

State of **MAIN**

A PUBLICATION OF MAIN STREET AMERICA

WINTER
2018

THE POWER OF SMALL



State of MAIN

State of Main is published as a membership benefit of Main Street America, a program of the National Main Street Center. **For information on how to join Main Street America, please visit mainstreet.org/main-street/join/.**

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National Main Street Center
a subsidiary of the
National Trust for Historic Preservation



Main Street America has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. Today it is a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

WINTER
2018

3 **President's Note**

By Patrice Frey

5 **Editor's Note**

By Rachel Bowdon

6 **Main Street Together 2017**

The Main Street America Network 6

The Power of Main Street 8

Partners and Supporters 10

Partners in Preservation: Main Streets 12

Main Street Awards 16

Main Street America Institute 20

Main Street Now Conference 22

24 **Main Street in Action**

Equipping Main Streets for the
New Economy 24

Advancing the Movement
through UrbanMain 28

Transforming Communities through
Partnerships and Innovation 32

38 **The Future of Retail**

By Becky McCray

48 **Seeing Small**

By Jim Heid and Samantha Beckerman

58 **Advocacy in Motion**

By Renee Kuhlman

70 **Leading Main Street**

By Norma Ramirez de Miess



As a Main Street leader, you're always looking to the future—the next board meeting, the next downtown event, the next accreditation visit—but what does the future hold for you?



Let the Main Street America Institute (MSAI) help you grow and succeed in your career with the best professional development offerings available for downtown and commercial district professionals.

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- 2 The Network:** Grow your skills and your professional network. Attend one of MSAI's in-person workshops to learn in the company of peers and take away best practices and ideas from across the country – and some new friends.
- 3 The Instructors:** Engage with industry-leading experts. In each MSAI online course and workshop, instructors spark your curiosity with their subject-specific knowledge and broad vision of the field.

.....
**Get the training you need
to implement the changes
your community wants.**
.....

Learn more about Main Street America Institute's upcoming courses, certificate programs, and the Main Street America Revitalization Professional credential at mainstreet.org/msai.

PRESIDENT'S *Note*

Recently, my colleague Debra Wise recounted to me that when she started her career at the National Main Street Center in 1986, she was hesitant about trying to explain her work to friends and family. As she detailed the Center's efforts to save declining downtowns, she was often greeted with nervous laughter and puzzled looks. It's not an exaggeration to say that when Main Street was founded nearly 40 years ago, many regarded the Center's work to support downtowns to be outdated and well, just uncool. Why fight the tides of "progress" — malls, office parks and big boxes to save those decaying old town centers?'

Some four decades later, folks aren't laughing. Main Streets are enjoying a resurgence that few could have imagined when the Main Street America Network began its work. Today, people are voting with their feet, seeking out places that are distinct and rich in character, and filled with locally-owned retail and restaurants that provide unique experiences. In short, they're coming back home to Main Street.

Yet, our work is far from over—and in fact, it's even more important today than it was 40 years ago. Fundamental changes in the economy have reshaped communities, whether rural, urban, or everything in between. Main Streeters are now broadening their focus beyond the core essentials of renewing the symbolic heart of their community, preserving history, and creating an attractive place for local residents and visitors to shop. They are pivoting to concentrate on positioning their communities to be competitive in a fast-shifting economy.

In smaller towns, where long-standing manufacturing or other major local employers have often shuttered, it's the efforts of local Main Street directors — working hand in hand with civic leaders and the business community—who are at the vanguard of renewing stagnating local economies. In hot urban markets, where

many neighborhoods have been left behind and remain stymied after decades long disinvestment, it's local commercial districts leaders who are champions of neighborhood change that will create economic opportunity for local residents.

How do they do it? Whether working in a town of 1,000 or a city of 3 million, Main Street leaders are bound by the knowledge that local economic transformation happens by generating growth from within the community. In short, these Main Streeters are part of a long legacy of American Bootstrappers. Rather than waiting for the day when a large employer will decide to locate in their town and reverse their community's decline, these leaders are rolling up their sleeves and engaging with their neighbors to create opportunity together.

They focus on figuring out how they can best support existing businesses and help them grow over time. Always forward thinking, they look to the local community as a wealth of new entrepreneurial creativity to cultivate and develop. They help lower the barrier to entry for business starts-ups by offering training for new entrepreneurs, low-interest loans, and small grants. At the same time, they understand that a strong economic base is dependent upon a strong residential market to activate and sustain these places. This includes working along private and public partners that are committed to creating inclusive, accessible communities that provide residents with access to a range of jobs, education, businesses, and housing options.

All of us at the National Main Street Center are honored to work in support of this inspiring and dedicated group of local economic revitalization professionals.



Continued on Page 5

Successful downtown revitalization requires laser-focused strategy, inclusive and sustained community engagement, and meaningful impact measurement.

The Main Street America technical services team—with decades of combined experience in the broad range of issues that impact Main Streets—can provide your program with the support you need to put those principles into practice.



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- :: **Comprehensive Main Street Approach planning and implementation**
- :: **Advancing economic opportunity in urban commercial districts**
- :: **Leadership development training**
- :: **Fundraising, planning, and organizational assessment**
- :: **Entrepreneurial ecosystem development**
- :: **And much more!**

Whether your program is getting off the ground or you are looking to take your revitalization effort to the next level, our team is here for you.

For more information, please contact Matt Wagner at mwagner@savingplaces.org.



Clockwise: Matt Wagner, Vice President of Revitalization Programs // **Dionne Baux**, Director of Urban Programs // **Kathy La Plante**, Senior Program Officer and Director of Coordinating Programs // **Norma Ramirez de Miess**, Senior Program Officer and Director of Leadership Development



“Over the past 14 years, Michigan Main Street has been collaborating with the National Main Street Center as a key partner in the development of our program and services. The support from the leadership and field staff at the Center has helped elevate the Michigan Main Street program to what it has become.”

LAURA KRIZOV,
Coordinator, Michigan Main
Street Center, MEDC

PRESIDENT'S *Note*

This year, we are embarking on a journey to better connect and support the creative and “can-do” spirit of the Main Street America Network. This spring, we will be introducing The Point, an online digital networking platform that will make it easier than ever for our nationwide network to engage and share resources with one another. Part knowledge center, part relationship hub, we hope you’ll find that The Point will not only help support you in the work you do every day, but strengthen the Network and movement as a whole.

Look for more details in the coming months. We’ll see you at The Point!



pfrey@savingplaces.org

EDITOR'S *Note*

As I write this, I’m working from a café. It’s an independent café, owned by a 30-something female entrepreneur, located in a former silk mill that also happens to host weekly yoga sessions and feature local artists’ works for sale. It’s where I go to not only enjoy delicious food and coffee but to be around my neighbors and feel grounded in my community. This is a typical Main Street experience—one that I’m sure everyone reading this can relate to and it’s what we’ve all been working to protect for nearly four decades. Yet, what’s different is that innovative, small businesses like this are no longer the outlier or seen as a noble experiment. Local establishments that offer unique experiences are on the rise, competing successfully against large chains because that’s what people are demanding.

On the pages that follow, I invite you to explore and celebrate the power of small — how small businesses, small-scale development, and small steps are leading to big things. As Becky McCray discusses in her article “The Future of Retail” (page 38), small business is poised to win big in the new economy as consumer preferences shift away from large impersonal, big-box retail. In “Seeing Small” (page 48), Jim Heid and

Samantha Beckerman explain why small-scale development is even gaining the attention of the historically unyielding finance and real estate industries, who traditionally saw this type of development as a credit risk. Yet, there are still very real barriers and threats that Main Street is up against. It is our responsibility to keep the momentum moving forward by making our voices heard and honing our skills needed to navigate the complex role of a Main Street leader. Check out “Advocacy in Motion” by Renee Kuhlman and “Leading Main Street” by Norma Ramirez de Miess, on how to do just that.

But first, please join me in celebrating all the work that we have accomplished together over the past year. From our impressive reinvestment statistics (page 8), to the Partners in Preservation: Main Streets campaign (page 12), to the launch of UrbanMain (page 28), it’s been quite a year.



rbowdon@savingplaces.org



THE MAIN STREET AMERICA *Network*

A MOVEMENT OF COMMUNITY CHANGEMAKERS

Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, the thousands of organizations, individuals, volunteers, and local leaders that make up Main Street America™ represent the broad diversity that makes this country so unique. Working together, the Main Street America Network helps to breathe new life into the places people call home.

Thank you to the thousands of people who are a part of this powerful movement and to the **Main Street Leadership Council** for their support and direction:

Laura Krizov, *Chair, Michigan Main Street*

Darrin Wasniewski, *Co-Chair, Wisconsin Main Street*

Ronald Campbell, *Main Street Oakland County*

Kitty Dougoud, *Kentucky Main Street*

Breanne Durham, *Washington Main Street Program*

Bill Fontana, *Pennsylvania Downtown Center*

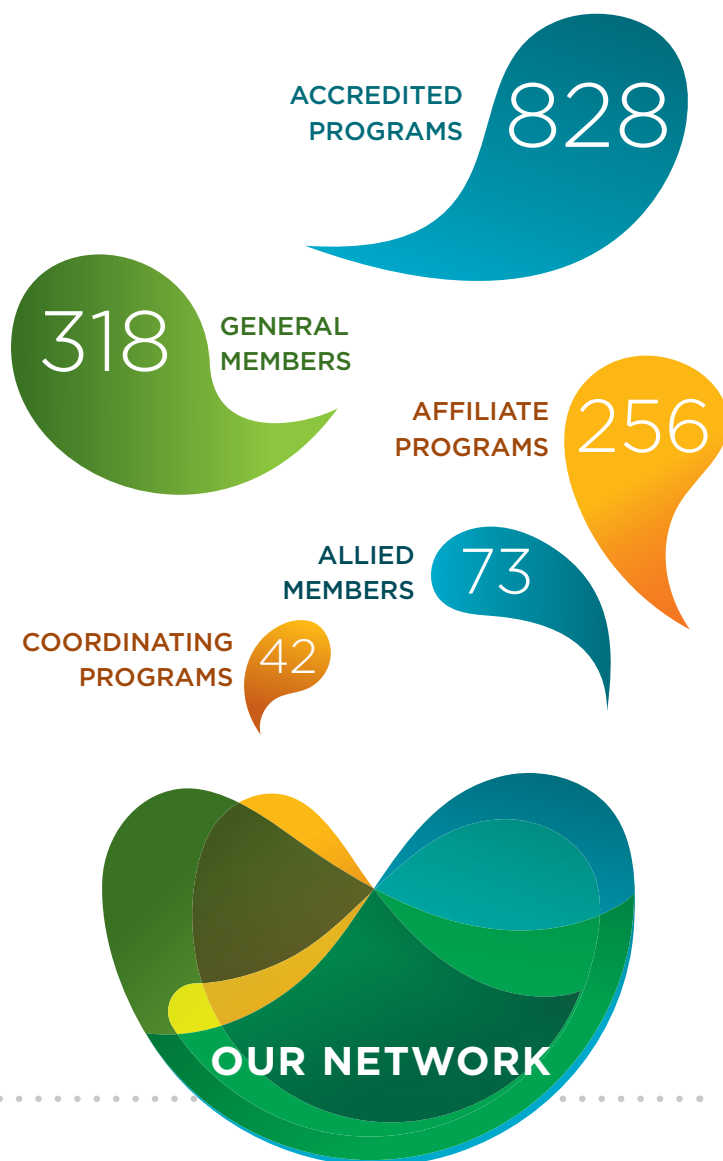
Stephen Gilman, *Boston Main Streets*

Gayla Roten, *Missouri Main Street Connection*

Michael Wagler, *Main Street Iowa*

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Beppie LeGrand, *Main Street South Carolina*



As of December 31, 2017

Membership Benefits



Main Street News

A weekly newsletter on trends, stories from the field, and need-to-know information

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State of Main

Main Street America's annual printed publication

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Insurance

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Preservation Resources

Membership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation

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join today.**

Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

THE POWER OF *Main Street*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION = ECONOMIC IMPACT

The cumulative success of the Main Street Approach™ and Main Street America™ programs on the local level has earned Main Street the reputation as one of the most powerful economic revitalization tools in the nation. The National Main Street Center conducts research to document this by collecting impact data on the preservation, revitalization, and economic activities in local Main Street America programs throughout the country.

CUMULATIVE REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

The cumulative estimates are based on statistics gathered from 1980 to December 31, 2016, for all designated Main Street America communities nationwide.

2016 REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

The 2016 estimates are based on statistics gathered January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016, from the 1,052 designated Main Street America communities nationwide.

\$70.25 billion

TOTAL DOLLARS REINVESTED IN PHYSICAL
IMPROVEMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES

268,053
NUMBER OF
BUILDING REHA-
BILITATIONS

584,422
NET GAIN
IN JOBS

132,092
NET GAIN IN
BUSINESSES

32.56 : \$1
REINVESTMENT
RATIO*

5,616

NET GAIN IN
BUSINESSES

27,462

NET GAIN
IN JOBS

8,042

NUMBER OF
BUILDINGS
REHABILITATIONS

**\$4.65
billion**

TOTAL DOLLARS REINVESTED IN
PHYSICAL IMPROVEMENTS FROM
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SOURCES

* The Reinvestment Ratio measures the amount of new investment that occurs, on average, for every dollar a participating community spends to support the operation of its Main Street program, based on median annual program costs reported to the National Main Street Center by its coordinating programs. This number is not cumulative and represents investment and organization budgets from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2016.

A STRONG RETURN ON INVESTMENT

So much of what we do is intangible. We foster pride of place, celebrate diverse history and culture, and cultivate leadership from within our own communities. While those things are vitally important, our work also directly advances local economic prosperity.

Our annual reinvestment statistics capture a wide range of economic indicators, from building rehabilitations to public and private investment. While these figures are powerful, we are looking at new data that paint a fuller picture of the difference Main Streets make.

For example, new research we conducted this year shows the fiscal impact of Main Street America programs in Washington, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and the City of Boston.* The results are unequivocal: investment in Main Street yields strong return on investment (ROI).

In **Washington State**, business growth attributable to Main Street America programs generated state tax revenues of approximately \$17 million. This fiscal impact far exceeds state spending on the program, which has averaged \$1.2 million over the last two years, **resulting in an ROI of 1:13**.

Likewise, **Oklahoma's** Main Street America communities make significant fiscal contributions. With a state budget of \$470,000, Oklahoma Main Street programs generated almost \$2.4 million in fiscal return to the state between 2015 and 2016, equal to nearly \$72,000 per Main Street community, **resulting in an ROI of 1:5**.

In **Pennsylvania**, business growth attributable to Pennsylvania Main Street America communities generated state tax revenues of approximately \$25.1 million. This fiscal impact outpaces state spending on the program, which has averaged \$2.8 million over the last two years, **resulting in an ROI of 1:8**.

At the city level, Main Street America programs in **Boston** generated nearly \$7.3 million more city tax revenue than would have been expected without the presence of a Main Street program—a \$5.5 million net fiscal gain for the city, **resulting in an ROI of 1:3**.

We know that downtown and neighborhood district revitalization doesn't happen overnight, but Main Street America programs are showing day in, day out, that strategic, incremental investment can lead to real economic change.

	WASHINGTON	OKLAHOMA	PENNSYLVANIA	BOSTON
City or State spending on Main Street program	\$1.2 million	\$470,000	\$2.8 million	\$1.8 million
Fiscal revenue generated from average program in City or State	\$985,000	\$72,000	\$485,000	\$274,000
Tax revenue attributable to Main Street program	\$17 million	\$2.8 million	\$25.1 million	\$7.3 million
Return on Investment	1:13	1:5	1:8	1:3

*Research conducted by Jon Stover and Associates.

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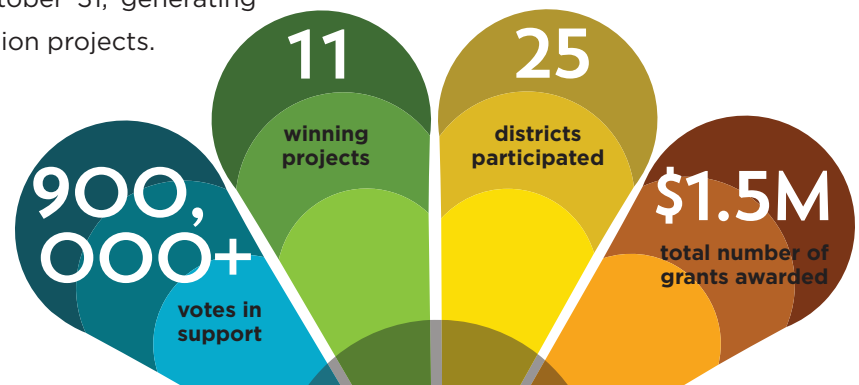
PARTNERS IN PRESERVATION

Preserving America's Main Streets

This fall, Main Street America joined the National Trust for Historic Preservation, American Express, and National Geographic for Partners in Preservation: Main Streets, a community-based campaign to raise awareness about the importance of preserving America's Main Street districts.

The vote-driven campaign highlighted Main Street communities around the U.S. and their positive local impact. A total of 25 different Main Street districts participated in the campaign from September 25 through October 31, generating over 900,000 votes in support of their preservation projects.

The 11 winning projects received a total of \$1.5 million in funding. An additional \$500,000 in grants was provided to the nonprofit partners of the 25 Main Street communities that participated in the program to help raise awareness about their preservation needs.



Congratulations to the winners of Partners in Preservation: Main Streets



**BIRMINGHAM,
ALABAMA***

Lead Organization:
REV Birmingham

Project: Alabama Theatre

Grant Amount: \$120,000

**CASA GRANDE,
ARIZONA***

Lead Organization:
Casa Grande Main Street

Project: Vintage Neon
Sign Park

Grant Amount: \$144,000

**LOS ANGELES,
CALIFORNIA**

Lead Organization:
Los Angeles Conservancy

Project: Formosa Café

Grant Amount:
\$150,000

**WEST DES MOINES,
IOWA***

Lead Organization:
Historic Valley Junction
Foundation

Project: The Lyric

Grant Amount: \$150,000

**CAPE GIRARDEAU,
MISSOURI***

Lead Organization:
Old Town Cape, Inc.

Project: Ivers Square

Grant Amount: \$127,650

**LAS VEGAS,
NEW MEXICO***

Lead Organization: Main-
Street Las Vegas Corporation

Project: E. Romero Hose &
Fire Building

Grant Amount: \$150,000

**GREENSBORO,
NORTH CAROLINA**

Lead Organization:
Downtown Greensboro
Foundation

Project: Carolina Theatre

Grant Amount: \$150,000

CINCINNATI, OHIO

Lead Organization:
Cincinnati Preservation
Association

Project: Woodward Theater

Grant Amount: \$150,000

**PHILADELPHIA,
PENNSYLVANIA**

Lead Organization: German-
town United Community
Development Corporation

Project: Parker Hall
and the John Trower Building

Grant Amount: \$150,000

MCKINNEY, TEXAS*

Lead Organization:
McKinney Main Street

Project: McKinney Performing
Arts Center

Grant Amount:
\$150,000

**For more information
on the winning sites
please visit:**
**[savingplaces.org/partners-
in-preservation-main-streets](http://savingplaces.org/partners-in-preservation-main-streets).**

**Main Street America community*

**SALT LAKE CITY,
UTAH***

Lead Organization:
Studio Elevn

Project: Granary District

Grant Amount: \$50,000

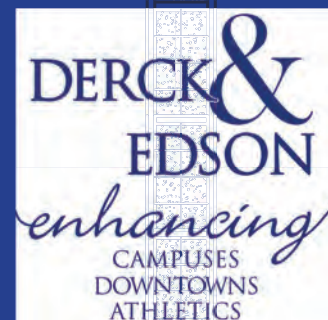
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RECOGNIZING AND CELEBRATING

Each year, the National Main Street Center presents a series of awards at the Main Street Now Conference. These exclusive awards serve to honor the important work of commercial district revitalization organizations, individuals, and businesses, as well as raise the visibility of the Main Street America movement nationwide.

2017 GREAT AMERICAN MAIN STREET AWARDS

The National Main Street Center recognizes exceptional Main Street America communities with the Great American Main Street Award™ (GAMSA). Their successes are a shining model for comprehensive, preservation-based commercial district revitalization. GAMSA winners represent the diversity of communities in the Main Street America Network—small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts from every region in the country. The 2017 awards were made possible through the generous support of PNC Bank.

