

# MAIN STREET HANDBOOK

## About Main Street Guide



**OREGON**  
**MAIN STREET**



Revised 2020

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## About Main Street

This guide is written for anyone wanting to know more about the Main Street Approach™ and how Main Street organizations serve their communities.

### Why it matters

You are a part of a movement of community members, businesses, historic preservationists, economic development leaders, and many others who bring their time, talent, and energy to downtown revitalization. You have come together to imagine a vital downtown district where people gather to learn, shop, connect, and celebrate. You are part of an approach that has been used since 1980 with proven results across the country. Understanding the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ is critical to your Main Street organization's success. Use it alongside the other three guides, [Starting a Main Street Board Leadership](#), and [Executive Leadership](#) that provide more details..

### This guide explores

- ▶ Why downtown matters
- ▶ How to utilize the Main Street Approach™
- ▶ Who benefits from a Main Street initiative
- ▶ How to be a successful Main Street organization



Find examples of documents and resources by visiting [www.oregonmainstreet.org](http://www.oregonmainstreet.org) and look for this button:



### How to use this guide

This guide should be used in conjunction with the [Starting a Main Street, Board Leadership](#), and [Executive Leadership](#) companion guides. It is designed to be used in three ways:



**Answer questions:** Have you just become involved with your local Main Street organization? Welcome! This guide gives you an overview about this national movement in which you are now an important member.



**Learn together:** This guide gives you information and discussion questions to support conversations on revitalization within your organization and community. Use this guide to learn about the Main Street Approach™ with your fellow board or committee members. Discuss how you can be a more effective leader and partner in downtown revitalization.



**Get advice:** You are part of a larger network of other local Main Street organizations in your state's Main Street Program. Experts are ready to train you on what you need to know and connect you with colleagues in other communities. This guide gives you a common starting place.

## Why is downtown important?

It is critical for everyone involved in downtown revitalization to understand the value of our historic downtown districts.

Here are some reasons why Main Street matters:



**Identity:** When people think about your community, they often think about your downtown. It reflects how your community sees itself, what it values, and how it wants to move into the future. This sense of identity attracts visitors, entrepreneurs, and investors. Further, identity leads to stronger place attachment. Those communities where there is a stronger place attachment have higher levels of physical health, sense of well-being, economic growth, and longer lifespans\*.



**Economic Resiliency:** Your downtown is your central business district. People are employed there, businesses operate there, and new ventures are seeded there. Independent businesses bring people downtown, keeping profits in town and generating taxes that fund the community. Downtown commercial districts offer the connectivity start-up businesses require for success and generate more business per square foot than a sprawling box store. This makes downtown optimal for creating sustainable community wealth.



**Retail, Professional, & Civic Services:** Your downtown is an indispensable shopping and service center. It offers unique shopping opportunities and other key services, such as offices for attorneys, doctors, accountants, insurance providers and others. In many communities, the government seat is downtown, drawing people to offices where they can meet their representatives or pay bills.



**History:** Your downtown is the historic core of your community. The district contains historically significant buildings, sites, and stories that help highlight your community's heritage and culture. Your downtown today connects your community with the downtown of yesterday and tomorrow. Maintaining your historic downtown is also a smart use of resources; over the decades, vast amounts of public and private investment has gone into the existing infrastructure that makes up your downtown's built environment.

\*The Soul of the Community study, conducted over 3 years in 26 communities by Gallup for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, found all these positive impacts and more. [knightfoundation.org/sotc](http://knightfoundation.org/sotc)



### Discussion:

- Why is your downtown important?
- Who do you regularly see in your downtown?
- Who would you like to see?
- What story can you tell about your downtown?

## Your Main Street Support System

Originally established in 1980 as a program and now a nonprofit subsidiary of the of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center works with a nationwide network of State Main Street Programs and local communities to encourage preservation-based community revitalization. Over the past 40 years, the National Main Street Center has led the development of a national network of over 2,000 historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts – what we refer to as Main Street organizations - all united by these communities' tireless dedication to create vibrant, people-centered places to live, work, and play.

In 2015, the Center launched a new program brand for the network of Main Street organizations—Main Street America™—to reinvigorate the collective look, feel, and strategy to position Main Street as a leader locally, regionally, and nationally.

