assessments are available at no cost to the community.
- Applications will be competitive, and not all who apply will be awarded an Assessment.

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### How do I apply?

- Complete the online form linked [here](#).
- Download a PDF application [here](#) to make notes, but **all submissions must come through the online form.**

### NEED MORE INFORMATION?



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