Renaissance Covington, Covington, Ky.

A Creative Renaissance

Made up of 19 neighborhoods and commercial districts, Covington is situated south of the Ohio River and Cincinnati. The area features a casual mix of Midwestern strength and Southern charm and has developed a flourishing creative population. Brimming with beautiful Italianate brick buildings, the district has seen an influx of new independent businesses and insatiable demand for downtown residential units over the past few years.

“Downtown Covington’s resurgence has been a long time in the making,” said Katie Meyer, executive director, Renaissance Covington. “There are several critical partners who have contributed to the development’s success and this award reflects all the individuals’ and entities’ hard work.”

Established in 2003, Renaissance Covington has played a key role in spearheading efforts that integrate small business with creative public space projects to encourage civic engagement and Main Street revival. Since 2010, over 40 new businesses have opened in formerly vacant storefronts. Many storefronts’ upper floors have also transitioned into urban lofts. Since 2003, vacancy rates have dropped from 26 percent to five percent and the district has also added 790 jobs.



Left: Hopscotch Parklet Unveiling at Braxton Brewing
Credit: Anissa Lewis

Top Right: From the stage at Central City Fest in O.C. Haley
Credit: Victor Robinson

Bottom Right: Street festivals add vitality to downtown West Chester. Credit: West Chester BID

EXCELLENCE: 2017 Main Street Awards

Cumulatively, this year’s GAMSA winners and semi-finalists have generated almost a billion dollars in public and private reinvestment, created 5,700 new jobs, opened 1,000 new business, rehabbed 1,400 buildings, and clocked over 133,000 volunteer hours since their programs’ inceptions.



Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard Merchants and Business Association, New Orleans, La.

A Community for All

Located in New Orleans, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard’s revival reflects the city’s resilience. Once a bustling Jewish and African-American corridor in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and a hub for civil rights activism in the 1960s, the boulevard fell into decline in the 1970s. In 1995, the Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard Merchants & Business Association was established to help revive the area following interest in a local arts center and coffee shop. Since then, the association has helped reinvigorate the 12-block long commercial district into a robust community that not

only celebrates New Orleans’ culture of jazz heritage and great cuisine, but also features renovated historic churches, schools, and homes serving local residents.

“We are pleased that our collaborative efforts have helped transform the area from a majority of vacant structures to being mostly occupied,” said Linda Pompa, executive director, Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard Merchants & Business Association. “Since 1995, we’ve reduced the vacancy rate from 48 percent to just 17 percent. Through key partnerships and collaboration with committed developers and neighborhood stakeholders, we’ve come a long way.”

The neighborhood within the city is steeped in social activism. The boulevard’s namesake Oretha Castle Haley played a major role in the Civil Rights Movement and helped organize the 1960 boycott of businesses refusing to hire black sales clerks right on the boulevard. Post Hurricane Katrina, the community also rallied together to rebuild into a thriving cultural and commercial destination that was featured in The New York Times travel section in 2016.

West Chester Business Improvement District, West Chester, Pa.

Historic Town with a Thriving Food Scene

At just 1.8-square miles, West Chester is a lush green town that packs in a thriving food scene, a vibrant college population, and 200 years of history. Nestled in the Brandywine Valley, the town has 4,200 structures listed in the National Register of Historic Places, including a collection designed by Thomas U. Walter, a celebrated American architect whose credits include the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Since 2000, under the leadership of the West Chester Business Improvement District, the town has reduced the business vacancy rate from 22 percent to four percent, adding close to 250 new businesses and creating 1,000 jobs for the area.

“It was a challenge to bring a new vitality to our downtown more than a decade ago so it’s especially rewarding to now gain recognition for our hard work,” said Malcolm Johnstone, executive director of West Chester BID. “The completion of the historic courthouse renovation and the opening of a new hotel and theater are just some visible signs of the area’s revitalization, but it truly was the partnership between local, regional and national organizations that helped West Chester flourish into a vibrant community.”

One to Watch

Downtown Goldsboro Development Corporation in Goldsboro, North Carolina, was selected as the 2017 “One to Watch”—a place that is making great strides in using the Main Street Approach to revitalize their downtown.

Downtown Goldsboro exemplifies the Main Street promise—transforming the once neglected and abandoned heart of the city into a thriving destination, beloved by residents and visitors alike. Downtown Goldsboro has leveraged resources and partnerships leading to almost \$13 million in streetscape improvements, and has cultivated a dynamic local business environment.



2017 MAIN STREET EXCELLENCE AWARDS

All three Main Street Excellence Awards—Innovation on Main Street Award, Business Leadership Award, and Main Street America Hero Award—were generously sponsored by Edward Jones.



INNOVATION ON MAIN STREET AWARD

The Innovation on Main Street Award recognizes high caliber Main Street America programs for successful, sustainable initiatives that represent new approaches to downtown revitalization challenges or opportunities.

Texas Main Street Program

Celebrate Main Street Campaign

The Celebrate Main Street campaign was launched by Texas Main Street (TMS), a program of the Texas Historical Commission, to recognize its 35th anniversary. To honor this achievement, TMS created a sweepstakes campaign to draw attention to the collective achievement of all participating Texas Main Street communities while promoting them as destinations for visitors. Sweepstake winners received a prize package of a weekend getaway to one of the 89 Main Street cities—including lodging, dining, entertainment, and activities that showcase the historical aspects of each Main Street community.

Gulfport Main Street Association

Fishbone Alley “Urban Living Room” Project

The Fishbone Alley “Urban Living Room” project is an inspiring example of the power of Main Street to transform downtowns and rally communities. Gulfport Main Street Association helped to turn an underused, unattractive alley right in the middle of the downtown district into a vibrant public space, featuring century-old brick pavers, public art, and enchanting lighting.

Top Right: Buster’s Main Street Café in Cottage Grove, Oregon. Credit: Busters Main Street Café

Middle Right: Michigan Main Street receives the 2017 Main Street America Hero Award at the Main Street Now Conference in Pittsburgh.

Bottom: Fishbone Alley in Gulfport, Mississippi. Credit: Gulfport Main Street Association





BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

The Business Leadership Award recognizes the critical role that local businesses play in a healthy economy, and honors the hard-working small business owners that keep those enterprises going while contributing to the community.



Buster's Main Street Café, Cottage Grove, Ore.

In 2011, Paul and Amy Tocco purchased Buster's Main Street Café, located in the Cottage Grove Main Street district. Since then, they have grown the business into new locations and now employ 15 people in town. Their leadership extends far beyond just that of employers—they are true community citizens, giving back to Cottage Grove at every opportunity.

In 2013, the Toccos began providing free meals to veterans and active service duty members. Since then, the entire community has gotten involved, initiating a "thank you" on the 11th of every month. On that day, Main Street is adorned with American flags welcoming service members to Cottage Grove. And of course, they are all provided with a free meal at Buster's.



MAIN STREET AMERICA HERO AWARD

The Main Street America Hero Award recognizes outstanding contributions by an elected official, government staff person, public agency, or nonprofit organization at the local, state, or federal level. Winners of the Hero Award are champions of community-driven comprehensive economic development, leaving a lasting impact on their own community, region, or state, while also enhancing national efforts to revitalize America's downtowns and older and historic commercial corridors.



Michigan Main Street

Michigan Main Street (MMS), a program of the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, has a long track record of outstanding commitment to communities across the state through direct technical assistance and forward-thinking leadership. MMS also has a strong partnership with the National Main Street Center, including support for professional development initiatives like the Main Street America Institute, as well as the rollout of the refreshed Main Street Approach to all of its communities.

STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT

Main Street America Institute

We were honored to recognize the first graduating cohort of the Main Street America Institute at the Main Street Now Conference in May 2017. Achieving the Main Street America Revitalization Professional credential, currently the highest credential offered through the Main Street America Institute, is a tremendous accomplishment. In just over a year, these nine professionals completed ten online courses, two in-person workshops, and one intensive final exam demonstrating a mastery of subject matter essential to downtown and neighborhood district management. Armed with the knowledge, tools, and ability to lead revitalization efforts, our MSARP recipients each have a unique perspective on the future of the profession. We asked them:

The biggest opportunity is to expand creative partnerships. In an era of scarce funding and changing attitudes towards volunteerism, getting creative to tap partnerships offers a way to expand your reach and welcome new partners to your revitalization efforts. Whether it is collaborating with your local library, school, club, or local interest group, Main Street directors have an incredible opportunity to use new technology and ideas to rethink Main Street creatively.

ALEXANDER BALLOON
*Manager, Tacony Community
Development Corporation*

Embracing the growing diversity of our communities—large and small—is the most exciting opportunity, yet most significant challenge currently facing Main Street directors. “Building a bigger table” will ensure our work is more inclusive and can harness new ideas and creative solutions which spark growth in our programs and districts in ways currently unimagined.

BREANN BYE *Executive Director, 6th Avenue
Corridor*

Downtowns are on the upswing, which is both an exciting opportunity as well as the biggest challenge facing downtown directors. People want to live and socialize in downtowns. This creates opportunity for directors to be a part of positive change. It’s gratifying to see community improvements and to look back with pride and say “Hey, I was part of that.” Helping downtowns reclaim their place as the social and cultural hearts of their communities is a huge challenge with endless possibilities.

AMY HANSEN *Executive Director, Downtown
Fond du Lac Partnership*

I’m starting to see new growth and excitement as more towns are realizing the value and potential a vibrant downtown has on economic development, business recruitment, and job creation for their entire city. Because of this, downtown directors are now being paid for the importance that their role brings to a community. Now, we not only love what we do, but we are beginning to get paid for the passion we bring to our jobs.

PATRICK KAY *Director, Americus Main
Street & Americus Downtown Development Authority*

*“What do you see as
the most exciting
opportunity and/or
biggest challenge
facing Main Street
directors in the
next five years?”*

As Main Street directors work to do more with less resources, including a work-life balance, more and more communities will see this as an either unnecessary position or entry level position. This puts Main Street directors in a lose-lose situation to implement effective community development through attacks and distractions from other entities. By working to strengthen the position and visibility of directors, we can combat this phenomenon nationally.

DEREK LUMSDEN *Executive Director, Osceola Chamber Main Street*



We were honored to recognize the first graduating cohort of the Main Street America Institute at the Main Street Now Conference. Back Row: Patrick Kay, Alexander Balloon, Martin Smith, Donnie Rodgers, Derek Lumsden Front Row: Breann Bye, Sarah Thompson, Diana Schwartz, Amy Hansen.

What does the future of Main Street hold for you? Develop your skills and create your own path with the Main Street America Institute.

VISIT MAINSTREET.ORG/MSAI FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE MSARP CREDENTIAL AND ALL OUR PROGRAMS.

One of the biggest challenges for directors could be the workload and pay gap. Most directors are very passionate about their work and it is easy for them to get overloaded. The challenge for boards will be to put as much time and energy into finding volunteers and offering the kind of salary and benefits that will retain a passionate director. By becoming certified one has shown that they are passionate about the work.

SARAH THOMPSON *Executive Director, Hamilton Hometowns*

Main Street directors must embrace new and changing technology. Technology has made it possible for us to reach people across the world with the single click of a mouse. There is major potential with technology in helping us tell our story and build local awareness while reaching new markets outside of our community.

DONNIE RODGERS *Executive Director, Downtown Lee's Summit Main Street*

One of the challenges facing many Main Street organizations is sustainability of funding. Not only for our organizations, but for everyone involved in economic vitality in a community. With the inherent volatility in politics, it is imperative to understand additional funding mechanisms such as BID and TIF. Thanks to the certifications and credentials I achieved through MSAI, I feel that I have a much better understanding of how to find additional ways to sustain this growth.

DIANA SCHWARTZ *Executive Director, River District Association*

The biggest challenge facing Main Street directors in the next five years is the same as it has always been—funding. This challenge does, however, also produce our biggest opportunity. By advocating for preserving federal dollars in this administration effectively, you can demonstrate what I always say—investing in Main Street now is investing in a leading local economic engine with both quantifiable and qualitative returns—one that helps make your community somewhere people want to work, live, and, most importantly to decision makers, pay taxes.

MARTIN SMITH *Executive Director, Barracks Row Main Street*

MAIN STREET
TOGETHER 2017

CONFERENCE REWIND

Main Street Now 2017



In May 2017, over 1,500 Main Street leaders and commercial district revitalization professionals came together in Pittsburgh for the Main Street Now Conference. From the opening plenary to the celebratory Big Bash, the conference offered ample opportunities to learn, explore, and connect. Thank you to all who attended and supported this one-of-a-kind event that positions Main Street programs and communities to thrive!



MAIN STREET *Now* CONFERENCE

PITTSBURGH, PA
MAY 1-3, 2017



EQUIPPING MAIN STREETS FOR THE *New Economy*

By Matt Wagner, Ph.D. and Hannah White

The Main Street Approach™ was first developed nearly 40 years ago in response to a complex set of issues facing older and historic downtowns. Suburbanization, depopulation in rural communities, and the growth of shopping malls posed a serious threat to local Main Street economies and the historic structures that anchored their districts. Today, the economic and social forces impacting Main Streets are even more complex and challenging. New retail trends, an aging population, increasing income inequality, and a rapidly changing manufacturing landscape mean that Main Streets — now more than ever — must be prepared with a strategic framework for competing in the new economy.

The Main Street Approach has proven remarkably effective during the intervening years, equipping local communities with a roadmap to ride these seismic societal shifts. However, we recognize that competing in the global economy — and ensuring that Main Streets are seen as places of opportunity for residents, entrepreneurs, and investors — requires new ways of working. Our careful reexamination of the Main Street Approach's Four-Point framework, resulting in a refreshed Main Street Approach, accomplishes just that. It reinforces the value of community engagement and investment, fosters an increased understanding of existing market conditions, and promotes a strategy and results-driven focus for the successful transformation of downtowns and urban commercial districts.

After several years of planning, convening, and piloting, we are excited to see communities across the country embrace the changes to the Main Street Approach and incorporate it into their work. Take a look at the examples on the following pages for some early results of successful implementation.

SUPPORTING MAKERS ON MAIN IN LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA

Lexington, Va., is a scenic college town steeped with history and natural beauty. When Main Street Lexington, the local Main Street America program, looked to position their community for long-term economic opportunity, they decided to leverage their community's heritage of engineering and entrepreneurship to develop a "Small-Scale Artisanal Manufacturing" Transformation Strategy.

Facilitated through a pilot initiative with Virginia Main Street and Main Street America, their Transformation Strategy has already resulted in a number of early successes, the most visible being the 2017 launch of the Lexington Collaboratory, a makerspace and business incubator. The goal is for it to be a full-service platform for makers who have an idea — or who are already tinkering at home and selling wares online — but don't have the means to handle the production, scaling, and business development end of things. With a team of mentors at the ready, the Collaboratory is gearing up to provide legal, marketing, real estate, finance, and professional development assistance that start-up businesses inevitably need, but too often don't have easy access to. To support this venture, Main Street

MATT WAGNER has more than 20 years of non-profit management experience in downtown development, entrepreneurship and tech-based economic development. At the National Main Street Center, Matt leads the launch of the renewed and re-imagined Main Street Approach, as well as helps the Center reach new communities with this refreshed framework. Overseeing the Field Services team, Matt also leads the Center's efforts to expand technical service offerings, and offer preservation-based economic revitalization services directly to communities. Matt received his Ph.D. in Urban Affairs with a specialization in Urban Economic Development from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He is a Fulbright Scholar Specialist, recently completing work in the area of entrepreneurship and economic development at the University of Hyderabad, India.



As Director of Outreach and Engagement, **HANNAH WHITE** oversees the Membership and Marketing departments, and contributes to the fundraising and external relations functions. Working closely with the senior team and peers across the organization, Hannah develops and directs implementation of the Center's strategic vision for strengthening membership, building brand awareness, and broadening the organization's reach through external partnerships. Hannah graduated with a BA in History from Earlham College and has a Masters in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago.



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. Grounded by both an understanding of the underlying drivers of the local and regional economy as well as community feedback and engagement, a Transformation Strategy should describe a market position that the commercial district can successfully fulfill. An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination.

In general, a revitalization organization should work with one or two Transformation Strategies at a time. Each Transformation Strategy should have the following key characteristics:

- :: It is rooted in the community's vision for the district.**
- :: It is measurable, making it possible to track progress.**
- :: It is based on a solid analysis and understanding of the district's economy and its best economic opportunities.**
- :: It provides guidance for program activities for a 2-5 year period, after which the revitalization program should examine progress and make adjustments, as needed.**
- :: It is comprehensive, in that it is implemented through a broad range of activities that span the four broad areas of work represented by the Four Points.**





Downtown Lexington, Va. Credit: Main Street Lexington

Lexington's Economic Vitality committee is currently working on mapping the inventory of available spaces that are suitable for small-scale production, and are planning an outreach campaign for those home-based businesses that are ready to scale up.

The Transformation Strategy focus has also resulted in additional resources for the organization. Last year, Main Street Lexington received three grants from the State of Virginia and Washington and Lee University to aid with makerspace operations, offer business and entrepreneurship technical assistance, and obtain a laser cutter for the makerspace.

Early successes have helped to showcase the value of the downtown's revitalization direction.

"The fact that we have successfully installed a makerspace and are holding regular workshops on various making, crafting, or imagining topics is creating a buzz. We are consistently drawing increasing numbers to those workshops, and when we roll out the new equipment that is being made possible by a state grant, we expect to see another jump in interest." — Main Street Lexington's Executive Director, Stephanie Wilkinson

Moving forward, Main Street Lexington's workplan for 2018 aims to provide all-around support for the artisanal manufacturing strategy. This could include a revolving loan fund for new or expanding ventures, creating and marketing a "Lexington-Made" regional brand for the products that come out of their community, working with local government entities to find and encourage their procurement arms to use locally produced products, reaching out to regional partners to market those products beyond the borders of Rockbridge County, and supporting and facilitating more retail outlets in the downtown for locally produced products.

FINDING NEW AUDIENCES IN OWOSSO, MICHIGAN

Owosso, Mich., has a lot going for it as a destination for regional travelers. It is home to the original Polar Express train, a historic park, a population of local artists, and a community theater that draws audiences from across the state. Owosso Main Street, in partnership with Main Street America and the Michigan Economic Development Corporation's Michigan Main Street, used a combination of community surveys, market data, and community asset identification to select a Transformation Strategy focused on "day-tripper" consumers.

Josh Adams, Executive Director of Owosso Main Street/DDA, explains that the program's shift to focusing on a market-based strategy has been valuable in two critical ways: 1) It helped confirm internally that they were on the right track; and 2) It was a strategy that didn't just apply to Main Street, but could engage



Glow Owosso Event 2017. Credit: Schutt Photography



Glow Owosso Tree Lighting Ceremony 2017. Credit: Schutt Photography

the entire community. In other words, it gave Owosso Main Street and its partner organizations a defined vision for how to use their collective assets to promote the community. It wasn't about forcing a new idea on unwilling audiences, but maximizing the community's existing strengths and giving structure to initiatives already in motion. And importantly, it helped internal stakeholders — the board, committees, and partners — unite around a common vision.

Since the development of the Day-Tripper Destination Transformation Strategy, Owosso Main Street has been able to take a close look at its current programming including their annual Glow Owosso event which attracts thousands to the community, and find ways to adjust and/or change tasks and events to better suit the vision. Efforts to collaborate with partner organizations have been strengthened and are now encouraged at the board level across the community's non-profits and civic organizations.

Programmatically, Owosso Main Street has created a marketing initiative to help promote all of downtown's assets, including a new holiday shopping video geared towards the day-tripper. Looking to the future, the organization will be exploring collaborative efforts to preserve and build on historic assets, support the arts and cultural community within the district, and promote the use and stewardship of the town's natural resources. This will involve activities such as continued facade grant implementation, collaborative park improvements, sculpture and mural projects, outdoor musical and theater presentations, and a comprehensive riverbank plan that promotes both use and conservation.

"The targeted direction has attracted new volunteers with new ideas and the community has almost immediately seen a change in the way our downtown is promoted, said Adams. "Together we are creating our own narrative, our own story."

