

Dublin

Downtown Assessment Resource Team Report

Prepared by Heritage Ohio Inc. | 2020

Dublin Downtown Assessment Resource Team Report

This document was created by Heritage Ohio Inc. for Dublin as the final report for the Downtown Assessment Resource Team visit that was conducted from March 3 and 4, 2020.



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INTRODUCTION



PROCESS

On March 3 and 4, 2020, Heritage Ohio coordinated a Downtown Assessment Resource Team (DART) visit to Dublin, Ohio. The resource team included: Joyce Barrett, Executive Director, Frances Jo Hamilton, Director of Revitalization, and Thomas Starinsky, Associate Director, Cleveland, and Susie Bibler, Executive Director, Main Street Delaware. The primary goal of the DART visit was to create a series of recommendations for Dublin to assist them in their efforts to continue their revitalization efforts in the downtown, with a secondary goal of educating Dublin community leaders, task force and residents on the principles of the Main Street Program, and to foster additional buy-in for local revitalization efforts.

The team met for lunch on day one of the DART visit at DCRC Tallas - 5600 Post Rd, Dublin with the task force. During the lunch meeting, we discussed the history of downtown revitalization in Dublin as well as the current community dynamics. The DART team asked a number of questions of the task force and learned a great deal of important background and current information. Following lunch, the DART team members were given a guided tour of the downtown. Following the tour, the team reviewed findings and finalized a strategy for the community visioning session.

➡	Identify the commercial district's major challenges, opportunities, and needs;
➡	Provide community members with information about the Main Street Approach™ to commercial district revitalization;
➡	Create an opportunity to engage the community and garner support for the downtown revitalization program;
➡	Provide hands-on and immediate actions for items that could enhance the commercial district;
➡	Allow the community to hear outside perspectives on local issues; and
➡	Give a clear path to becoming a Main Street Program community and earn National Accreditation through the National Main Street Center.



PURPOSE OF THE DART VISIT

A Downtown Assessment Resource Team visit is for any community or district in Ohio, which would like assistance in developing or enhancing a downtown revitalization program. The community may be in the beginning stages of a downtown revitalization program, or it may have a program that has been in existence for some time. For the beginning program, it is designed to set priorities, give guidance, and provide the consensus necessary for taking significant steps towards providing direction to the downtown. It also serves to introduce the community to the basic building blocks that make a comprehensive, long-term program using The Main Street Approach™, developed by the National Main Street Center, which tackles revitalization and development through: Economic Vitality, Promotion, Design, and Organization, known collectively as the Main Street Four Points.

Heritage Ohio's Downtown Assessment Resource Team spends one and a half days in the community to assess the downtown district's revitalization needs and opportunities. The assessment process had several functions:

The community visioning session provided a great deal of insight in to the general feeling of citizens regarding the downtown. Community members were consistent about what they want to see take place in the downtown. Many creative ideas were shared and a great deal of insight was gained into the Main Street program and goals for downtown.

The team collected a substantial amount of information from the first day's tour, interaction with the community, and discussions. The team incorporated those recommendations into a round table discussion the following morning with the task force. The community visioning presentations are available to all participants, as well as the general public. Along with the presentations, the DART team has written a series of recommendations based on the Main Street Four-Point Approach™, included in the following report.





HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

The resource team, comprised of four commercial district revitalization professionals, evaluated downtown Dublin, presented observations of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the downtown district, and made recommendations for strengthening the downtown to ensure the organization continues to move forward in the right direction. The team's recommendations for implementing long-term, historic preservation-based revitalization and management goals for the downtown business district are presented in this report.

All recommendations are based on the premise that in order to successfully implement a revitalization effort, a strong partnership must exist among all task force members, including the City of Dublin, other local organizations, volunteers, and significant stakeholders. The resource team bases its observations and advice on years of field experience with many different communities, but the citizens of Dublin know their community best. Therefore, the selection of local revitalization projects and activities should be based on the community's priorities and what can realistically be accomplished.

The resource team report should be distributed at least to all appropriate city staff and elected officials, and the board of directors of the program that will head this effort. Relevant sections should be distributed to each of the committees, other volunteers, and to the community as deemed appropriate. It is strongly recommended that the task force members read the report, discuss the recommendations, and develop or adjust their annual and long-term work plans accordingly. At minimum, the task force should fully review this document and use it to guide the committee's future actions and assess the progress in further developing its Main Street™ program.

This report should not supplant the recommendations already provided in any current plans or initiatives the community is undertaking. The DART report supplements prior recommendations with advice on how to develop and build the other critical aspects of a truly comprehensive Main Street™ revitalization program.

Finally, the DART Visit is just one part of a long relationship between Dublin and Heritage Ohio. The resource team strongly encourages the Dublin task force group to contact Heritage Ohio, to discuss the contents of this report. It is hoped that the visit and this report will serve as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue and discussion about what's best for the downtown and how to achieve it.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

BUILD A FOUNDATION FOR THE ORGANIZATION

Dublin has a unique position in that a city-wide task force has been put in place to address the downtown revitalization as well as other key points of interest in the city that need attention. The current assembled group should look at the organization portion of this report and make a sound decision to either maintain the organizations as they stand or to implement an effort toward establishing a “Main Street” Board of Directors and begin the process of becoming a “Main Street” Community. This established organization would focus solely on the historic downtown in collaboration with the Bridge Park development.

BUSINESS OWNER CONSIERGE SERVICES

In a traditional Main Street organization, the Economic Vitality committee would establish a business owner support system to assist with issues faced by local entrepreneurs. This committee would be well versed in the city’s rules and regulations as well as contacts for key city officials to assist with items like building permits, signage permits, sidewalk permits, etc. Building a system through which the ‘Main Street’ concept of business assistance is in place and gives a soft place for new and potential business owners to find support and direction.

CONNECT SHOPPERS TO THE HISTORIC DOWNTOWN, EVEN DURING AND AFTER COVID

In these trying times we must find a way to nurture our local businesses and keep them alive. Putting together a committee dedicated to the assistance of small businesses and offering online assistance is time sensitive right now. Many communities are finding success in recording short video interviews with small business owners, giving them a platform to talk about their products and services but also how customers can access those businesses in this remote realm. A short 2-minute video can be used on social media, websites and you tube channels to offer your businesses another route to the public and a way to increase revenue. This will also promote the one on one connections that are so crucial to catering to independent business owners and endearing them to their customer base.

DEFINE WHAT HISTORIC PRESERVATION MEANS TO DUBLIN

The Dublin community seems to be disjointed with each group having different wants and needs and overall vision. The community would benefit from a thoughtful planning process with the main purpose of bringing the community – city, organizations, commercial property owners, businesses, and residents – together. The process should be designed to engage task forces on an equal plane to define the community’s overarching goals.



BACKGROUND

HERITAGE OHIO

As Ohio's official historic preservation and Main Street coordinating organization, Heritage Ohio fosters economic development and sustainability through preservation of historic buildings, revitalization of downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts, and promotion of cultural tourism.

Helping people to save the places that matter, build community, live better.

Ohioans crave authentic, dynamic places found in rejuvenated downtowns and historic districts. Preservation and revitalization efforts enrich communities and make them appealing to all ages, as better places in which to live, work, play, invest, and visit.

Revitalization is the most basic economic development program. It sustains our communities through existing resources, prioritizing job intensive rehabilitation for existing buildings.

Historic Preservation and downtown revitalization enrich our quality of life, enhance our neighborhoods, and revitalize communities by protecting the buildings, landscapes and landmarks we have inherited.

"...at its best, preservation engages the past in a conversation with the present over a mutual concern for the future."

William Murtagh, The First Keeper of the National Register

REVITALIZATION

Heritage Ohio provides technical assistance to downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts which want to engage in grassroots revitalization. Our largest Program is the Ohio Main Street program, which follows the trademarked 4-point approach of the National Main Street Center.

PRESERVATION

Heritage Ohio provides assistance through a variety of programs including the Top Opportunities Program; Historic Theaters Initiative; Preservation Easement Program as well as one-on-one advice and consultation to organizations, communities and individuals saving the places that matter in Ohio.

ADVOCACY

Heritage Ohio supports policy efforts such as the Ohio Historic Preservation Tax Credit to promote tools to revitalize Ohio towns and cities.



OHIO MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Heritage Ohio is the designated state Main Street coordinating program of the National Main Street Center®. As the state partner of the Main Street Center, we provide participating local Main Street organizations with the training, tools, information, and networking they need to be successful. Structured as a non-profit organization, Heritage Ohio is positioned to give local Main Street programs professional advice and guidance in the use of the proven Main Street Four-Point Approach™ to start or strengthen their revitalization efforts.

The Ohio Main Street Program, administered by Heritage Ohio, works with communities across the state to revitalize their historic or traditional commercial areas. Based in historic preservation, the Main Street approach was developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation to save historic commercial architecture and the fabric of American communities' built environment, but has become a powerful economic development tool as well.

The primary functions of The Ohio Main Street Program are to:

- » “translate” and tailor the Main Street approach according to the specific economic conditions and development tools and resources in Ohio;
- » competitively select Ohio's communities with traditional commercial districts for participation in the Main Street program;
- » provide an appropriate scope of technical assistance and training to Ohio Main Street organizations;
- » provide networking, advocacy, and encouragement to participating Ohio Main Street programs;
- » serve as a liaison with the National Trust Main Street Center; and
- » identify which Ohio Main Street programs annually meet the standards of National Main Street Program Accreditation.

The Main Street program is designed to improve all aspects of the downtown or central business district, producing both tangible and intangible benefits. Improving strategic direction, strengthening public participation, and making downtown a fun place to visit are as critical to Main Street's future as retaining and recruiting businesses, rehabilitating and finding new uses for buildings, and organizing parking. By building on downtown's inherent assets, rich architecture, personal service, and most of all, a sense of place, the Main Street Approach has rekindled entrepreneurship, downtown cooperation and civic concern. It has earned national recognition as a practical strategy appropriately scaled to a community's local resources and conditions. Also, because it is a locally driven program, all initiative stems from local issues and concerns.

The Four-Point methodology works to create a total image for the community: providing the retail/professional area with its necessary market niche, creating a cohesive visual identity unique to the community, and nurturing a cultural ambiance associated with the community's location, appearance, and way of life.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

- » Quarterly Training/Networking Series
- » National Main Street Conference registration
- » Heritage Ohio Annual Conference registration
- » Executive director orientation
- » Email/phone consultation
- » On-site technical assistance visit
- » Strategic Planning visit
- » Annual Evaluation
- » Rehab Resource Team
- » Retail-Minded, and Revitalize Ohio magazine
- » Main Street Google Groups List

OHIO MAIN STREET REINVESTMENT STATISTICS

Total Private Investment

\$1.49 Billion

Total Public Investment

\$153 Million

Total Investments

\$1.65 Billion

Net New Businesses

1,392

Net New Jobs.