This rebranding supports and unifies the work of State Main Street Programs, which are your first contact for direction, resources, and technical assistance as a local Main Street organization. State Programs determine your designation as Main Street organizations, support you with services, and connect you to your peers throughout the state and national resources.



## State Main Street Program

There are resources available to Main Street organizations involved in the state network, such as:

- ♦ Professional development including a bi-annual conference, workshops, and trainings
- ♦ Direction on the Main Street Approach™ and support for organizational capacity
- ♦ Access to special programs and services with designation

## National Main Street Center

There are several national resources available exclusively to members which Main Street organizations may want to access:

- ♦ Formal accreditation, access to grants, and special programs
- ♦ Discounts to conferences, workshops, and webinars
- ♦ Industry-specific resources, publications, and templates



### Discussion:

How does being part of the Main Street network serve your organization?

If your organization is seeking designation as a Main Street, what steps have been taken or need to be taken with your State Coordinating Program?

How is your organization leveraging your designation as a Main Street or its position within the network?

## Main Street Approach™

The Main Street Approach™ is an asset-based economic development strategy. It is a comprehensive, incremental approach to revitalization built around a community’s unique heritage and attributes. Main Street organizations are locally-driven, funded, organized, and run. They are oriented around **8 Guiding Principles** which describe and direct their work.

**Comprehensive:** An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress; a process, not project!

**Incremental:** Small projects make a big difference. They show that “things are happening” on Main Street while honing the skills and confidence the organization will need to tackle more complex projects.

**Self-Help:** State Programs provide direction and technical assistance, but only local leadership can breed long-term success by demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

**Public/Private Partnership:** Main Street organizations need support and expertise from both public and private sectors. Effective partnerships recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each partner.

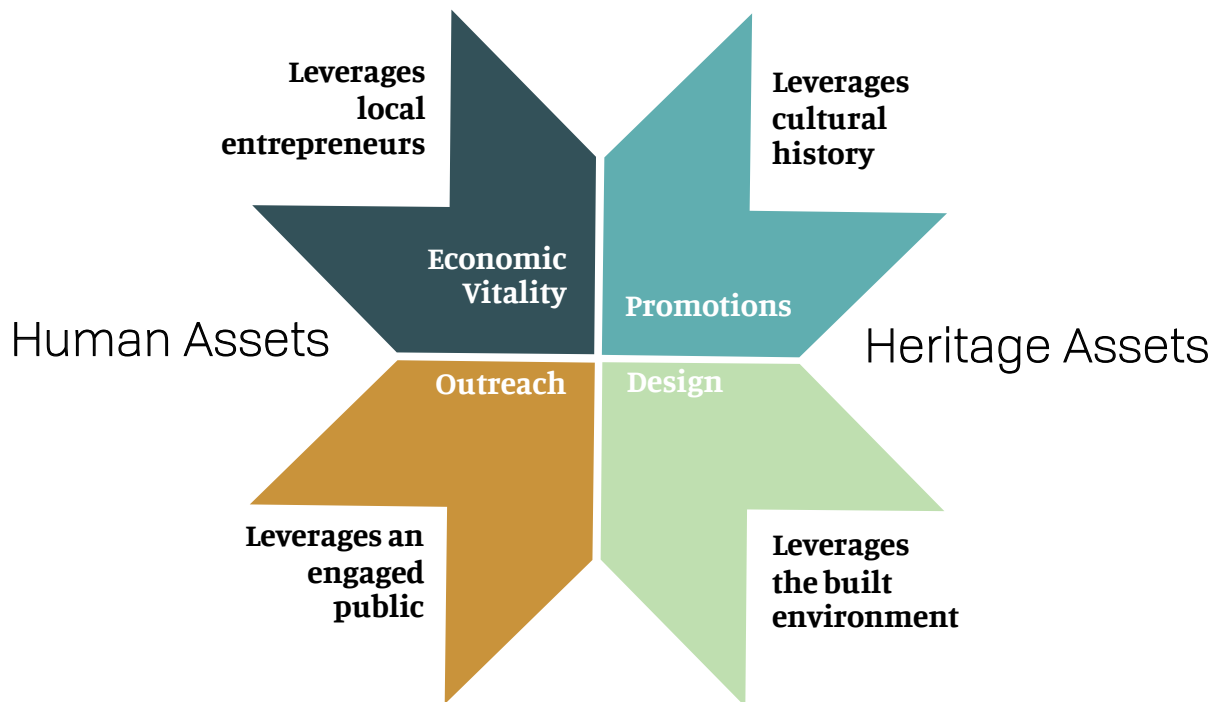
**Asset-based:** Unique local assets provide a solid foundation for successful revitalization.

