

MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

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IT'S A TWO-WAY STREET

Location: Vancouver, Washington state, U.S.A. (population: 164,500)

Program: Downtown revitalization

Tool: Street conversion from a one-way to two-way street

Context: A great deal of time, effort and investment were being put into revitalizing the city's downtown, which had been in decline for many decades. While there were a number of successes – restored parks, a new hotel, nearby shopping centre and mixed-use buildings– Vancouver's Main Street, formerly the primary commercial centre, remained stagnant. That is, until city council opted for a simple and inexpensive solution – convert Main Street from a one-way to a two-way street. With a number of revitalization projects in place, the addition of yellow paint, new signage and traffic lights changed the street ambience almost overnight. The number of people visiting Main Street increased significantly and new businesses opened. Main Street merchants are happy with the result. According to Vancouver's Downtown Association, which added 32 new members in 2009, "the two-way street not only reduces confusion for people visiting downtown, but more importantly, it's one of the catalysts facilitating people's re-entry into the area and helping to revive a once lively urban life."

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