4,510 Full-Time/4,647 Part-Time

Total Cost Per New Full-Time Job Created

\$11,609

Reinvestment Ratio

\$31.00 To \$1.00

Volunteer Hours Donated

Over 1 million

1998 – 2017





National Main Street Center

a subsidiary of the
National Trust *for* Historic Preservation

NATIONAL MAIN STREET CENTER

Established in 1980 as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center, Inc. works with a nationwide network of coordinating programs and local communities to encourage preservation-based community revitalization, and has equipped more than 2,000 older commercial districts with the skills, and organizing framework they need for renewal during its 35-year history. An exciting new chapter for the organization began on July 1, 2013, when the National Main Street Center launched as an independent subsidiary of the National Trust. This transition enables Main Street to build on its three-decade record of success, with new leadership and new resources that will help communities respond to evolving needs and opportunities in the commercial district revitalization field.

As a nonprofit organization, the National Main Street Center provides information, offers technical assistance, holds conferences and workshops, and conducts research and advocacy on critical revitalization issues. The proven Main Street Four-Point Approach® provides a framework for communities to organize themselves for success, improve the design of their neighborhoods, promote their district, and enhance the economic base of a community.

Cumulatively, commercial districts taking part in the Main Street program have spurred the rehabilitation of more than 246,000 buildings, and generated \$59.6 billion in new investment, with a net gain of more than 502,728 new jobs, and over 115,000 new businesses. Every dollar a community uses to support its local Main Street program leverages an average of \$25 in new investment, making Main Street one of the most successful economic development strategies in America. These community benefits would not be possible without the training, education, and leadership of the National Main Street Center.





MAIN STREET AMERICA™

For more than 35 years, the National Main Street Center has been helping communities revitalize their downtowns and commercial districts. Collectively, the movement is the leading voice for preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country. Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, Main Street America™ represents the broad diversity that makes this country so unique. Working together, the programs that make up the Main Street America network help to breathe new life into the places people call home.

The Main Street movement grew out of a recognition that a community is only as strong as its core. In an era when many people had given up hope about the commercial and cultural viability of downtown, and when suburbs, shopping malls, and big box retailers were dominating the American landscape, this seemed like an unlikely proposition. But, the practical framework outlined by the Main Street Approach, as well as the passion of the professionals and volunteers who make up the Main Street network, helped to pave the way for the renaissance of healthy, vibrant downtowns that we're experiencing today.

The community development field has changed dramatically over the course of the past three and a half decades. In many ways, new trends in planning, development, and preservation build off principles that those in the Main Street network have long understood: that revitalization must be inclusive and representative of the community, that a place's distinctive characteristics and older and historic buildings are its greatest assets, and that fostering a strong local-business environment creates enormous rewards.

The National Main Street Center is based in Chicago, Illinois, with an office in Washington, DC, and field staff located throughout the country. For more information, visit www.mainstreet.org.



APPROACH

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH™

Main Street-style transformation is a combination of art and science: communities first need to learn about the local economy, its primary drivers, and its regional context (the science), but they also need to convey that special sense of place through storytelling, preserving the older and historic structures that set it apart, broad and inclusive civic engagement, and marketing (the art). To support this powerful network, the National Main Street Center has a revitalization framework—the Main Street Approach™—that helps communities leverage both the art and science of downtown revitalization to create a better quality of life for all.

The Main Street Approach™ is most effective in places where community residents have a strong emotional, social, and civic connection and are motivated to get involved and make a difference. This approach works where existing assets—such as older and historic buildings and local independent businesses—can be leveraged. It encourages communities to take steps to enact long term change, while also implementing short term, inexpensive and placed-based activities that attract people to the commercial core and create a sense of enthusiasm and momentum about their community. Both small-city downtowns and urban neighborhoods throughout the nation are renewing their community centers with Main Street methodology.

The result of these community-driven efforts are places with strong social cohesion and economic opportunity; they are places that support and sustain innovation and opportunity; places where people of diverse perspectives and backgrounds come together to shape the future.

It's helpful to think of the Main Street Approach™ consisting of three tightly integrated components: community visioning and marketing understanding (the inputs), transformation strategies (implemented using the Four Points), and implementation and measurement (the outcomes).

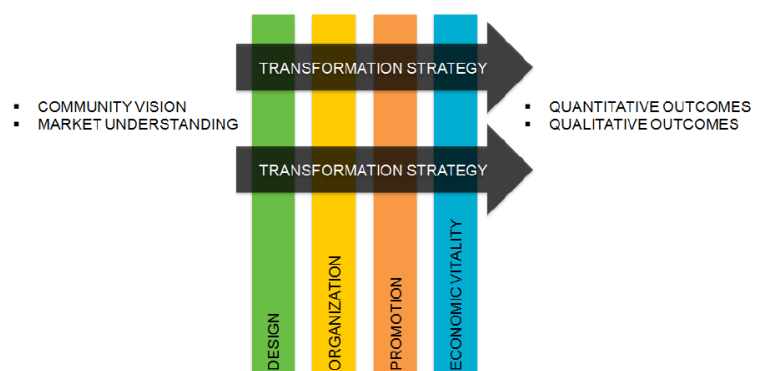
1. IDENTIFY THE COMMUNITY VISION FOR SUCCESS

The Main Street Approach™ begins with creating a vision for success on Main Street that is rooted in a solid understanding of the market realities of the district, and is informed by broad community engagement. Main Street promotes a community-driven process that brings diverse stakeholders from all sectors together, inviting them to be proactive participants in the revitalization process. This essential step provides a foundation for outlining the community's own identity, expectations, and ideals while confirming real and perceived perceptions, needs and opportunities. It also ensures that the vision is a true reflection of the diversity of the community.

2. CREATE COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

A vision of success alone is not enough. Communities must work together to identify key strategies, known as Community Transformation Strategies that will provide a clear sense of priorities and direction for the revitalization efforts. Typically, communities will find two to three Community Transformation Strategies are needed to help reach a community vision. These strategies will focus on both long and short-term actions that will move a community closer to achieving its goals.

Work on these strategies would align with the four key areas Main Streets have been using as a guiding framework for over 35 years: Economic Vitality, Promotion, Design, and Organization, known as the Main Street Four Points.





Organization

A strong organizational foundation is key for a sustainable Main Street revitalization effort. This can take many forms, from a standalone non-profit organization, to a special assessment district, to a program housed in a municipality or existing community development entity. Regardless of the organizational type, the focus is on ensuring that all organizational resources (partners, funding, volunteers, etc.) are mobilized to effectively implement the Community Transformation Strategies.

Design



A focus on Design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical elements of downtown while capitalizing on the unique assets that set the commercial district apart. Main Streets enhance their appeal to residents and visitors alike with attention to public space through the creation of pedestrian friendly streets, inclusion of public art in unexpected areas, visual merchandising, adaptive reuse of older and historic buildings, more efficiently-designed buildings, transit oriented development, and much more.

Promotion



Promoting Main Street takes many forms, but the ultimate goal is to position the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and the hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics. This can be done through highlighting cultural traditions, celebrating and preserving important architecture and history, encouraging local businesses to market cooperatively, offering coordinated specials and sales, and hosting special events aimed at changing perceptions of the district and communicating to residents, investors, businesses, and property-owners that this place is special.

Economic Vitality



Revitalizing a downtown or neighborhood commercial district requires focusing on the underlying Economic Vitality of the district. This work is rooted in a commitment to making the most of a community's unique sense of place and existing historic assets, harnessing local economic opportunity and creating a supportive business environment for small business owners and the growing scores of entrepreneurs, innovators, and localists alike. With the nation-wide growing interest in living downtown, supporting downtown housing is also a key element of building Economic Vitality.

3. IMPACT AND MEASUREMENT

To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects – both shorter and longer-term activities that add up to meaningful change. Activities aligned with shorter-term strategies focus on highly visible changes that are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding, helping to secure buy-in from community members and rallying volunteers. Placemaking strategies – those actions which focus on what can be achieved “lighter, quicker, and cheaper” are particularly effective and important in energizing the community and demonstrating short-term progress.

While shorter-term, highly visible activities are critical to Main Street's success, communities must also sustain focus on implementation of longer-term projects and activities that are the building blocks for substantial change over time. Identifying milestones for these longer-term projects can be important in creating a sense of forward momentum and reinforcing to the community the need for sustained focus on revitalization efforts.

Coinciding with implementation is an equally important focus on measuring progress and results. Healthy Main Streets are built on a commitment to measure outcomes. We live in a time where public resources are scarce, and competition for private resources is fierce. Main Streets must be able to demonstrate the wise use of resources, which translates to real change on the ground: new jobs added to a Main Street, new businesses open, buildings redeveloped, and numerous other metrics of success. The National Main Street Center, together with our network of over 45 Main Street Coordinating Partners, works to make measuring results on Main Street easier and accurate



THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Building on the Main Street Approach™, the following principles are a set of values that can help staff and volunteers articulate a Main Street program's mission and focus energy. These principles are an easily understandable, common-sense teaching tool and can be tailored depending on community priorities and needs.

COMPREHENSIVE

No single focus — lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events — can revitalize Main Street. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street's Four Points, is essential.

INCREMENTAL

Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate that “new things are happening” in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Main Street district grows and participants' understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street is able to tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area.

SELF-HELP

No one else will save your Main Street. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they'll reap by investing time and money in Main Street — the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

PARTNERSHIPS

Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street's revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.

Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets: Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.

QUALITY

Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process — from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and “cut and paste” efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.

CHANGE

Skeptics turn into believers and attitudes on Main Street will turn around. At first, almost no one believes Main Street can really turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite — public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices, altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

IMPLEMENTATION

To succeed, Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is under way and succeeding. Small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization activity creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation.



ORGANIZATION

COMMITTEE FUNDAMENTALS

This element of the Main Street Approach™ focuses on building collaboration among a broad range of public and private sector groups, organizations, and constituencies. The Organization Committee plays a key role in keeping the board, committees, and staff functioning by attracting people and money to the Main Street program. To succeed, this committee must take responsibility for managing these financial and logistical aspects of the non-profit organization:

Raising money—for projects and administration, from donations and sponsorships;

Overseeing volunteer activities—by recruiting and supervising people and rewarding good work;

Promoting the program—to downtown interests and the public;

Managing finances—by developing good accounting procedures.

By getting everyone working toward the same goal, your Main Street program can provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy for your downtown or neighborhood business district. Through volunteer recruitment and collaboration with partners representing a broad cross section of the community, your program can incorporate a wide range of perspectives into its efforts. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various task forces.



Thankful for
Volunteers who
give so many hours
for so many wonderful
causes.

OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Organization point of the Main Street Four-Point Approach™ establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district. By getting everyone working toward the same goal, your Main Street program can provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy for your downtown or neighborhood business district. Through volunteer recruitment and collaboration with partners representing a broad cross-section of the community, your program can incorporate a wide range of perspectives into its efforts. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORGANIZATION

Organization is the key to a successful commercial district revitalization program. A strong, viable organization provides the stability necessary to build and sustain long-term revitalization. Developing a management program that is well-structured, well-funded, and committed to the future is the only way to sustain the revitalization effort. For these reasons, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center believes establishing a sound organizational base for the commercial district should be a primary goal of a revitalization program. In its most basic form, a successful Main Street program should have the following characteristics:

- » Widespread community support for the commercial district revitalization process from both the public and private sectors.
- » Vision and mission statements that reflect current conditions in the district and community, as well as goals.
- » Comprehensive work plan based on the Main Street Approach™.
- » Commitment to preserving and reusing the district's historic and unique assets.
- » Active board of directors and committees.
- » Adequate operating budget and dependable sources of funding.
- » Paid, professional management staff.
- » Program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers.
- » Method of documenting and reporting key statistics and accomplishments.
- » Membership in the National Main Street Network and affiliation with a statewide, citywide, or regional Main Street coordinating program.

ESTABLISHING ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The formation of a board begins with interested parties, stakeholders, downtown business owners, downtown building owners, community members, etc. as is laid out in the *Board of Directors* section of this chapter. Recognizing the missing pieces of the group and filling those board seats will create a well-rounded group of interested community leaders, as well as long-standing stakeholders to support the organization as it moves forward.

Creating a well-defined vision of the district, and forming the mission statement as the method for reaching the goal, will help to define the overall image package you utilize for the community.

Using the Main Street Four Point Approach™ will give stability to the program when pursued equally and vigorously; however, of the four committees, the Organization Committee will be the guiding force. It is essential that the program have several avenues of financial support, including sponsorship, membership, and government



collaboration. The four Main Street committees should be established, based on the four points, and committee chairs appointed. All committees will need to identify and recruit volunteers. DART participants would be the best place to start in staffing these committees. Also, ask committee members to bring others they feel possess valuable skills or resources and have an interest in Dublin's success.

Committee Handbooks | DART Attachment Folder

Hire an executive director as laid out in more detail in the *Staff section* later in this chapter.

Work with the City of Dublin to ensure municipal membership to Heritage Ohio to increase governmental buy-in for downtown Dublin, as well as offering several educational and programmatic resources to the city staff and/elected officials. A municipal membership is \$500 annually.

Heritage Ohio Municipal Membership | Go to HeritageOhio.org/support-us/ and select 'Community Membership'

Consider applying for Ohio Main Street status which gives the program greater access to technical assistance, training, materials, networking and on-going support from Heritage Ohio that would greatly benefit Downtown Dublin in its efforts to continue and enhance its downtown revitalization program. More about this can be found later in this chapter in the Achieve Main Street Status section, the fees are \$3,950 per year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The primary purpose of the board of directors is to ensure the organization is on track with regard to staying true to the mission, meeting its goals, and to craft policies in support of those goals. Nonprofit organizations are operated by two distinct groups: the board of directors, which determines policies and plans, and the organization staff and/or committees, which carry out plans and implement policies. It is critical that the board be the source of leadership and guidance for the organization. As an organization that brings many people, groups, and resources together with a broad purpose of revitalizing your downtown, there will be many distractions. Without the leadership of the board, it is nearly impossible for the committees to stay on track towards common goals and the organization will not be as effective.

In addition to this core duty of leadership, the board of directors will be responsible for strategic planning, budgeting, hiring and managing executive staff and assuring that the organization has the funds to accomplish the work. None of these duties end when staff is hired. The organization does not belong to the staff; it belongs to the community and should continue to be led by the board which is a representation of the community. The local program's board of directors should be a strong, working board, capable of developing and implementing policies to create positive change. The success of a commercial revitalization effort depends largely on the board's ability to identify and mobilize resources, build volunteer support, develop new leadership, and maintain clear focus on the district's needs and opportunities.

The Main Street Board

The board should be a decisive, action-oriented group representing a cross-section of the community. Ideally, the board should come from the following groups: the commercial district's property owners, retailers, professionals, and other business owners; lenders; city and/or county government officials; leadership from local schools or libraries; heads of neighborhood organizations; recognized community leaders; local civic organizations; preservation and/or historical societies; or interested active citizens.

Identifying Board Members

When choosing board members, look for three types of people: those who will become actively involved in planning and implementing projects; those who can provide needed services or information, such as accountants, architects, or lawyers; and those who have funding or access to funding and resources that could be used to finance the program's projects. In short, board members should all bring the following to the organization in one form or another:



- » Commitment to the Mission
- » Leadership
- » Time
- » Enthusiasm
- » Funding
- » Community Respect
- » Knowledge and Skills

Seek to balance the composition of the board with diversity that is representative of the community, ethnically, by gender, by age, by class, etc. within the context of these criteria. While always striving to be the best representation of the community possible, at a bare minimum each board member should offer the following:



- » A demonstrated interest in the program's purpose and goals;
- » Specific experience in and/or knowledge of administration, finance, program development, advertising, public relations, commercial district activity, communications, design or economic development;
- » Representation of a public or private organization in the community; and
- » A commitment of 4 to 10 hours a month.
- » A board profile grid can be a useful tool for the creation and development of the board to ensure that the board is a full reflection of the community and consists of the talent needed to satisfy the mission of the downtown revitalization group.

Board Profile Grid | DART Attachment Folder: Board Development

Board Member Education

It is highly beneficial to have an orientation process for new board members and that they pursue continuing education that will help them succeed in their role as the leadership of the organization. It does not matter if the orientation process is a formal packet or a simple conversation with the Executive Committee and director, what matters is that new board members have a clear understanding what their role and responsibilities are and are able to get enough information to hit the ground running. The *Board Member Handbook* can be a great place to start with the creation of materials for board orientation.

Board Member Handbook | DART Attachment Folder: Board Development

Continuing education for board members can happen as a group or individually. A few ways to continue the board's education: have a relevant speaker address the board at an annual retreat, attend Heritage Ohio's webinars, workshops, or annual conference, take classes online or at a local college, read books and articles, etc.

Officers

Usually elected by the organization's board or by the membership, the officers typically include a president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. (In non-membership organizations, the board generally elects officers; in the case of downtown development authorities and city council, the local government appoints them.) It is best to rotate one-third of the members off the board each year to prevent burnout, attract new leadership, and avoid domineering personalities. This requires staggering terms for the original board members. If more people are interested or need to be involved, remember that there are plenty of standing and ad hoc committees on which these individuals can serve.



Ex Officio Board Members

These are people who serve on the board because of another office they hold, such as the mayor, council member, or the president of a local institution like a university or the chamber of commerce. If the current mayor resigns, for example, and a new mayor is elected, the new mayor will take the board seat. Sometimes an ex officio member will designate a staff person to serve in his or her place. Be careful, however, not to put too many ex officio members on the board, as their role is often one of communication, not leadership. Ex officio members can be voting or nonvoting, depending on the Main Street program's bylaws.

Executive Committee

Some Main Street programs create an Executive Committee to help manage and focus the board's responsibilities. Typically composed of the board's officers, the Executive Committee can streamline board meetings by handling administrative items that do not merit full board discussion. Non-controversial items, such as record-keeping systems, approval of staff vacations, office equipment, etc., can drag out board meetings unnecessarily. The Executive Committee can also be a good place to start policy discussion so that when the discussion reaches the full board, it is already focused. Be careful, however, to limit policy discussion in the Executive Committee; the entire board should be involved in making policy decisions. Also, keep the Executive Committee small - more than four committee members become a miniature board of directors. Many boards are small enough to interact well and effectively handle the organization's housekeeping details. If this is the case for your board, an Executive Committee may be an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.

Strategic Planning

Initial goal setting and long range planning should take place at the board level. Those goals for the organization should then be handed down to the committees to decide what projects support the organization's set goals. At that point, each committee will create projects and begin work plans. Consider holding a work-planning session so that each committee is coordinating the same goals. Utilize the assets and challenges to formulate the initial goals and objectives and to address known issues confronting the organization and downtown area.

- » Board of Directors set 1-3 over-arching goals for the organization.
- » Goals are then passed down to the committees.
- » Committees will generate programs, projects, events or activities that will satisfy the goals set forth by the board.
- » Committees will generate work plans to support each project, program, event, and activity.
- » Work plans will be handed to the board of directors for approval before committees begin work.

Blank Work Plan | DART Attachment Folder: Work Plans

Budget

With Executive Committee and committee chairs, the treasurer should develop a one-to-five-year budget. Set realistic goals as to where you want this organization to grow. Continue to evaluate and update these budgets and make sure that assigned committees are following through on securing the projected financial commitments.

- » Procedures for expending funds should be in the form of a written policy. Heritage Ohio will provide example financial policies and procedures document which can be tailored to downtown and approved by the board.

OMSP Recommended Financial Policy | DART Attachment Folder: Financial Policies



INCORPORATE

Though there are some exceptions, most local Main Street programs operate as nonprofit organizations. The structure suits the purpose of the main street group; being mission driven, having a board of directors that is representative of the community they serve, and leveraging resources to be a positive force in the community are all built in. Incorporating allows a group to be taken more seriously and opens up doors for additional resources not accessible to unincorporated groups or for profit business.

Handbook for Nonprofits | DART Attachment Folder: Non Profit Status

Financial Reporting

- » Make sure your organization is prepared to file appropriate papers with the Ohio Secretary of State and the Ohio Attorney General's offices.
- » If your nonprofit has revenues of more than \$25,000 a year, you must file an annual report (Form 990) with the IRS. Form 990-EZ is a shortened version of Form 990 and is designed for use by small exempt organizations with incomes of less than \$1 million.

Filling out 990 | DART Attachment Folder: Financial Policies

COMMUNICATIONS

The distinction needs to be clear that the Organization Committee communicates about all aspects of the organization. The Promotion Committee promotes downtown events and activities. Obtaining funding for the organization means you have to get credit for everything the organization does.

- » Create a strong relationship with local media. Make sure to send press releases for everything you do so that credit is properly given. If something is mis-assigned, make sure to call and correct.
- » Develop an elevator speech for all board members and volunteers about why this group has come together, including the mission and vision of the organization. This document should be something that allows people to add their own sentiments while still speaking from a common central theme.
- » Develop a video or PowerPoint presentation for community viewing on your mission, vision, board and program goals.
- » Echo these ideals in all forms of communication, website, social media, etc. Make sure branding is clear and consistent.

Ensure you have correct contact information for all building and business owners. Decide what type of information and the frequency you plan to communicate with them, and follow through. Plan to keep news flowing to the community, whether it is about a building rehab, and upcoming event, new businesses, or exceptional volunteer stories. Plan to keep the organization in the news and take advantage of all media opportunities.

How will you communicate with donors, merchants, members, and the community at large? Social Media; newsletter; E-news; website; press releases to media?