**Quality:** From storefront design to promotional campaigns to special events, quality is key.

**Change:** Positively shifting community habits and attitudes is essential to a commercial district renaissance. The public needs to see change.

**Action-Oriented:** Frequent visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change.

Main Street organizations follow the **Main Street Four-Point Approach™**. The assets common to all historic commercial districts are heritage and human assets. Heritage assets encompass both built and cultural history. Human assets encompass both entrepreneurs (local/independent owner operators) and an engaged public (locals with a sense of ownership/buy-in). The Main Street Four-Point Approach™ has the most impact when it leverages all four assets together.



People are at the center of the Main Street movement. Organizations are volunteer-driven with volunteers mobilized through committees or teams that reflect the Main Street Approach™. Everyone with a stake in the commercial district and its future are typically involved. Merchants, property owners, the chamber of commerce, industries, local government, and residents all benefit from a healthy local economy and historic core that reflects the community’s heritage and personality.

Financial support for the organization comes from the local entities that have a stake in the downtown: city government, merchants, businesses, major employers, and the public. The success of the Main Street organization over the years lies in the fact that it is a local initiative, both organizationally and financially. When there is local buy-in, people care more about the success of the organization and become more involved.

## Main Street Partners & Benefits

At its best, a local Main Street organization represents and involves a coalition of organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals from throughout the community—everyone who cares about the community’s overall health. Different groups have different interests in the downtown, but all groups ultimately share the common goal of a vibrant commercial district. By identifying each partner agency’s greatest strengths and priorities, the Main Street organization can identify opportunities for collaboration to use community resources most efficiently and effectively.

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### Common Partners

Main Street organizations can draw partners from public and private institutions, for-profit and non-profit agencies, and individuals with diverse experience and backgrounds. Great partners and volunteers could come from anywhere, but commonly come from:

- Chambers of commerce
- City government
- County government
- Schools
- Civic clubs
- Financial institutions
- Historical societies
- Historic preservation organizations
- Residents
- Property owners
- Local media
- Visitors centers
- Regional tourism organizations
- Retail sector business owners
- Service sector business owners

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### Partner Benefits

The work of Main Street organizations provide a range of benefits. We’ve provided some examples experienced by the various stakeholders involved in Main Street initiatives. Use these lists as talking points.

#### Retail Business Owners

- Increased sales
- Improved image
- Increased value of business
- Coordinated efforts between local businesses
- Quality of business life
- Educational opportunities (seminars and workshops)
- Increased traffic
- District marketing strategies (promotion and advertising)
- Better business mix
- New market groups downtown
- Community pride

#### Property Owners

- Increased occupancy rates
- Rent stability
- Increased property values
- Reduced vandalism/crime deterrent
- Assistance with tax credits, grants, loan programs, design, and co-op maintenance
- Communication medium with other property owners
- Better image
- New uses, especially on upper floors

## Local Residents/Consumers

- Have needs/issues addressed
- Enhanced marketplace (better shopping and the benefits of shopping locally)
- Sense of pride in downtown
- Social/cultural activities
- Opportunities to keep kids in town
- Sense of hometown community
- Preservation of architecture and heritage
- Opportunity to participate/volunteer
- Better communication
- Political advocate
- Home values increase

## City Government

- Increased tax base
- More tourism
- Increased property values
- Increased number of jobs
- Better goals and vision
- Healthy economy
- Better services available
- Positive perception of downtown and community
- Better relations between city hall and private sector
- Increased volunteer base for city
- Industrial recruitment
- Develops consensus for political requests

- Impetus for public improvements and Certified Local Government (CLG) grant dollars
- Education resources for city leaders (officials) on planning and economic development

