

GEORGIA

MAIN STREET



COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION
STRATEGIES WORKBOOK

Growing Business. Preserving History.



THEATRE

THEATRE DUBLIN
PRESENTS
THE NUTCRACKER

Dublin

ENTRANCE

AN INTRODUCTION

The National Trust for Historic Preservation established the Main Street Program in 1980 to address the reaction against community disinvestment and the shifting market dynamics impacting historic downtowns all across the United States. The evolution of the 1960s and 70s, coupled with the rise of shopping centers – malls, suburban development and big box retailers during the same time period – had a devastating impact on the areas that comprise today’s Main Street districts.

At the time of inception, the National Trust studied select cities from around the country to determine common factors contributing to their success in maintaining a vibrant and economically successful downtown. The Trust distilled the common themes identified into a four-pillar approach to transform and revitalize threatened and struggling historic commercial districts.

These four pillars (economic development, design, promotion and organization) are now simply referred to as the “Four Points” or the “Main Street 4-Point Approach™.” While these Four Points may be short words to describe complex ideas, this approach remains a balanced way to address downtown revitalization goals and initiatives.

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to catalyze development and to create a supportive environment for the entrepreneurs who drive local economies.

PROMOTION positions the downtown or commercial district as the community's center and hub of economic activity while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

DESIGN supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual elements of downtown while capitalizing on the unique assets that set the commercial district and community apart.

ORGANIZATION involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement and financial resources for the district.

Using the Four Points as the sole building blocks for downtown's recovery is not enough. Downtown development must be strategic, incremental, measurable and, above all else, community driven. We understand the challenges of rallying a community to support a cause that lacks an organized vision. A cohesive purpose can serve as a catalyst to focus your city's efforts around a common unifying theme. This lack of a unified vision led to the creation of Community Transformation Strategies.



Dahlonega, ExploreGeorgia.org

Community Transformation Strategies

Community Transformation Strategies are designed to serve as the backbone for what drives a Main Street Program. They are intended to function as an overarching theme to rally volunteers, inspire investors and serve to as a catalyst for growth over a period of three to five years. At their core Community Transformation Strategies should be:

- **COMPREHENSIVE** and serve as an idea that unifies projects, programs and events under one work plan. When getting started, the best question to ask yourself is “What is the big picture goal I want to accomplish in my downtown district?”
- **ASSET-BASED** research used to establish the foundation and to determine which strategy will best suit the downtown district’s needs. Market-based research should demonstrate an understanding of the current economic climate in the downtown, as well represent community-wide opinions and feedback.
- **VISIONARY** and representative of the hopes, dreams and aspirations of both residents and visitors alike. It is important to make sure Main Street Programs engage and share their vision for a better tomorrow with all key community stakeholders and partners, investing the community in the plans for the future.
- **CONCISE** and direct. Each Community Transformation Strategy is intended to summarize goals and action items into a two or three-word theme that can be easily described, repeated and shared with others. Think of it as the Main Street Program’s elevator speech, specifically for the work plan.
- **MEASURABLE** with goals to outline your program’s success. Each objective, project or program completed should inch you closer towards achieving your vision for downtown. We can easily overlook successes when measurable objectives are not attached to our goals. By determining measurable goals and timelines in the beginning of the work plan development process, success can be both quantified and celebrated by all involved.

Community Transformation Strategies for established Main Street communities fall in to one of two potential categories: Catalyst or Customized. A Catalyst Strategy refers to a type of “off the shelf” Community Transformation Strategy that has been fully developed by the Georgia Main Street Program or the National Main Street Center to help guide Main Street staff and board members with the implementation and execution of common topics and themes. A Customized Strategy is exactly that, customized. Customized Strategies are crafted entirely by the local Main Street Program to meet, or address, a specific need in the community or downtown.

While the National Main Street Center has developed 21 “off the shelf” Catalyst Strategies based on either a specific customer segment or industry/product, the Georgia Main Street Program has worked to develop 15 “off the shelf” Catalyst Strategies which we believe more broadly represent the needs in our local communities and the challenges we have seen directly impacting our Main Street Programs.

While the Georgia Main Street Program’s Catalyst Strategies are thematic in nature, this particular element allows them to be suitable for communities of all sizes. These unifying themes may be adopted and applied more broadly across multiple retail sectors, industries and customers segments, serving both rural and urban communities alike. At the Georgia Main Street Program, we understand the one thing making each of these strategies unique is your community. Your city’s particular demographics, support, population, desires and local assets will ultimately shape the perspective placed on programming, thereby tailoring your selected strategy specifically to your needs.

In the following pages we will speak directly to the 15 Catalyst Strategies developed by the Georgia Main Street Program. For more information on the National Main Street Center’s specific Catalyst Strategies, we recommend following up at their website at mainstreet.org.

