Village of Calumet Downtown Development Authority

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN



グ脚コ U.P. ENGINEERS & ARCHITECTS, INC.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Village of Calumet Downtown Commercial District is of recognized national historical significance. This distinction is backed by the district's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, its designation as a National Landmark District, and as the centerpiece of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. There are very few places in the country that can claim such importance.

Historic preservation has long been heralded as the means to secure the future of downtown Calumet, as well as the entire village. While much building renovation and restoration has occurred, historic preservation and downtown development continues to challenge the downtown community.

The old excuses — limited market opportunities, one-dimensional tourism, isolation, cold and snow, and banking constraints — no longer apply. Business can be very profitable in downtown Calumet, as evidenced by a growing number of thriving small shops and businesses housed in restored buildings.

A major downtown challenge is community infrastructure: sidewalks, lighting, streets, signage, parking, etc. Funding public improvements is especially difficult after years of declining property values. Many communities try to solve downtown problems only by addressing infrastructure issues. This plan takes a slightly different approach.

In the short-term, action is needed to boost investor and developer confidence. This can be done through marketing, removal of institutional barriers, property maintenance, code enforcement, and technical assistance.

In the long term, attracting additional entrepreneurs and businesses will enhance the tax base and provide resources for additional public improvements.

The village has begun the rebuilding process. Sustaining it will require continued leadership, persistence, and a shared vision as defined in this Downtown Development Plan.

REVIEW OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Village of Calumet consists of a 30-block urbanized area that is part of the greater community of Calumet (Calumet Township and the villages of Laurium and Calumet). It is estimated that the 1920 population of this area exceeded 35,000 persons.

Since 1920, the entire "Copper Country" area experienced population loss as a result of the decline of a copper industry that dominated the area economy for a century. In 1968, the Calumet community was dealt a devastating blow with the closure of all Calumet and Hecla Mining Company mining operations.

In the 1980s through the 1990s, economic conditions stabilized in the Keweenaw Peninsula. There has been some growth at Michigan Technological University in nearby Houghton. A number of small manufacturing firms have also developed and provide jobs in the region.

For decades the Keweenaw Peninsula has attracted visitors and tourists, fueling a modest tourism-based economy. To great benefit is the area's dependable and extraordinary annual snowfall that has resulted in tremendous growth of snowmobiling and other winter recreation activities. New lodging units, restaurants and other services have been developed in response to this market.

Just outside the Village of Calumet is the Swedetown Ski Touring Center. Cross-country skiing has long been a traditional activity in the area. The trail system at Swedetown was enhanced and expanded through the efforts of Calumet Township and the Copper Island Ski Club. Additions include a chalet, trail lighting for night skiing, and a sledding hill. Recently, the township was able to secure ownership of a large tract of land containing the trail system, thereby securing its long-term future.

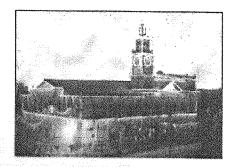
In 2001, the Midwest's newest ski resort opened at Mount Bohemia 20 miles north of Calumet in Keweenaw County. Boasting the highest vertical drop and most challenging terrain, Mount Bohemia is the first step toward diversification of winter tourism in the Keweenaw Peninsula.



In recent years, the Keweenaw Peninsula has experienced an influx of retired persons who have built homes along Lake Superior and inland lakes. These new residents are attracted to the area by the high quality of life, ample cultural activities, scenic beauty and diverse recreational opportunities.

Despite the area's economic stability, the Village of Calumet has not fared so well. From 1920 until 1990, the village population declined. This trend seems to be reversing, however. The 2000 Census indicates the population increased 7% increase to 879 persons. Improvements to downtown apartment units may explain this increase. This is a very positive sign.

The village historically served as the central business district for the Calumet region. The former prominence and wealth of the Copper Country is very much evident in Calumet in the fine commercial architecture and in the quality of public facilities, such as the Calumet Theatre.



The entire commercial district of the village was placed on the National Register of Historic Places during the early 1970s, and is included in the boundaries of one of the nation's newest national parks, the Keweenaw National Historical Park.

Downtown Calumet includes a variety of land uses, including retail, rental housing at ground level and upper floors, the service industry, office space, and light manufacturing. A map showing existing land use is included in this report.