We at the National Main Street Center are energized by the creativity and eagerness of the Main Street America Network to embrace the Main Street Approach's new focus on Transformation Strategies. District revitalization continues to be both complex and ever-evolving and we encourage communities to share with us how they are using, adapting, and implementing the Main Street Approach. Given the range of issues we know downtown and neighborhood commercial districts will be facing in the years to come — including advancing health outcomes, competing with big online retail, and fostering equitable development — we're confident this new Approach will equip Main Streets with the tools needed to thrive.

ADVANCING THE MOVEMENT *through UrbanMain*

By Dionne Baux

“In all cases, rebuilding neighborhood retail streets is a difficult, lengthy, and complicated process. It differs significantly from developing a suburban shopping center or reestablishing downtown shopping districts, so innovative strategies must be employed to restore the neighborhood’s vitality and competitiveness.” *Ten Principles for Rebuilding Neighborhood Retail*, Urban Land Institute

This summer, an exciting new chapter began here at the National Main Street Center: the launch of UrbanMain. Building on the National Main Street Center’s decades of leadership and success in community driven economic development in downtowns and commercial districts, we have developed a new set of economic development services to address challenges in revitalizing urban neighborhood commercial districts. Rebuilding the economies of under-resourced urban districts is challenging work. However, these are places with enormous opportunity, and with the right experience and thoughtfulness, big things are possible.

THE URBAN CONTEXT

In urban contexts, it is crucial to create innovative, flexible tools and resources that respond to years of disinvestment and high rates of vacancies. At the same time, there must be a focus on retaining existing businesses and attracting new ones, maintaining neighborhood character, and avoiding business displacement or gentrification—all while combatting

misperceptions about urban buying power and overcoming negative attitudes and perceptions. The Center’s new UrbanMain program aims to do just that with specialized services, networking, and advocacy to support the growing field of urban district revitalization practitioners.

The National Main Street Center has long known that its Approach, principles, and disciplines would translate well in urban neighborhood commercial districts. In fact, in the early 2000s, there were active Main Street programs in over 100 urban districts, representing nine percent of the entire Network. Many of these programs continue to thrive, with successful models in Boston, Baltimore, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. In these cities, the city government agency serves as Coordinating Program, supporting local district initiatives through funding, training, and convening opportunities.

As Director of Urban Programs, **DIONNE BAUX** leads the UrbanMain initiative to broaden the Center’s offerings and engagement in urban neighborhood commercial districts. Dionne has over a decade of experience in project coordination in the fields of urban economic development and commercial district revitalization. She has extensive expertise engaging community stakeholders, identifying and implementing projects in conjunction with community based organizations, government institutions, and real estate development, as well as supporting capacity building opportunities.



The background of the page is a composite image. On the left, there's a dark, abstract graphic with vertical and diagonal lines. On the right, there's a black and white photograph of a city street at night, showing buildings, streetlights, and a few cars. The 'URBANMAIN' logo is prominently displayed in the center-right, with 'URBAN' in white and 'MAIN' in white with an orange triangle behind the 'N'. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is to the right of 'MAIN'.

URBAN MAINTM

NEW SERVICES FOR URBAN DISTRICTS

UrbanMain seeks to continue to strengthen the work of urban citywide, county, and state Coordinating Program partners, while building out a network of practitioners charged with restoring economic vitality and promoting quality of life for residents in under-resourced older and historic commercial districts. UrbanMain is an entrée for locally based community development corporations, chambers of commerce, Business Improvement Districts (BID), Special Service Areas (SSA), Neighborhood Improvement Districts (NID), and city governments to take advantage of the tools and resources traditional Main Street programs have deployed, while offering a unique networking opportunity to individuals working in this field. The Center will work directly with local neighborhood districts to test the approach in urban corridors through a comprehensive multi-phased approach or through specific tactical services, best suited to meet the needs of the district.

URBANMAIN IN PRACTICE

So, what does this look like in practice? Our technical services team is already conducting UrbanMain work in several cities around the country. Together with stakeholders on the ground, we are developing district-specific Transformation Strategies and helping local leaders engage their communities around implementation.

URBANMAIN SERVICES INCLUDE:

Fast Track Assessment. Begins with an examination of the assets and liabilities of a neighborhood commercial district to understand the best path for a revitalization program. This phase focuses on community vision and market conditions.

Framework Development. Utilizes input and consensus gathered during the district's assessment phase. This phase focuses on building the capacity of local organizations, neighborhood districts, and cities to successfully carry them out.

Implementing Change. As districts shift work from planning to implementation, the Center provides on-going support and project-specific assistance to district leaders.



Salt Lake City, Utah. UrbanMain partnered with Salt Lake City's Department of Economic Development to implement services in two areas: the State Street and Granary commercial districts. Together with organizational leaders, we have developed a hybrid structure to implement the Approach and tailor execution-driven Transformation Strategies.

The Granary District is situated in an area that contains a mix of retail and warehouse/light production with a low density of residents. The City and key stakeholders were drawn to several strategies for the district, but decided to begin with an **Arts & Entertainment Transformation Strategy** to leverage the area's existing character. The strategy will also take advantage of a small but growing cadre of local maker businesses, micro-producers, and small manufacturers.

The State Street District, while more densely populated, has a different set of challenges. Previous efforts to revitalize this area have identified several barriers, including traffic safety, personal security, and a lack of unique sense of place. While there are obstacles to overcome, there are great opportunities to build on existing restaurants and local venues that currently serve as destinations for locals. The City and key stakeholders decided to begin work by focusing on a **Culinary and Dining Transformation Strategy**.

The National Main Street Center partnered with the Salt Lake City Department of Economic Development (left) and both Main Street Alabama and REV Birmingham (right) to implement UrbanMain services. Credit: Matt Wagner (left) Kathy LaPlante (right)

Birmingham, Alabama. In partnership with Main Street Alabama and the local Main Street America program REV Birmingham, UrbanMain is working to implement services in Birmingham's Woodlawn commercial district. Woodlawn is an under-resourced district struggling with issues common to many urban commercial districts across the US, including crime, lack of economic opportunity, and negative perceptions about growth opportunities for the district. Our technical services team visited with local stakeholders to gain their consensus and buy-in for appropriate strategies on which district leaders should focus. With our data, district leaders and Woodlawn community stakeholders decided to target their efforts on developing a robust **Equitable Entrepreneurship Transformation Strategy**. This strategy aims to create equity and sense of place by supporting local minority-owned businesses, advancing a local food economy, and helping youth interested in opening businesses.

In 2018, the Center will commence implementing additional UrbanMain initiatives with Coordinating Program partners, including in Milwaukee's Historic King Drive BID No. 8 with the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, and in Pontiac, Michigan, in partnership with Main Street Oakland County.

URBANMAIN NETWORK CONVENING

Thanks to the generous support of Anne T. and Robert M. Bass, we hosted the inaugural UrbanMain Network convening in Seattle, Washington, March 26-28, with 32 dynamic practitioners from across the country. The purpose of the convening was to build relationships, explore a vibrant corridor in action, begin discussions on how to best address challenges these leaders face in their work in real time, and—most importantly—successfully launch the UrbanMain Network to ensure its usefulness and sustainability to urban district leaders. **Thank you to the following individuals for lending their experience, time, and insights:**

LARRY ADAMS North Ave. Market-Place BID #32, Milwaukee, Wisc.

SHARON ADAMS North Ave. MarketPlace BID #32, Milwaukee, Wisc.

DESHEA AGEE Historic King Drive BID #8, Milwaukee, Wisc.

ELIZABETH BARBAREE-TASKER REV Birmingham, Birmingham, Ala.

SANDE BIVENS 51st Street Business Association, Chicago, Ill.

DIANE BURNHAM South East Chicago Commission, Chicago, Ill.

STEVEN BURY Urban Impact, Seattle, Wash.

LUIS COTTO Egleston Square Main Street, Boston, Mass.

LISA CUATT Thornton Park District, Orlando, Fla.

YEMISI DINKINS Westside Health Authority, Chicago, Ill.

AMARA ENYIA Austin Chamber of Commerce, Chicago, Ill.

CHRISTINA JAMES Greater Southwest Development Corp., Chicago, Ill.

LORI LENCHESKI City of Charlotte, Charlotte, N.C.

CHRIS LEVERSON Lake City Future First, Seattle, Wash.

PETER MAKOWSKI City of Salt Lake City, Salt Lake City, Utah

JENNIFER MARVEL Audubon Park Garden District, Orlando, Fla.

ALYSIA DAVIS OSBORNE Historic West End, Charlotte, N.C.

ALEXANDER PADRO Shaw Main Streets, Washington D.C.

LINDA POMPA Oretha Castle Haley Blvd. Main Street, New Orleans, La.

MARTHA POTERE Grandmont Rosedale Main Street, Detroit, Mich.

N. NICOLE PURVIS Four Corners Main Street, Boston, Mass.

ERIC REAVES South East Chicago Commission, Chicago, Ill.

ANDREA REED Greater Roseland Chamber of Commerce, Chicago, Ill.

GERALD ROBBINS Hyde Jackson Square Main Street, Boston, Mass.

ANWAR SALEEM H Street Main Street, Inc. Washington D.C.

JEFFREY SCHWARTZ Broad Community Connections, New Orleans, La.

PATRICE THOMAS Rainer Beach Coalition, Seattle, Wash.

JESSA TIMMER Chinatown - International District BID, Seattle, Wash.

LEJUANO VARNELL Sweet Auburn Historic District, Atlanta, Ga.

WENDY WALKER WILLIAMS South East Chicago Commission, Chicago, Ill.

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- Old Town Cape Girardeau (now on ornament #22 in their series) uses our ornaments "not only as a fundraising project, but a way to highlight and promote historic and unique sites in [their] downtown."
- The Washington (NC) Historical Foundation (also on ornament #22) tells us they "look forward to another 20 years of excellence with Hestia Creations."

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TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES THROUGH *Partnerships and Innovation*

By Lindsey Wallace

Main Street is built on strong partnerships. At the National Main Street Center, we are focused on continuing to create new partnerships while strengthening existing relationships to share knowledge, broaden our reach, and transform communities. Over the past year, these partnerships have brought several new programs and opportunities to the Main Street America Network, as well as new resources and ideas that can be applied in communities large and small. Explore our current focus areas and discover how organizations, companies, and individuals are working together to advance our common cause of fostering and supporting vibrant economies.

FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PILOT PROGRAM

For nearly forty years, Main Street America districts across the country have been revitalizing local economies by focusing energy, resources, and people-power on improving their older and historic commercial districts. Central to these efforts is the preservation and maintenance of the historic properties that give Main Streets a sense of place, a rootedness, and a thriving economic engine.

In 2016, we launched the Main Street America Façade Improvement Pilot Program with generous support from the 1772 Foundation, Inc. This three-year program makes \$80,000 in no-interest loans and grants available to support highly visible improvements to buildings and storefronts.

In the first year, we partnered with the Texas Main Street Program's team of experienced leaders and expert design staff to focus the pilot in two Texas Main Street communities: San Augustine and Texarkana. Led by San Augustine Main Street, and Main Street Texarkana, loan recipients will track a set of metrics to document the impact of the funds to their businesses and buildings. We look forward to sharing their ongoing progress.



Pecan Point Brewing Company

213 Main St., Texarkana, Texas

Project scope: Repoint and repair the deteriorating exterior walls and repaint previously painted exterior brick. *Note: original windows had been removed prior to their application.*

Total project cost: \$27,000

MSA funds applied: \$10,000

Community impact: As a result of this project, a new local façade improvement grant program started in the summer of 2017 after local donors were inspired by the impact the loan program was having on the Texas side of Texarkana's commercial strip.

Before



Credit: William H Scurlock

After



Credit: San Augustine Main Street

Heart of Texas Grill

102 E. Columbia Ave., San Augustine, Texas

Project scope: Signage for new restaurant.

Total project cost: \$10,000

MSA funds applied: 5,600

Community impact: The Heart of Texas Grill was the first business in San Augustine to receive an MSA façade improvement loan. Local contractor Tommy Cordova of Cor-Craft was so inspired by his experience working with the MSA/Texas Main Street design review process and creating historically-appropriate signage that he has taken a new interest in downtown and changed the way he approaches his business.

Learn more at mainstreet.org/facade-improvements

As the Senior Manager of Special Projects, **LINDSEY WALLACE** manages a variety of projects and partnerships, including our placemaking efforts with the Project for Public Spaces, the Façade Improvement Pilot Program, and upcoming health-focused initiatives. Previously, she managed America Saves, a national model program led by the Preservation Green Lab of the National Trust for Historic Preservation focused on delivering energy efficiency to small businesses and buildings, driving cost savings, and new investment in existing buildings. A native Ohioan and Midwest enthusiast, she received her M.A. in Historic Preservation Planning from Cornell University and her B.A. in History from the Ohio State University.

PLACEMAKING

Since 2015, we have been working in partnership with NYC-based, international nonprofit Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to help revitalize towns and communities through placemaking—a community-led process that helps activate downtowns and community gathering places. Placemaking provides a powerful set of tools for change that Main Street organizations can easily learn and apply. Through a strategy called Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper, communities can make immediate and affordable changes to public spaces while also building local support and demon-

strating to stakeholders the potential for further long-term projects and investments.



Training Workshops

One of the primary efforts in our partnership with PPS is the *Cultivating Place in Main Street Communities* training program, a series of two-day intensive training workshops. It began in five pilot states in 2016—Alabama, Connecticut, Missouri, Montana, and Oregon—and continued with a second round with six more states in 2017—Delaware, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming. Generously supported by Anne T. and Robert Bass, these trainings not only instruct Main Street communities on how to integrate placemaking principles into their work, but also draw a path to implementation.

As a result of these 10 grant-funded trainings and the incredible work from our Coordinating Programs and local Main Streets:

- :: More than 650 community activists and civic leaders have learned placemaking skills;
- :: More than \$14 million has been generated for placemaking projects overall; and
- :: Multiple states have created placemaking grant programs or used existing grant funds for placemaking projects.



Participants at the Cultivating Place training in Reading, Pennsylvania, explore the downtown district. Credit: Emily Wallrath Schmidt

We are thrilled with the positive impact these trainings have had in our Main Streets, and look forward to gathering additional projects stories to share on a larger scale.

Healthy Main Streets

In addition to the training workshops, we also partnered with PPS to explore the intersection of place, health, and economic development to develop strategies and a set of resources for helping communities realize the multifaceted potential benefits of health initiatives. More and more, health and community development research is pointing to where we live as one of the most influential determinants of overall health. As community revitalization practitioners, we must consider how our work can help make places healthier, and how we can create economic opportunity within health initiatives we undertake.



At the Health Convening in Denver, participants identified four actionable agendas on which NMSC, PPS, and partners will continue to work collaboratively to share resources and opportunities with our networks. Credit: Project for Public Spaces

To kick off this new initiative, we co-hosted the *Convergence of Health, Place, and the Economy* convening in Denver, Colo., in July 2017. Nearly 50 of the country's thought leaders from nonprofit planning and community development, transportation, health institutions, foundations, and government agencies came together and focused on three themes tied to healthy community initiatives: food, green space, and active transportation. As the primary objective of the convening was to take action, participants identified four actionable agendas on which NMSC, PPS, and partners will continue to work collaboratively to share resources and opportunities with our networks.

Learn more at: mainstreet.org/placemaking

Try This West Virginia

Try This West Virginia (Try This) offers the Main Street America Network a robust and successful model for how community revitalization professionals can support health initiatives that also create economic opportunity. Begun as a pilot program co-led by Main Street West Virginia, Try This focuses on developing activities that combine community health and wellness with local economic development and revitalization. Their mission is "To help knock West Virginia off the top of the worst health lists, community by community."

Try This supports statewide healthy community efforts through several means:

Trythiswv.com. More than just a website, this online resource features hundreds of case studies focused on health initiatives and community wealth building.

Annual Conference. An event for community leaders and members to come learn about and share best practices on health initiatives throughout the state.

Minigrants. Up to \$3,000, minigrants are supported by the Benedum Foundation and WV DHHR Bureau of Public Health. In 2014 alone, Try This teams turned \$84,000 in minigrants into projects worth more than \$750,000 through additional donations, contributions, other grants, and volunteer time.

Year-round program. Try This supports workshops, social media, and on-the-ground organizers year-round to help local people plan projects, carry out long-term planning, find resources, and get training.

State-level coalition. Try This is itself a coalition of a variety of stakeholders, joined together to share their resources with communities.

Incubator. Try This also serves as an incubator for big ideas, such as WV Healthy Bodies Healthy Spirits. Learn more at trythis.com/healthyfaith.

Since 2013, Try This distributed more \$280,000 in minigrants to 153 community teams throughout West Virginia. In efforts to quantify the economic benefits of the projects undertaken through Try This, the West Virginia University School of Public Health has developed a set of metrics to research and report. We will be looking to Try This and to the WVU research for ways to scale these successes and in our work developing strategies and a set of resources for helping communities realize the multifaceted potential benefits of health initiatives.

Learn more at trythiswv.com

CROWDFUNDING

Drawing small donations for a cause or project from a wide variety of donors, crowdfunding fits well with the community-driven work exemplified by the Main Street America Network. This year, we partnered with the national nonprofit crowdfunding platform ioby on three sets of crowdfunding campaigns for the Network. Crowdfunding on ioby allows project leaders to raise funds, cultivate a local donor base, find volunteers, and build visibility for their project, all with one-on-one support and training from ioby staff.

In 2017, we launched two rounds of *Cultivating Place on Main Street: Crowdfunding Challenge*, a crowdfunding campaign generously supported by Anne T. and Robert Bass. In these crowdfunding campaigns, selected projects received matching funds of \$1,500 each, as well as training and one-on-one fundraising coaching from ioby. In an effort help make implementation of placemaking efforts easier, this crowdfunding campaign was available specifically to Main Street communities in states that received the *Cultivating Place in Main Street Communities* training program:

Alabama, Connecticut, Missouri, Montana, Oregon, Delaware, Louisiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wyoming.

Edward Jones®



Thanks to the generous support of Edward Jones, we also provided match funds to support placemaking projects on Main Street through the Edward Jones Placemaking on Main Crowdfunding Challenge. This crowdfunding challenge connected 10 selected Main Street America programs with ioby to raise funds for placemaking projects downtown and build local fundraising capacity. Each program has received \$2,500 in match funds to implement their “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” projects. The projects will have a catalytic impact on local economies, activate public spaces, and engage community residents.

Learn more at mainstreet.org/crowdfunding

SnapRetail! The Essential Online Marketing Tool **MADE FOR MAIN STREET**

Credit: William H Scurlock

Empower your community with email marketing, social media management, and e-commerce websites. Get started with the only all-in-one marketing tool designed for Main Street.

www.snapretail.com/MainStreetNow

The advertisement features a dark blue background with a white line-art illustration of a city skyline at the bottom. In the center, there is a photograph of a laptop and a desktop monitor displaying the SnapRetail! software interface. The laptop screen shows a map of a city with various markers, while the desktop monitor displays a dashboard with various charts and data.

MAIN STREETS

Empowering our clients

NTIS educates clients in regards to their exposures and provides comprehensive and competitively priced policies for both your historic assets as well as the organizations that operate within them.

www.nationaltrust-insurance.org
866.269.0944

National Trust Insurance Services, LLC
a subsidiary of National Trust for Historic Preservation

The advertisement features a background image of a historic street scene with a building that has a sign that reads "Breakfast-Lunch-Dinner". In the foreground, there are bicycles parked on a sidewalk. The text is overlaid on a dark blue, semi-transparent banner that covers the upper half of the image. The logo for National Trust Insurance Services, LLC is located in the bottom right corner, featuring a circular emblem with a stylized eagle or bird.

Pigtown Main Street's Pop-Up Park

Baltimore, MD

Pigtown Main Street Executive Director Ben Hyman describes the intersection of Washington Boulevard and Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard in Baltimore, Md., as a physical and socioeconomic barrier to the vitality of the three communities that border it: Pigtown, Ridgely's Delight, and Barre Circle. Pigtown Main Street envisions this intersection as a place that could welcome people coming into neighborhoods, slowing traffic and breaking down a physical and psychological barrier between Baltimore's western communities and its thriving downtown neighborhoods.

In their winning application to the Edward Jones Placemaking on Main Crowdfunding Challenge, Pigtown Main Street proposed a pop-up park in the green space of this intersection as part of their longer-term, major redesign Washington Boulevard Gateway Project. With support from the Project for Public Spaces, they held their pop-up park event in September to gather community input to inform streetscape design, plaza elements, rally community support, and raise awareness and engagement in developing a permanent solution.