## County Government

- Increased public relations for county
- Increased tax base
- Draw for industry and county-wide area businesses
- Common partnership with city hall
- County/community pride
- Heritage preservation
- Quality of life, especially for employees
- Help with parking issues

## Local/Regional Economic Organizations

- Analyzes market and creates downtown brand
- Destination development through promotion
- Network of entrepreneurs and local businesses
- Collects public and private investment data
- Attracts new businesses
- Encourages business retention and succession
- Advocate for small businesses
- Promotes building reuse and improvement
- Builds business incubators and experimental retail
- Maps and capitalizes on existing assets
- Acts as information outlet



## Discussion

Think about people in your community who care about historic preservation and economic development:

Who are they?

Why do they care about these issues?

How can you best engage them in your work?



## Oregon Main Street

Oregon Main Street (OMS) serves as the statewide coordinating program in Oregon. It has the authority to designate communities and use the trademarked Main Street methodology through a licensing agreement with the National Main Street Center. OMS was established by the legislature in 2007. Originally housed in Oregon Business Development Department, OMS is now housed in Heritage Programs in Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and serves over 90 participating communities.

### Requirements and Benefits

#### Requirements

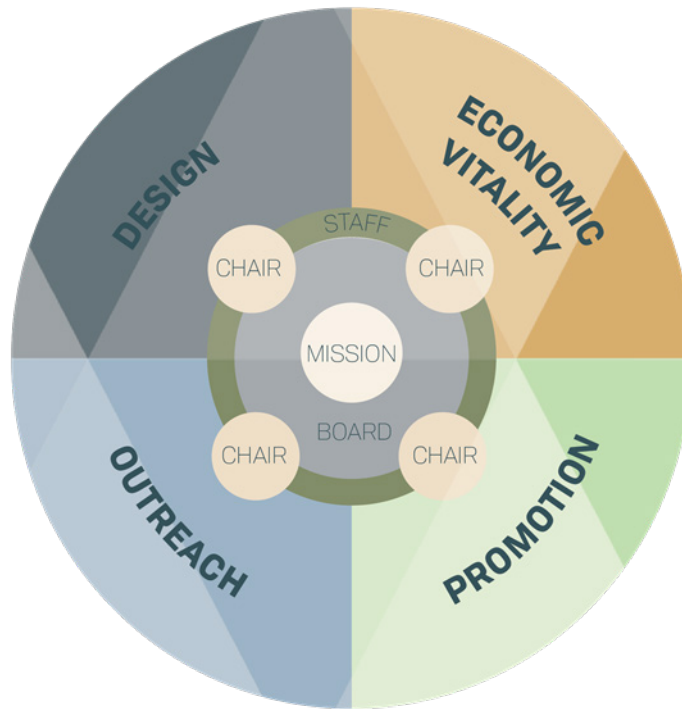
	Accredited Main Street	Designated Main Street	Affiliated Main Street	Rural Regional Main Street	Connected Communities
<p><b>Who Qualifies?</b> All Network members must have an identifiable Main Street district</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Nonprofit*</li> <li>FT executive or managerial staff position (PT under 5,000)</li> <li>At least two years at the Designated Main Street level</li> <li>Meet MSA Accreditation criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Nonprofit*</li> <li>FT executive or managerial staff position (PT under 5,000)</li> <li>Activity in each of Main Street Four Points™</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Either have an Independent Nonprofit or are committed to forming one* by year 2</li> <li>Minimum of PT staff support dedicated to main street effort</li> <li>Build and sustain comprehensive Main Street effort</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Independent Nonprofit or comparable regional organization serving as hub</li> <li>Dedicated paid staff position to serve as liaison w/OMS</li> <li>Minimum of three rural communities in hub</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cities and down-town organizations or other similar organizations are eligible to apply for the Connected Communities level</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maintaining Status</b> All Network members must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide a point of contact</li> <li>meet minimum training requirements</li> <li>fulfill minimum reporting requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to meet NMSC Accreditation criteria</li> <li>Mentoring as requested</li> <li>Participation in required trainings &amp; meetings</li> <li>Quarterly check-ins</li> <li>Submit quarterly report</li> <li>Use Main Street America™ brand &amp; follow branding standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to Main Street Approach™</li> <li>Participation in required trainings &amp; meetings</li> <li>Biannual check-ins</li> <li>Submit quarterly report</li> <li>Active board of directors</li> <li>Sustainable organizational structure with adequate funding and staffing levels</li> <li>Use Main Street America™ brand/stds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to Main Street Approach™</li> <li>Biannual check-ins</li> <li>Submit quarterly report</li> <li>Participation in required trainings &amp; meetings</li> </ul> <p><b>Within 3 years have:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget</li> <li>Comprehensive work in Main Street 4 pts.</li> <li>Staff plan</li> <li>Funding plan</li> <li>Use Main Street America™ brand/stds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to Main Street Approach™</li> <li>Submit quarterly report for each community participating in hub</li> <li>Participation in required trainings &amp; meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit annual report</li> <li>Provide primary contact info</li> <li>Attend at least one OMS training opportunity every two years</li> </ul>