The Village of Calumet has taken advantage of grant opportunities to improve the community, and specifically the downtown. These include:

- Several grants for continued restoration of the Calumet Theatre.
- Sidewalk replacement and lighting restoration on Oak and Sixth Streets.
- · Brick street restoration and lighting on Fifth Street.
- Acquisition of Agassiz Park and construction of a park building and public restrooms.
- Reconfiguration of Fourth Street to create additional off-street parking.
- Rental and single-family rehabilitation grants for improving housing in the downtown.
- An MDOT grant for repaving Sixth Street.
- An MDOT grant for brick street restoration on Pine Street.

These grants have resulted in an investment of more than \$3.6 million in the village since 1988 and made significant improvements. A major hurdle in receiving additional grants is the limited ability of the village and DDA to provide local matching funds.

Typically grants require a 10-50% local match. The DDA has experienced some growth in its tax increment finance revenues (TIF), and the village has been able to pledge modest sums for matching grants. Overall, the Village of Calumet has been very successful in obtaining grants despite limited resources.



The establishment of the Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP) has created new confidence and opportunities in the Village of Calumet. The National Park Service has developed a management plan based in part upon conceptual planning carried out by the village and township. KNHP has acquired several key properties, including the Union Building at the entrance to the village

downtown district on Fifth Street, the C&H Administration and Library buildings located just outside the village on Red Jacket Road.

Some downtown properties have been improved in recent years. A handful of facades have been restored to their original historical architecture. However, many historic properties still need façade work. A number of downtown buildings are vacant and continue to deteriorate. This problem continues to be one of the major challenges faced by the Calumet DDA in its mission for downtown revitalization.

The redevelopment and historic preservation of Calumet's large downtown commercial buildings present difficult challenges. Primarily, this is an economic challenge, as market rents may not be sufficient to provide a return on investment. Historic preservation tax credits provide an economic incentive for building redevelopment. This tool has not been used, primarily due to a lack of understanding about the mechanism.

A large public parking lot was created by the reconfiguration of Fourth Street in the early 1990s. Private lots are also located behind buildings along Fourth Street and throughout the district. However, most of Calumet's downtown public parking supply is located on-street. How this parking is managed has created issues between the village and retailers, as downtown businesses want free and convenient parking, and the village needs to generate revenue to manage and maintain the parking. Downtown

residents and service businesses have different parking needs. Solving downtown parking needs for additional commercial redevelopment is another challenge, as vacant land is limited and the removal of historic buildings for parking lots is not an acceptable solution.

Many of downtown Calumet's sidewalks are in poor condition and must be improved to create good pedestrian conditions. Replacement is expensive because sidewalk widths often exceed twelve feet and are frequently constructed over basement coal bins.



DOWNTOWN CALUMET ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Understanding the downtown's issues and opportunities is an important part of programming revitalization activity. The DDA spent considerable time discussing and analyzing issues and opportunities. The following outlines the issues and opportunities identified by the DDA.

ISSUES

Parking

- Perception is the greatest parking problem.
- Off-street parking lots are not utilized.
- Parking is an emotional issue.
- Parking signage is poor.



Appearance and Landscaping

- Adopt a park needed.
- No trees or green space.
- Maintenance of existing parks.

Traffic

- Changes in traffic flow from Mine Street Station have been detrimental.
- Traffic flows too fast on 6th Street.
- Which is downtown's gateway-6th St. or Red Jacket Road?

General Problems

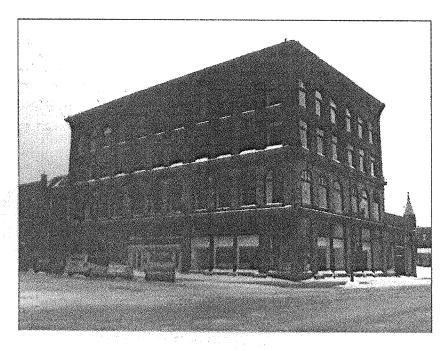
- The 300 and 400 Blocks of 5th Street are in bad condition.
- There is not a good connection between 4th and 5th Streets.
- The business district is fragmented.
- Need snowmobile directory signs/wayfinding.
- Vacant storefronts.
- Cooperation between the Village Council and business owners.
- Need an entry sign.
- Business recruitment.
- Need a website.
- Kids hanging out.
- Agassiz Park restrooms are closed.
- Infrastructure.
- Need a downtown directory, brochure and map.
- Motivating businesses.