Learn more at pigtownmainstreet.org.



Credit: Pigtown
Main Street

Thank you to the following organizations for participating in the Convergence of Health, Place, and the Economy convening:

AMERICA WALKS // AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION // BALL STATE UNIVERSITY // CITY OF LAMAR // CITY OF MONTROSE // COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT // COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION // COLORADO DEVELOPMENT OFFICE // COLORADO MAIN STREET // COMMUNITY BUILDERS // COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER // U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION // EDINGTON ASSOCIATES, LLC // FIELDING SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, UCLA // IOWA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT // KABOOM! // KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL // LAND INFORMATION ACCESS ASSOCIATION // LIVEWELL COLORADO // MAIN STREET SOUTH CAROLINA // MAIN STREET WEST VIRGINIA // MARY BLACK FOUNDATION // MONTANA MAIN STREET // MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY // NASHVILLE CIVIC DESIGN CENTER // NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER // NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION // PROJECT FOR PUBLIC SPACES // RAILS TO TRAILS // RED TAIL CONSERVANCY // SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL // TELAMON, INC. // TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH // TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND // USDA-RURAL DEVELOPMENT

REET

THE FUTURE OF

By Becky McCray

AIL

There's no doubt about it, the retail landscape is changing and getting more complex. No longer are there clear boundaries between brick and mortar establishments and e-commerce, between big boxes and mom & pops. Yet one thing is for certain: Main Street has a unique competitive advantage and it's up to local leaders and local business owners to understand how to tap into this opportunity.





You couldn't escape the headlines about the retail apocalypse in 2017. Throughout the year, the news reported waves of store closures, how entire chains had declared bankruptcy, how traditional malls were visibly struggling. What does this all mean for Main Street? The answer may surprise you.

THE BIG SPLIT

Is this the retail apocalypse? Is it really the end of people shopping in physical stores? No. Rather than disappearing entirely, retail is splitting in two.

On one hand, chains of massive stores that competed on convenience, low cost, and wide selection dominated for decades. Now online retailers win on those three factors, and fewer people want to endure today's typical big box experience: parking, hiking, fighting crowds while overwhelmed with choices. On the other hand, massive stores are losing sales to smaller retailers that can better compete on meaning, interest, and experience.

If people are going to go to an actual store, they want to enjoy it.

That's retail's big split.

Becky McCray and her husband Joe own a retail liquor store and a cattle ranch in Oklahoma. She shares insights from this real-world experience at her highly-ranked website, *SmallBizSurvival.com*, and in her award-winning book, *Small Town Rules*. Together with Deb Brown, she helps small town people shape a better future for their community through their website *SaveYourTown*.

The big impersonal retail landscape is evolving quickly due to the rise of online retail and this is ushering in an exciting era for small businesses who position themselves to compete.



Local retailers on Main Streets and in downtowns are well positioned to take advantage retail's big split. Credit: Becky McCray

THE LARGER SMALL SIDE OF RETAIL

When convenience matters, technology is taking the thought — and the store itself — out of the buying process. Most retail stores — large and small — are adding or upgrading online purchasing options, trying to be part of this market shift.

Yet, despite the attention focused on the predicted future of online retail, online sales currently make up less than 10 percent of all retail sales. In a poll by Square and BigCommerce, 96 percent of Americans surveyed said they shop online, but 65 percent of their shopping budget is spent in physical stores. Then why aren't big chain retailers still thriving in their big boxes? Because sales at small retailers have grown at a faster rate than big retailers since 2012, according to Mastercard Spending Pulse for Small Business. They attribute it to the "general consumer trend to shop small." In 2015, even Chain Store Age admitted that "Mom and Pops Are Cool Again." There are still lots of retail sales being made; they just aren't all happening in the same big stores they had been.

Thus, while big box chains are being pressured to improve their online game, they are simultaneously being squeezed to shrink their stores and improve their service. They're forced to be more like the mom and pop shops that they thought they had replaced.

This is the other, larger side of the split that doesn't get as many headlines. It's all about the unique competitive advantage that smaller stores have in their ability to tap into the meaningful in-person experience. **When consumers want to find something made locally, feel a connection to the artisan who created it, and know that their purchase makes a difference, they want to go to a real store, a small store, a local store.**

Yes, this is the larger side of retail. The chains and online giants get more headlines, but there are far more small retail establishments than big ones. Census Bureau numbers show that over 80 percent of retail businesses have nine or fewer employees. Fewer than 10 percent of retail businesses have 20 or more employees.

WHAT THIS MEANS TO LOCAL LEADERS

With this much change going on in retail, local leaders will need to shift from recruiting established retail chains to supporting multiple smaller local retail experiments.

Recruiting chains and building complete new lifestyle centers is a terrible bet in today's changing retail

environment. Trying to predict the future retail winners is difficult even for industry experts. Lifestyle centers require a big investment all at once instead of the slow, incremental growth pattern that successful downtowns have followed.

To find future retail successes, local officials will have to flip their ideas of economy of scale. Rather than betting big on individual chains or a few major construction projects, today's leaders will find the successful economy of scale by bringing together dozens of tiny retail experiments by local people. **Main Street leaders play a critical role as they understand the value of small scale development and can help educate others on how local ownership benefits the community.**

WHAT LOCAL RETAILERS CAN DO

The retailers that survive will be the ones that focus on meaning, experience, and enjoyment. It affects every aspect of the store and is the best competitive advantage for small retailers.

Focusing on the consumer's experience can seem like a distraction from the real business, but increasingly

Local stores not only provide a personal instore experience but can compete in the world of automated reorders and digital assistants.



those unique experiences are the core business of local retail. A hardware store owner in Elkhart, Kansas, and I brainstormed ways to add experiences to the process of buying tools. We talked about a Tool Days event, with lessons and demonstrations about how to use tools, a tool sharpening service in the parking lot and chances to get hands-on right there in the store. No e-commerce site can begin to compete with this personalized approach.

In addition to creating these personalized experiences, local stores will need to adopt technology to provide an immersive mixed physical and virtual retail experience. Trend watcher J. Walter Thomson Intelligence calls this new level of integration transcendent retail. Simple steps like using tablets to improve service don't require a massive investment by small retailers and show a commitment to technology improvement. Local stores can even compete in the world of automated reorders and digital assistants. It's easy for any retailer to deliver a set order of items to a customer on a regular schedule. All it takes is good recordkeeping, and that can be as simple as a calendar.

Because customers are using Messenger, text messages and email to communicate every day, stores can start accepting orders and requests by all those channels. Digital assistants on phones and in homes today are also capable of sending messages, giving another way for customers to place orders with smart local stores. Retailers will need to give customers easy-to-follow instructions for customers to get set up, but they will get repaid every time a customer says, "Siri, email The Copper Penny: 'Please reorder that lemon soap I love.'"



Typically car-oriented vs. people-oriented, lifestyle centers are not the way of the future.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

Retailers can't do it alone. That's why we have Main Street programs, chambers and economic development organizations. There are several steps that these groups and community leaders can take to ensure an environment where small, local retailers will thrive.

Encourage Businesses to Cooperate

In the Survey of Rural Challenges conducted by SmallBizSurvival.com and SaveYourTown, one of the most common challenges was local businesses acting competitive and uncooperative. The solution may lie in another finding from the survey: many small business owners feel challenged trying to market their businesses in a fast-changing world.

Main Street leaders can leverage this challenge to their advantage by bringing local businesses together to promote the whole district and entire town. Because retailers already feel overwhelmed, leaders need to offer non-threatening ways to start cooperation. Invite retailers to come for coffee and informal discussion, or hold a block party for merchants. Talk through



Local retailers are innovating lower-risk business models like locating one store inside another store. Here, an essential oils retailer joins a yoga studio downstairs inside a clothing store in downtown Aberdeen, South Dakota. Credit: Becky McCray

upcoming ideas and the potential to play a small part. Focus on small but meaningful steps that don't feel like a ton of extra work or a long-term commitment.

Focus on Downtown

Walkability, livability, and placemaking are all major trends in urban planning. They recognize the importance of a compact town center that people want to enjoy together.

This return to emphasizing downtown as the center of a community is a good sign for traditional Main Street districts. The buildings and spaces people encounter here are more human scale than huge high rises or spread-out car-driven sprawl. New lifestyle centers may be easy to walk around in, but aren't easy to walk to. They are typically located far from the center of the community, surrounded by car-oriented development.

Provide Smaller Business Opportunities

Remember that we need to flip our idea of the economy of scale. Tiny retail experiments spread opportunity and develop a pipeline of future successful merchants. Community leaders can support these small-scale businesses by providing smaller spaces to do business.

Shared spaces represent an important trend in downtown retail development in both small towns and urban cities. Instead of expecting one potential store owner to spring fully-formed into 15,000 square feet, landlords are dividing open retail spaces into many small spaces. These shared spaces let potential retailers explore their concept in a few hundred square feet with much less risk, adding to the pool of experienced future retailers.

Communities that provide more small, low-risk opportunities will grow their base of local entrepreneurs. Communities that focus on recruiting out-of-town businesses will grow someone else's base of prosperity.

Relax the Rules

The rules that govern our towns and cities weren't written to support these smaller opportunities. Zoning, licensing, codes, and rules all were written for big monolithic businesses that are expected to endure for decades and will of course be located inside of perfectly maintained buildings. That's not where most Main Streets are today. Officials don't have to throw all the rules out, but should be open to reevaluating them and approaching them with flexibility.

What if officials enforced rules in order of priority? They could start with critical safety issues, then give new businesses time to grow and be able to afford the less-critical needs. Governing boards could declare a bureaucracy-free zone for three months and see what happens. Municipalities could cut fees or fines from huge amounts down to a pittance, to encourage experiments.

Officials can selectively choose whether to notice tiny tests or temporary events. If it's only there for the weekend, is it necessary to be enforcement-heavy? Officials can work with people to find solutions that work better for the business owner and community and are still legal. If the rule says no selling from trucks on the street, can they sell in a parking lot? Or set up inside an empty building? Be as creative as possible in allowing positive rule-bending.

INNOVATIVE RETAIL BUSINESS MODELS

What does a local store look like? A standard downtown retail storefront filled by one business may be the image that springs to mind, but local retailers can be more creative than that. Shared spaces, booths at events, and even empty buildings present new opportunities for today's local stores.

TINY Smaller scale offerings give retailers small steps towards full-scale stores.

TEMPORARY Short-term stores give instant feedback on the viability of a concept.

TOGETHER Locating inside another store or a non-retail business provides access to established markets.

TRAVELING Trucks, trailers and carts bring the store to the customers, wherever they are.

COMMUNITIES THRIVING WITH INNOVATIVE RETAIL

Every community has a mix of retailers, some flexible and innovative, others stuck in the past, and a bunch somewhere in the middle. Any community can probably find local examples of some of the future retail trends we've just talked about. Let's look at specific communities where people are trying some of the new ways.

Shed-Based Retail Stores

Whether you call them storage sheds, garden sheds, or backyard sheds, the modern pre-fab sheds that are about the size of an extra bedroom or tiny house make usable business spaces. These build on the need for smaller spaces where potential retailers can run experiments and gain experience. When multiple sheds are clustered, together they create a critical mass of interest and traffic. It's like a mini-business

ecosystem. They also address the shortage of usable buildings many downtown districts face and may avoid triggering some of the more onerous zoning requirements if they are installed temporarily instead of permanently.



Tiny retail experiments are thriving in the Tionesta Market Village, filling the pipeline of future local business owners. Credit: Rowan Rose

Mini-Downtown Made of Sheds

Tionesta Market Village, Tionesta, Penn., pop. 500

Tionesta, Pennsylvania, had a commercial lot that was vacant after a fire in their downtown. Officials tried unsuccessfully to interest a developer in building a full-scale retail project on it. After 10 years, they decided to try a different idea.

They cleaned up the lot and added storage sheds that measure just a few hundred square feet. The sheds were decorated with 19th century-style false fronts to coordinate with the downtown architecture. They called it Tionesta Market Village and offered the sheds for rent to tiny businesses. They have had a waiting list since the project started.

“The goal was to create healthy traffic in the downtown that would help boost sales at our existing businesses, spur new businesses, and encourage façade improvements,” Julia McCray of Tionesta told me. “It’s working! The coffee shop and art gallery extended their hours and saw a boost in sales. A vacant building was purchased and is being renovated for mixed-use.”



Upscale Sheds

Artist Shanties, Hyannis, Mass., pop. 14,000*

Stroll around popular tourist destination Hyannis Harbor, and you’ll come across artist shanties. The tiny buildings are just over 100 square feet of temporary retail space for painters, photographers, jewelers, and other arts and craftspeople. They are so popular that artists apply to a competitive program to earn the right to display. Over 12 seasons, the 600 artists who participated have collectively earned over \$1 million in sales.

Tiny Houses

Anchor Square, Pascagoula, Miss., pop. 22,000*

After Hurricane Katrina hit the US Gulf Coast, tiny-house-style Katrina Cottages were provided as temporary housing. When the temporary housing was no longer needed, the city of Pascagoula ended up with 17 of the cottages. They placed them on an empty lot near their downtown, and filled them with tiny businesses, a mix of retail shops, restaurants, galleries, and studios. The open green space in front of the cottages is now a popular public gathering spot and plays host to even more pop-up businesses during special events.

Pop-ups

Pop-ups are just temporary businesses. Anyone with a business idea can try it out temporarily while they learn more about the market, improve their business skills, and make actual sales for cash flow.

Pop-ups can be big or small, lasting a few hours or a few weeks. They can stand alone or be inside other businesses. This is one area where small towns have an advantage; some rural building owners are more flexible about not requiring a full-year or multi-year lease.

Pop-ups Grow Businesses

Delaware*

Project Pop-up in Delaware has a record of success. Of the 18 businesses selected for their pop-up program, 17 went on to sign a long-term lease and go into a full-scale business. They carefully target business people who are already running some tiny retail experiments.

"The businesses that are most successful have shown a strong readiness to occupy a brick and mortar space as they are already generating some revenue, have a customer base (even if small), and they are typically using the Internet for sales and marketing," State Coordinator for Downtown Delaware Diane Laird said.

Popping up for the Holidays

Homewood, Illinois, pop. 19,000

Homewood wanted their holiday shoppers to enjoy their downtown without having to walk past a bunch of empty buildings. The Community Development department featured a pop-up program to fill as many buildings as they could, improve the downtown experience and encourage temporary business experiments. Two businesses used the program to test whether Homewood was the right market for them to open a new location, and five more were new local businesses.

"In Homewood, we see our downtown becoming an incubator for new ideas, the perfect place for entrepreneurs to try out new concepts," Marketing and Events Director Rachael Jones said.

Shared Spaces

Remember the trend toward multiple retailers sharing one larger space? Time for the examples.

Shared Artist Spaces

ARTesian Gallery and Studios

Sulphur, Oklahoma, pop. 5,000

The ARTesian Gallery and Studios bring together five small spaces for artist studios, a gallery, shared equipment, and classroom areas. At 7,400 square feet, the building was too large for any one artist to have renovated and occupied alone, but makes perfect sense as a shared space.



Co-owners Keila Montalvo and Albert Sierra and family celebrate the grant opening of Petite Sweets on Walnut Street in downtown Milford, Delaware. Petite Sweets features cake pops, selling through both "brick and mortar" location and on-line. Credit: business.delaware.gov

From Vacant Department Store to Mini-Downtown

The Village, Washington, Iowa*

What can fill up the large buildings left behind by former downtown department stores? Washington, Iowa, had one that included 15,000 square feet of retail space that sat empty for years. Today it houses The Village, a collection of little shops that looks like a mini-downtown inside the building.

There are stores with only a few hundred square feet, and in the "town square," there are tables and push carts available for micro-businesses to get started. Many businesses grow from a tiny table to a little shop to a full-scale business ready to move into their own building. Others reach a size that is comfortable for the business owner and stay there.

One of the organizers Cathy Lloyd said, "I truly believe that this is the future of retail in small communities."

Roofless Buildings and Empty Lots

When downtown buildings are demolished or collapse, often only the walls or façade may be saved. Before investing in a complete rebuild of a missing building, tiny experiments like these can temporarily make positive use of an empty space.

FOR ADDITIONAL
EXAMPLES OF MAIN
STREET COMMUNITIES
THRIVING WITH INNO-
VATIVE RETAIL, VISIT
MAINSTREET.ORG



Coffee Shop

Union Square, Saint Francis, Kan., pop. 1,300

In the footprint of a former downtown building, Union Square houses a walk-up coffee shop in a shed-like temporary kitchen. An outdoor seating area is open to the sky with the remaining rafters used for decoration.

Beer Garden

*107 Grand, Paris, Texas, pop. 25,000**

Doesn't a beer garden sound so much more entertaining than just "the façade of a missing building"? The kitchen is housed in a tiny shed-sized building inside the old building's footprint. A partial tin roof shades some of the outdoor seating, and ceiling fans provide a steady breeze.

Breaking the Old Rules

Making Space for Informal Businesses

*Zuni, New Mexico, pop. 6,000**

The pueblo of Zuni, New Mexico, had little in the way of traditional businesses and almost no public space. Today it is transforming into a place where everyone can gather and informal businesses can start and grow from pop-ups to street vendor carts to small indoor spaces within a new Main Street corridor.

* Main Street America member community

THE SMALL WINNERS AFTER RETAIL'S BIG SPLIT

Despite all the media attention on retail closures this past year, these more complex trends have not fit into the sound bites. Pinched on both sides, big box retailers are experimenting with doing more online while also trying to be smaller. Small retailers find themselves in a better position, already small, already connected to customers, already providing an experience worth enjoying.

Local officials and Main Street leaders play a crucial role in fostering and supporting smaller footprints, tiny tests, and temporary experiments. Suddenly, it seems like everyone wants what our Main Streets and downtowns have. Now is a great time to show everyone the power of local, small, and personal retail.

When downtown buildings burn or collapse, there may not be funds to replace them immediately. In St. Francis, Kansas, a coffee shop started in the roofless shell of a former building. They've continued to improve the old structure over several years and now have a roof over their heads. Credit: Kansas Sampler Foundation.

RESOURCES

The Survey of Rural Challenges, conducted in 2015 and 2017 by Small Biz Survival and SaveYour.Town, surveyed over 450 rural people about their challenges in business and community building. Website: smallbizsurvival.com/ruralchallenge

IBM Research's 5 in 5 report predicts that in 5 years, buying local will beat online. Website: mashable.com/2013/12/17/ibm-5in5-report/

J. Walter Thompson Intelligence report on Transcendent Retail predicts further blurring of the lines between online and offline retail (fee for the full report). Website: jwtintelligence.com/trend-reports/transcendent-retail

The Complete Omni-Channel Retail Report: What Brands Need to Know about Modern Consumer Shopping Habits issued by Big Commerce, Square, and Kelton Global, explores online and offline shopping behavior. Website: smallbiztrends.com/2017/09/small-business-retailers-need-know-online-consumer-behaviors-right-now.html

Chain Store Age admits "Mom and Pops Are Cool Again" and looks at the changing retail dynamics favoring small stores for purchases that matter. Website: chainstoreage.com/article/mom-and-pops-are-cool-again

Tionesta Market Village is a mini-downtown made of storage sheds that measure just a few hundred square feet. Website: marketvillage.forestcounty.com

The Artist Shanties in Hyannis, Massachusetts are so popular that artists apply to a competitive program to earn the right to display. Website: hyartsdistrict.com/visual-arts/art-shanties/about

Delaware's Project Pop-up works with building owners and potential retailers to temporarily fill buildings and give businesses a step up. Website: doverpost.com/article/20160225/NEWS/302259992

For additional resources, please visit smallbizsurvival.com.

SEEING SMALL

By Jim Heid and
Samantha Beckerman

Main Street was founded upon the principle that sustainable, comprehensive transformation of a downtown or commercial district doesn't happen overnight or with one "big fix." Small-scale development projects and incremental improvements are the key to creating vibrant local economies and distinctive places that will thrive well into the future.

Jim Heid, founder of UrbanGreen, and Consultant Samantha Beckerman dig into what happens when we think *Small* and why this development approach continues to gain momentum as the best solution for achieving economically resilient communities in the 21st century.





