

## 11.0 Enabling Strategies - BIDs

Business improvement district schemes are a well established process where local authorities and local business owners form a collaborative process whereby significant aesthetic and environmental improvements might be achieved. This involves establishing a common platform for improvements and a design led scheme of intervention whereby necessary infrastructural improvements (provided via the local authority) are paired with similar improvements by private owners of shops, businesses and residences. Smaller version of BIDs like schemes exist in the form of shop front improvement schemes and other similar “beautification projects” with some local authorities. BIDs schemes work best when applied to very specific character areas or specific quarters or streets. It is proposed that the local authority initiate discussions about establishing such a BID (business district) for Main Street from the Civic Gateway to the Harbour. By focusing on this key component of the Rush 2020 plan it would be possible to achieve significant improvements.

It would require a majority of the owners to “buy into” the scheme as resentment often results in those contributing to the scheme if others benefit without making a contribution. It is essential therefore the local authority is seen to make a significant contribution to the scheme to make it worthwhile. This form of co partnership funding/investment has been proven to work especially where there is a strong brand image that everyone benefits from.

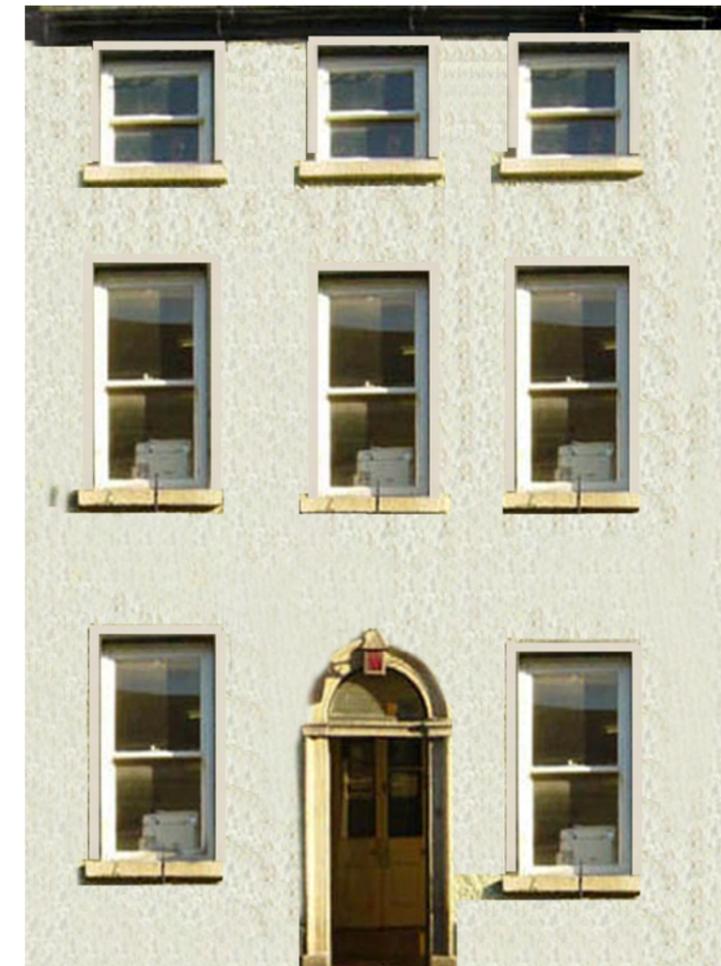
The key elements of a BIDs scheme for Main Street would concentrate on specific elements for their special qualities and the opportunity for improvement. Architectural features and heritage buildings, shop fronts, branding and logos would be the focus of any such scheme.

To illustrate the potential of BIDs improvements specific buildings would become the basis of a “before and after” study. These would show the impact of BID sponsored alterations. The main benefit of this form of analysis allows researchers to highlight the beneficial aspects of the environmental change. It is necessary therefore to keep the method flexible to accommodate variations.

Elements that could be enhanced through a BID process include;



*Building Elevation Study - Before*



*Building Elevation Study - After*

*Building Study from BIDS Scheme courtesy of DIT Dublin Road Carlow Study*

- repairing facades
- repainting facades in a coordinated fashion
- removal of extraneous infrastructure, wires etc.
- reduction in the size of signage
- replacing inappropriate signage
- reconfiguring signage and agreeing standards for letter types
- colour schemes for shop fronts
- ban on inappropriate advertising
- ban on inappropriate and washed out lighting schemes
- new branding and signage schemes

**11.1 Enabling Strategies - Civic Trust - Civic Charter**

Civic Trusts are a very effective way of providing a functional platform and a vehicle through which national, local and individual funding can find its way to supporting significant urban improvements from “beatification projects” to building or urban space restoration and commissioning. Many building or civic trusts emerge in places of significant architectural or urban heritage. The motivation for the establishment of a civic trust is the imminent threat to the building or urban environment. A civic trust could be more proactive, protecting the future as well as the past. It is proposed that such a proactive Civic Trust and a Civic Charter be established for Rush, to provide both the vehicle whereby funding might be pooled and organised locally with representation from the various local and community representatives and stakeholders.

The Civic Trust of England and Wales is a charitable organisation was founded in 1957. Its prime purpose is to improve the quality of new and historic buildings and public spaces, and to help improve the general quality of urban life. The Trust supports a national network of Civic Societies, which are local groups in which volunteer members participate in efforts to improve their surroundings. It runs the Civic Trust Regeneration Unit, which supports urban and neighbourhood renewal through programmes which address issues of concern.



*The Birmingham Civic Society*

The Civic Trust is a useful banner under which the local community gains influence and control over their environment. The trust usually carries a strong brand with a logo which aids the promotion of the place above and beyond the usual partisan identity that hinders integrated planning at local level.

The Civic trust becomes a vehicle for local historians and has a role in coordinating a blue/brown plaque scheme honouring people or place alongside other schemes such as the Bridgestone guide and the tidy towns’ competition.



*The Birmingham Civic Society Historic plaque*

Ireland has two civic trusts that are well known, located in Dublin and Limerick. In Limerick the experience is close to what one would expect to deal with in Rush, with a mix of historic protection, repair and restoration work being undertaken in part at the behest of the trust.

Limerick Civic Trust was founded in 1982. It is a voluntary organisation, registered as a Trust, with charitable status. Its objectives include historical buildings renewal, cultural research and the enhancement of the architectural heritage.

Working in conjunction with Government agencies, the local authority as well as Commercial, Professional, and Community life it seeks to establish a common vision for the “benefit of its citizens, visitors and future generations.”

The Civic Trust states that the Trust is “an action driven organisation which undertakes a wide range of projects to improve and preserve Limerick’s Architectural Environment and Heritage.”