



Downtown Photography Tip Sheet

On your photography in general

1. Regularly walk the district with a camera and use it.
2. Take lots of photos. Erase what you don't want to keep.
3. Take high resolution pictures. This is necessary if you want to be included in any type of publication (magazines, newspapers, brochures). You can always shrink your hi-res photos, but you can't add resolution to grainy, 35kb pictures. And with high resolution photos, you can also crop the image later to highlight details and improve composition.
4. Frame your photos appropriately from the start. Composition counts.
5. Have a photo contest...let others do the work for you (but don't forget to make sure they sign a release).
6. Check your batteries...and carry extras.
7. Take your photos when the sun is shining brightly; it brings out the colors of your downtown.
8. Using your digital camera, check your just-taken shot on site and adjust exposure, composition, and lighting.

On people

9. Choose photos of real life action over posed.
10. Choose posed photos over images without people.
11. While big "crowd shots" are fine, try to get photos of people using your downtown in an everyday setting.
12. Don't be afraid to get close. Happy faces sell your district.
13. Take photos of the people you want to attract (multi-ethnic, multi-age) not just grandparents and kids.

On businesses

14. Get photos that say “Open for Business” (shoppers, deliveries, shop owners unrolling their awnings, etc).
15. Nighttime photos from outside looking into a busy shop are very appealing in saying, “Hey, we’re open late for business.”
16. Share good images of merchants for use in their own promotions.

On seasons and special conditions

17. Capture all of the seasons. Use fall leaves or spring flowers to frame an image, give seasonal context, and add color. Bare trees aren’t necessarily ugly. Explore how branches can add drama to a shot.
18. When it snows, be the first one out to get pictures of the fresh blanket. Get pictures of kids playing downtown, shop owners preparing to open, and *shoppers!*
19. After a snow, come out at night and get photos of the lights shining. Experiment with exposure to create dramatic effects.

On building rehabilitation projects

20. Get “before” photos of every façade, rehab and infill project, no matter how small. Mark the camera spot (and tripod height if applicable) so that you can go revisit the shot.
21. Get “during” photos of every façade, rehab and infill project, no matter how small—don’t forget some of the people doing the work.
22. Get immediate “after” photos of every façade, rehab and infill project.

On maintaining your catalog

23. Have an online photo directory, thumbnail binder or some easy cataloging system that works for you so that photos can be found for press deadlines.
24. Archive and backup properly: File photos with descriptive data, including caption information, date taken, location and consent releases.
25. Don’t keep your photos a secret. Consider using a social media site such as facebook or flickr for your own online press area or public catalog to easily share Main Street images with press, merchants and neighbors.