- » Platforms should be vast and inclusive.
- » There will be a need for internal communication with building owners and business owners. Tailor communication to each group. Provide it in multiple ways, according to what solicits a response.
- » It is good for merchants to have a platform to communicate with each other privately. A good way to facilitate this is by opening a 'closed and private' merchant page on Facebook. Consider that it may be beneficial, especially in the beginning, to include all merchants there; this kind of collaborative communication should not be based on membership/partnership dues to the organization.
- » Consider establishing an on-going blog to engage and educate the public.



Provide a press/photo opportunity with each of your donors: perhaps at the \$1,000 or above giving level.

Example Donation Press Release | DART Attachment Folder: Communications

A communications strategy with regional partners such as the chamber of commerce, county economic development office, and county convention and visitor's bureau should be developed. Setting or attending a meeting with all local economic development officers would provide a cohesive effort for downtown.

- » The executive director (or board president in the absence of hired staff) will set one-on-one meetings with all local officials at least once a year. This kind of relationship building will be highly beneficial to the organization and should be a priority.
- » Board members should also reach out to local officials throughout the year. This could be in the form of a thank you for their support or an inquiry as to how they think the organization is functioning in accordance with their expectations.

Complete monthly report forms to track trends and changes in your downtown district.

- » Reinvestment statistics will assist in the year-end celebration of accomplishments, as well as facilitate the 'asks' for the following year funding from major sources.
- » These records can be quite useful when selling the organization to new volunteers, donors, committee members and potential board members.

Establish an annual meeting to recognize progress and plan to write an annual report to communicate with task forces. Annual report pages should be available on your website and to the community as well. A single page, designed to attract attention, highlighting the year's successes, is best for community consumption.

2018 Annual Report - Delaware | DART Attachments Folder: Communications

FUNDRAISING

The full board should be involved in the development of the initial funding strategy. Then collaborate with the Organization Committee to implement.

- » Working from the established budget, identify and develop ongoing items to secure funding for the organization.
- » 33% Partnership/Membership, 33% Earned Income, and 33% Municipal Support. As a long-range goal: first third from the City of Dublin, the second third from membership, corporate sponsorship and donations, and the final third from foundations, grants, fundraising events, and/or merchandise sales.
- » Evaluate all fundraising to suit and satisfy the organization's mission.
- » Plan multiple membership/partnership campaigns. This will assist with community education on the new organization and build local buy-in.
- » Ask for more than you think they will give, always. No one is ever offended that you would assume they can do more than they actually can. Make the ask. Everyone appreciates being asked.
- » Ask the city for a multi-year commitment (3 years); ask donors for multi-year gifts. Your mayor might consider co-signing the corporate and foundation letters of request.

Eight Strategic Mistakes with Memberships | DART Attachments Folder: Partnership

Create a fundraising commitment, which includes: mission; committee structure and short and long term goals; board members; chronology of activities; DART visit summary; current budget, and three-year budget.

Seek out community and family foundations that may support your mission. Ask them to sit on the advisory board, and ask for multi-year donations.





Identify corporate donors. Assign teams to visit and present sponsorship or partnership opportunities. Ask for multi-year financial support.

- » Most corporations have a community/social responsibility policy, which allows/requires them to make donations to local non-profit organizations.
- » Corporations are using downtown to sell their company to executives and staff. A vibrant downtown means that employees will want to live in the community and are more likely to accept employment there. This makes the downtown organization an easy sell for large donors.
- » Most major gifts will likely originate from outside the downtown district.

Help identify corporate sponsors for any major Promotions Committee events (and indeed all other committee projects). The Fundraising Committee 'controls' these solicitations, but acts in partnership with committee needs.

- » Sponsorships are not partnership/memberships and should be handled as such.
- » Provide sponsorships that are financially attainable to your local, downtown businesses, \$500 or less.
- » Sponsors are getting advertisement in exchange for their sponsorship dollars.
- » Do not water down sponsorship, your offering should matter.
- » Provide a follow up to all sponsors including advertising files included in their sponsorship and number of impressions before and during the event or activity.
- » Make sure the organization gets credit for what it does. Remember that the headline always belongs to the downtown organization. e.g. Downtown Dublin Chocolate Walk, Sponsored by Dublin Methodist Hospital. Do not give up branding the organization in exchange for sponsorship.

Put a partnership structure in place that pulls together all merchants, building owners, individuals. Recruit marketing volunteers to establish strategy for attracting members. Do not confuse major donor support with a membership/partnership campaign.

- » You can make major donors members/partners though, and list them as such on your website and any member/partner lists.
- » Decide ahead of time what level of gift will also include membership/partnership.

Establish a recognition and thank you program for all solicitation appointments (funded or not) and all pledges and gifts.

- » When corporations or other entities, such as university, are not willing to make a cash contribution, think about in-kind donations.
- » In-kind donations that 'count' as membership/partnership should consist of items that will actually save or spare budget funds. i.e. accounting, bookkeeping, printing, legal assistance, branding/advertising, photography, etc.

Keep those who declined solicitation visits or donation opportunities well informed, they may say yes next time, as you prove yourselves through this establishment phase.

- » Included in any plans for ongoing funding asks, should include the mission and goals of the organization. Why should anyone give? How can you show value to the community for the program?
- » Share your passion, make it personal.
- » Personal stories are great and go a long way to imparting care to those who maybe do not...yet.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Determine how to furnish and equip an office. Do you have vacant space downtown that might be donated towards an office? Many communities have the tourism department, chamber of commerce, and Main Street in one location. This helps the communication between entities as well as overhead costs for all organizations. Communities can also look to building owners who may have available office space that may need renovation or updating in which they would trade or compensate rent for the renovation efforts. This type of project speaks volumes to the community that the local Main Street program is working on renovation projects in downtown.

Staff

Dublin does not currently have a paid executive director in place to focus on downtown. In time, the organization will have the financial stability to post for the executive director position.

Establish a budget to include salary, benefits and travel for a full time executive director.

- » Salary should be comparable to other economic development professionals in your area.
- » Review the Manager Salary Survey results for Ohio. The median salary is currently \$43,500.

Salary Survey 2018 | DART Attachment Folder: Hiring a Main Street Manager

- » Set financial goals to bring the organization to a point of comfort in hiring a full time director.
- » Review attached job descriptions and tailor to the needs of Downtown Dublin.

Sample Job Descriptions | DART Attachment Folder: Hiring a Main Street Manager

- The executive director will answer to one boss, the board president.



- The executive director will be the one consistent touch point for all committees, board members, and officials from both the city and county for the organization.
 - Relationship building is the primary role of the executive director.
 - Heritage Ohio offers a half-day training program for all new executive directors, as well as ongoing training and networking.
- » Begin hiring process for executive director.

Hiring a Main Street Manager | DART Attachment Folder: Hiring a Main Street Manager

Volunteer Management

Though they are certainly some of the organization's most critical volunteers, board members have already been covered in depth under the Board of Directors section previously in this chapter. So in this section we are focusing primarily on volunteers in general, which includes but should never exclusively be the board of directors.

- » Once hired, the executive director will generally be the consistent touch point for all volunteers.
- » The executive director will be tasked with ensuring that volunteers are trained and have all materials needed to perform assigned tasks.
- » Volunteers should be given the opportunity to thrive in a position doing what they love.
- » Consistent volunteers, such as event chairs, committee members and board members, etc., should be given an opportunity for a one-on-one meeting with the executive director and/or the board president to ensure that they have all they need to perform leadership duties and that if need be, they can be moved to something new. This will ensure that all volunteers remain fresh and highly functioning.
- Volunteers that are burned out should be moved to another facet of the organization. Staying in touch, personally, with your volunteers will help recognize burn out before the volunteer decides, on their own, to leave the organization.

Prepare recruitment and training materials for volunteers and a defined job description with roles and responsibilities for more involved volunteers such as board members, committee chairs, and farmers' market manager.

- » Determine how best to recruit, assign, train, and recognize initial volunteers who will populate committees.
- » Each committee will use its work plan to recruit volunteers for specific projects.

Begin a system to log volunteer hours. There is a federal dollar amount assigned for these hours and they can be used to show the level of commitment of the board, the level of activity of the organization, as well as how they are assisting in economic development.

- » Create committee volunteer lists – thinking futuristically about these members transitioning to board duties.
- » Decide on software to track volunteer contact information, projects, hours, likes, etc.
- » Create work plans and defined time expectations for all volunteer duties.

Blank Work Plan | DART Attachment Folder: Work Plans

- » Plan for routine “thank you” texts, emails, phone calls, cards, events, etc.



Hint – Make sure volunteers feel value in what they do and tell them often how much they are appreciated. There is never a ‘too much’ in regards to thanking volunteers.

APPLY TO BECOME A MAIN STREET PROGRAM

Once the program has started the process of hiring an executive director, the program may be ready for full Main Street Program status and should consider applying for Ohio Main Street status, which gives the program greater access to technical assistance, training, materials, networking and on-going support from Heritage Ohio that would greatly benefit Downtown Dublin in its efforts to continue and enhance its downtown revitalization program. More about this can be found later in this chapter in the Achieve Main Street Status section, the fees are \$3,950 per year.

- » Establish a municipal membership for the City of Dublin to Heritage Ohio to increase governmental buy-in for Downtown Dublin, as well as offering several educational and programmatic resources to the city staff and/ elected officials. A municipal membership is \$500 annually.

Heritage Ohio Municipal Membership | Go to HeritageOhio.org/support-us/ and select ‘Community Membership’

- » Review the Memorandum of Agreement to be signed upon acceptance into the Ohio Main Street Program.

Memorandum of Agreement | DART Attachment Folder: Ohio Main Street Program

- » Obtain, complete, and send the completed application to Heritage Ohio to officially apply for Main Street status.
- » The application will be reviewed by Heritage Ohio and an application visit will be scheduled. This visit will be up to a full day with the full Heritage Ohio staff, meeting with board members, stakeholders, and committee members.

» Upon acceptance into the Ohio Main Street program, the organization may operate doing business as 'Main Street Dublin.'

- Though Heritage Ohio will continue to work with any community that would like to mimic the Main Street Approach™, but does not currently have the capacity or funding to become an Ohio Main Street community, the Main Street name is trademarked and cannot be used unless accepted into the state program.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF DOWNTOWN AFFILIATE MEMBERSHIP

A free one-year membership as a Downtown Affiliate is included in our assessment of the region. Feel free to reach out to Heritage Ohio staff as needed to support and assist your volunteers in the implementation process. The Downtown Affiliate membership includes the following benefits:

- » One complimentary registration to each of the Quarterly Revitalization Trainings and the Heritage Ohio Annual Conference. Additional registrations at member rate.
- » Monthly Webinar Series
- » Executive director orientation
- » Unlimited Email / phone consultation
- » Half-day (3 hour) community visit / presentation
- » *Revitalize Ohio* electronic magazine

2018_HO_OMSP_DA | DART Attachment Folder: Ohio Main Street Program

DESIGN

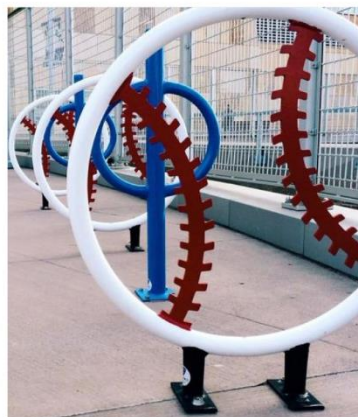
COMMITTEE FUNDAMENTALS

This element of the Main Street Approach™ involves improving the physical environment of your district by rehabilitating buildings, constructing compatible infill, improving signage, improving merchandise displays, creating attractive and usable public spaces, and ensuring that planning and zoning regulations support Main Street revitalization. The Design Committee plays a key role in shaping the physical image of Main Street as a place attractive to shoppers, investors, business owners, and visitors.