Historic Preservation

- Need guidelines for property owners.
- Property owners carry out misguided renovations.
- Lack of knowledge and sensitivity to preservation and good design.

Market

- There is a lack of entrepreneurs.
- Existing retail spaces are too large.
- Not understanding market opportunities.
- Tourism vs. local market.



OPPORTUNITIES

- Local market/trade population of 8,000 + people.
- Regional market/trade population of 35,000 persons.
- Existing tourism base.
- Retail and office space available at low cost.
- Existing retail space in good condition rents quickly.
- People live downtown.
- Downtown Calumet can be more of a tourist attraction.
- Large, vacant historic buildings awaiting re-use.
- Keweenaw National Historical Park.
- Museums and historic attractions.
- The Calumet Theatre.
- Winter and snow.

Community Involvement

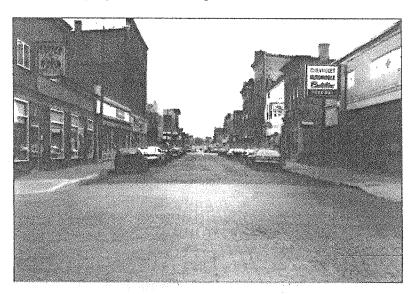
The DDA invited community participation in the downtown planning process by hosting a meeting on January 30, 2002. An "open house" format was used for this meeting. This format allowed meaningful public participation, usually one-on-one. Members of the DDA and Village Council were present to meet and discuss concerns with the community. The format also allowed comments to be posted on maps.

A number of downtown business leaders and citizens attended this meeting. A lively Q&A session occurred during a slide presentation on existing conditions by the planning consultant, and comments from the National Park Service Park Superintendent Frank Fiala.

Outlined below are community concerns, ideas, comments and suggestions.

- Place public parking signs and historic district signs in appropriate locations to direct traffic.
- Change primary route to 5th Street (using cut-off street between 6th Street and Red Jacket Road).
- Stop sign on 6th Street.
- Need to attract outside investment.
- Need historic preservation education and technical assistance.
- Awareness of 5th Street for traffic on 6th Street 5th Street is hidden.
- More public restrooms.

- Need huge, wordy sign on 6th Street pointing to everything ahead and keep them from seeing mall.
- Need a sign on 6th Street directing traffic to 5th and 4th Streets.
- Put stop signs on all intersections of 6th Street.
- Create a park in the rail corridor (township, DNR?).
- Save/maintain Portland Street oldest concrete in Michigan? What's right thing to do?
- Brick Oak Street.
- Streetcar.
- Restore 6th Street to concrete.
- Develop Calumet Lake into recreation area with camping, trails, boating, etc.



Vision Statement

Calumet's Downtown is an exciting and vibrant historic shopping district, attracting area residents and visitors with services, food, entertainment and retail establishments while also providing a convenient and desirable place to live, with complete services and shopping within walking distance of home.

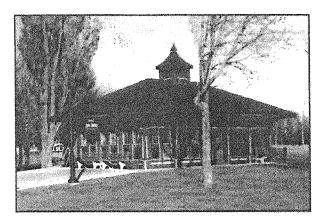
Development Framework

The process to create a new downtown plan for Calumet began with an inventory of existing conditions. Through DDA and community brainstorming sessions, the downtown's assets and opportunities were identified, analyzed and discussed.

The process also took a realistic, frank view of the challenges downtown Calumet faces. Some of these challenges and problems are unique to Calumet, while many are the same experienced in other communities, both nationally and regionally.

The Development Framework is a series of general ideas and goals that respond to downtown's identified opportunities and challenges. The ideas form a platform for strategic actions and specific projects.

 Work with KNHP to develop historic walking tours, key property acquisitions, technical assistance and funding for plan implementation. Continue Agassiz Park restoration and revitalization.



- Sixth Street paving, sidewalk and lighting improvements.
- Consider stop sign(s) on Sixth to calm traffic.
- Create angle parking on Oak Street, west of Sixth Street.
- Create angle parking wherever street widths and traffic flow allow.

