

Does your downtown attract residents, visitors and businesses?

The look and feel of a downtown can influence the decisions of potential residents, visitors, and businesses. A vibrant downtown serves as a gathering place, a place for people to dine, shop, and conduct business. First Impressions is an assessment program that examines downtowns through the eyes of potential residents, visitors, and businesses, helping communities learn about opportunities and empowering them to take steps to improve their downtown.



How does it work?

Communities are matched with a sister community who has a similar downtown based on criteria, such as size, location, amenities and natural features. Both communities then agree to build a team of community volunteers to complete visits to the sister community and report on their findings. Participants document their visit, report out and engage with their community to take steps to improve their town. The University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension provides facilitation, training, a written report, and follow up support for a year afterward.

What does First Impressions assess?

- Business
- Community Art
- Displays and Signage
- Downtown Entrance
- Landscaping
- Lighting
- Natural Features
- Points of Interest
- Public Facilities
- Sidewalks, Crosswalks and Trails
- Streets and Transportation
- Seating
- Parks

Outcomes may include:

- Improvements to the visual appeal of a downtown
- Strengthened marketing and promotions of a downtown
- Enrichment of the climate of a downtown for new businesses, residents and visitors
- Increases in the number of community volunteers

For more information, visit: <https://extension.unh.edu/community-economic-development/economic-development/main-street-resiliency> or reach out to community.development@unh.edu