Over the past few decades, planners, civic leaders, and anyone interested in great places have come to recognize—or rediscover—the great potential in urban centers and walkable communities. With a tailwind of positive change driven by demographics, walkable downtowns have re-emerged as the “place of choice” for generations young and old. Every day we read how regional malls atrophy, while we witness Main Streets and neighborhood commercial districts regain their footing through a renewed sense of purpose, hipness, and place.

As institutional investors continue to favor gateway cities—relying on “safer returns” driven by millennial tech worker affluence and demand generated by the influx of wealthy immigrants—creative developers and investors are quietly setting the stage for long-term returns by focusing on small-scale development projects in mid-size cities, once soulless suburban strips, and rural communities. Eschewing the big formulas of institutional capital, pioneers working in these alternative markets are bringing creativity, a new sense of discovery, and celebrating the unique sense of place that happens when we embrace *Small*.

Jim Heid, FASLA, is a small-scale developer and real estate advisor, whose focus is the creation of developments that provide a positive contribution to their environment, region, and residents. In 2000, he founded **UrbanGreen** to advise established development companies, governments and legacy NGO's that seek better development models. He is a frequent speaker at national conferences and local programs focused on sustainable development and value of small-scale development as a tool for creating more vibrant, economically resilient communities. He has taken ULI's Small Scale Developer Forum to over eleven cities in the past five years. This article is excerpted from his forthcoming book 'Building Small: A Toolkit for Real Estate Entrepreneurs, Civic Leaders and Great Communities' to be published in 2018. He can be reached at jim@urbangreen.net.

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Samantha Beckerman is a Consultant based in Berkeley, California working on projects related to small-scale real estate development and affordable housing. Sam is a graduate of UC Berkeley's Master of City Planning program where she focused her coursework on the intersection of equitable development, land use, and urban sustainability. Before graduate school, Sam worked for four years at the Natural Resources Defense Council in Washington, D.C. managing community development, transportation, and green infrastructure projects in their Urban Solutions program. Sam is a ULI Debra Stein Fellow and sits on ULI's Public Private Partnership product council. She can be reached at samantha.beckerman8@gmail.com.





Thanks to the advocacy efforts of H Street Main Street and countless community leaders, much of the older and historic architecture of the H Street NE Main Street corridor of Washington, D.C., was retained despite demolition threats. Many of these buildings are now occupied by unique, locally owned businesses that have created a vibrant environment for residents and visitors alike.

Credit: H Street Main Street

WHY IS SMALL IMPORTANT?

As Jane Jacobs's seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* approached its 50th anniversary, her prescient work was gaining new gravitas—both for its meaning and its reality. Written in the 1960s, her thesis stated that fine-grained, small-scale development was better than big, monolithic development. Her eloquent, but intuitive, response emerged from what she witnessed in her daily West Village life in New York City. In 2014, the release of “Older, Smaller, Better”—the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Preservation Green Lab’s (PGL) groundbreaking research—leveraged new technology and data to provide analytical support to what Jacobs deeply understood to be true.

Jacobs’s thesis and PGL’s “Older, Smaller, Better” showed that neighborhoods containing a mix of older, smaller buildings of diverse age support greater levels of positive economic and social activity than areas dominated by newer, larger buildings. These types of neighborhoods are more walkable, they attract a more diverse mix of residents, and they support smaller businesses, local businesses, and jobs in the creative economy at higher rates. For example, there are 36.8 percent more jobs per commercial square foot in

areas of Seattle composed of older, smaller, more age-diverse buildings than in areas with mostly newer, larger buildings.

But you don’t have to do the kind of research PGL did to see this fact play out. It comes as no surprise to Main Streeters from both urban and rural areas that in most any city, wealth—either baby boomer-saved or millennial tech-fueled—is homing in on neighborhoods that reflect the basic tenets of *Small*, while increasing value and vitality. For instance, between 2015 and 2016, the median sales price of a home in the H Street NE Main Street corridor of Washington, D.C., went up 8.6 percent. The corridor is known for its mostly two-to three-story late 19th century row houses and commercial buildings, new streetcar line, and vibrant restaurant and bar scene.

BUT WHAT IS SMALL?

Small is not about the size of the deal or total square footage. *Small* is about attitude, creativity, and a commitment to making a positive impact. It tends to rely more on adaptive use than building new, but it can come in many forms.

Big, for the purpose of this discussion, is characterized by whole- or multi-block projects that use institutional funding sources, and are organized to create rates of return that have become an industry standard—in an industry that is anything but standard. Big projects result from a multi-year, large-scale planning process—often excruciating and expensive because of their scale and the requirements of archaic approval processes that must address wary neighborhoods seeking highly prescribed outcomes. This creates a high degree of predictability and certainty, but lacks the ability and agility for projects to adapt and evolve.

Small, on the other hand, is the type of project with which Main Street leaders are most familiar. *Small* is a locally-driven and contextually sensitive approach to building and re-building communities. For this reason, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and no single template. *Small* leverages the DNA of a community's existing fabric, refining and polishing great, and not-so-great, existing buildings. *Small* relies on entrepreneurial attitudes and bootstrap funding. It creates places that people want to be, by carefully curating the tenant mix rather than adopting conventional leasing formulas that homogenize downtowns in the pursuit of efficiency and credit tenants. *Small* seeks—and generates—holistic returns, generating long-term positive economic results for sponsors, investors, and tenants, while leading to positive community transformation.

WHO IS DOING *SMALL*?

Developers focused on *Small* are not your stereotypical attorney, or MBA-turned-real estate developer. The genre of “*Small* developer” comes from the ranks of architects, community activists, and tech emigres, possessing the intellectual prowess and discipline that it takes to build in today's complicated regulatory and financial environment. But they also possess a creative moxie that belies the conventional developer. They are all people who see a higher purpose for what they are doing—focus on real estate not as the end, but as a means to the end that is all about great placemaking. And their growing financial success demonstrates how we are entering a new era where the premium for authentic places is no longer just an academic dream.

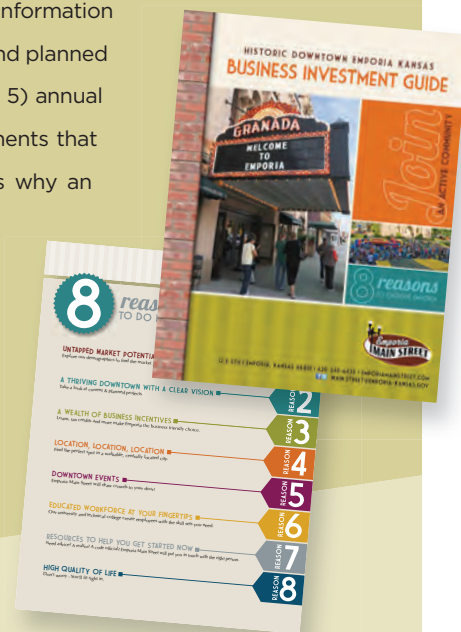
Small is occurring at scale across the country thanks to the support and advocacy of the Main Street America Network, as well as other non-profit groups in the commercial district revitalization field. For example, Midtown Detroit, Inc. (MDI) is a nonprofit planning and development organization focused on the revitalization of the Midtown Detroit neighborhood. Working in collaboration with community stakeholders, MDI is engaged in over 30 initiatives around district planning, marketing, real estate, and economic development. The Inn on Ferry Street, a 40-room boutique hotel, exemplifies MDI's focus on placemaking and neighborhood reactivation. In partnership with the Detroit Institute of Arts, MDI converted four historic homes and two carriage houses into The Inn, leveraging \$8.5 million from over 24 sources of financing. MDI also recently worked to change the zoning in Midtown to encourage walkability, more small-scale production uses, and provide parking relief. This change in zoning will be well supported by the area's walkable geography. Beyond brick and mortar, MDI supports local events such as DLECTRICITY, a nighttime arts festival that brings awareness to the historic architecture of Midtown through art, lighting design, video, and performance, which in turn increases the value of real estate within the district.

HOW TO ATTRACT SMALL-SCALE DEVELOPERS AND INVESTORS

Small-scale developers, entrepreneurs, and businesses have many options when it comes to where they choose to invest. If they can't easily find a compelling reason to locate in a community, they'll quickly move on to the next. To stand out among your competition, follow Emporia Main Street's lead and create a Business Investment Guide that lays out why your community is a smart place to locate.

Created in collaboration with local design firm IM Design Group and local development and consulting group Placemakers, LLC, Emporia Main Street's eight-section guide covers the top categories of information most requested by developers and entrepreneurs: 1) market analysis; 2) list of completed and planned projects; 3) available monetary and non-monetary incentives; 4) detailed downtown map; 5) annual events calendar; 6) qualified workforce availability; 7) local assistance points; and 8) elements that contribute to a high quality of life. Each of these sections serve as compelling reasons why an investor should choose the community.

At 23 pages in length, this booklet provides potential developers and businesses with a substantial, but easily digestible snapshot of the community, while also positioning Emporia Main Street as a knowledgeable partner and valuable resource. Visit emporiainmainstreet.com/business-resources/business-recruitment/ to view Emporia's guide. A customizable digital guide is available for purchase at imdesigngroup.com/downloads/business-investment-guide/.



SMALL MATTERS

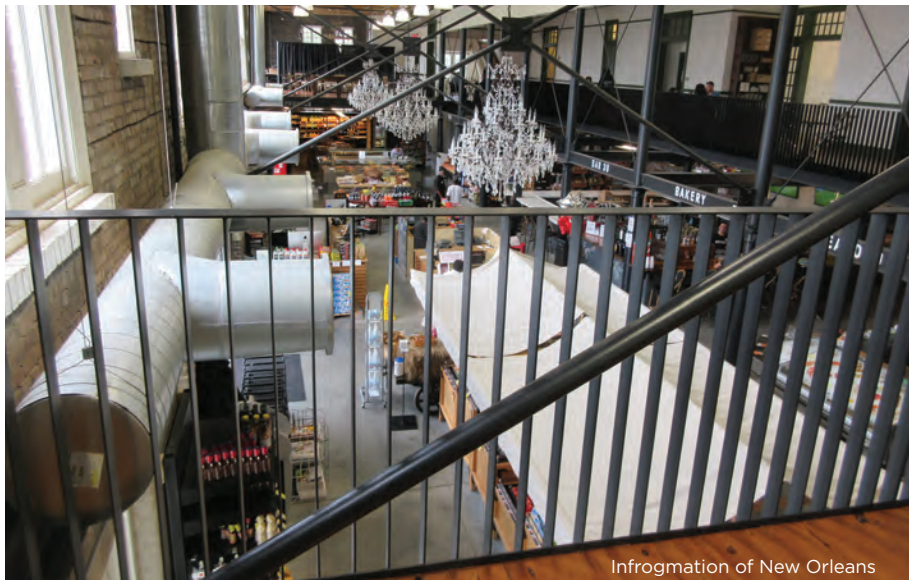
Local advocates, like those in the Main Street movement, innately know why *Small* matters. In an era where trend watchers and prognosticators attempt to predict what our collective future will look like on a daily basis, we know the only constant will be continual change. Increased fragmentation of markets, the ability to find whatever we want with one click, an expanding shared economy, and the rapid movement of global investment means a personal connection with the community in which we choose to live is ever more important.

We know that all this change makes people want the constancy of something comfortable, personal and maybe even a bit routine more than ever before. Our community members want to connect with those who work at their local pizza shop or bakery, and enjoy the chance encounter of speaking with someone we know, or someone new. We understand if places are the same in every city we go to, there is little to nothing special about where we live. But when those places are one-of-a-kind—steeped in local culture, grown from the fabric of our former blocks, imbued with local art, operated by local business “makers” supporting our community and creating connections—we all benefit.

“Mom and pops” are even gaining the attention of the finance and real estate industries, who traditionally saw this type of development as a credit risk. Following the Great Recession of 2008, many banks and communities learned that economic resilience—not just sales tax—is a crucial factor in how we should think about downtown revitalization strategies. As Kimber Lanning, of Local First Arizona, shows in her work supporting locally owned, independent businesses, spending money locally reaps substantial economic benefit for communities. Buying locally and supporting home-grown businesses keeps money in the local economy, fosters community pride, creates jobs, diversifies the economic base, and supports healthier communities.



Increasingly, our social interactions don't occur over our dinner table but at the local restaurant or coffee shop.



Infrogmation of New Orleans

The Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard Merchants & Business Association, a 2017 Great American Main Street Award winner, has overseen the redevelopment of a number of catalytic small-scale development projects. The former Myrtle Banks school sat empty for years until its transformation into the new Dryades Public Market. The \$17 million renovation was financed through a combination of public and private sources, including

historic and new market tax credits, funding from the New Orleans Redevelopment Authority, a loan from the City of New Orleans, and private grant funding. Throughout the development process and launch of the market, the developer and local leadership remained committed to the principal of place, ensuring that the local community was reflected in the kinds of products and services available at the market. And, while the market is only one component of Oretha Castle Haley Boulevard's overall transformation, it has provided a much-needed jolt of energy into the district, helping to generate additional buzz about this neighborhood in transition.

Small Scale Developer Forum by the Urban Land Institute

Lessons Learned

After years of focus on large, complex mixed-use developments that leveraged global capital, a countervailing view to see what was happening at the other end of the spectrum led to the 2012 launch of the *Small Scale Developer Forum* as part of the Urban Land Institute's Real Estate Entrepreneur's program. The two-day program combines neighborhood tours, project case studies, and intimate conversations with developers and regulators on what is *Small*, and how it was creating value in their communities.

Since the first forum in San Francisco, 11 cities have been toured. Starting with mature cities (San Francisco, Washington, D.C., and Seattle), the program moved to emerging urban and suburban centers (Austin, Phoenix, Denver, Miami, and Portland) and then Rust Belt cities (Pittsburgh and Detroit). What each tour witnessed was both remarkably unique to their locale, and incredibly consistent in their lessons. These included:

Small and adaptive reuse go hand-in-hand. The creative and curated nature of *Small* allows heretofore “unusable” buildings to be repurposed into unique places with entirely new formats that

bring unique focus to neighborhoods and add new value. Seen in the re-purposed single-family houses and shipping containers that make up Rainy Street in Austin's outdoor “barbeque and bar” vibe, to arterial strip centers turned into dynamic neighborhoods in Phoenix or Denver. These examples prove it doesn't require what has traditionally been considered great building stock to create great places. The creativity of design and material applications in today's re-generation movement are unmatched—and often it is the least likely buildings that become the most loved places.

Small as a Phase 0.0 strategy.

Incremental, temporal approaches to *Small* define the essence of a place and let the neighborhood evolve organically. *Small* development is about NOT master planning, instead it's about letting places evolve in a more organic, incremental fashion. Today “grit” replaces greenfield as the raw material of neighborhood building. And often times, a Phase 0.0 is the best strategy for creating place and testing markets before making a big investment in bricks and mortar. In Louisville, Kentucky, across from the successful 21c Museum Hotel, a vacant lot

behind the propped-up façade of a lonely storefront was used as the venue for pop-up events to drive foot traffic, call attention to the block, and add an “edge” to the redeveloping area.

Curating vs. leasing. “Big” creates real estate spaces to lease. *Small* curates tenants to foster synergy and place. Often curating requires the developer to go into business with the tenant—to make sure they succeed and keep everyone's interests aligned. This means *Small* cannot be the type of real estate where once the lease is signed the asset is turned over to a third-party property manager. *Small* developers understand the principle that value will accrue over time as the place matures—which means they must work hard to ensure tenants achieve vitality and synergy with the neighborhood, as both evolve together. Ankeny Alley in Portland is a public street that was decommissioned by the City, allowing the adjoining businesses to co-op the public space with alfresco dining and a light ceiling, reinforcing the uniqueness of place and creating a positive public private partnership. An informal business association paid for improvements and the City provided grants for building upgrades. This unique public private partnership reinforces the concept of ‘curating’ both place and tenants, in order to create a higher level of experience and business success.

Art as an economic development strategy. Public art used to be viewed as a “nice” element in a district, but not something that was connected to the local economy. Today’s *Small* developers know better. They recognize art as a strategy for generating value, and creating the kind of vibe needed to generate a buzzworthy place. Public art can be part of the Phase 0.0 strategy or integrated consciously throughout a development project to help create a distinct sense of place.

***Small* is not David to Big’s Goliath.** Small development can be a complementary development strategy to the sometimes necessity of large scale, catalytic investments. A 250-unit apartment building may sometimes be necessary to help create the density needed to energize a moribund neighborhood, but it is the incremental, fine-grained commercial uses that ensure it is a unique place that will attract and retain residents. Some “big” developers are seeing this big/small partnership as a valuable strategy for gaining neighborhood approvals and creating real places that will increase in value over the long term. They are gaining building efficiencies while designing and modeling projects on a small scale.

IT’S NOT EASY BEING *SMALL*

For all its promise and success, barriers to scaling *Small* development loom large. Two primary impediments persist:

Regulations. In most cities, the process required to entitle projects has become increasingly arduous. The cost of approvals—both the level of documentation and time to fulfill submission requirements—make small-scale development infeasible in most locales, or lead to big development as the only possible solution. There is a need to right-size regulations and streamline approvals for smaller projects. Jurisdictions should examine the costs created by archaic code requirements that are not relevant to, or create excessive cost burdens for achieving *Small*. Examples include onerous parking requirements, incompatible land uses, outdated zoning codes, and burdensome bathroom and accessibility interpretations. Furthermore, a cultural shift is necessary to ensure that *Small* projects are supported and incentivized, and that permitting and fees make small-scale development more attractive, not more challenging. This cultural shift won’t happen without leadership that spreads the message of why *Small* is valuable and how *Small* can support a better quality of life for entire communities.

Leadership for making *Small* happen can come from the top down, or bottom up. But it ultimately relies on champions explaining how small-scale development is not just about building places, it is a critical component of any community’s economic development strategy. This may include leaders asking planning staff to review codes, using the lens of small-scale developers and small-scale sites. Do parking requirements—form and quantity—make projects infeasible? How is accessibility addressed and what are the triggers for requiring a full ADA upgrade? Can buildings be adaptively reused or are there hidden cost triggers that make anything but tear down and build new—requiring bigger buildings—the only option? Staff should review fee minimums for *Small* projects—sometimes there is a “floor” for fees, meaning these projects will pay an outsized fee per square foot compared to bigger projects, just to be reviewed or permitted.

Finally, leadership and policies need to align to ensure everyone from elected officials through staff recognize that *Small* is an important strategy for long-term community building. In departments that rely on “cost recovery” approaches to funding, new ground-up projects get all the attention because the fees generated are greater and the work effort is usually less. *Small* projects need recognition as contributing a different kind of value to the community, and fees and attitudes should be adjusted accordingly.



It's up to us spread the message that small-scale development and adaptive reuse is a critical component of any community's economic development strategy.

Credit: Bastrop Main Street

Capital. Traditional sources of funding for real estate (banks, life insurance, and pension funds) don't understand projects that do not fit their standard underwriting classifications. While *Small* and creative projects are exciting concepts to those of us focused on building place, they are seen as risky and unproven to those who are focused on minimizing capital risk.

Perceived risk aside, *Small* also requires the same—or more—due diligence and fund management as much larger real estate opportunities. As a result, the success of *Small* in so many of the projects witnessed has had to come from unconventional sources. Fortunately, more and more people see the value of *Small* and want to contribute and create a positive impact in their community. For many high-net-worth individuals who made their wealth in intangible businesses, helping to “build something real” can be very seductive. There is a tangible, personally fulfilling aspect to visiting the local restaurant, bookstore, or indie movie theater one helped build. However, unconventional funding is not dependent on these wealthier individuals. The advent of new alternative financing mechanisms such as crowdfunding has provided a way to gather small donations for a cause or project from a wide variety of donors. This grassroots funding instrument fits in

especially well with the community-driven work exemplified by the Main Street America Network.

THE FUTURE OF *SMALL*

Big urban challenges have historically been answered by big projects. The conventional wisdom for “fixing cities” epitomized by the Robert Moses era of Urban Renewal was that megaprojects were the only answer to solving complex issues in our rapidly expanding city centers. Whether subsidized housing projects or megablock gallerias, bigger was always better. As a result, our regulations, capital markets, and planning industry grew up to support and fuel this notion, eclipsing our ability to work more surgically.