## Benefits

	Accredited Main Street	Designated Main Street	Affiliated Main Street	Rural Regional Main Street	Connected Communities
<b>Technical Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Targeted TA</li> <li>Quarterly check-in</li> <li>Progress Visit every 3 yrs.</li> <li>Other Services as requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision Development</li> <li>Strategic Planning</li> <li>Quarterly check-in</li> <li>Progress Visit every 3 yrs.</li> <li>Targeted TA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main Street Overview</li> <li>Goal Development</li> <li>6-mo. check-in</li> <li>Community Assessment</li> <li>On-line trainings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Main Street Overview and community tour</li> <li>Regional training</li> <li>6-mo. check-in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Virtual Main Street Overview</li> <li>Virtual Organizational Development Consultation</li> </ul>
<b>Additional Benefits</b> All communities have access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statewide &amp; regional workshops</li> <li>Networking</li> <li>OMS Revit. grant</li> <li>OMS listserv</li> <li>On-line webinars &amp; resources</li> <li>Telephone consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TA grant/biennium</li> <li>Extra pts on OMSRG</li> <li>National recognition as an "Accredited Main Street" organization plus use of Accredited logo</li> <li>Access to local trainings and technical assistance</li> <li>Eligible for Excellence on Main awards</li> <li>Main Street Now Scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TA grant available after strategic planning</li> <li>National recognition as an "Affiliate Main Street" organization plus use of Affiliate logo</li> <li>Ability to apply for National Accreditation recognition</li> <li>Access to local trainings</li> <li>Eligible for Excellence on Main awards</li> <li>Main Street Now Scholarship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National recognition as an "Affiliate Main Street" organization plus use of MSA™ Affiliate logo when meet baseline criteria</li> <li>Access to trainings and technical assistance</li> <li>Eligible for Excellence on Main awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TA grant when funds available</li> <li>National recognition as an "Affiliate Main Street" organization plus use of MSA™ Affiliate logo when meet baseline criteria</li> <li>Access to trainings and technical assistance on regional basis</li> <li>Main Street Now Scholarship for hub staff liaison</li> <li>Eligible for Excellence on Main awards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity to learn more about ways communities are improving and enhancing their historic downtowns and traditional commercial neighborhoods</li> <li>Limited access to technical assistance when resources permit</li> </ul>

## Building a Strong Foundation

The Main Street Approach™ provides a roadmap to help you strengthen your organization over time. By learning about the roles each of the Four Point committees play, you can better understand how individual projects and initiatives build upon each other, can all align with overarching strategies, and create momentum for your district. The committees, staff, and board must all work toward the revitalization mission, with committee chairs acting as point of contact for committee work, staff as both leaders and connectors, and board as stewards of the mission. More in [Board](#) and [Executive Leadership](#) guides.



### Outreach<sup>1</sup>

The organizing component of the Main Street Approach™ lays the foundation to support a successful revitalization effort by ensuring adequate people and financial resources are available to implement approved projects and activities. Specifically, the Outreach Committee is responsible for coordinating:

- ◇ Communication strategies to create awareness of the overall revitalization effort and promote the purpose and activities of the organization
- ◇ Volunteer and leadership development, including recruitment, training, and recognition
- ◇ Developing an overall fundraising plan
- ◇ Fiscal oversight to ensure appropriate policies are in place and required reporting is completed

### Promotion

Promotion sells a positive image of the downtown district and encourages consumers and investors to live, work, shop, play, and invest there. By marketing a district's unique characteristics to residents, investors, business owners and visitors, an effective promotional strategy forges a positive image through advertising, media relations, retail promotional activity, special events and marketing campaigns carried out by local volunteers. These activities improve consumer and investor confidence in the district and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area by identifying and appealing to the district's market niches.