Georgia Main Street Program's CATALYST STRATEGIES	
Arts and Entertainment	Agricultural Focus
Beautification Initiatives and Design	Environmental Sustainability
Business Activation and Development	Public Health and Wellness
Downtown Living	Greenspace
Community Serving	Maintaining Authenticity
Transportation and Pedestrian Experience	Placemaking
Ecotourism and Recreational Economy	Storytelling
	Tourism
	Foundation Building



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GETTING STARTED

We realize that just as all cities are different, all Main Street Programs are different, meaning each program will be at a unique point in its community's revitalization process at any given time. This section is designed specifically for those programs who need more guidance on how to identify, select and begin work on developing your program's unique Community Transformation Strategy.

For those programs who believe they are ready to jump ahead, we have developed a checklist to get you started quickly and easily. If you are ready to begin, please, jump ahead to page 13 in your workbook.

Identifying a Community Transformation Strategy that best serves your downtown should be a multifaceted process involving feedback and support from the community at large, the downtown businesses and the Main Street Program's board members and staff. A well-rounded strategy will address three major components: the inputs, the objectives and the outcomes. Keep in mind that each of these sections will contain a multistep process which will be necessary to complete before moving on to the next phase.

QUICK START CHECK LIST

- Gather market research.
- Conduct a downtown survey.
- Host a community visioning session.
- Host a board retreat.
- Identify two Transformation Strategies that are the best fit for your program and downtown.
- Identify tasks and set measurable goals to accomplish the work plan.
- Host a meeting of community partners to get buy in and support for the work plan.
- Post the program's Transformation Strategies and work plan on the Main Street Program's website.
- Review the work plan monthly at the board meeting.
- Adapt, add and check off tasks as they are accomplished.
- Revisit and repeat as needed.

“ Good market research can help to shape the understanding of your downtown’s current economic climate and can help your program to make informed and better decisions.”

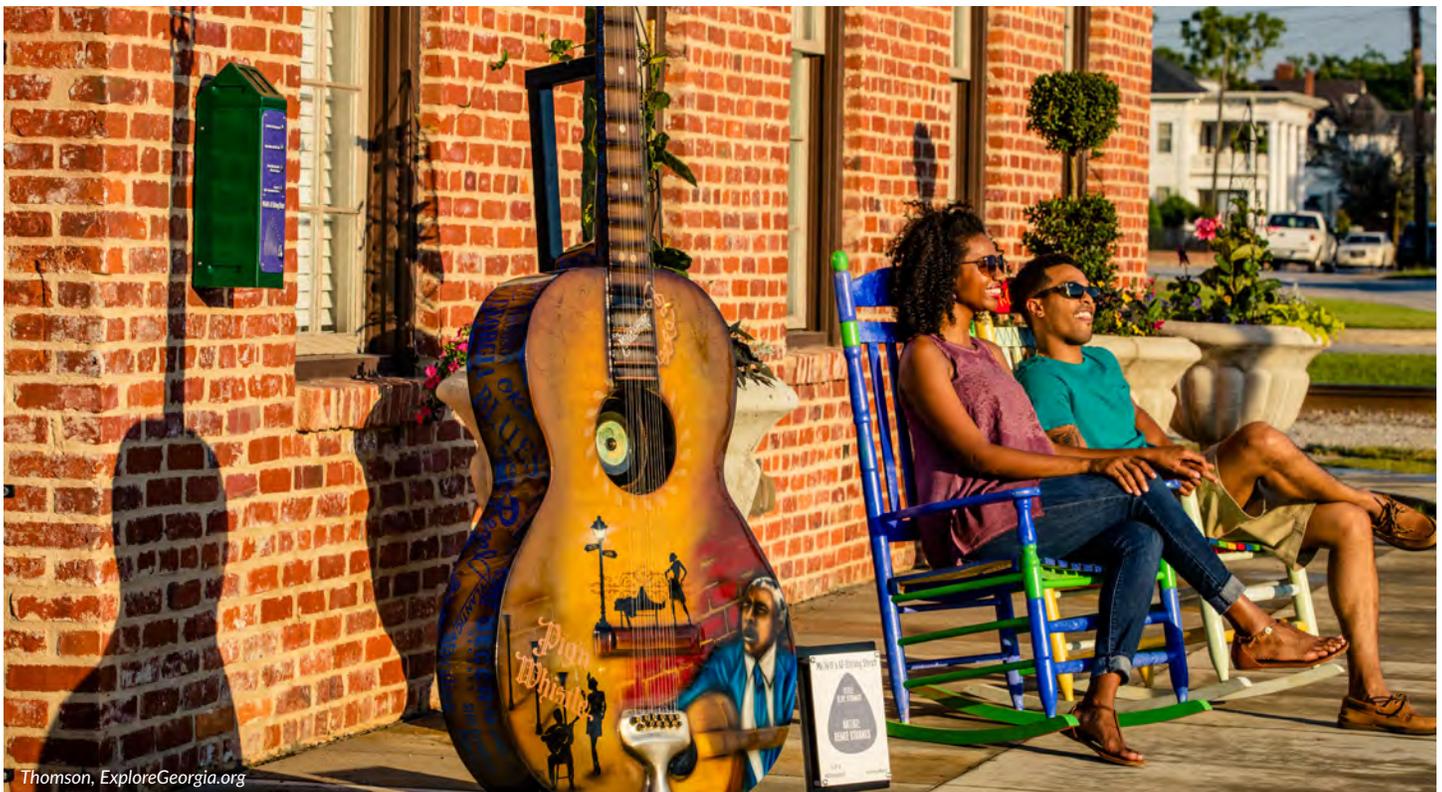
The inputs, better known as the data-driven information which will help shape your strategy, should consist of market data research, surveys and visioning sessions conducted prior to selecting a Transformation Strategy. The research used to identify the inputs should be multifaceted and gather feedback from a wide and varied audience. The great news is that gathering inputs is a task that can be accomplished solely by Main Street staff. It is because of this that we recommend starting here. Good market research can help to shape the understanding of your downtown’s current economic climate and can help your program to make informed and better decisions. These reports can be often obtained at no additional cost by local power companies or cities/counties that have access to ESRI data.