But at this point in time the neighborhoods that age the most gracefully, create the most resilient economic ecosystems, and hatch or host the most innovative talent, refute this idea. The thesis first penned over 50 years ago by Jane Jacobs—that fine-grained, small-scale development makes for more interesting places—is being born out as we find new data to collect, and new ways to holistically measure success. Going forward, the concept of *Small*, so deeply ingrained in the work of Main Street, is finally coming of age. And this is a good thing for all of us.

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ADVOCACY IN MOTION

By Renee Kuhlman

Every day, Main Street directors and their boards advocate for their districts, their local businesses, and their programs. As a result, Main Streeters have developed great advocacy skills as well as trusted relationships with officials at all levels of government. Renee Kuhlman, Director of Policy Outreach, Government Relations and Policy, at the National Trust for Historic Preservation offers examples of where advocacy for Main Street has recently made a difference as well as resources on how to get involved.





Local New Mexico MainStreet directors gather in Santa Fe for their Winter Quarterly and advocate as a coalition at the state capital. Credit: Gary Cascio

Main Street America programs provide officials with three key things: data, ideas, and connections to their constituents.

Why advocate and lobby for Main Street? Main Street America organizations have many interests that are impacted by government policies—whether it’s ensuring funding for programming (appropriations), incentives for encouraging reuse, or legal protections for historic districts. For these reasons and more, it is beneficial for Main Street stakeholders to undertake advocacy and lobbying activities.

Likewise, the accomplishments of Main Street America programs are of great interest to policy decision-makers. Because the work of Main Street helps create local jobs, gets historic buildings put back into productive use, and encourages new businesses to relocate downtown, legislators want to understand both how the program works and how they can be supportive.

By informing officials about what’s happening in the commercial district, Main Street America programs provide officials with three key things: data, ideas, and connections to their constituents. The impressive national reinvestment statistics—\$70.25 billion reinvested, 584,422 jobs created, 268,053 buildings rehabilitated, and 132,092 new businesses started since 1980—are exactly the kind of

data that legislators look for when deciding where to invest citizens’ money and their time. Main Street revitalization efforts are also a source of inspiration for legislators as they look for creative yet concrete ideas that they can implement in their districts. Finally, Main Streeters provide legislators with connections to people that are actively trying to improve their communities. For these three reasons, legislators see Main Street directors and their boards as a valuable resource.

Renee Kuhlman is the Director of Policy Outreach for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Since 2004, she has been assisting legislators and advocates across the country with the adoption, expansion, and protection of state historic tax credit programs. Renee has also conducted advocacy training workshops, written several articles, blogs and briefs on advocacy, and participated in dozens of local, state, and federal advocacy campaigns.

How Main Streets Are Organizing

Today, many states have an informal network of Main Street America organizations that work together on state and federal issues. Some states, like New Mexico, have a formal alliance. Whether formal or informal, working together is extremely impactful. “Advocacy is additive,” says Tom Cassidy, Vice President of Government Relations at the National Trust. The broader and more diverse the coalition, the stronger it will be perceived by government officials.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

ADVOCACY can include anything from relationship-building activities, such as educating decision makers, informing the public, gaining support for Main Street, to activities designed to bring about a specific change in policy.

LOBBYING is a subset of advocacy activities involving efforts to influence legislation. Specific laws govern lobbying by nonprofit organizations, so it is important to understand what constitutes lobbying and ensure that your program does not run afoul of these limitations.

Source: *Lobbying and Political Action: What is Permissible by 501(c)3 Organizations*, a chapter from the **Advocacy Training Manual** produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

From their perspective, Main Street America organizations see their officials as key to unlocking sources of revenue, to protecting the district’s historic resources, and a way to jumpstart local rehabilitation projects by offering local, state, and federal incentives. Although local Main Street efforts have historically been strongly connected to mayors, many programs have proactively worked to strengthen ties with their federal and state officials. Because the saying “all politics is local” is true, this increased advocacy effort pays great dividends to the national Main Street and preservation movements.



Nevada Coordinator Jean Barrette and NMSC Senior Program Officer and Director of Coordinating Program Services Kathy La Plante joined Gardnerville Executive Director Debbi Lehr for a community celebration. Left to right: Debbi Lehr, Jean Barrette, and Kathy La Plante

**MAIN STREET ADVOCACY AT THE
STATE LEVEL**

The Creation of the Nevada Main Street Program

Dr. Heidi Swank, Nevada Assemblywoman and Executive Director of the Nevada Preservation Foundation, was immediately impressed by Main Street’s strong record of creating jobs and revitalizing communities across the country after learning about the program through a colleague. Realizing that her state could greatly benefit from such a program, she introduced Assembly Bill 417 to create the Nevada Main Street Program within the Office of Economic Development.

An advocacy coalition that included the Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities, the Nevada Association of Counties, and cities like Sparks, Wells, Reno, and Las Vegas, joined her effort to build support for the program. By writing letters, testifying at hearings, speaking to media outlets, sharing the national reinvestment statistics, and success stories from local Main Street programs in Nevada and elsewhere, Assemblywoman Swank and the advocacy coalition built enormous support for the program.

Their efforts were worth it. On June 8, 2017, the Nevada Main Street Coordinating Program was approved by Governor Sandoval and \$350,000 for the operation and grants to local programs was set aside for the program. Assemblywoman Swank is working now to introduce a state Historic Tax Credit (HTC) to help

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Celebrating Gardnerville

In January 2018, Main Street Gardnerville was announced as Nevada Main Street’s first official program. Originally founded in 2008, Gardnerville is looking forward to the benefits of having the support that a statewide coordinating program offers.

.....

give the property owners of historic buildings yet another revitalization tool. The newly-minted Main Street communities will have their first advocacy opportunity during upcoming legislative session when the state HTC is introduced.

Missouri’s State Senators Tout Main Street

Educating a new governor about the benefits of Main Street is hard enough, but it’s even more challenging when your state is “in the red” and facing a budget shortfall. Luckily, the Missouri Main Street Connection (MMSMC) and the state’s Main Street directors were up to the challenge.

Realizing they needed increased support and visibility for Main Street, eight local directors worked with their state senators to host “Town Hall Meetings” in their communities. The legislators took the lead and sent out invitations to events. Held in cities ranging in size from St. Louis to a community with a population of 2,000, the “Town Hall” toolkit provided by MMSMC ensured that all were a success.

During each event, the Senator spoke first, followed by Main Street representatives who shared information about federal, state, and local tools that could be used to help revitalize communities. Senators also invited representatives from the Missouri Department of Economic Development to participate. The diversity of speakers helped attract a diverse audience of residents, business owners, and government officials.

The community meetings have been a hit with all parties! Senators enjoyed hosting because it was a way for them to offer a tool (Main Street) while connecting with their constituents. Main Street enjoyed the opportunity to interact more closely with their legislators while building support locally for their program.

In 2017, despite extreme budget cuts elsewhere, MMSMC received the same appropriation (\$200,000) for downtown revitalization services in Missouri Main Street communities as it had in the past.

Communicating Successes in Missouri

Representatives from MMSC and local Main Street communities annually travel to the state capital, Jefferson City. During visits with legislators, they showcase the work they are accomplishing in Missouri's historic downtowns and share the impact local Main Street organizations have had on the state's economy. Legislators also receive a handout that summarizes the reinvestment statistics.

Later that same day, MMSC hosts legislators at a two-hour reception to celebrate the achievements of Missouri Main Street communities. The reception gives state legislators a wonderful opportunity to personally congratulate the Revitalization Award winners previously announced during the Missouri Main Street Conference.



Mayor Sandy Lucy of Washington, Mo., accepting the Award for Outstanding Public Official in 2014. Credit: Missouri Main Street

Wisconsin Lt. Governor Takes Main Street to the Media

To bring attention to the impact of the state's program, Governor Scott Walker proudly proclaimed August 22, 2017, as Wisconsin Main Street Day. On that day, Lt. Governor Rebecca Kleefisch, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) Deputy Secretary Braun, and staff of the Wisconsin Main Street program attended 12 public events in Main Streets and Connect Communities across the state.

Remarkably, Wisconsin Main Street Day was planned within a period of three months from start to finish. In addition to his proclamation, Governor Walker shot a video officially declaring August 22 as Wisconsin Main Street Day, issued an official press release and media advisory, and provided a press release template for local communities. The preparation clearly was worth it because Wisconsin Main Street Day generated 80 stories statewide, including coverage on 10 different television stations. Public relations staff estimate they raised awareness with a total of 6.93 million people and that the total event had a total publicity value of \$40K.

Wisconsin Main Street Day was so successful, organizers are already hard at work planning the next one scheduled for 2018! They envision expanding the event to include a toolkit so that every Main Street community can find a way to celebrate the day.

Awards Recognize and Encourage Others to be Supportive

Healthy cooperation with local government is crucial for Main Street programs, which is why Missouri Main Street Connection, Inc. offers the annual Outstanding Public Official Award. In the past five years, two mayors and three community development directors have been recognized. Awards of this nature allow Main Streets to both recognize the contributions of individual public officials and encourage others in similar positions to be supportive of their own Main Streets.

Downtown Fond du Lac Kicks off Renovation

The Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership hosted one of the 12 events on Wisconsin Main Street Day and used it as an opportunity to kick off the renovation of Hotel Retlaw. The landmark hotel received \$26 million dollars through the use of state and federal historic tax credits for the makeover.



Amy Hansen, director of the Downtown Fond du Lac Partnership, and State Sen. Dan Feyen (R-Fond du Lac) at the Fond du Lac event on August 22. Amy also invited Fond du Lac City Council President Karyn Merkel, State Representative Jeremy Theisfeldt and Craig Molitor, President of the Fond du Lac Convention and Visitors Bureau, to make remarks recognizing not just the upcoming renovation of the Retlaw Hotel, but all the businesses that create the heart of the Fond du Lac Main Street. Credit: Wisconsin Main Street

MAIN STREET ADVOCACY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

Main Street Goes to Washington, D.C.

One of the ways that local directors advocate for Main Street's priorities is to visit their legislators at their offices in Washington, D.C. This spring, Malcolm Johnstone, executive director of West Chester BID, and Ray Scriber, the director of Louisiana Main Street, visited Capitol Hill to educate Pennsylvania and Louisiana legislators about deferred maintenance in our national parks. The officials valued learning about how the lack of maintenance negatively impacts those Main Streets that serve as gateways to our nation's parks and possible solutions that could be implemented.

Malcolm Johnstone proudly carried the bronze Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) to 11 Pennsylvania congressional offices. He explained why West Chester had won the award and how important tourism in the Brandywine Valley was to his community. Johnstone and other Pennsylvanians met personally with Congressman Costello, who represents West Chester.

In nine meetings with congressional offices, Scriber shared examples of how Main Street economies from New Orleans to Natchitoches are positively impacted by their proximity to national parks. While visiting, he was proud to see the book *Main Streets of Louisiana* in Congressman Higgins' (R-LA) reception area. Scriber sent each of the Louisiana's congressional offices a copy of the book when it was published back in 2012, and was glad to see that the Congressman showed off the state's historic downtowns to visitors.



GAMSA winner Malcolm Johnstone of the West Chester BID met with Congressman Costello to request funding for deferred maintenance in national parks, like nearby Valley Forge National Historical Park. Left to right: Renee Kuhlman, Paul Steinke, Rep. Ryan Costello (R-PA), Malcolm Johnstone, Brenda Barrett and Jay Zeiler. Credit: Brenda Barrett



Both Scriber and Johnstone delivered a national sign-on letter with the signatures of 135 Main Street organizations requesting co-sponsorship of the National Park Service (NPS) Legacy Act S. 751/H.R. 2584 to their members of Congress. The bill would create a reliable, dedicated federal funding source to address the deferred maintenance backlog, thereby allowing the public to continue to visit our nation's parks and support the communities and businesses that rely on them as economic engines.

During a meeting with preservationists seeking his co-sponsorship of the National Park Service Legacy Act, Representative Ralph Abraham (R-LA) expressed his enthusiastic support for Main Street communities, including those that serve as gateways to national parks. Left to right: Christine Luthy, Fairleigh Jackson, Representative Abraham, Ray Scriber, Renee Kuhlman and Rick Normand.

LOBBYING IS PERMISSIBLE FOR 501(C)3 ORGANIZATIONS

Contrary to what many people believe, tax-exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code can lobby without losing their tax-exempt status, but must adhere to specified limitations. If an organization elects to participate under the safe harbor provisions of the tax code, it must file Form 5768 with the Internal Revenue Service and include the following types of expenditures as contributing to the calculated limit:

- ⌘ Employee compensation, based on the percentage of time devoted to lobbying.
- ⌘ Costs associated with communication intended to influence legislation—printing, postage, telephone calls, etc. This must also include the staff and facility costs to prepare lobbying communications and materials.
- ⌘ Overhead expenses proportionate to the percentage of an employee's time spent lobbying.
- ⌘ Payment to another organization to do lobbying on its behalf.

An organization that chooses not file with the IRS can still lobby, but only if lobbying does not constitute a substantial part of the activities of the organization. There is no definition for “substantial,” thus the organization should be cautious and consult an attorney.

What Activities Constitute Lobbying?

- ⌘ “Lobbying” activities are those that seek to influence specific legislation. Any action by Congress, state legislature, local council, or similar governing body, or by the public in a referendum, initiative, constitutional amendment, or similar procedure is considered “legislation.”
- ⌘ An “action” refers to the introduction, amendment, enactment, defeat, or repeal of acts, bills, resolutions, or similar items.
- ⌘ “Influencing” is deemed to be “(a) any attempt ... to affect the opinions of the general public or any segment thereof, and (b) any attempt ... to communicate with any member or employee of a legislative body, or with any government official or employee who may participate in the formulation of the legislation.”

Source: *Lobbying and Political Action: What is Permissible by 501(c)3 Organizations*, a chapter from the **Advocacy Training Manual** produced by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

Determined Advocacy Preserves the Historic Tax Credit

The successful effort to retain the Historic Tax Credit (HTC) was made possible in large part by Main Street representatives. In person and through emails, calls and social media, Main Street leaders informed their members of Congress that they needed the federal Historic Tax Credit to redevelop historic commercial buildings in their communities.

For example, Representatives from Mississippi Heritage and the Water Valley Main Street program helped get every member of the state's congressional delegation to co-sponsor the Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act. Others organized visits to their Main Streets for their members of Congress. Michael Sothan, director of Beatrice Main Street in Nebraska, showed downtown properties that were about to be rehabilitated with the HTC to Rep. Adrian Smith, who sits on the Ways and Means Committee. Likewise, Heritage Ohio organized site visits for eight congressional offices. These one-on-one visits helped secure 13 of Ohio's

15-member congressional delegation as co-sponsors of the Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act as well as the support of Senator Portman. Because of their exemplary advocacy work, Heritage Ohio was awarded the 2017 John H. Chafee Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Policy by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

When tax reform moved into high gear, Main Streets all across the country went into overdrive. For example, Alabama, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Wisconsin Main Street directors helped get their mayors to sign on to statewide letters—22 mayors, 27 mayors, 56 mayors and 74 mayors signed on, respectively. In Iowa, 33 Main Street directors signed a group letter requesting their members of Congress ensure the retention of the HTC.

Over the summer, hundreds of Main Streets added their own organizations to a national sign-on letter and helped get a total of 1,487 businesses and organizations to ask for the retention of the credit. The letter was then shared electronically with 1,400 congressional staffers.



Heritage Ohio was awarded the 2017 John H. Chafee Trustees' Award for Outstanding Achievement in Public Policy by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Credit: David Keith Photography

The advocacy worked!

One-on-one visits helped secure 13 of Ohio's 15-member congressional delegation as co-sponsors of the Historic Tax Credit Improvement Act. Left to Right: Representative Michael Turner (R-OH), Amanda Terrell, Ohio Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer, and Joyce Barrett, Executive Director of Heritage Ohio.



Congress has once again concluded that it is critically

important to protect our nation's historic buildings. The Historic Tax Credit, made permanent in the tax code in 1986, will remain in the revamped tax code with some modifications. Most notably, after implementation of a transition period, the credit will now be claimed over a five-year period.

Because of Main Street advocacy, there are strong congressional supporters in the House and Senate that are committed to historic preservation, economic development, and the Historic Tax Credit.

Focus On: New Mexico Advocacy

Recognizing their similar objectives and goals, New Mexico MainStreet works together with the New Mexico Resiliency Alliance and the New Mexico Coalition of Main Street Communities on legislative issues. Lisa Pellegrino-Spear, Executive Director of Clovis MainStreet, shared the following “lessons learned” from their work together.



CLOVIS, NEW MEXICO

Q: What do you think is the most effective advocacy tool that your group uses?

A: Our greatest advocacy tool is our local stories of success and/or challenges our individual communities face. The stories that come from the communities that the legislator represents—and calls home—are the stories that they remember. We can have as much marketing materials as we can print but nothing makes an impact like a story about their own community from the local director who has an established rapport!

Face-to-face meetings during the session make a great impact. Our legislators are generally away from home for weeks at a time during the session and seeing a visitor from home—even if only for a brief minute—makes a big impression. The gesture shows that you care about the bill they are putting forth and that you are passionate about Main Street’s priorities.

Q: How do you decide legislative priorities?

A: We look for suggestions from our members, our partners, lobbyists, past and current legislators, as well as state and community leaders. In most cases if a legislator is working on a bill that would benefit your Main Street district, they will reach out to you. We want all our members to tell us about these bills or “works in progress” so we can provide support early on.

Each year we discuss together the most crucial needs to retain the support for the state program and strive to have a cohesive message. However, we each may find a few different priorities that meet the needs of our own members and so we develop our own individual legislative approach for those.

Q: How do you lobby?

A: Our advocacy is only as strong as the support we have from our members. Every year we host two advocacy trainings for our members, retain a lobbyist, and develop materials for our members to utilize when visiting with their legislators.

We meet once a year for a lobby day at the state capital and host a meeting before hand to review our priorities. If possible, we try to facilitate meetings for our members with bill sponsors to further educate our members on the bills’ details. These meetings also provide the legislators with firsthand experience on how their bills may affect our communities.

Our vice president sends out a weekly or daily email update from our lobbyist during the legislative session to keep our members updated on any bill movement

Our advocacy is only as strong as the support we have from our members.

and budget changes. Our executive board encourages members to create a rapport with their legislators. To facilitate this relationship-building, we annually host a booth at the legislator reception at the beginning of the session.

Our executive board members spend additional days at the capital, attending hearings and meeting with legislators prior to the session. They do this to raise awareness of our requests and to share Main Street successes that have occurred because of the state's support of the program.

We keep a list of the legislators and which Main Streets they represent, so newer directors can familiarize themselves with their local legislators. We send out greeting cards to all the legislators during the holidays and communicate throughout the year with each legislator about the bills that our members support.

Q: If you could tell another state group considering organizing like you have, what tips or do's and don'ts would you share?

A: I think the number one tip is training! Not knowing how to speak to a legislator is the number one fear we try to overcome and is why some organizations or executive directors do not take action. Legislators have chosen to do what they do because they care about the future of your community. They are just regular people and neighbors trying to make a difference.

Second, it is really important to have a dedicated executive board and to get input from all sides of the state.

Finally, don't give up! It takes time to build relationships and time to learn how the legislature works. You always need to ask questions and find someone to help you understand it!

Q: What's the biggest "win" your group has had?

A: Our group itself. Rebuilding our organization, gaining interest in the mission and creating a desire to make change happen. I think each year we can weigh our successes as a group and what challenges we need to work on for the upcoming session but the most difficult mission is creating a team that is willing to work at making the effort and commitment to stick with it even when you have a year with small wins.

But this past year we had a huge win. We helped retain the budget for our state program in a year when nearly all of the state programs were cut and unspent capital funds were clawed back to cover deficits. With our partners, we made a big enough impression that our program was spared!

The New Mexico Resiliency Alliance, a 501c3 tax-exempt organization, was established to support sustainable community revitalization initiatives in New Mexico communities.

The New Mexico Coalition of MainStreet Communities is a non-profit organization designed to support economic development and historic preservation of their communities as well as the Arts and Culture districts and the Frontier Communities Initiative.

Our greatest advocacy tool is our local stories of success and/or challenges our individual communities face.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN EDUCATING AND LOBBYING

EDUCATING IS:

Sharing nonpartisan analysis, study, or research with the public or elected officials;

Responding to requests for technical assistance or advice from a governmental body;

Examinations of problems that do not express a view about specific legislation and have a call to action.