- ◇ Understanding the changing market—identifying both potential shoppers and the competition

1 This point has been traditionally referred to as "Organization", but we believe "Outreach" better explains its purpose.

- ◇ Identifying downtown assets—including people, buildings, heritage, and institutions
- ◇ Defining Main Street’s market niche—its unique position in the marketplace
- ◇ Campaigns, retail promotions, and special events to bring people back downtown

## Design

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape. Capitalizing on its best assets — such as historic buildings and pedestrian-oriented streets — is just part of the story. An inviting atmosphere, created through attractive window displays, well-managed parking areas, building improvements, street furniture, signs, sidewalks, lights and landscaping, conveys a positive visual message about the commercial district and what it has to offer. Design activities also include instilling good maintenance practices, as well as enhancing the physical appearance of the district and creating new productive commercial or residential space by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensible design management systems, and long-term planning.

- ◇ Educate others about design to enhance the image of each business as well as that of the district
- ◇ Provide design expertise to encourage quality improvements to private properties and public spaces
- ◇ Planning Main Street’s development—guiding future growth and shaping regulations
- ◇ Motivating others to make changes by creating incentives and targeting key projects

## Economic Vitality

Economic vitality strengthens a community’s existing economic assets while expanding and diversifying its economic base. The Main Street organization helps sharpen the competitiveness of existing business owners, helps to foster entrepreneurial start-ups and expansions, and recruits compatible new businesses and new economic uses to build a commercial district to create jobs and to respond to today’s consumers’ needs. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability and sales tax revenue of the district.

- ◇ Build up local economies by expanding the role entrepreneurs and innovation play downtown
- ◇ Strengthening existing businesses and recruiting new ones
- ◇ Infrastructure reuse—finding new economic uses for traditional Main Street buildings
- ◇ Develop financial incentives and capital for business improvement and retail operations layout



## Evolution of Local Main Street Organizations

Local Main Street organizations typically go through three distinct phases of development. The first two phases, Catalyst and Growth, focus on revitalizing the commercial district — bringing it back to a position of economic health. The third phase, Management, focuses on enhancing and maintaining the commercial district’s economic health.

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### Phase One: Catalyst (or Start-Up) Phase

#### Typically lasts 3-5 years

- ◇ Organization forms, outlines its major problems, builds collaborative partnerships, and develops a strategy for intervening in the cycle of commercial district disinvestment.
- ◇ Often, some organization fine-tuning must take place during this phase, as the organization learns how to form collaborative partnerships and use organizational leverage. It takes time to adjust and for the organization to “gel.” This fine-tuning is a normal part of evolution.
- ◇ Leaders are usually energetic, visionary people, likely to become overextended or burned out after a few years unless intentional effort is made to broaden participation.
- ◇ Fundraising in the Catalyst Phase is usually in the form of 3-4 year pledges, with support from both the public and private sectors. Because the new organization has no track record yet, it must, in essence, “sell a dream” to the community, asking people to take a leap of faith in providing funding for the initiative’s first few years.

#### Indications of transition from Phase One into Phase Two:

- ◇ Organization has a good understanding of the commercial district’s economic role in the regional economy
- ◇ Organization is beginning to think and act strategically
- ◇ Organization has put design education and guidance materials out for property owners
- ◇ Organization is viewed in the community as credible and successful, making future fundraising easier

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### Phase Two: Growth Phase

#### Typically lasts 5-10 years

- ◇ Organization uses the skills it has developed in the catalyst phase to tackle bigger issues (e.g. redevelopment of key buildings, small business development)
- ◇ Leaders must be good, solid managers skilled at helping organizations grow
- ◇ Fundraising should be based on a realistic business plan with a 5-10 year timeline, seeking investment from various constituencies, agencies, organizations, etc. for specific projects

