

2.4. Improve the curb appeal of towns

This Strategic Action strengthens Montana's tourism product development, and builds respect for the tourism industry in Montana.

Recommended Tactics

MTOT, Regions

- » Publicize curb appeal projects within the Montana tourism industry to encourage more projects and to build respect for tourism and its benefits.
- » Provide financial and technical assistance to tourism-related projects that fit the guidelines of MTOT's grants and assistance programs.

CVBs, Communities, Tribes

- » Unite the local tourism (and general) community to lead and support curb appeal improvements.
- » Identify ways to beautify the town, evaluate the resources needed for each, prioritize them, and implement them.
- » Start with small, easily achievable improvements to build momentum.
- » Enlist the support and participation of private sector partners, civic groups, and other entities to provide resources and expertise.
- » Link curb appeal improvement efforts to existing local events, such as festivals, fairs, or parades. Have the primary community work session just prior to these events, so that the improvements can be noticed and celebrated by the community.
- » Acknowledge curb appeal improvements made by individual businesses and organizations.

Businesses & Organizations

- » Carry out projects to improve the curb appeal of your property. Ensure that any improvement efforts you might propose comply with city/county codes and obtain approval from all relevant government agencies.
- » Organize the owners of adjacent properties to improve the curb appeal of the block.
- » Volunteer to "adopt" a street, a local park, or other area, taking responsibility for cleaning up, maintaining physical structures, or otherwise improving its curb appeal.
- » Take the lead in organizing a community-wide curb appeal improvement effort.

Indicators of Success

- » More towns undertake curb appeal improvements.
- » Tourism businesses and organizations make curb appeal improvements and lead community curb appeal efforts.

- » More towns epitomizing the “vibrant and charming small towns” are highlighted in visitor information and marketing materials.
- » Success stories are widely covered by Montana media.

Background & Rationale

The Montana Brand promises “vibrant and charming small towns”. To better deliver on that promise, Montana should continue to improve the appeal of its small towns and expand the list of particularly charming towns that can be highlighted (see Strategic Action 2.1.) throughout the state. Delivering on this Brand promise will improve the visitor experience and visitor satisfaction, contributing to extended stays, return visits, and positive word-of-mouth.

Improving curb appeal also offers beneficial “peer effects”. Improving the facades of one block often leads to improvements on the next block. Raising the appeal of one town encourages other communities to follow the example. This effect is strengthened by shining a spotlight on the efforts – by raising industry awareness of successful efforts that are undertaken and by rewarding the effort through promotion of the most charming small towns to visitors.

In addition, media coverage of successful curb appeal projects – big and small – throughout Montana not only offers positive publicity for the town, but also builds respect in general for tourism and the benefits that it brings. Particularly where the tourism community provides the leadership and support for curb appeal improvements, the projects will demonstrate that improvements designed to attract visitors are also an amenity for local residents and improve the local quality of life.