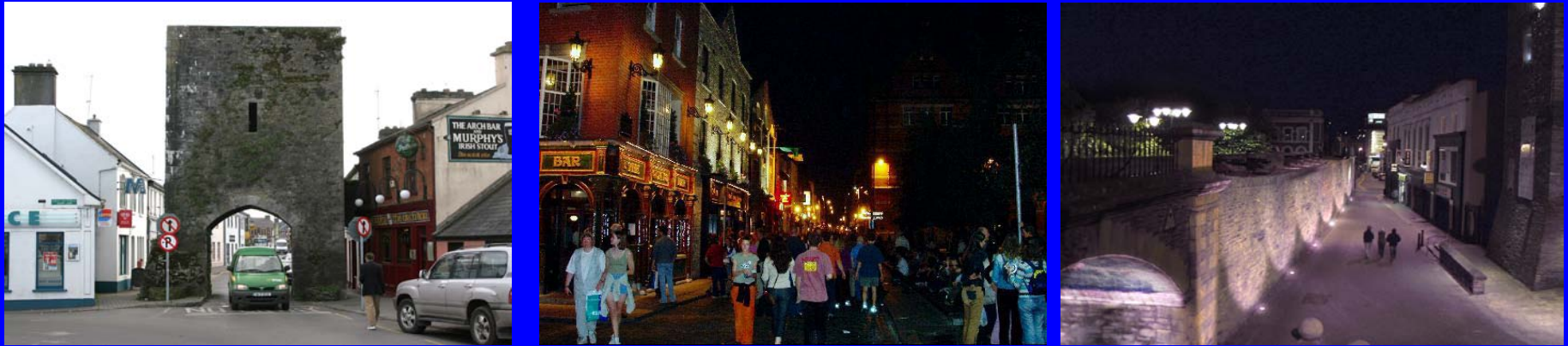


Town Centre Management (TCM): Benefits of Investment



Irish Planning Institute Conference

Tullamore, 16th April 2010

Alison Harvey

P&D Officer, The Heritage Council



Introduction – 3 Parts

- 1. Why TCM and what is meant by Town Centre Management (TCM) – Key Aim, Importance, & Benefits?**
 - Designing Effective TCM Strategies – Three Step process**
- 2. What makes Successful and Vibrant Towns Centres?**
- 3. Summary**



But First! – An Overview of our Town Centres

- **town centres are important in terms of local heritage – they create ‘local distinctiveness, identity and sense of place’** - traditionally where major social & economic activity take place: a place for people to meet, exchange goods/trade, a base for local government, entertainment, courts, etc.
- **Recent Threats – Recession (>Vacancy Rates), High-class Regional Shopping Centres and eCommerce**
- **Consumer Confidence in Ireland? – ESRI and CSO**



1. Town Centre Management (TCM) – Key Aim?

“Town Centre Management is a co-ordinated & pro-active initiative designed to ensure that our town and city centres are desirable and attractive places. In nearly all instances, the initiative is a partnership between the public and private sectors and brings together a wide-range of key interests”.



Why is TCM Important?

- Enables a town and/or city to fulfil its socio-economic and tourism potential
- Facilitates strategic ‘re-positioning/re-imaging’ of town/city centre – Concept of ‘*Place Marketing*’
- Transforms towns and cities into high quality places in which to live, visit and invest
- Promotes good health and well-being
- Encourages both **Day-Time** and **Evening Economies** – e.g. ATCM ‘**Purple Flag**’ Scheme (5pm-6am)
- Enhances ‘**Sense of Civic Pride**’ and ‘**Sense of Place**’
- Ensures long-term **Vitality, Viability and Vibrancy** – the 3 Vs!



TCM = The Benefits?