The Design Committee views the downtown district with a critical set of eyes. People will too easily become “blind” to the true look of their district, and do not evaluate it regularly. This kind of complacency can lead to peeling paint on storefronts, tired window displays, worn signage, and trash that collects. It’s up to the Design Committee to lead efforts to reinvigorate activities that focus on improving civic pride within the community.

To succeed, this committee must persuade downtown stakeholders to adopt a rigorous approach to physical improvements for buildings, businesses, and public improvements. Specifically:

- » **Educating others about good design**—enhancing the image of each business as well as that of the district;
- » **Providing good design advice**—encouraging quality improvements to private properties and public spaces;
- » **Planning Main Street’s development**—guiding future growth and shaping regulations;
- » **Motivating others to make changes**—creating incentives and targeting key projects.



OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Design means getting the downtown commercial district, your “Main Street”, into top physical shape. That means engaging in meaningful activities and initiatives that transform the district into a safe, inviting, and fun environment for shoppers, residents, and visitors. This environment comprises everything from the overall appearance of the buildings in Dublin, down to the cleanliness of your sidewalks. Take advantage of the visual opportunities inherent to a downtown commercial district by directing attention to all of its attractive physical elements: buildings, storefronts, signs, product merchandising, window displays, art, and promotional materials. Remember, you are engaged in the slow but steady race to accent your district’s positive qualities, and to improve on the components that need it.

As one of the time-tested Four Points of the Main Street Approach™, a revitalization organization includes a Design Committee focused on the district’s:

- » Private realm (the buildings),
- » Public realm (the streetscape and other public spaces), and
- » Education efforts for its stakeholders.

It’s also important to note that the public realm includes the look of alleys and the backs of buildings. In our opinion, one of the greatest benefits of serving as a Design Committee member stems from having a direct hand in helping to make some of the most visible change happen in the downtown district.

THE PRESERVATION MINDSET

A good Design Committee embraces the opportunity to guide the future development of the district. And while residents are almost always more attuned to the importance of preserving Dublin’s unique heritage, absentee landlords and corporations are not. Communities that have suffered the most from erosion of community character are the ones that have allowed absentee landlords and corporations to make the decisions about how downtown should look. And every time, the absentee landlords and corporations will opt for the easiest, cheapest, cookie-cutter solution, if the community lets them.



So what’s the problem with that? When the community lets the CVSs of the world get away with building their “off-the-shelf” buildings, a small piece of your community’s unique character has been wiped away, and can’t be brought back. And each small erosion of community character further hampers your ability to use the best marketing tool you have for selling your district: its unique character. Too much erosion of that downtown character will make successfully marketing yourself more difficult.

The smart community understands that the phrases “change, progress, and economic development” can all happen within a historic preservation context. Profit and preservation are not mutually exclusive goals. The savvy community also understands the inherent leverage it has when someone expresses an interest in joining its downtown “family”. While there’s no reason to exclude anyone from being part of Dublin’s downtown, you must

make sure you've carefully spelled out how you're willing to let your downtown change for the better, and how further erosion of your downtown character would be unacceptable. Having local design review in place is one important component to successfully guide how downtown changes for the better, and the Design Committee can and should work closely with the review board.

We can't stress enough: a good design ethic embraces historic preservation, because a solid, handsome building constructed in 1900 is a non-renewable resource. When the building is demolished, there can be no bringing it back in the future. Continue to safeguard your heritage as it truly forms the foundation for a successful downtown revitalization effort.

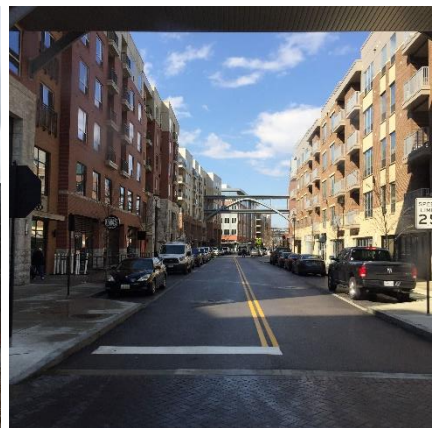
While some communities may have certain advantages over other places (a vibrant riverfront, a lake shore, a local college population to draw from, or inherent county seat advantages) EVERY community must utilize its existing assets and build on its efforts to create a destination downtown based on its authentic and historic elements. Your efforts will help transform Dublin into a great downtown!

THE DESIGN COMMITTEE CAN ASSIST WITH A FEELING OF COHESIVE DESIGN EFFORTS:

The Dublin community seems to be disjointed with each group have different wants and needs and overall vision. I believe the community would benefit from a thoughtful planning process with the main purpose of bringing the community – city, organizations, commercial property owners, businesses, and residents – together. The process should be designed to engage task forces on an equal plane to define the community's overarching goals.

COMMUNITY GOALS

- Define what is Downtown Dublin
 - Is it just the historic district?
 - Does it include Bridge Park?
- Define a community definition of what historic preservation means
 - We heard many divergent opinions on this in the historic commercial and residential areas.
 - Once the definition is set, clear policy can be set so the everyone understands the expectations
- Engage the community in a way that meets them where they are – don't expect them to come to you
 - Use apps, NextDoor, websites, surveys, focus groups, or whatever you can dream up to engage, educate, ask for input, and keep in touch with the community. Communication is everything for a community to feel valued and heard.



PLANNING AND PLACEMAKING

- Planning work should be grounded in the community goals
- The community should work to join the east and west side of the river as one cohesive place that is defined as downtown and eliminate the division
- Embrace the diverse places within the newly defined downtown. The historic buildings, new condos, small local boutiques, and large regional businesses all add to the flavor of the overall experience.
- Embrace the different housing types to attract different demographics whether it's a new condo or an authentic historic home or a newer home outside the historic district
- Connect housing, places within downtown, parks, recreation, and community center with comprehensive multi-mobility strategies to lessen the need for auto and provide opportunity for biking and walking as real options to get around your city.

SENSE OF PLACE

- With the planning work and community goals set in motion, Dublin as a whole, can create a sense of place through several strategies. The city is in an enviable position to invest in itself in many ways and the sense of place should be no different.
 - The city lacks a distinct recognizable brand. We saw Dublin represented in several different ways – font, color, use of the shamrock or not. We saw this on signage and the community center among other places. There is an opportunity, as you develop community goals to garner information that would inform a designer on a brand identity for the city that can be employed on in places such as city letterhead, web site, city vehicles, gateway signage, and wayfinding signage.
 - Provide essential amenities that meet the needs of residents and visitors. This could take the form of benches and planters in the downtown; bike racks at strategic locations along the bike network such as in front of businesses or at park area; or ride share drop off areas in busy areas.
 - Public art is also an opportunity for Dublin to exude its personality and show what is unique about your city. This could take the form of murals, sculptures, or even gateways.



MAIN STREET PROGRAM

- An advocate for the community. With the seemingly divergent goals of the various organizations, committees, and city entities, a Main Street program could become a group that convenes all interests. We heard about many issues that seem to be impeding progress – the current code for historic and new construction; ARB guidelines; building maintenance; cohesive and coordinated retail strategy; urban planning and placemaking, and connectivity to name a few. Because Main Street is community driven, it inherently builds community and this strategy could yield solutions like a minimum maintenance ordinance, a façade and signage program that meets the needs of the business community, or a preservation strategy that is clear and consist to both ARB and the community.

MAKING GOOD DESIGN HAPPEN/PRESERVATION EDUCATION

The Design Committee should be a point of access for information for downtown stakeholders when it comes to:

- Comparing new versus historic wood and metal frame windows for cost, thermal performance, and payback period.
Saving Windows, Saving Money | DART Attachment Folder: Preservation Education
- Providing contact information for local artisans who do specialized building rehabilitation work (masonry repointing, building cornice fabrication, etc).
- Gaining a better understanding of Chapter 34 of Ohio's building code and how historic buildings can achieve life/safety measures, while respecting their historic character, and encouraging code officials to use Chapter 34 in their analysis/reviews.
- Along the same lines, you can encourage downtown building owners to learn about how Chapter 34 can be used, with the important understanding that the building owner chooses how local building and code officials evaluate building construction projects.
Ohio Revised Code Chapter 34 | <https://codes.ohio.gov/oac/4101%3A1-34>
- Having a basic understanding of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines, how building and business owners are affected by those guidelines, how strictly or loosely the building department and code officials interpret the guidelines, and what incentives are available for making accessibility upgrades.
ADA Guide for Small Business | DART Attachment Folder: Preservation Education
- Knowing the basics on how federal and state historic preservation tax credits work for rehabilitating historic buildings.
- Historic Tax Credits aren't the only incentives that are available. It is possible to implement a number of incentive packages for the building owners if adopted by the City and County. For example, there are communities who have Façade Enhancement Programs that provide funding for building owners in the historic district, to do exterior work. These programs can be through a CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) which is a federally funded, state grant or through local funding if it is available. There are tax incentive programs like a Community Reinvestment Area (CRA), which holds taxes at the pre-improvement level for 10-15 years depending on the project. A Downtown Redevelopment Area (DRD) can be implement based on one historic renovation project and the tax money can be used to assist with additional projects within a 10-acre area. A Special Improvement District (SID) is an assessment put on



the property owner, typically a few cents per linear foot, where the funds are delegated for downtown planters, snow removal and much more. A Certified Local Government (CLG) can assist with funds for planning, locally designating buildings as historic, Surveys, public education, acquisition and development. There are many more incentives, but it will be up to the community to determine which programs are right for Dublin.

About the CDBG Program | https://development.ohio.gov/cs/cs_cdbg.htm

About the CRA Program | https://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_comreinvest.htm

About the DRD Program | https://development.ohio.gov/bs/bs_drpd.htm

About the SID Program | <https://ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/CDFS-1566>

About the Ohio CLG Program | <https://www.ohiohistory.org/preserve/state-historic-preservation-office/clg/about-certified-local-governments>

THE DESIGN COMMITTEE PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The Design Committee should be in partnership with the Design Review Board so that they can provide a soft touch to design review and compliance. This partnership can also assist with the utilization of the National Register Listing in downtown Dublin and the application of federal and state historic tax credits on building rehabilitation.