- Acquire vacant parcels on Pine Street, landscape and market for new development.
- Encourage renovations and landscaping on Pine Street.
- Sidewalk repair and replacement throughout downtown.
- Expand off-street parking.
- Improve public signage throughout the downtown.
- Business district identification signage.



- * Celebrate the winter season by initiating a winter fractival, and ice sculptures throughout countains at:
- Macketing through web presence and local branding identification.
- Education of property awners.

- Code inspection and enforcement, particularly vacant properties.
- Downtown coordination, events, marketing, recruitment, etc.
- Continue 5th Street Improvements (300 block).
- Streetcar.

Development Strategies

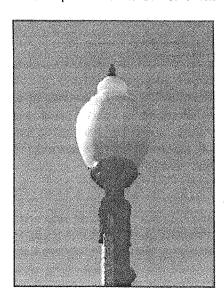
Based upon the Development Framework, specific projects are identified and discussed in this section. Strategies are action-oriented projects. By assigning responsibility, resources and a timeframe, the Downtown Development Plan is in reality, a strategic plan.

The needs of downtown Calumet are very great, and financial resources limited for creating change in the short-term. Much has already been done in the last 15 years to set the stage for revitalization of the downtown.

It is now up to the private sector to create and implement many of the changes that will increase market share, adapt and compete with big box retailers, catalogues and the Internet. Thus, the strategies are not especially expensive or complicated, but are suggested to stimulate private actions.

Infrastructure, like sidewalks, streets lighting, etc., may be grant eligible, as were the Sixth Street infrastructure improvements. Without grant resources, most of the infrastructure needs will take many years to resolve if the

village and the DDA have to fund them on their own. Private action in the form of building improvements is needed to enhance the tax base. The end result would be that local government has the ability to provide matching funds or to finance improvements on its own.



The following development strategies have been prioritized beginning with those viewed (by the DDA) as most crucial:

1. Sixth Street Improvements

In conjunction with the Sixth Street paving project, Calumet Township has received CDBG funds for lighting and to pave Sixth Street Extension. The grant is also funding sidewalk replacement and lighting restoration along Sixth Street. Originally Sixth Street was paved with stamped concrete. This latest project will result in the paving of the intersection of Oak and Sixth Streets with stamped concrete.

2. Sixth Street Stop Sign

Changes in traffic flows in Calumet have evolved due to the development of Mine Street Station. Sixth Street also provides a shortcut from U.S. 41 and M-203. Concerns have been raised about vehicle speeds and use of large trucks on this segment. When the street is improved from its current rough condition, it will attract additional vehicles. The width of the street and smooth surface will result in increased speed.

It has also been noted that the business district on Fifth Street is overlooked by visitors traveling on Sixth.

A stop sign is proposed at Oak Street. This will slow vehicles down, create gaps in traffic for improved vehicular circulation, and help create awareness about the existence of the Fifth Street business area.

3. Code Inspection and Enforcement

Vacant and dilapidated buildings continue to be a problem in the downtown district. Economics is often used as an excuse for not doing anything with these properties. Meanwhile, the buildings continue to deteriorate. They are a fire and safety hazard. They endanger not only themselves, but the adjacent buildings as well.

An aggressive inspection and code enforcement effort should be initiated to identify the location and extent of code issues. Citations would generate action to resolve code issues and/or the sale of these properties to owners willing to invest in the downtown and correct the problems. This action has a cost, but there is also a cost in not doing anything.

4. Marketing/Business Development

Downtown Calumet needs a focused marketing effort to attract consumers and investors. The DDA should initiate action to create a new identity and "brand" that will appeal to these different groups. Once this "branding" is developed, it can be used through media exposure, a web presence, and special events to draw attention to the business and real estate opportunities found in the district.

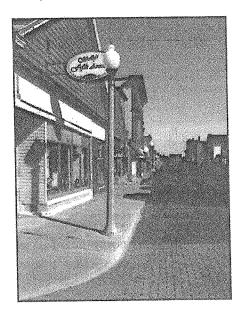
In addition, there is a need for on-going downtown coordination, special events, and recruitment activities. The DDA should consider retaining a part-time downtown coordinator to help with these activities.

5. Business District Identification/Wayfinding Signage
To create more awareness, simple, small identification signs are proposed at key locations on Sixth Street, M-203, and U.S. 41.