- Increased pedestrian flow – *'footfall'*
- A longer stay by shoppers and visitors = increased spend per head – local economy benefits
- Increased rents and property values
- Increased street activity - pavement cafes, street markets, performances
- Reduction in accidents and crime = reduction in public expenditure
- Decreased noise and air pollution = better health/quality of life
- *'Multiplier Effect'* – wider regeneration including heritage revitalisation & enhanced **'image and profile'**



TCM: 3-Step Process

- 1. Where is our town centre now? – Taking stock – SWOT, Urban Form & Retail Analysis and Town Centre Health Check**
- 2. Where or what do we want our town or city centre to be? - What is the Unique Selling Point (USP)? - Develop a ‘Shared Vision’ for the Town Centre**
- 3. How do We get there? – develop a TCM Plan or Strategy including Public Realm Plan– delivery vehicle (e.g. BIDs - IDA), sources of funding, monitoring (Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and maintenance**

(Source: A. Harvey, 1998)



2. What makes successful and vibrant Town Centres?

1. Unique ‘Sense of Place’ – local heritage
2. An attractive public realm
3. Planning for Success
4. Accessibility and Permeability/ Movement
5. Safety and Security
6. Supportive Regulatory and Fiscal Regimes



i. Unique ‘Sense of Place’

- Well-loved Town Centres have a **unique character**:
- Maximise heritage features - **distinctiveness is an Asset**
 - Ensure **appropriate retail mix** – diversity – anchor stores?
 - Retail offer should match the public perception of the High Street identity
 - Marketing is key to strengthening ‘**sense of place**’ – Events Strategy, e.g. Heritage Week & Irish Walled Towns’ Day



ii. An Attractive Public Realm

- **Developing and maintaining an attractive environment is critical for success:**
 - **Social Spaces** – allow people to shop, relax and ‘people watch’
 - **Distinctive Places** – enhance experience
 - **Effective Signage** – orientation is important
 - **Good Quality Paving, Furniture & Lighting** – minimum clutter



Hierarchy of Visitor & Tourist Signage:

1. **Gateway Signage** – ‘First Impression?’
2. **Directional Traffic Signage** – ‘Key Arrival Points’
3. **Orientation Signage** – Key Locations - You are Here!
4. **Pedestrian Signage** – Finger Poles, Plaques
5. **Interpretative Signage** – Whet the appetite!



Signage!



iii. Planning for Success

- **Developing a clear ‘Shared Vision’ is essential to delivering a sense of place and an attractive public realm:**

- **Town Centres are assets** – they need to be planned and managed just like shopping centres

- **Town Centre Health Checks** – are essential for strategic management – annual checkups

- **Guidelines** – should set out the spatial planning hierarchy incl retailing – should enhance TCs

- **Data/Statistics** – provision, leakage and perceptions



iv. Accessibility and Movement

- **Attracting ‘footfall’ is essential to retail success so easy access for shoppers, staff and deliveries is a must:**
 - **Parking and Transport** - must be managed together
 - **Innovative Park and Ride Schemes** – are essential for reducing congestion
 - **Car Parking is vital, e.g. Family car parks** – a % should be ring-fenced for car parking improvements + disabled access
 - **Ease of Delivery** – congestion?



v. Safety and Security

- **Shoppers will not be attracted to a High Street if they feel unsafe:**
 - **‘Zero Tolerance’** - graffiti and vandalism
 - **Car Parks** – must be safe
 - **Night-time Economy** – visible policing & management of alcohol related disorders
 - **Retail Crime** – increases during recession



vi. Supportive Regulatory & Fiscal Regimes

- **A thriving High Street needs thriving shops, cafes cultural venues:**
 - **Empty Property Rate Relief?**
 - **LAs as Landlords – monthly rents**
 - **EU Research – small businesses are disproportionately affected by regulatory burdens**
 - **Carbon Reduction – without unfairly penalising businesses in historic High Streets**



4. Summary – Remember the Three Step Process

1. **Where is our town centre now?** – Taking Stock – SWOT and Urban Form Analysis, Town Centre Health Check
2. **Where/what do we want our town centre to be** – what is the USP and ‘Shared Vision’ for the future?
3. **How do we get there?** Develop a TCM Action Plan or Strategy – Short, Medium and Long Term e.g. to ensure **Vitality, Viability and Vibrancy** – the 3 Vs!

(Source: A. Harvey, 1998)



Further Information on TCM and 'Place Making'

Please visit:

www.heritagecouncil.ie/planning

www.atcm.org

www.environ.ie

www.worldcongress2010.org

(16th –19th June 2010, London)