One of the benefits of design review is to stop short-sighted (no matter how well-intentioned) efforts that compromise the look of the building. Original historic windows are made from dense, old growth wood and have been on the buildings since it was built. Historic windows are candidates for restoration, and properly reconditioned, will provide another 50 years of functionality. It's amazing what can be accomplished on energy efficiency just through the use of weather-stripping and storm windows.

To educate task force about the roles of the different bodies, how they work together for the common good of Dublin, and how both fill essential roles contributing to the long-term success of downtown.

To help reinforce the importance of preserving downtown's historic building stock (remember the 1900 building as a non-renewable resource) and the importance of reviewing new construction to insure it complements the district's character.

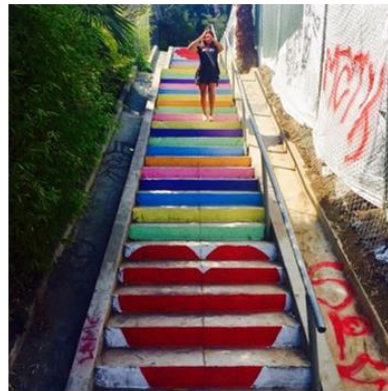
Of course, we need to note that with private property rights come responsibilities. Owners who allow their buildings to deteriorate, and city leaders who allow this to happen, lessen the value of all of the buildings around them. From a standpoint of basic fairness, all building owners downtown should be allowed to see their investments thrive, because everyone is held accountable to the same standard of building condition, code requirements, design review administration, etc.

Engage the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Heritage Ohio to educate and assist local building owners in utilization of the federal and state historic tax credits.

The National Register of Historic Places | DART Attachment Folder: Preservation Education

DO SOMETHING FUN

These creatively designed elements of downtown infrastructure are not only pleasant to look at and memorable, they improve the pedestrian experience and the crosswalks even have a bonus effect of slowing traffic and making intersection more psychologically approachable. Since your new library is so disconnected from the pedestrian sidewalk, why not paint the steps to entice walkers to engage with the space. These elements are low cost, can be temporary, and can be designed to represent the community which creates a sense of pride and ownership in the downtown. Be creative, don't be boring!



HELPFUL RESOURCES

We try to keep our reports short and palatable so that anyone can pick it up, read it, and have an idea of where to start. Below is a collection of resources that will provide even more insight into the topics mentioned in this section and other topics with relation to design.

Revitalizing Main Street | DART Attachment Folder: Committee Handbooks

Design Handbook | DART Attachment Folder: Committee Handbooks

Community Engagement for Main Street Transformation | DART Attachment Folder: Committee Handbooks

PROMOTION

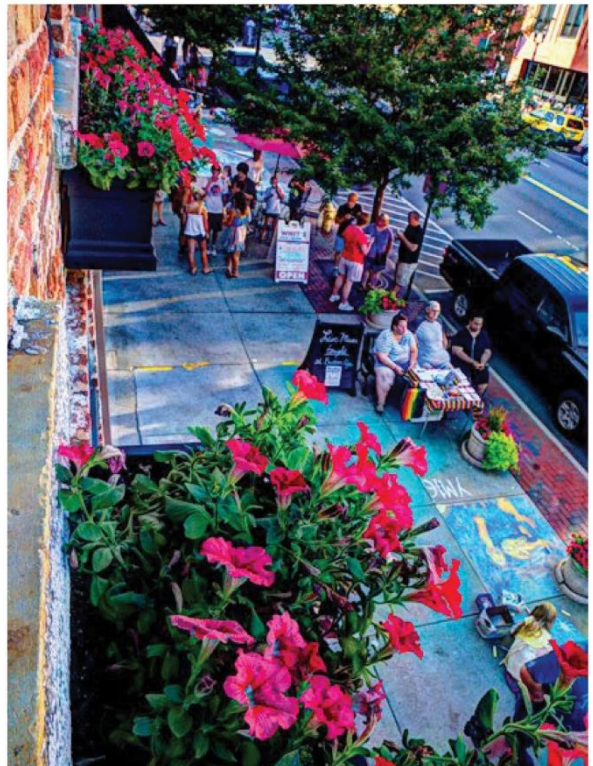
COMMITTEE FUNDAMENTALS

This element of the Main Street Approach™ deals with marketing the district's assets to residents, visitors, investors and others through special events, retail promotion, and activities that improve the way the district is perceived.

The Promotion Committee has the job of promoting downtown as the center of commerce, culture, and community life for residents and visitors alike. To be effective this committee must move beyond cookie-cutter downtown promotion ideas. Specifically:

- » **Understanding the changing market**—identifying both potential shoppers and the competition;
- » **Identifying downtown assets**—including people, buildings, heritage, and institutions;
- » **Defining Main Street's market niche**—its unique position in the marketplace;
- » **Creating and maintaining image**—campaigns, retail promotions, and special events to bring people downtown.

Within the four points of Main Street, promotion is likely the most fun and popular aspect, but also the most misunderstood. There is purpose behind the party committee. Large corporations are very serious about their brands; your organization should be too. The competition to attract and retain investors, businesses, industry, visitors, shoppers and residents has never been fiercer. One can choose where they will live, work and go to school - why will they choose your community over other options? Make sure you are celebrating the community's strengths and are understanding of its weaknesses.



OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Four Point Main Street Approach™ separates the area of Promotion into 4 distinct areas: Image Development, Retail Promotions, Special Events, and Heritage Tourism. Each of these areas should be developed while keeping in mind the target demographic and anticipated results which will enhance Dublin. The Promotion Committee interacts with other Main Street Committees; the relationship should be fluid, not rigid. The Promotion Committee develops partnerships with other community organizations; share and grow, but keep focused on the commercial districts.

THE PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

People from all occupations belong on the Promotion Committee, doers with a positive attitude and creative nature; graphic artists; advertising and sales people; public relations professionals with various backgrounds in media; residents, young and old who are results-driven; people who are great at planning events; and organizational partners like the public library, local corporations, and community service groups like Kiwanis.

One goal for the Promotion Committee will be the development of a comprehensive promotional strategy that will be effective in the long-term, and will address the targeted market opportunities in Dublin. Your organization's promotional strategy needs to be based on strong market research, which is a coordinated responsibility of the Economic Vitality Committee.

The Promotion Committee will also depend on the Economic Vitality Committee to bring back useful information from business visits. What types of promotional activity would businesses find useful? Events can put business people at odds with the Promotion Committee. Special events can become bad days for business people who cannot get their regular customer in the door when events are planned poorly. Be responsive to their concerns.

University of Wisconsin-OSU Extension's Market Analysis Toolbox | DART Attachment Folder: Business Inventory & Analysis

Market Analysis | DART Attachment Folder: Business Inventory & Analysis

IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

Brand and Marketable Image

The overall brand and image of downtown Dublin is not as consistent as it needs to be. It is important to understand that a brand is far more than a logo, slogan, or tagline. Your brand is the symbolic embodiment of all the information connected to your community, and serves to create associations and expectations around it. Dublin's brand should represent the community, the downtown, and be based on market analysis and research. Developing and improving the image of downtown Dublin also means changing attitudes and being the positive voice for downtown.

- A primary area of focus should be made to recruit local employees of marketing/branding firms and residents with professional design skills to the Promotion Committee. In addition to being able to make informed suggestions to the organization, they may offer to donate their time and skills, or offer their services at a reduced rate to support Downtown Dublin.
- A goal of the Promotion Committee will be the development of a comprehensive promotional strategy that will be effective in the long-term and that will address the target market opportunities in Dublin. The promotional strategy needs to be based on market research. One great resource for doing this kind of research on your own is University of Wisconsin-Extension's Market Analysis Toolbox. Compile information about the marketplace, analyze data, and match assets with market niches. Then develop a positioning statement and marketing strategy. Another great tool is National Main Street Center's *Market Analysis for Community Transformation: A Practitioner's Guide* which helps you understand the basic information you need and how to get it.

University of Wisconsin-Extension's Market Analysis Toolbox | <https://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/>

- Once you have developed a strong community brand, make sure there is continuity of your marketable image in all promotional materials. Comprehensive branding uses similar and consistent font, colors, design elements, and verbiage to convey the identity of the community. Even if you lack a logo or a fully developed brand now, are there elements of design that can be consistently used? Do you use one font type and a particular set of colors on all of your communications, or does each graphic, poster, document, or publication have a different look and feel? You want task forces to identify Downtown Dublin easily and consistently with the high quality of work the organization will provide.

Develop a media resource list, including: press release list, newspaper columnists with whom you have built a relationship, and radio/TV talk shows so that the organization can quickly and efficiently get your message out. Tell your story, make sure you get credit for the things you accomplish.

Establish image-building events (re.g.: progress awards, ceremonies, new business welcomes, new projects and businesses, “before and after” renovation displays).

When thinking of the image of your community to the outside world, it can be helpful to review the following three periods of engagement and make sure that there is a known response that makes sense to each question.

» **Before They Visit Dublin**

- How do they hear about you?
- Where do they go to learn more?
- Where do they find information to plan a visit; choose to live; build a business?

» **During Their Visit to Dublin**

- How do they find you?
- When do they know they have arrived?

- Where do they figure out where to go and what to do?
- What experiences will they have?
- What memories do they make?

» **After They Leave Dublin**

- How do they share their experiences?
- How do they stay connected to your community and what reasons have you given them to return?

Community Web Presence

The Downtown Dublin Promotion Committee will want to develop and improve Dublin’s web and social media presence. The website should display recent and active pictures, highlight businesses and/or business owners, available retail space, etc. Often, this may be a first point of contact with potential visitors and volunteers, so it should be well thought-out, engaging, and informative.

- » We encourage you to review the websites of other Ohio Main Street communities to see other aspects of the community that can and should be included in this resource. One community that does a great job with web presence and material production with their brand is [Marietta Main Street](#). They have a great example of what a good website, [Facebook page](#), and [Instagram](#) can look like.

- Things for which to Look:
 - High quality photos and graphics;
 - Feature local business owners and residents without making it look like an ad;
 - Consistent high quality event materials that show clear ownership; and
 - A clean, modern, and adaptable layout that is built with the user’s needs in mind.

Marietta Main Street Website | <https://www.mariettamainstreet.org/>



Marietta Main Street Facebook | <https://www.facebook.com/mariettamainstreet/>

Marietta Main Street Instagram | <https://www.instagram.com/mariettamainst/>

- » The website should be, in general, for visitors and to inform people about your downtown and your organization (who may not know you or care about which businesses are members or not). Remember, you are trying to improve the whole downtown and nothing should detract from this goal. Make sure that the information that people need is available and easy to find.

Social Media

Downtown Dublin should develop and regularly use several social media platforms. Social media should be used to communicate with Downtown Dublin's audience, not only to promote events and businesses, but to show the organization's accomplishments and what makes downtown Dublin amazing.