6. Education and Outreach

There is a great need to provide technical assistance to property owners in Calumet about the value of historic preservation. In 1979, a downtown plan identified historic

preservation as the means to revitalize the downtown and the village. The plan contained recommendations for each storefront and building. These design recommendations are still valid today.



Since 1979, numerous private improvements have been made, with only a few good examples of historic renovations. Misguided façade and building renovations continue despite available technical assistance, façade grants from the DDA, and the presence of the Keweenaw National Historical Park (KNHP).

The DDA should consider two approaches to correct the situation:

- An effort should be made to educate property owners on the benefits of historic preservation.
 Workshops, a design manual, and brochures directed to building owners and contractors, are just a few of the alternatives available. The program should include information on the availability of the historic preservation tax credits, which can provide a great financial incentive for eligible work.
- The newly created Village of Calumet Historic District Commission should take a hard line on inappropriate designs and renovations and insist projects pass the historic preservation test.

7. Walking Tour and Interpretation

Historic walking tours have been conducted in downtown Calumet in the past. A new self-guided tour should be developed and marketed. Interpretative signage and kiosks similar to that in the historic industrial district, should be provided.

8. Pine Street Enhancement

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is currently designing an historic streetscape for Pine Street (M-203) through the Village of Calumet. The project includes paving the roadway surface with brick. The project will be constructed in 2003. The DDA should

enhance this project with landscaping and visual improvements.

The DDA should initiate action to promote building and façade improvements on Pine Street. Vacant land along this segment should be landscaped as well. Developable parcels should be identified and marketed. Opportunities for off-street parking lots on vacant parcels should be explored.

9. Public Signage

Throughout downtown, there are a multitude of signs regulating parking and traffic. Public signs need to be consistent, with a goal of having as few signs as possible. Public signs should be inventoried as to purpose and condition. Obsolete signs should be removed. New signs should be purchased to replace those in poor condition.

10. Improve Small Parks and Green Areas

Several small parks and green spaces exist in the village, including Theatre Park, Italian Hall Park, and the triangle at Fifth Street and Red Jacket Road. The DDA is working to acquire the old Mihelich slaughterhouse property for preservation of historic ruins. These parks need to be maintained and improved. A master plan exists for the Theatre Park.

11. Consider and Evaluate Angle Parking Opportunities

The width of several Calumet streets may provide opportunities to increase on-street parking by allowing angle parking. Customers prefer this type of parking, as

they perceive it is closer to the destination and easier to get in and out of parking spaces. According to historic photos, Sixth Street once had angle parking on the east side of the street. When Oak Street was improved in the early 1990s, sidewalk widths were narrowed to create additional street width to allow angle parking between Fifth and Sixth.

In several areas of downtown, curb cuts are undefined or non-existent. If specific curb cuts were defined in these areas, additional space along the curb would be created and either angle or parallel parking established.

12. DDA District Expansion

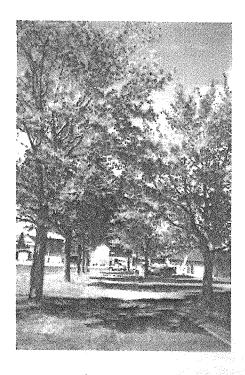
Oak Street, from the west boundary of the village, to Agassiz Park, is one of the great vistas in Calumet, and is an important link to the rail corridor and future greenway. Several commercial properties along Oak Street are not included in the DDA District. This area should be evaluated for inclusion in the District.

13. Agassiz Park Revitalization

Agassiz Park was acquired by the Village of Calumet in 1991 using CDBG funding. The park building was also constructed at that time with the grant funds. Subsequently, a Master Plan for restoration and revitalization of Agassiz Park was created by the Calumet Planning Commission.

As an historic park and open space in the village, the park could become more important for recreation and as an

attraction for the community. The Master Plan should be implemented. The village and DDA should consider operating an outdoor skating facility in the park as a winter attraction.



14. Celebrate Winter

Calumet's winter conditions should be promoted and developed as an asset. Snow makes Calumet very unique, even among northern communities. Snow creates opportunities for tourism, such as snowmobiling and skiing.

