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Shediac plans revitalized downtown

■ Town in process of finalizing a three-year implementation plan that will steer future for seaside community

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Business owners and merchants of Shediac are playing a big hand in the rejuvenation process of the seaside community. These stakeholders have laid out what they love about the town of over

6,000 residents but also included what aspects need improvement during recent community roundtables.

Although Shediac remains relatively busy in cottage and beach season, the growing town knows it can do better, so the new revitalization plan in the works aims to attract both locals of the southeastern area and tourists alike 12 months of the year.

Danny Pellerin, Shediac's new director of economic development and tourism, says he was happy with the turnout for town hall held one on one interviews with

retail owners, restaurateurs, hotel operators, landlords and developers, among others, and last week's working session where more than 40 showed to add their ideas and opinions on a three-year, town revitalization implementation plan.

"It was very exciting for us," he said. "We are seeing consistent messages. Some are the town's strengths and some are weaknesses. We want Shediac's owners

and operators to be involved with the plan. Communication is always open, and this is

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Major Metro roadwork to begin in April

■ Moncton, Dieppe and Riverview lay out agendas for roadway fixes

BY JAMES FOSTER
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Town of Shediac considers revamping Main Street as part of revitalization

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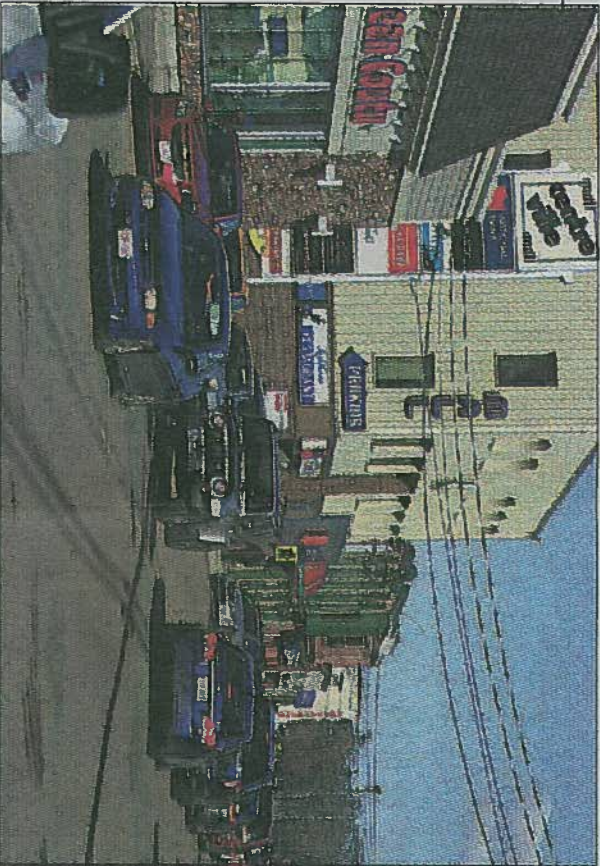
really an inclusive plan.”

There will be an imaging session at town hall April 2 that will use some of the suggestions from the roundtables as catalysts for discussion, and by June the entire plan will be finalized and the three-year implementation period will begin.

All who turned out to the roundtables and interviews agree that because of Shediac's marina, its central location in the Maritimes, its close proximity to Moncton, its many free events and activities in the summer, and its rich history and welcoming population, there's no reason why it can't thrive all year-round.

In organizing the three-year plan, the stakeholders say that more encouragement is needed for the business community to mobilize, to get involved and to partner with each other. The need to harmonize business hours also made the list.

From a town promotional aspect, emphasis was heaviest on the move to extend the events calendar over 12 months, thus extending the tourist season. Developing the Town of Shediac website, improving welcome signage, practising good



Shediac officials are considering ways to revitalize the downtown. This is Main Street in the seaside town, as seen last week.

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customer service in all businesses, producing the Good Times Guide and better promoting its businesses and service offering were also listed.

To facilitate both existing and new events, the plan will cover the promotion of networking among business people, highlighting local

history and even adding street music for ambience.

In terms of economic development, Shediac's stakeholders say they need to improve off-season service offerings, increase number of outdoor patios, diversify commercial offerings and analyze

potential for other specialized institutions, repurpose the old train station, and improve the welcoming of new residents. As for physical improvements, an overall need to increase Main Street's appeal and atmosphere is needed, a lighting project should be pursued, street lighting should be added, and a greener and more accessible



From left to right, Shediac town manager Gilles Belleau, Shediac Mayor Jacques LeBlanc, Centre-ville Shediac Downtown Inc. administrator Anne McGraw and Sebastien Dolron, regional service commission 7 planning director talk at the Auberge Gabriele about the Shediac Downtown Revitalization Project.

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downtown should be promoted.

Two important ideas, to raise awareness of the bylaw relating to renovation standards and to provide technical support to renovation projects, are timely for Shediac as the town faces the problem of many aging, and some dilapidated, homes and buildings that line the downtown area.