DIRECT LOBBYING is when an organization attempts to influence specific legislation by sharing its view on the legislation with a member of a legislative body or a government employee who helps formulate the legislation.

GRASSROOTS LOBBYING is any communication with the public about a specific legislative proposal that expresses a view on the legislation's merits and encourages contact with decision-makers.

Iowa Sends a Strong Message to Congress

In October, 33 Iowa Main Streets came together to sign a joint letter asking Members of the Iowa congressional delegation to protect the federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) during tax reform. Sarah Grunewaldt, Executive Director of Washington Main Street, and Abby Huff M.F.A., Executive Director of the Story City Greater Chamber Connection, developed the letter with Preservation Iowa's President Joshua Moe, AIA, NCARB. The letter sent a strong message to Congress that the majority of Iowa's Main Streets support the federal Historic Tax Credit. As a result, Senator Grassley (R-IA) supported a key amendment proposed by Senator Cassidy (R-LA) in the Senate Finance Committee in November 2017.

USING STATISTICS AND STORYTELLING AS ADVOCACY TOOLS

While helpful to benchmark a program's progress, reinvestment statistics can also be an advocacy tool. First, they help establish Main Street as a credible economic development approach with officials. Second, because legislators are eager to learn new ways to create jobs in their community, the numbers can act as a "hook" to get them interested in your proposal. Third, presenting the statistics over a range of time (e.g., in past three years, we've grown the number of businesses by 50 percent), helps decisionmakers quickly grasp the trends and make decisions. Finally, evidence-based proposals are more readily accepted by lawmakers.

A narrative in the form of "talking points" using statistics can also help the official understand either the problem or the proposed solution, and illustrate how the statistics relate to each other. For example, "The national network of over 1,000 Main Street America programs reached a ten-year high for community reinvestment. In 2016, these communities reinvested \$4.65 billion from public and private sources, created 5,616 new businesses, 27,462 new jobs, and rehabilitated 8,042 buildings." shows how investing in Main Street leads to positive outcomes. Because some people are

visual learners, try to share reinvestment statistics in an infographic as well. See figure to the right.

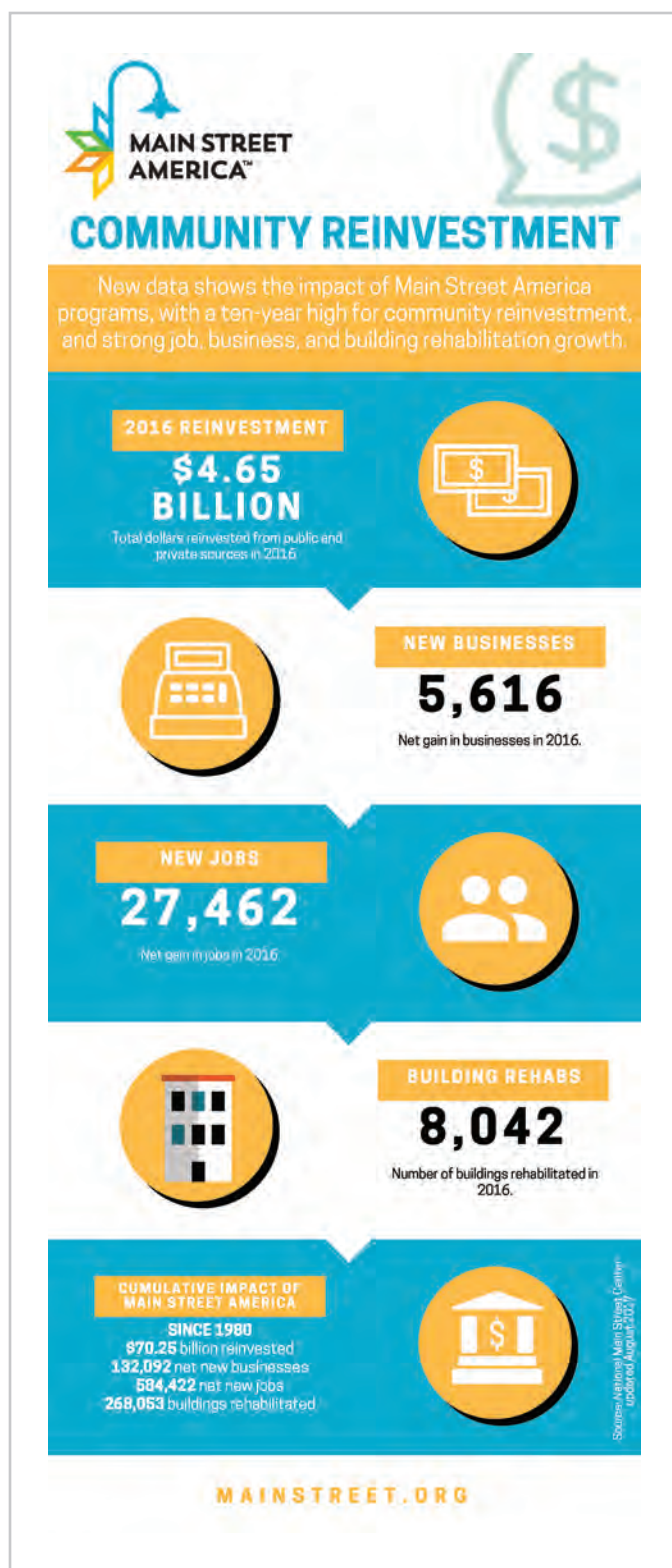
All politics is local and that is true when presenting Main Street's statistics. Legislators are interested in "their" numbers. State officials want to see the aggregate data for their state, mayors want to see data for their city, and U.S. Representatives want to see the data compiled for their legislative district. Take time to compile the data in a way that reflects political boundaries.

Because it's human nature to be competitive, show a comparison of reinvestment statistics from other communities or states when pitching a new program that's worked elsewhere.

Narratives do not need to be long to be effective. For example:

- ∴ "The City of Keota, Iowa, which has no Historic Tax Credit (HTC) projects to date, passed a resolution calling on Congress to retain the HTC." Translates in the legislators' minds to..."they are a community of under 1,500 people and believe this tool will help make a difference in their revitalization efforts."
- ∴ "We have the mayor of Steele City, Nebraska, with a population of 60 as well as the mayor of Lincoln with 300,000 people on a national mayor's letter asking Congress to retain the Historic Tax Credit." Translates to..."This incentive works in both large cities and small towns."

Finally, while impressive on their own, statistics also need to be personalized. Illustrative pictures and a personal anecdote bring to life each statistic presented (e.g., the renovated loft apartments encouraged the owner to open a business on the same block.)



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

This year, Main Street voices were heard loud and clear. Energetic and continuous advocacy by Main Street organizations, their mayors and other supporters helped Congress decide to retain the Historic Tax Credit in our nation's tax code when other credits were reduced or eliminated. Main Street's activism also helped ensure continuing appropriations for state Main Street programs in tight state budgets and has proven that "when Main Street talks, legislators listen."

LEADING MAIN STREET

By Norma Ramirez de Miess

We all know strong leadership when we see it, but how do we define it? While there may not be a one-size-fits-all Main Street leader, there are common characteristics among programs and communities leading successful revitalization efforts.

Norma Ramirez de Miess, Senior Program Manager and Director of Leadership Development, highlights five of these key attributes, and shares insights and examples from Main Street leaders across the nation on what it takes to lead effectively.



We are always impressed at the sheer number of unique initiatives and innovative projects that communities are in the Main Street America Network are implementing across the country to revitalize their historic downtowns and commercial districts. These efforts are not only leading to more vibrant and sustainable economies, but stronger, more resilient communities. What is common thread among these successful revitalization efforts? **Effective leadership.**

In fact, we believe that the future of Main Street depends on cultivating active, focused, effective leadership. To help Main Streeters in their work, we have spent the past few years strengthening the Main Street Approach™ with a stronger focus on strategy-driven revitalization, based on community vision and engagement, increased market understanding, and defined measurable outcomes. These integrated components, centered around the proven Four-Point framework, are intended to provide leaders with a roadmap for successful downtown revitalization.

Although there is no one-size-fits-all Main Street leader, there are many common attributes that influence the success of their programs and communities. Let's walk through five of these key characteristics, and see some insights and perspectives from a few of your Main Street peers. This list is by no means comprehensive, but intended to highlight specific areas that are essential for impactful leadership.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS:

VALUE PEOPLE
BUILD CAPACITY
LEAD THROUGH STRATEGY
STAND ON SOLID GROUND
NEVER STOP LEARNING

As Senior Program Officer and Director of Leadership Development at the National Main Street Center, **Norma Ramirez de Miess** helps communities across the nation assess organizational and programming needs, build consensus, and define and implement strategies to help build successful revitalization programs. With over 20 years of leadership experience, Norma is also focused on supporting the crucial role of revitalization professionals and local leaders. She regularly conducts professional development and volunteer leadership trainings across the country, including at the Main Street Now Conference and the Main Street America Institute.

EFFECTIVE LEADERS VALUE PEOPLE

Our work offers ample opportunities to talk with local stakeholders about how and why they are involved with their community's revitalization program. Time and again, they attribute their participation, support, and investment in Main Street to leaders who impressed them through their genuine care and interest. These are leaders that are authentic in their connection and are focused on building real relationships with everyone — be it a district business or property owner, resident, or elected official. They are optimists, who celebrate the positives and commit to finding solutions to challenges. They motivate and inspire people.

Organizations often invest a great amount of time and funds in initiatives to raise money, but unfortunately don't always give enough attention, time, and effort to cultivating their staff and volunteers. We encourage Main Street leaders to place people at the heart of their organizational culture and programming efforts, and to expand their reach to connect and engage with more district and community stakeholders.

This is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do. Research shows that placing people first positively impacts the bottom line. On Main Street, we are all familiar with the saying "retention is our best recruitment tool." This doesn't only apply when we are talking about business development. It also rings true for Main Street America organizations, and the people — both staff and volunteers — that make it all possible. The reality is that in today's environment, no one person "has to" work or volunteer for our organizations. People have more options than ever before with where to work or volunteer, and are more selective in choosing the communities where they want to live and the organizations they wish to join and support. It's up to strong leaders to show them why Main Street is where they want to be.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: How do you show your staff, volunteers, partners, etc. that you value them?

Effective leaders recognize people as the greatest asset for success and strive to leverage their support as a talent source, not simply as a labor force. Valuing people is essential for building trust, confidence, and ultimately, positive and active engagement in revitalization efforts.

An important element in any expression of appreciation and value is the sincerity with which it is delivered. Although it may have a dated ring to it, for me there is nothing more meaningful than a hand-written note that conveys in concrete terms the impact the recipient had on the project. [...] I also believe in the power of the small gesture: the gift certificate for lunch at a local establishment, a small but fragrant flower arrangement made in a wine glass or small vase, a newspaper clipping in which the receiver is featured (with a note of congratulations), a jar of local honey, etc. **Nancy Hoffman, Downtown Estacada Commission**

Guidance, group input, and collaboration are key ingredients when working with people who are your volunteers, partners, and staff. Expressing appreciation with small tokens or a quick text or email to let them know their work is valued is a great way to continue to show how important they are to your organization. Valued people work harder and create a better environment for everyone. **Carolyn Honeycutt, Ellensburg Downtown Association**

One way we show our promotional volunteers their value is by including them in media interviews. **We invite volunteers to be interviewed alongside staff when reporters attend our events.** We often hear “My kids were so excited to see me on channel 15,” or “My friends said they heard me on the radio when they were driving their kids to school!” Ensuring volunteers receive public recognition “in the moment” shows them we have trust in them and keeps them engaged in the events that they have worked so hard to plan and execute.

Carol Lilly, Community Main Street

Each year we hold a volunteer recognition party in February that the volunteers can bring their spouses/ others to just enjoy each other’s company with refreshments. We recognize one volunteer from each of our 5 committees and then announce our Leadership Award winner for the year who is recognized in April at the state level. **We continue to have new volunteers join us and I think it is because they can have fun, feel successful and the time commitment is manageable.** **Peg Raney, Jefferson Matters: Main Street**

I have a rule that I drop everything when a volunteer, partner, or business approaches me with a question or idea. Yes, this means other projects pile up but I consider this position a vocation and not a job. [...] I think it is imperative for this job to live and work in the District—meetings and big ideas happen at all times of the day and all over the community.

Joe Jennison, Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group

We have found that the secret to success, in many areas of our program, is personal communication. Our meetings and presentations involve a personal invitation. Our donors receive hand-written thank you notes at the time their checks are deposited! Our donors, volunteers and partners are invited to an annual appreciation event where we have the opportunity to say thank you, in person, and send them home with a token gift showing our appreciation. [...] It’s truly the every-day “thank you for your help, couldn’t do it without you,” message that we try hard to mention, often! **Kelly Haverkate, Dayton Community Development Association**

I believe that our time is the one unrenowable asset we have to give. When people volunteer and invest their asset of time, it needs to mean something to them. Make it fun and thank them and they will continue to invest. **People are our very best ambassadors.** **Linda Haglund, Wenatchee Downtown Association**

Business in all forms is about relationships. It is essential to consider the entire relationship you are building; not just addressing the needs of your organization, but their needs as well. What would enhance their experience or meet their needs? What is of interest to them both inside and outside their participation on your board, event, or committee? **By being present, asking good questions, and contributing your own time, talent, and treasure to things that are meaningful, you show that what they value is also important to you.** **Diana Schwartz, River District Association**

EFFECTIVE LEADERS BUILD CAPACITY

Over the past four decades, Main Street has provided a solid foundation for building strong community leadership where property and business owners, residents, and neighbors, can come together and take ownership of their district’s revitalization alongside public partners. This diverse base of leadership is one of the key factors that sets Main Street apart from other economic development approaches.

Yet, a strong base of community leadership doesn’t just happen. Main Street leaders must go beyond simply inviting people to be part of their boards or committees. Effective leaders make a conscious effort to define and confirm specific roles and responsibilities for different aspects of the revitalization effort. Every board member should hold an active responsibility in leading key aspects of the organization and every committee or team should make it a priority to have a leader for every project. Distribution of roles provides a clearer understanding of the gaps in leadership and avoids the threat of burn out.

Beyond defining roles, empowerment is crucial for building a strong leadership base. Main Street directors in particular serve an important role in cultivating, inspiring, and empowering people within their organization and extended volunteer base to see long-lasting results. This requires the ability to build trust, delegate, and provide guidance, coaching, and support. Empowering volunteers and staff also frees up time for organizational leaders to go beyond project management and spend more time managing key foundational, programmatic, and strategic areas of work. Effective leaders avoid the trap of being positioned, or positioning themselves, as merely project or task managers, rather than program directors.

The role of a Main Street director is often compared to that of a choir director or conductor. Their talents are best utilized as leaders of the entire group. They are responsible for bringing diverse talent together, empowering individuals to find their perfect fit and flourish, forming teams that have common ground, and then leading the entire group to produce the desired outcomes. Just as a conductor is not expected to fill in for the violinist, it is not recommended that Main Street directors take on specific tasks, manage individual projects, or lead committees that others within the organization are able to handle. The director's crucial responsibility is to lead the entire program and empower his or her base through participatory leadership.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: What has been your biggest barrier to building capacity and how did you overcome it?

The biggest barrier is that we have more ideas that need financing than we have budgeted income. Grant opportunities of all sizes have helped us reach our goals. We leverage funds to raise even more. [...] Being aware of possible resources and bringing the right people together has helped us overcome barriers. **Peg Raney, Jefferson Matters: Main Street**

Perception has been the biggest barrier to building capacity. Perception that we were a government agency, perception that the City covered all of our expenses, or perception that we were/were not responsible for certain activities in our community. In an effort to change perceptions, four years ago we led an aggressive communication effort that used multiple outlets to start telling our story. We needed to build understanding and change the negative perceptions. It took baby steps, celebrating the small successes, and continually telling others about ourselves and the positive impact that Main Street has on the community not only each year, but over the long-run. **Cathleen Edgerly, Howell Main Street Inc.**

The biggest barrier to building capacity is defining the need. **A lot of people see an organization trying to raise money as a negative thing, even if they rely on that entity to a large degree for information, expertise, etc. that they might need.** One lesson learned is that it is important to have simple and precise information about what that capacity could do for the organization and the community. Simple and concise facts and figures do a lot to build capacity. Another lesson learned is to make sure that the board and volunteers are on board to help build the capacity. A lot of people fear fundraising the way they do public speaking, so finding ways to make it easier for them to be part of the process and solutions also help increase capacity and their own development as leaders in the organization and the community. **Derek Lumsden, Osceola Chamber Main Street**

*I was at a national conference a couple years ago and the keynote speaker gave a quote that changed my thinking and removed a big barrier: “**The lack of resources is no longer an excuse NOT to act.**” I stopped using resources as excuse and started thinking outside the box.* **Linda Haglund, Wenatchee Downtown Association**

***With regard to volunteers, our biggest barrier to building capacity continues to be clear cut “jobs” to offer those who want to help.** We are now working on building clear cut work plans for sustainable projects so that we can offer volunteers a job that fulfills them and gives them more of a sense of purpose. Each year we are better at building a board that we trust to send out to spread our message in a way that is true to our mission and values. With more board members able to help in this way, it relieves the staff from being the only “recruiters” of volunteers and funding.* **Kelly Haverkate, Dayton Community Development Association**

*There is a quote by Michael Strahan, “**We are our own worst enemy. You doubt yourself more than anyone else ever will. If you can get past that, you can be successful.**” I sometimes observe that pattern of thinking—in myself, my board, and even my community at times—and I think that is a big but important barrier to chip at constantly. [...] For example, a board member recently remarked to me that our sponsorship package for a new event was too high, that it would work in neighboring communities or perhaps even another organization, but not ours. I asked if it was because he felt we aren’t worth as much as they are? He told me he had never thought about why he believed that, and would examine his feelings about that question. **We have to challenge the reasoning behind why we hold the beliefs that we do, not only as individuals, but as a community as well.*** **Diana Schwartz, River District Association**

EFFECTIVE LEADERS LEAD THROUGH STRATEGY

The work of Main Street revitalization is two-fold — there are programming activities that help achieve the transformation of the commercial district, and there is the organizational structure that includes assembling the human and financial resources to make it all happen. Effective leaders understand that both need defined vision and direction.

When strategy is not in place to guide the direction of our programming efforts, ideas brought to the table can quickly become projects that take the organization in several directions, or none at all. Organizations can end up with a long list of to-dos that do not always leverage broader market opportunities or address the community’s vision to produce comprehensive change. Lack of strategy also often puts a higher burden on the organizational aspects of our work, especially regarding engagement with volunteers and fundraising.

Although strategy has always been an essential component of the planning and implementation process of the Main Street Approach, too many revitalization programs have become more project- and process-driven than strategy-driven. Starting in 2014, we at the National Main Street Center undertook an effort to strengthen the overall framework of the Main Street Approach by bringing strategy back to the forefront. This “refreshed” Main Street Approach provides Main Street directors, and volunteer leaders and partners, with a defined path for revitalization through Transformation Strategies. And, we have found that selecting Transformation Strategies helps leaders learn how to define and maintain focus, and even say “no” to those appealing ideas that inevitably pop-up, but do not directly advance organizational goals. These strategies guide the planning and implementation of the work of an organization, ensuring that all projects and activities align.

Main Street leaders, especially Main Street directors and boards of directors, play an essential role in directing the process of defining appropriate Transformation Strategies through meaningful community engagement and analysis of the district's market position. Through this process, Main Street Directors can elevate their role by establishing themselves as strategic leaders, and help their boards focus beyond the routine of everyday tasks and projects. We also believe that the strengthened Main Street Approach enables more effective leadership and alignment across teams and committees needed to carryout successful revitalization efforts.

*When presented with opportunities, stay true to your mission. **As intriguing as a partnership or project may be, if it doesn't fit within your organization's mission and strategic plan, you need recognize it and move onto a project that is a better fit.** Our downtown is experiencing a period of growth, which includes a plaza area that will be privately owned, but under management by a soon-to-be established non-profit entity. As important as we think the plaza will be to our downtown, when asked to include it in our streetscape fundraising campaign, we were unable to do so since our plan calls for us to focus on specific streetscape features.*
Carol Lilly, Community Main Street

*Stop assuming and leaning on "well we have ALWAYS done it this way". **I believe that organizations...especially nonprofits get stuck in the way it has been so it is the way it should be.** I, with intent, target organizations and businesses NOT typically connected to our organizations. Most simply do not understand what we do and why we do it. Given the opportunity, I have found that they will engage and that has increased partnerships and revenue. Mostly it has increased awareness for Main Street and the key role we play in the community.* **Linda Haglund, Wenatchee Downtown Association**

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: What are your best words of advice for defining strategic direction, staying focused, and not taking on projects that do not serve the community's vision for your district?