Work on developing a comprehensive social media strategy for the organization. At a minimum, you will want to:

- » Set general policies and procedures for staff and volunteers using your social media accounts.
- » Standards and guidelines for the types of media (photos, videos, GIFs, etc.), both in terms of physical quality, but also in terms promoting the organization's mission and communicating effectively with your audience.
- » Development of creative content. You want media that people can interact with and they find interesting, all the while getting the message you wanted them to hear across.
- » Set a calendar of postings to help you keep on track. Integrate this with your normal calendar of activities and events to ensure maximum exposure.

Start using hashtags. Pick a good one for promoting downtown and use it. Encourage the community to use it and encourage visitors to use it. A good hash tag is short and easy. A few that we noticed are not being used at the moment that your community could be using to promote itself: #DowntownDublinOH #WeLoveDublinOH, the list goes on! Just remember to check to see if the hashtag is being used before you start using it.

How about a selfie spot? This is something a high school art class could produce and it could change over time. A selfie spot is a great way to give visitors and locals alike something with which to interact. It is also a great way to generate media exposure on Instagram and Facebook. Let them know a hashtag you want them to use for downtown. Use fun parts of your community's history or culture as inspiration for the design. Again, working on a project like this is a great opportunity to think of what is special and relevant about Dublin's downtown.



Be Positive

All communities can take a lesson in being positive. Residents are often hardest on their own hometown. Make sure that the positive message about downtown Dublin is prolific and something that is perpetuated.

Be positive and always keep in mind how something will look to a visitor, as well as residents. Try to surprise and delight people. This relates both to promotion and design, but think about how you will make an impression and what kinds of things you have seen elsewhere that instantly make you smile; thereby creating a positive connection with you.



Remember, to a certain degree, Downtown Dublin controls the narrative of downtown. Tell your stories of successes, learn from mistakes, and understand that building a better Dublin is what you are working for every day. Fall in love with your town.

- » Suggested Reading: *For The Love Of Cities* by Peter Kageyama. He explores the love affair of people and places, what affects how people feel about a place, and what you can do to make a place more lovable to both residents and visitors.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Leadership

All events should have an event chairperson in place. Implement a succession plan for all chair seats. Leadership seats are easier to fill if a defined strategy is established with specific goals and work plans, creating a formal part of the organization's structure. Your events should never rely on one person to get it all done. Divide and conquer! One of the greatest benefits of the Main Street Approach™ is the strength of your volunteer base, which produces greater community buy-in as more and more people have a vested interest in the success of your downtown commercial district.

Work Plans | DART Attachment Folder: Work Plans

Event Planning Overview | DART Attachment Folder: Promotions & Events

Why Have an Event

Events are great, but never simply for the sake of doing an event. While you should encourage all groups and organizations to consider downtown a stage for the events they put on, the downtown organization should be wary of becoming too focused on planning all the events themselves. Large events are fun and they serve many important goals of Main Street organizations, but they are very resource and time intensive, keep focused on building the local economy and improving the downtown built environment.

In light of the new normal that has been brought about by Covid-19, we must consider how best to bring people to our businesses while also being responsible about social distancing and following safety guidelines. Thinking of new ways to promote businesses, online, virtually and in the natural environment are going to be key.

- » All events should be associated with your mission, should serve to fulfill the board's major objectives, and then have a specific measurable goal to fulfill. Goals can be to: raise funds; to get feet on the street; to ring cash registers in your businesses; to train the community to identify downtown as the heart of the community; or to gain recognition for the organization, etc. If an event does not serve your purpose, someone else will take it on if it is important to the community. Just because it is downtown, you do not need to own it.
- » If an event does not meet its goals, a post-event evaluation will show this and a decision should be made to change or scale back an event, to revamp it totally, or to retire the event. The great part is, events can be picked up again at a later date. Changes do not have to be permanent. If events get dry or old, replace them with something new and exciting. Find new ways to highlight your history and unique assets. Make events memorable for everyone. Your volunteers are some of the best litmus tests: if volunteers are difficult to recruit for a specific event, perhaps it has run its course and should be discontinued. Always evaluate events against the stated goal, revise work plans as needed. Remember to get evaluation feedback from merchants and businesses.

Event Evaluation | DART Attachment Folder: Promotions & Events

- » Your ultimate mission and purpose is to focus on the downtown.
- » Are you planning or promoting events that are happening outside of the downtown? Could you have an event downtown? What are you gaining or sacrificing to have an event elsewhere?



- » If you are having an event in a parking lot, even if it is in a commercial core, could you have it on the sidewalks in front of the businesses? Always be thinking of how to engage your visitors with your local economy and less about where they will park.

Train People to Come to Dublin

The primary purpose of special events is to get people accustomed to coming downtown. They become familiar with the lay of the land, the parking and hopefully see shopping and service opportunities. In an ideal world the stores will be open. Events and their components must be planned in a way that encourages the businesses in the downtown to be an extension of the event. Are vendors being invited to participate which compete head to head with local businesses? What is the physical set up of guest vendors? Is the main event corridor down the center of the street and the storefronts are demoted to pedestrian “back alleys” to get around the crowd, or instead are the backs of vendors facing each other in the center of the street, creating two active corridors in which the storefronts are an active component? Or worse, the event is not in the district at all, thereby excluding the businesses entirely?

The 5 essentials to successful events according to Disney: food, music, overlapping activities, activities for all ages, and something free.

Make It Fun

Another reason to have special events is to create and enhance a sense of place and make downtown Dublin a fun place to be. Holding regular special events that are well thought out to have “something for everyone” will create some of the entertainment that is missing in downtown. Eventually, the goal is that the market will begin to support this function, but special events can, and do, fill the entertainment gap in many downtowns that are on the path of revitalization. Special events are also one of the best ways to get new people involved with the organization. Most people are more willing to help put on an event at which they will have a lot of fun.

Monthly Events

Hold regular monthly special events. You do not need to put all your eggs in one basket and pull off one singular, large fundraiser each year if you can make the same amount by doing smaller, less work intensive events throughout the year. The concept of First Fridays is very popular in our Main Street communities. Each event will have a certain goal in mind, some may ring registers, some may just create a family friendly space, but all of them together create a new habit among residents. Teaching people that every First Friday you can come downtown and there will be something to do. Often, people stop even caring what is on the docket, they just come because it is what they do. Create a mix of retail events and special events. The following are just a few ideas that you might build in to what you are currently doing, some are much more retail oriented than others. Be creative and interactive.

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| » Upper Floor Tours | » Chocolate Walk | » Musical Revue - a different “act”/ style at each intersection/differed corner |
| » Pop-Ups | » Pet Parade | |
| » Culinary Tour | » Big Trucks | |
| » Scavenger Hunts | » Classic Cars | |
| » Art Walk | » Food Trucks | |



ECONOMIC VITALITY

COMMITTEE FUNDAMENTALS

This element of the Main Street Approach™ concentrates on strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand its economy and introduce compatible new uses. The Economic Restructuring Committee has the job of identifying new market opportunities for the traditional commercial district, finding new uses for historic commercial buildings, and stimulating investment in property. To succeed, this committee must develop a thorough understanding of the community's economic condition and opportunities for incremental market growth. Specifically:

Building entrepreneurial economies;

Strengthening business—includes strengthening existing businesses and recruiting new ones;

Infrastructure reuse—finding new economic uses for traditional Main Street buildings;

Development—financial incentives and capital for business development and retail operations layout;

Ascertaining progress—monitoring the economic performance of the district.

Main Street at its core is an economic program. The work of the Economic Vitality Committee should coordinate with the work of other committees. Promotional activities are developed based on your economic target demographics. Building rehabilitations are based on market demand for particular businesses or housing opportunities. This committee will be critical for reporting and distributing collected information to other committees.

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Who should serve on the Economic Vitality Committee?

Economic development staff, bankers, commercial realtors, business owners, property owners, leaders from local community development corporation (CDC), community improvement corporation (CIC), or other development entities you may have, small business development center (SBDC) director, colleges or university representatives, and marketing and analytical professionals.

What Does the Economic Vitality Committee Do?

Economic Vitality involves analyzing current market forces to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants are examples of economic vitality committee activities. Economic vitality focuses on retaining and expanding successful downtown businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. The goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today's consumers.



OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Your downtown is going to be a mix of retail, services, government, non-profit, and perhaps manufacturing. The diversity of products and services is a goal.

Establish Business Education Opportunities: Downtown business owners will benefit from being offered education opportunities such as social media presence and marketing, market analysis, and merchandizing. Hold regular meetings and allow time for networking.

Document Your Downtown: Complete a census of downtown workers and housing units available in the downtown. You need to know how many people are working and living in the downtown to provide them with the services and amenities they need.

Build an Experience Economy: It is critical that each business is understanding the consumers experience and creating diverse, unexpected partnerships which give personality to the businesses as well as the community. Your secret to success is the personality of the “experience”.

KNOW YOUR MARKET

Understanding Dublin’s market is about knowing the numbers, but it is also an art. How do you know what your community wants or needs? One great resource for doing this kind of research on your own is University of Wisconsin - Extension’s Market Analysis Toolbox. Compile information about the marketplace, analyze data, and match assets with market niches. Then develop a positioning statement and marketing strategy. It is important that all downtown businesses understand both current customers and potential customer base.

Understand that you have both convenience and destination trade areas. Routine shopping is done by local residents (i.e. greeting card, a gallon of milk). You want your businesses to keep increasing their reach, making their business a destination that is worth a 30 or 60-minute drive to Dublin.

University of Wisconsin-OSU Extension’s Market Analysis Toolbox | <https://fyi.uwex.edu/downtown-market-analysis/>

Demographics

Dublin Population	52,465
Median Resident Age, 2019	39.7 years
Median Per Capita Income, 2019	\$58,386
Median Household Income, 2019	\$128,916

Reviewing the demographic data for Dublin, two important points jump out. First, the median age of Dublin is slightly higher than the statewide average of 39.3. Second, the median per capita and household incomes indicate there is ample discretionary income in the community. These two data points should influence existing and future business growth opportunities.

Dublin’s demographic data, from Esri’s Tapestry Segmentation, shows us your residents fall into three major demographic market “Tapestry Segments”:

» Bright Young Professionals	29.5%
» Old and Newcomers	13.9%
» Professional Pride	12.8%

The shopping characteristics of those professionals living in Dublin are digital. Bright Young Professionals go online and use mobile devices for banking, access YouTube or Facebook, visit blogs, download movies and play games.

