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11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets
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MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Spring 2009
11.439 Revitalizing Urban Main Streets

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Reflection # 6
Commercial revitalization practice

During the semester, we have focused on developing a detailed understanding of the conditions, challenges and opportunities to improve St Claude Avenue and to formulate a sound and specific set of proposals to revitalize the district emphasizing the use of urban design and economic development interventions. We also have confronted and had to work around an organization with very weak capacity and a front line practitioner with a narrow view of her role in planning for and revitalizing St. Claude Avenue. These experiences provide a very fertile basis to think about the nature of practice in revitalizing commercial districts.

1. Based on your work in this class and your experience engaging with the St. Claude Avenue Main Street Program and other local stakeholders, how would you describe the work of a front-line practitioner in revitalizing distressed commercial districts and what does such a practitioner need to do and accomplish to be effective?
2. Drawing on these reflections, prepare a job description for the St. Claude Avenue Main Streets Program Executive Director that defines the position's key responsibilities, in the spirit of "what this job is really about" and "what the Executive Director needs to do to succeed," rather than as a collection of tasks.

These responses will be assembled and shared with the entire class (omitting the name of each respondent).