The snowmobile trail runs west of the business district and snowmobiles are permitted to operate in the village to access services, eateries and bars. Swedetown trails are situated immediately outside the community and could be better promoted. A ski link from the village to the trails would be great for residents and visitors alike.



The development and evolution of the downhill ski business in the Keweenaw Peninsula creates an opportunity for Calumet to become a "ski town." Many of the resort communities of the Rocky Mountains were old mining towns, including Telluride and Aspen. Creating a positive winter atmosphere in Calumet will attract the downhill ski crowd.

Snow can be used in creative ways to create gateways, sculptures, and even buildings. Using snow as a resource, instead of something to be plowed and hauled, creates a positive winter image and builds upon the uniqueness of the village and its response to winter. A winter festival offering activities, food and fun can be used to attract people downtown. Building a festival upon the successful Great Bear Chase event is logical. Calumet is one of the few places in the USA with snow in mid-March and the weather is usually ideal for enjoying winter activities.

Winter, snow and multi-seasonal use should also be considered in the design of all public facilities.

15. Investigate Lodging Feasibility

Vacant or underutilized space in the upper floors of downtown buildings, if renovated, could provide lodging for tourists. An analysis of issues, such as building codes, parking, etc., would be of help for potential entrepreneurs. The DDA has the statutory authority to conduct such studies.

16. Parking Demand Study

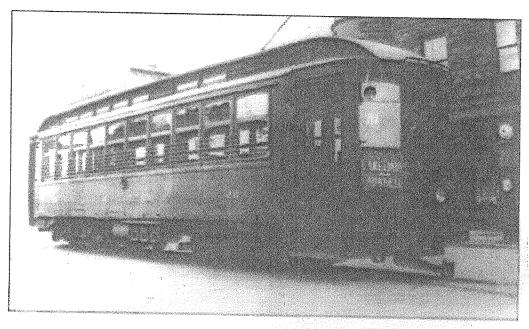
Learning where parking demand and underutilized parking resources are located can help the village and the DDA set policy and evaluate needs for additional parking. A Parking Demand Study will provide this information. A map is made showing all on and off-street parking. A day is selected and cars and empty parking spaces are counted every hour. This study would indicate the location of high demand areas, as well as the location of underutilized space and turnover.

17. Cooperate with Streetcar Study

KNHP is studying the feasibility of a streetcar or light rail transportation system in Calumet. The idea is to recreate part of the public transportation system once present in the area as a means of moving tourists around the site of the National Park. This project could create a major attraction for the village. MTU students are carrying out the study. The DDA should cooperate with this study.

18. Fifth Street Brick Repair

Construct brick roadway in the 300 block; repair the brick in the 100 and 200 blocks.



IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

This list prioritizes projects and programs, and includes the suggested time deadline as well as who is responsible for action, and the preliminary budget for carrying out the task.

	Activity	Time Frame	Responsibility	<u>Budget</u>
decons .	Sixth St. Improv.	Fall, 02	Village, Township	Completed
2.	Sixth St. Stop Sign	Nov, 02	Village	\$2,000
3.	Code Inspection and Enforcement	Initiate 1/03 Ongoing	Village/DDA	\$5,000/yr
4.	Marketing/Business Development	Initiate 10/03 Ongoing	DDA	\$5,000/yr
5.	Business Distr. Ident./ Wayfinding Signage	May, 03	DDA	\$20,000
6.	Education & Outreach	Initiate 2/03	DDA/KNHP	\$2,000
7.	Walking Tour & Inter.	6/03	DDA/KNHP	\$2,000
8.	Pine St. Enhancement	2003	MDOT	Unknown
9.	Public Signage	Ongoing	DDA/Village	\$2,000

10.	Improve Small Parks & Green Areas	Ongoing	DDA	\$2,000/yr
11.	Evaluate Angle Parking	2003-2004	DDA	Unknown
12.	DDA Distr. Expansion	2003	DDA/Village	Minimal
13.	Agassiz Park Revit.	Ongoing	DDA/Village	\$5,000/yr
14.	Celebrate Winter	Ongoing	DDA	Cost will vary
15.	Invest. Lodging Feasibility	Ongoing	DDA	Unknown
16.	Parking Demand Study	2004	DDA	\$4,000
17.	Cooperate with Streetcar Study	2004	DDA	Unknown