#### Indications of transition from Phase Two into Phase Three:

- ◇ Generally no more than a 5-8 percent overall vacancy rate in the commercial district
- ◇ Generally at least 70 percent of the buildings which needed major rehabilitation at the beginning of the Main Street organization have now been rehabilitated
- ◇ Organization should have developed one or more sources of ongoing funding support or earned income — typically a special assessment district, municipal service contracts, investment income, and/or unrestricted TIF revenue

## Phase Three: Management Phase

### Ongoing

- ◇ It is a constant challenge at this point not to let complacency set in. The Main Street organization must strive to balance maintaining a comprehensive scope of work with identifying trends and opportunities for moving the district and program to the next level.
- ◇ The Main Street organization is operating at a sophisticated level with a highly engaged board and active volunteer base working hand-in-hand with the executive director.
- ◇ Staffing levels have evolved beyond the executive director to meet program needs in all but the smallest communities.

Organizations often cycle back through one or more of these three phases. Many get “stuck” at the transition between the Catalyst and Growth Phases — usually because of leadership. In fact, of the 18 percent of local Main Street organizations that have failed, over 90 percent have failed at this transition point. Failure is usually the result of one or more of the following:

- ◇ Failure to work in all Four Points of the Main Street Approach™, comprehensively and simultaneously
- ◇ Failure to build strategic partnerships
- ◇ Failure to hire professional staff
- ◇ Unrealistic expectations about the amount of work involved in commercial district revitalization and/or about the speed at which change occurs
- ◇ Failure to involve new leadership and to ensure the organization’s leadership includes both “visionaries” and growth-oriented managers

## Successful Main Street Traits

### Hallmarks of Effective Organizations:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Widespread community support                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiasm for the organization among board members and volunteers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A distinct constituency                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Well-run meetings with decisions made                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse and dynamic leadership                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Good relationship between board and staff                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A committed, dependable funding base                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Clear understanding of the roles of the board, committees, and staff. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic core budget                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Strong public-private partnerships                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> High level of volunteer participation                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive media coverage   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Realistic expectations for staff and volunteers’ abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Commitment to work and succeed over time, sustainably                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clear, shared sense of mission                             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Well-defined goals and work plans                          |  |



## Discussion

1. Everyone has a Main Street story. Some of us grew up on or near Main Street. Others of us bought our first musical instrument or met friends for ice cream in a store on Main Street.
  - ◇ What is your Main Street story?
  - ◇ Why is it important to you? What does it tell others about the power of a Main Street?
2. The Main Street Approach centers historic preservation as part of economic development.
  - ◇ What is the connection for you?
  - ◇ Why does this connection matter in your community?
3. Successful Main Street organizations follow these guiding principles. Read through them. Choose one or two to discuss. Why is this one important to explore more?

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Comprehensive</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Asset-based</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Incremental</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Quality</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Self-Help</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Change</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public/Private Partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Action-Oriented</b>
4. Volunteers are vital to a Main Street organization's success because they connect the mission with the community. It's the people who make it possible for local organizations to accomplish a significant amount of work.
  - ◇ How can you best engage people to be active volunteers?
  - ◇ How can you organize committees to attract and retain volunteers?
5. Your local Main Street organization is part of a state and national movement. You have colleagues across the country who care about many of the same things you do.
  - ◇ How can you best leverage your State Program network?
  - ◇ What resources from the Main Street America network are most useful?

## Companion Guides

This About Main Street guide is written for anyone wanting to know more about the Main Street Approach™ and how Main Street organizations serve their communities. It explores why downtown matters, what a Main Street organization is and who benefits from it, and how to be a successful Main Street organization.

### Other guides available:

#### Starting a Main Street

This guide is written for people new to Main Street and considering starting a Main Street organization in their own community. It explores why your community might use the Main Street Approach™, how to tap into state and national resources, start a Main Street organization, and become a nonprofit.

#### Board Leadership

This guide is written for Main Street organization board members and the staff with whom they work. It explores the basics of board governance, financial management, nonprofit law, and each section reviews what board members need to know as well as tools to help strengthen board leadership.

#### Executive Leadership

This guide is written for Main Street executive leaders and staff. It is also a resource for board members to understand a nonprofit executive director's role and their relationship to boards.

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