In this tricky market time amidst the pandemic, this demographic will adapt well to the online presence of your local businesses. They will be hungry for experiences and will want ways to connect to their local business owners online. Be careful, as these shoppers are endeared to places in which they make memories. Dublin is a successful town but that success has and will continue to erode if you lose the character that initially attracted people. Your top tapestry segments are drawn to places with soul and that define what they call home.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GRK MR)

- Own retirement savings and student loans.
- Own newer computers (desktop, laptop, or both), iPods, and 2+ TVs.
- Go online and use mobile devices for banking, access YouTube or Facebook, visit blogs, download movies, and play games.
- Use cell phones to text, redeem mobile coupons, listen to music, and check for news and financial information.
- Find leisure going to bars/clubs, attending concerts, going to the beach, and renting DVDs from Redbox or Netflix.
- Enjoy a variety of sports, including backpacking, rock climbing, football, Pilates, running, and yoga.
- Eat out often at fast-food and family restaurants.

Tapestry Segmentation | DART Attachment Folder: Market Analysis

Business Concierge Services

The defining of a group of well-equipped volunteers who will serve as a business concierge service will help avoid issues like the signage issue we encountered with Toy Emporium. A commitment to helping business launch means going beyond the ribbon cutting and assisting with resources for permitting, hosting an open house, helping to open the space and support the business owner long before their first day of business.

Business Inventory

Before you begin recruiting any new businesses into the downtown, it is important to understand what businesses you have and what types of businesses your current businesses would find complementary. Business-to-business (B2B) relationships will enhance and grow the district. By knowing your business mix, and having conversations with the business owners, it might be easier to fill out Dublin's downtown.

A basic activity for the economic vitality committee is to hit the streets and make sure the Dublin Business Survey & Analysis Form is up-to-date. Once you have a baseline, as new stores open and old ones close, maintain the inventory. A second activity will be covered later in the section titled, *Business Visits*. Among the information to collect in conversations with existing businesses is what additional businesses would be complementary or supportive to the existing business inventory? What products or services do they use outside of town? Which could potentially relocate or expand into Dublin. Who are their customers and how can the community expand upon those interests?

Business Survey and Analysis Form | DART Attachment Folder: Business Inventory & Analysis

Building Inventory

The Economic Vitality Committee should spend some time walking the streets and taking inventory of what buildings are available, what assets they have and who the contact might be for a potential tenant. Even an Excel spreadsheet with a list of building owners and addresses is a good start. You want to be able to communicate with each building owner.

It is not in your downtown's best interest to rush to fill vacant buildings. To fill vacant building with the types of merchants your downtown needs, you need to take an inventory of the available building supply. You need to know what spaces are available to help place new businesses. Work first with building owners who will work with you. If you had great prospective businesses right now, where would you put them? What is the right fit? Your Economic Vitality Committee could recruit volunteers to be a block captains to verify the building information.

Can you communicate with the building owners, draw them into the revitalization program, and keep them informed? Set up a mailing list so you are able to communicate with building owners. You might also work on getting email contacts.



For vacant properties, work with building owners and/or their realtor to develop a data sheet on available properties. Take several flattering photographs to market the opportunity. Detail items such as how many square feet, the cost to lease or buy, and what amenities are included (kitchen, garage, alley access, etc.). List the contact to lease or buy the space and what business adjacencies may complement a new business.

Real Estate Data Sheet Checklist | DART Attachment Folder: Building Inventory & Analysis

BUSINESS RETENTION

The Main Street philosophy is retention first, expansion second, recruitment third. Developing strong local businesses is a priority that often goes overlooked while community leaders search to fill the next industrial park. Studies have determined that net job growth is overwhelmingly due to existing businesses. Focusing your efforts on what you already have has a lower cost, but also is both lower risk and requires lower input than recruitment.

Existing local businesses are invested in their locations and want the area to be successful. They are already supporting the community and are more likely to have interest in the common good of the community than a new investor. The businesses that are already in your community are part of what makes up the competitive advantage of your location. When existing businesses do well and are successful, it is an advertisement to potential businesses that your community is a good place to do business, doing the recruitment work for you.

Develop a Downtown Business Retention and Expansion Team, composed of credible members that business owners trust. Attached is a sample customizable survey for your team to use. Review the feedback and find red flags and commonalities that you can use to begin to develop your work plans.

Business Retention Resources | DART Attachment Folder: Business Retention

Educate

Share demographic data, make sure your businesses have a solid understanding of the Dublin trade area. The ESRI Tapestry segment report can be shared among your retailers to give them a better understanding of the market. Always remember that the data is a great place to begin, but do not lose sight of the natural knowledge that is intuitive to doing business in your area.

All Tapestry Detail | DART Attachment Folder: Market Analysis

Facilitate productive business networking and meetings. Educate downtown business owners on local use of signage. Signs can be creative and cater to the walking population. Keeping downtown pedestrian friendly and putting the focus on people instead of cars will encourage walkers and enhance walkability in your downtown. Educate! Educate! Educate business and building owners on the current design guidelines but do not be afraid to be creative and surprising. Adding a moment of delight to those visitors in the downtown will bring them back again and again. Social media is swimming in cool photos of downtown attractions and interactions. Be Instagram-worthy.

Prepare a list of educational topics to facilitate discussion at networking, poll businesses as to their interest and priorities (fire chief on safety issues, police chief on shoplifting, design, etc.).

Evaluate

Strong businesses are always looking to improve. Encourage self-evaluations. We recommend you distribute a business self-evaluation to business owners. Each business needs to reflect on their customers' experience. From before the customer walks in the door, what do they see, hear, and smell? How are they treated, made welcome, and offered assistance? Answering these questions will undoubtedly strengthen any downtown business. Secret Shopper programs are popular, but more challenging to implement; the softer, gentler first step is working self-evaluations.

Retail and Restaurant Self Evaluation | DART Attachment Folder: Business Inventory & Analysis

Social Media

Being aware, active, and responsive with regard to social media is a necessary business skill, this is 2020. Social media is faster than the Better Business Bureau for the consumer. When many of us choose to eat out, we check



sites like Yelp or Google reviews. Our opinions and actions are formed by reviews from other customers. For all of the paid advertising and promotions a businessperson may invest in, not taking the time to address the businesses' cyber-reputation is an expensive error. It takes moments to respond and has a significant impact. It also ensures customers have the correct information about a business, such as hours of operation and the address. At a business networking session do hands-on training. Set a new habit to check the 4 or 5 social sites each day or week, like you check your email. It takes mere moments. Many days there will be no new comments, but when there are comments, think of that like "winning" dollars in your pockets and another opportunity to engage customers.

Social Media is not just for downtown businesses. A lively social media presence from the downtown revitalization group is a great way to excite and engage with the local community and is also, likely, the first touch to any visitor. Daily posts, including photos, with people in them, is a great way to begin engaging on social media. When you create Facebook events, you must invite people to those events. This can be a task done at board meetings. Everyone wants to be on their phones all the time anyway, so use this to your advantage. Create the next big event and then take time at your next board or committee meeting to make sure that everyone has invited their friends' group. In the 'after Covid' world, this is going to become even more important. Social media is the way to remind folks who are still staying home that downtown Dublin is still alive and active. Even if customers do not want to venture into the downtown, making sure that there are ways to shop and engage online will keep that life blood moving for your retailers and restauranteurs. This should also assist in building a following for your downtown revitalization page.

*All Dublin restaurants: Please post enticing pictures of your food. That is your business.
Help customers find you and make it easy for them to recommend you.*

Personalized & Experience Economy

Help teach business owners to personalize and know their customers better. Personalization is very important to customers, and turns them into lifelong patrons. This is why Starbucks uses your name and shouts it out. It builds a relationship with the customer through personalization and is part of creating a customized experience.

Each business needs to identify ways to integrate a personal experience. Can you handle once a week or once a month small classes, in person or over Zoom? Figure out the right schedule for your business. Classes can focus on food fads such as keto, vegan, gluten-free, etc. This is also a great way for local business to diversify their income. Hosting a ticketed 'Pinterest' party in a local business means that business owner is earning income and not spending it on overhead to host the event. Limiting tickets to such events will also create a scarcity for folks to get their ticket so they won't be left out. Most restaurants are solely taking reservations right now, retail businesses could institute something of this sort to intentionally invite customers in numbers that allow for social distancing as well as give them a personalized experience. An evening with a local business owner builds customer loyalty; people are less likely to spend their money in a big box store or online with Amazon. Building experience and relationships means that dollars will stay local and people will feel responsible for the health of their local businesses.

EventBrite: The Experience Movement | DART Attachment Folder: Business Improvement & Attraction

Business Visits

Conduct business visits. These are one of the most popular – and beneficial - economic vitality committee activities. Have a form so you can gather consistent information, and also somewhat "control" the conversation – but be open to listening! While you are there, take a census, record how many full and part-time employees they have. How will you know if you've improved the baseline if you don't know where you started? Find out if there are common needs of which you were not aware. It is also a great way to establish and define who this new



organization is with the business people, allowing you to share the mission and goals while collecting data from them.

Business Visit Form | DART Attachment Folder: Business Inventory & Analysis

Business Expansion

As the Main Street philosophy is retaining, expand, recruit, it is important to have that relationship with local businesses to work with them on expansion first. Certainly there has been lots of speculation about desired businesses. On those business visits, it is an opportunity to find out if the business owner has future expansion plans, as well as share what prospective businesses are on your downtown organization list. The Economic Vitality Committee has to focus on a few, and match appropriate buildings which have the right facilities and business adjacencies.

Market Loyalty

Identifying your small entrepreneurs' market to all of the Dublin High School Alumni, use their reunion pages to form relationships with those who have emotional ties to the community.

Support

The Economic Vitality Committee should be prepared to give tours, make introductions, and suggest properties that are an appropriate match to targeted businesses.

The Economic Vitality Committee should prepare a list of incentives and support for new businesses. Often these incentives are homegrown; however, there are some resources available.



CONCLUSION

Main Street revitalization is always an incremental and ongoing process; quick results are not guaranteed, nor are they realistic. Board members, volunteers, the municipal government, and other stakeholders always desire immediate results, but for Dublin, the most important long-term goal is to build the organization's capacity to undertake a wide range of commercial district revitalization activities. Without a strong organization and commitment on part of all stakeholders, it will be a challenge to implement the comprehensive Main Street Approach™.

It is important to remember that when it comes to downtown revitalization, there is no silver bullet. There is never one project or event that will fix every problem or sustain a community. The organization must think holistically and work on all the facets of revitalization with synchronization and synergy. Stay true to the mission and do not spend valuable and limited resources on projects that are not working towards the goal of downtown revitalization. There are a lot of distractions, and there is so much work to do that the organization cannot afford to be everything to everyone. Focus on those key projects that tie it all together and help accomplish the mission. With this in mind, the resource team would like to emphasize that Dublin has many assets, including its people and partnerships, existing businesses, historic building stock and new development. With the community's commitment and hard work, Dublin will most assuredly succeed in achieving the long-term vision of a successful and revitalized downtown.

ATTACHMENTS

The attachments listed in this document have been given digitally to the task force group and the City of Dublin. If there is an attachment that cannot be found, please contact Heritage Ohio. If individuals would like to review the attachments in the digital DART Attachments folder, please contact the city staff for access to these materials.

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