Northern California Downtown Revitalization Playbook

Research and Reference Materials

Collected here are a number of resources that were identified during the research phase of the Downtown Revitalization Playbook project which took place during summer and fall 2026. These are provided as additional information and inspiration for local stakeholders as they work to implement the recommendations made in the playbook.

Vacant Storefront Toolkit

Regional Plan Association. (2023, June). *Vacant storefront toolkit*. https://rpa.org/work/reports/vacant-storefront-toolkit

Downtown and Business District Market Analysis: Tools to Create Economically Vibrant Commercial Districts in Small Cities.

Ryan, B., Pesch, R., & Civittolo, D. (2022, April). *Evaluating retail and service business opportunities*. University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Extension, Community Economic Development. https://economicdevelopment.extension.wisc.edu/articles/evaluating-retail-service-business-opportunities/

How Can Municipalities Confront the Vacant Property Challenge: A Toolkit.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, & Metropolitan Mayors Caucus. (2010). *How can municipalities confront the vacant property challenge: A toolkit*. Impact for Equity. https://impactforequity.org/report/how-can-municipalities-confront-the-vacant-property-challenge/

Strengthening Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Across Rural America

Main Street America. (2025, June 17). *Strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems across America*. https://mainstreet.org/resources/knowledge-hub/publication/strengthening-entrepreneurial-ecosystems

Investing in Rural Downtowns: What Role are EDDs Playing?

National Association of Development Organizations Research Foundation. (2024, January). *Investing in rural downtowns: What role are EDDs playing?* https://www.nado.org/ruraldowntowns/

Comprehensive Guides to Combatting Blight.

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. (n.d.). *Comprehensive guides to combatting blight*. https://housingalliancepa.org/comprehensive-guides-to-combatting-blight/

From Blight to Bright: A comprehensive toolkit for PA.

Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania. (2016). *From blight to bright: A comprehensive toolkit for Pennsylvania* (Rev. ed.). https://housingalliancepa.org/wp-content/uploads/BlighttoBrightrevJune2016PrintFriendly.pdf

Placemaking Resources

Musicant Group. (n.d.). *Placemaking resources*. https://www.musicantgroup.com/resources

Downtown Revitalization Playbook

Downtown playbook. https://www.downtownplaybook.org/

Friendly Fronts: Storefront Toolkit

Musicant Group. (2018). *Friendly storefront toolkit*. https://static1.squarespace.com/static/65ba71de70902d713f944adf/t/65cbd6c0358f1d04c85b8575/1707857613661/friendly_storefronts_toolkit_-_the_musicant_group_2018.pdf

Massachusetts- Storefront Activation

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. (2021). *Pop-up vacant storefront activation toolkit* (Rapid Recovery Program Toolkit). Commonwealth of Massachusetts. https://www.mass.gov/doc/pop-up-vacant-storefront-activation-toolkit/download

Massachusetts - Sign Façade Toolkit

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. (2021). *Sign & facade toolkit* (Rapid Recovery Program Toolkit). Commonwealth of Massachusetts. https://www.mass.gov/doc/sign-facade-toolkit/download

Massachusetts - Wayfinding Toolkit

Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. (2021). *Wayfinding toolkit* (Rapid Recovery Program Toolkit). Commonwealth of Massachusetts. https://www.mass.gov/doc/wayfinding-toolkit/download

City of Florence, SC – Downtown Design Standards

City of Florence. (2025). *Downtown design standards*. https://www.cityofflorencesc.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/cof-downtown-design-standards-2025.pdf

City of Florence, SC – Incentive Programs

Florence Downtown Development Corporation. (2020). *Downtown Florence incentive package*. https://www.florencedowntown.com/sites/default/files/uploads/Events/incentivepackage_2020_rfs.pdf

U.S.EPA - Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Urban and Suburban Zoning Codes

United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2009, November). *Essential smart growth fixes for urban and suburban zoning codes* (EPA 231-K-09-003). U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-01/documents/2009_essential_fixes_0.pdf

U.S. EPA – Essential Smart Growth Fixes for Rural Planning, Zoning, and Dev. Codes

United States Environmental Protection Agency. (2012, February). *Essential smart growth fixes for rural planning, zoning, and development codes*. U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency.
https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/essential_smart_growth_fixes_rural_0.pdf