*Our Mission is very clear, if an appealing opportunity is not within our mission I would encourage the volunteer in question to consider finding another organization to pursue said opportunity. If this opportunity is indeed in our mission, then I would ask the volunteer to agree to be chair. No chair, no project. **The greatest idea is worthless without a volunteer to manage it.***
Joe Jennison, Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group

*Colorado Main Street created an opportunity for our board to participate in strategic planning and revisiting our Transformation Strategies. Our prior strategies were overly detailed, committing us to very specific projects. We got too overloaded, forcing us to postpone or eliminate projects and the board was disappointed if we weren't able to accomplish all of our tasks. **Strategic planning taught us to take a broader approach to our Transformation Strategies so that we can tackle projects efficiently and add opportunities that arise throughout the year that follows our mission as a Main Street community.***
Angie Cue, Lamar Partnership Inc.

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**Washington State
 MAIN STREET
 PROGRAM**

I have found that a solid, transparent strategic plan based on Transformation Strategy keeps everyone focused and makes it easier to say no, or not right now. If you have a solid plan and can show the ROI, timelines, resource capacity and how it will benefit your merchants, partners, and community, it is easier to stay on-task. The more you involve your constituents in creating the plan, the more likely you are to have buy-in and support when you have to decline opportunities that don't fit into the current plan of work or strategic direction. **Diana Schwartz, River District Association**

We have a tendency to say “no” to things that don’t directly or indirectly help multiple member businesses. [...] We once had an artist walk in the spring, but our surveys after the event indicated that consumers were not patronizing storefronts as a result of the event, and artists didn’t want to coordinate their activities with storefronts. If our metrics indicate that we aren’t tangibly creating benefit, we either retool or eliminate the activity. Our best advice is to eliminate emotional decision making. Identify a measurable way to define success prior to the execution of an activity, and then record your metric to determine the viability of your initiative. **Casey Woods, Emporia Main Street**

I am big on research and branding. When I first joined DOCA, we underwent an extensive community and visitor market research process that established Downtown Oregon City’s brand promise as “Portland Metro’s Small Town Experience.” We have since maintained yearly research that helps us track our progress on key metrics while also identifying if our brand is resonating with our target customers. We began this prior to the Main Street Refresh and have now incorporated that foundational work into what we now know as Transformation Strategies. **Jonathan Stone, Downtown Oregon City Association**

EFFECTIVE LEADERS STAND ON SOLID GROUND

The strength of the Main Street movement is demonstrated by the passion and commitment of everyone involved. Stakeholders bring a range of interests and diversity in perspectives regarding the needs and ideals for revitalization. Main Street leaders have an important role in helping build an environment that not only welcomes diversity of expression, but offers a path to building consensus and confirming a common vision for the future of the district. This role requires leaders to stand on solid ground as proactive advocates for the district and ambassadors of the vision for its future.

Effective leaders strive to build a strong position for the organization amongst all sectors of the community, while remaining attentive of the diversity in priorities and interests. They work hard at connecting with others and building strong collaborations, yet keep their organizations’ mission strong and in the forefront. They understand that there might be conflicting priorities among stakeholders — perhaps internally within the organization or within the district; perhaps externally within the community.

This kind of tension is not necessarily a bad thing — it means that people care about their community. But, a Main Street director must have the skills and foresight to build, maintain, and convey a unified voice for the organization and be clear about what the program should be involved in and how best to advance the strategy for the district. Main Street leaders should keep the Main Street Approach and its principles at the forefront to guide internal and external discussions, and build awareness and increased understanding within the district and among community stakeholders.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: What are your best tips for advocating for your district and creating an environment that welcomes diversity of expression? What have you found to be the best means for resolving tension due to conflicting priorities among stakeholders?

We have a large selection of diverse restaurants in our downtown and our University has a large number of international students. **So we have partnered with our University to develop a street festival to highlight the different international student organizations.** We have groups from over 10 different countries with tables set up showing the cultural differences that contribute to not only our downtown but the whole county. Since our fall festival was so well received we're partnering with them for a spring festival to be held at the University and bring in 4th-7th grade students to learn about the different cultures.

Barbara Watkins, Main Street Morgantown

Honest, sincere, and regular communication with our community has allowed us to keep conflicts to a minimum. **We work hard to develop partnerships with our City leaders and Council as well as the district businesses so that we can build channels that allow that two-way conversation.** We invite participation in our events, on our board, and within our volunteer pool, from different ethnicities, different age groups, and genders. **Kelly Haverkate, Dayton Community Development Association**

This one is simple....“Don't Give Up.”

I had an absentee property owner that would never engage, answer any question or even reply to a simple question. Never ever would call me back...for years. I just kept them in the loop and continued to not take it personally. After 6 years, things in their family ownership structure changed and with that change, they saw a need to connect and engage. Progress is happening with their two properties...the first time in years. It also allowed me to connect them to more engaged property owners who connected and formed a bond and relationship. Their words “we love this little town now and we want to invest more in it.” **Linda Haglund, Wenatchee Downtown Association**

It's both a top-down and bottom-up approach here. I'm a huge champion for our program and district and I think that rubs off on others. The volunteers, City council, partners, board members are also big champions so we lift each other up in advocating for our district. We don't have conflicting interests too often but we often allow others to “lead the charge.” **I'm a big fan of sayings things like “that's a great idea, would you like to lead it?” That really allows people to decide if it's important enough that they're willing to put THEIR time, effort, etc into it or is it just something they think OTHERS should do.** I also think conflict lessens when all of the stakeholders understand the direction and are on board.

Chad Banks, Rock Springs Main Street/URA

Any community can plan and find money. Any community can make a “place,” BUT without social capital a downtown/place will not be activated. **Advocating for inclusiveness and the need for collaboration is a necessity for aligning visions and resolving tensions.** Helping people know that they are valued and giving them a sense of collective ownership is key. **Josh Adams, Owosso Main Street/DDA**

It is important to include all voices and views, and to welcome new ideas and concepts. **Try to keep in mind that sometimes it is the ideas or comments that we aren't comfortable with initially that can morph into something that turns into a win for the community if you keep an open mind.** Also remember—sometimes your critics may be right! Remain positive and open to dialogue and know that being respectful doesn't mean you have to agree. Many times it is as much about the attitude you bring to an issue as it is the issue itself. **Diana Schwartz, River District Association**

The most common conflicts we face result from a difference in values.

Some people simply don't value community cores, public amenities, entrepreneurship, or quality of life efforts. We have to make sure that we clearly state our values and why we believe our values are important. **Communicating the necessity of equitable reciprocation within partnerships prior to engaging in initiatives can help diffuse some issues.** But, conflict is inevitable whenever you are creating change. Conflict should always be mitigated, but not at the cost of progress. As long as people have a clear understanding of everyone's value system, short term goals, and partnership requirements, common ground can usually be found. **Casey Woods, Emporia Main Street**

EFFECTIVE LEADERS NEVER STOP LEARNING

We often say that there is never a boring moment on Main Street, but there can be plenty of overwhelming ones. It's not uncommon to think of the position of Main Street director as a master of all trades, encompassing wide-ranging areas of expertise normally led by several different individuals within local government or community development organizations. Starting with Organization, a Main Street leader must master volunteer development, finances and fundraising, and overall nonprofit or organizational management. With regards to Promotion, communication and marketing skills are a must, as well as being well-versed in social media tools and event organizing. Design requires knowledge in historic preservation, architecture, and even streetscaping. And Economic Vitality requires expertise in business and real estate, along with experience in managing financial incentives.

The good news is that Main Street leaders don't need to master it all! As a community-driven effort, Main Street draws upon the experience and expertise of everyone involved. The Main Street director takes an active role in connecting, engaging, and leading individuals who have strong interests and experience in each of these areas. To be most effective in this capacity, Main Street directors must bolster their own skills by maintaining a strong commitment to professional development and encouraging the people they serve with to learn alongside them. This ultimately will foster an environment for continued innovation and growth for everyone involved in the revitalization effort.

I get so much out of the National Conference—several great ideas and potential projects and development opportunities for me, the board, and the org come from those meetings and keynotes. I like to take board members along and expose them to these other ideas as well.
Joe Jennison, Mount Vernon-Lisbon Community Development Group

Well, honestly the National Main Street Conference has been a game changer for me. In the first few years in this job, I used the excuse of money. Now when I come back from the conference, my brain is full of ideas and I simply see things differently. So much so that my board automatically includes it in my budget. We need to see things new or we get stale. Get out of your town and visit other Main Street programs at the very least. See what works and what doesn't. **Linda Haglund, Wenatchee Downtown Association**

Understanding the crucial role of Main Street leaders at all levels, the National Main Street Center provides a solid base of training and educational opportunities to support the continued development and strength of our leadership network. Our annual Main Street Now Conference provides an opportunity for everyone in the Main Street movement to come together to hear best practices and great examples of revitalization across the country. The National Main Street Center's recently launched Main Street America Institute (MSAI), is a year-round professional development program especially designed to enhance the knowledge base and leadership skills of commercial district revitalization professionals. Through online and onsite coursework, our leadership network now has easy access to best practices about the Main Street Approach and other essential topics. Committed to strengthening the powerful base of Main Street leaders, MSAI also offers advanced leadership development online courses and an onsite workshop with content specifically focused on elevating the role of strategic leaders and enhancing individuals' ability to lead people effectively.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: How do you prioritize and address your individual professional development and that of your leadership base to continue to enhance and innovate your revitalization and community's efforts?

I try to schedule one workshop a quarter to attend from these or similar organizations in areas where I have less expertise or simply wish to refresh myself. It is amazing how many ideas and initiatives that we have pursued in Bandon have germinated from this personal development. And realizing that, you understand that you must let that culture build throughout the organization. **I believe that leadership is an action we all can take. You must create the space for leadership to emerge.** You actively support and mentor your staff and volunteers' professional development. When that development leads to their departure to another place inside or outside the community, you have another party to network with outside of the organization and another opportunity opening within the organization for someone else to develop professionally. **Harv Schubothe, Greater Bandon Association**

Read! Connect! Talk! Debate! One of the biggest benefits of being part of Main Street America is the vast amount of knowledge and resources that lie within the people involved in the movement. All experiences, good and bad, offer the opportunity to learn, and I truly believe that the people within MSA are one of the best learning tools available. [...] That said, **I would highly recommend Main Street America Institute. The Accreditation I earned from MSAI has opened the door to opportunities I may not have otherwise had access to.** The knowledge I gained from the classes I took have been an integral part in the confidence I have to tackle hard questions in community development. Whether you can only take one class, earn one certificate, or successfully earn your accreditation, it is time and money well spent. **Diana Schwartz, River District Association**

This year I partnered with the Jackson County Visitor Center and attended some continuing education opportunities with their director. **I think that it is important to think outside the box and think not only about our district but how the entire county can be affected by the events, and design elements we implement in our district.** It helped us to collaborate on projects and get ideas and put our resources together to do great things. I also attended several continuing education opportunities that our Chamber of Commerce offered. These included topics like fundraising, event planning, and board development. All of the topics were applicable to our projects here at Main Street and I was able to pass along the information and graphics to our board of directors and our committees. **Becky Schepman, Seymour Main Street**

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

We asked you: How do you prioritize and address your individual professional development and that of your leadership base to continue to enhance and innovate your revitalization and community's efforts?

When we find educational opportunities that have a track record of generating assets or catalyst activities, our community is generally pretty supportive in making sure leadership attends. If development activities devolve into a round table discussion of oversimplified generalizations (leadership is good, youth are our future, change is happening, where do you want to be in 20 years, etc.) the meeting is occurring simply to "network." If, however, access to new assets is provided (along with the appropriate conduits), we want to participate in those types of development activities. **Casey Woods, Emporia Main Street**

THE FUTURE OF MAIN STREET DEPENDS ON EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

The Main Street movement will continue to thrive with leaders that value people and bring them together through a strong sense of ownership in revitalization. Leaders that expand their roles to go beyond project-driven routine and establish a solid focus on strategy-driven programming to produce measurable transformation. Effective leaders stand as strong advocates for their districts and organizations and are attentive to continued growth and innovation. And while there is no one-size-fits-all Main Street leader, there are several qualities that we see as pivotal in driving revitalization efforts forward. On behalf of Main Street America, we celebrate the dedication and strength of our Network and recognize all Main Street leaders for their contributions to the success of this movement.



One of the greatest benefits of being a Main Street America member is the opportunity to connect and network with other downtown and commercial district revitalization professionals from across the country. This will be easier than ever before with The Point, a new online networking platform from the National Main Street Center.

A NEW WAY TO NETWORK

THE
Point



The Point will allow you to interact and share resources with your peers — any place and any time. **Main Street America members will be able to:**

- Connect and communicate directly with peers.**
- Access user-generated document libraries.**
- Network via a comprehensive user directory.**
- Share resources and post questions online.**
- Grow the Main Street America Network and drive the movement.**

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Spring 2018

There has never been an easier or better way for Main Streeters to network.

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ALLIED SERVICES DIRECTORY

The Main Street Allied Services Directory offers a comprehensive selection of technical specialists and product suppliers in the field of commercial district revitalization. Thank you to our 2017 Allied Members for being a part of the Main Street America Network:

AirNetix, LLC
Smyrna, GA

Arnett Muldrow & Associates, Ltd.
Greenville, SC

Artificial Ice Events
Peabody, MA

Ayres Associates
Cheyenne, WY

Barman Development Strategies, LLC
Stoughton, WI

Beacon Me
Bala Cynwyd, PA

Beckett & Raeder, Inc.
Ann Arbor, MI

Benjamin Moore & Company
Montvale, NJ

Bishop Solutions
Terre Haute, IN

Bizzell Design, Inc.
Davidson, NC

Bradshaw-Knight Foundation
Ossining, NY

Business Districts, Inc.
Evanston, IL

Celebrate Greater Plymouth, Inc.
Kingston, MA

CGI Communications, Inc.
Rochester, NY

City of Douglas
Douglas, AZ

City of Riverside
Orange, CA

Community Land Use Economics Group
Arlington, VA

CREATE Buzz
Castle Pines, CO

Derck & Edson Associates, LLP
Lititz, PA

Distrx
Orlando, FL

Downtown Decorations, Inc.
Syracuse, NY

Downtown Diva
Waltham, MA

Downtown Graphics Network, Inc.
Salisbury, NC

Downtown Professionals Network
Franklin, TN

Downtown Wbl
White Bear Lake, MN

EarthPlanter
Auburn, NY

Eastwick Solutions
Doylestown, PA

EML Payments
Kansas City, MO

Erie Landmark Company
Columbia, PA

FlagandBanner.com
Little Rock, AR

Franklin Bronze Plaques
Franklin, PA

Frazier Associates
Staunton, VA

Freenotes Harmony Park
Baker City, OR

FrontDor
Conyers, GA

Gibbs Planning Group
Birmingham, MI

Glasdon, Inc.
Sandston, VA

Heritage Consulting, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

Hestia Creations, Inc.
Marblehead, MA

Holiday Designs, Inc.
Gainesville, GA

Inclusion Solutions
Evanston, IL

Innerglass Window Systems, LLC.
Simsbury, CT

International Downtown Association
Washington, DC

IRONSMITH
Palm Desert, CA

Julie Fielder Retail Consulting Services
Birmingham, MI

KPG Main Street Design
Seattle, WA

Late for the Sky
Cincinnati, OH

Main Street Consultants, LLC
Lancaster, PA

Main Street Lighting
Medina, OH

Material Promotions, Inc.
Waterbury, CT

Mobile Town Guide
Athens, GA

Mon-Ray, Inc.
Minneapolis, MN

Mosca Designs
Raleigh, NC

Obsidian
Durango, CO

OnCell
Pittsford, NY

Orton Family Foundation
Shelburne, VT

Pannier Graphics
Gibsonia, PA

Place & Main Advisors, LLC
East Lansing, MI

Pointy
Dublin, Ireland

Printastic.com
Novi, MI

Progressive Urban Management Associates
Denver, CO

Redevelopment Resources
Wausau, WI

Rileighs Outdoor Decor
Bethlehem, PA

Rokusek Design, Inc.
Quincy, IL

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Whitney, NE

ShopVillages, LLC
Alameda, CA

STEALTH Concealment Solutions
North Charleston, SC

Store Supply Warehouse
Bridgeton, MO

Terri Reed Cutright & Associates, LLC
Morgantown, WV

The Alexander Company
Madison, WI

The Charleston Mint
Brevard, NC

The Lakota Group
Chicago, IL

The Schallert Group, Inc.
Longmont, CO

Thom Guzman
Nevada City, CA

Tom Pollard Designs
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Tourism Currents
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Windows Matter
Chicago, IL

For more information about our Allied Members or to find out how to join, visit allieddirectory.mainstreet.org.

WELCOME TO KANSAS CITY

MAIN STREET NOW 2018

All of us at Missouri Main Street Connection are thrilled to be your host March 26-28 for the 2018 Main Street Now Conference. Missouri is more than cows and corn, and Kansas City is more than barbecue — though we do have the best, and we can't wait to show you!

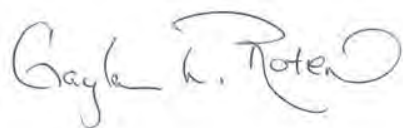
Kansas City is a friendly place, filled with salt-of-the-earth Midwesterners — we smile at strangers (or friends not yet met) as we pass them on the streets. It's also a cool and historically interesting place complete with a revived streetcar system updated for the 21st century. No longer a cow town, this thriving hub of innovation is economically driven by arts and entrepreneurship.

Positioned in the Heart of America, Kansas City is centrally located and easily accessible by plane, train, or automobile. You can reach this major metropolitan area by interstates and highways, by a three-hour flight from either coast, or by Amtrak. The Marriott Downtown, our conference site, is a two-tower complex unique among Kansas City hotels that combines newly restored historic elegance with modern luxury. Conveniently located in the heart of the city's business, government, and theater districts, the Marriott is just a five-minute walk from the Power & Light District, a nine-block area of trendy shopping, restaurants and nightlife. Hop on the streetcar at one of 16 stops for a quick, free ride to the River Market or Union Station or anywhere in between.

Make plans to celebrate at the Big Bash in Lee's Summit on March 28 and see this 2010 Great American Main Street Award™ winner in action. Ticket holders will receive \$25 to spend that evening on shopping, dining, and entertainment during this downtown street festival.

Along every boulevard, and around every corner, there's something to do that's unique to Kansas City.

***We can't wait to see you in Kansas City.
We will surprise you!***



State Director, Missouri Main Street Connection



Join us for the 2018 Main Street Now Conference in Kansas City!

As we welcome our friends, colleagues and downtown partners to Kansas City, Missouri, the National Main Street Center and Missouri Main Street Connection are excited to highlight and celebrate historic preservation, entrepreneurship, and arts & placemaking in Missouri. The conference will feature over 100 educational sessions and mobile workshops throughout the Kansas City and surrounding region. Find more details on the 2018 conference and to sign up for conference updates at mainstreet.org.

Everything you need to know:

Registration: Registration rates start at \$505 for members and \$655 for non-members. There are one day and student rates available.

Schedule: View detailed session descriptions and speaker information on your computer or mobile device through the conference app: eventmobi.com/mainstreet-now.

Hotel: The Kansas City Marriott Downtown is located at 200 West 12th Street. For your convenience, all education sessions will be held at the hotel.

Kansas City: Go to visitKC.com for visitor guide information, maps, videos and more information about Kansas City.

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Join us **March 26–28 in Kansas City, Missouri,
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**KANSAS CITY, MO
MARCH 26-28, 2018**

Main Street Now brings together doers, makers, and innovators to address challenges and take advantage of opportunities facing 21st century downtowns and commercial districts. Join us as we focus on creating places that are economically competitive and social connected, as well as developing leaders that can direct bold revitalization efforts and pave the way for communities of the future.



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You won't want to miss it! Please visit mainstreet.org for more information.

Enjoy the Show!