HELPFUL REPORTS INCLUDE

LOCAL RESOURCE SURVEY

Your downtown’s data points will be some of the most important and useful information collected. We recommend that all Main Street managers pull together the following information before doing anything else:

- ▶ **Determine your downtown’s retail mix.**
What percentage of businesses are retail, restaurants and professional services? These numbers can help you determine strengths, weaknesses and assets regarding your downtown’s current economic climate.
- ▶ **What is the downtown’s vacancy rate?**
This data is determined by comparing the percentage of vacant parcels relative to the occupancy of the overall district.
- ▶ **Average cost per square foot.**
This data can be determined by taking the monthly rental cost for a property and dividing it by the square footage of the rental space. For example, a commercial property that rents for \$3,000 per month and is 1,000 square feet in size would equal an average rental rate of \$3 per square foot. This number should be calculated for each property and then used to determine the downtown’s overall cost per square foot. These numbers can be helpful in identifying trends to see which properties may be overpriced or undervalued and if off-street rentals are cost friendlier.



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RETAIL LEAKAGE SURVEY

This report is useful to understand what consumers buy in your community and what products they leave your community to purchase elsewhere. It can identify gaps in the market and illustrate areas in which the market may be oversaturated.

DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT

Understanding your community's makeup is a critical component in developing a Transformation Strategy. Knowing the age, race and education of the people who make up your city will help the Main Street Program develop curricula and events to better serve the community. Average household income and the percentage of homeowners compared to renters can illustrate how much disposable income residents may have to spend downtown, as well as the demand that may exist for downtown residential development.

COMMUTER METRICS

When they leave, the distance and destination to which your workforce drives every day can help businesses maximize the impact during their hours of operation. A majority of residents in suburban cities surrounding larger metro areas like Atlanta, Chicago and Houston may commute regularly for work; only a small percentage of the population of these suburban cities may be available to shop during the traditional 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. store hours. Understanding your city's commuter metrics can help Main Street staff lead informed discussions with downtown business owners regarding the advantages of staying open later.

TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION REPORT

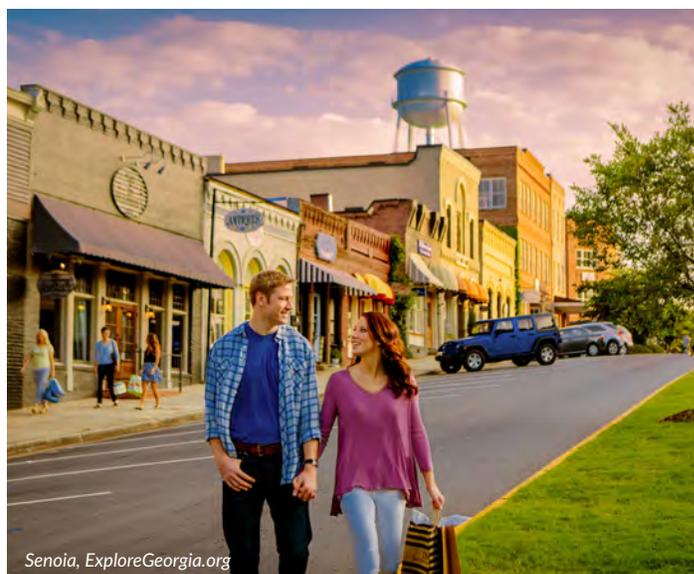
Tapestry reports provide insights to help identify your area's best customers, optimal sites, and underserved markets. Tapestry Segmentation classifies neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based not only on demographics, but also socioeconomic characteristics. It breaks down all U.S. neighborhoods in easy-to-visualize terms, ranging from Soccer Moms to Heartland Communities.

Once market research has been concluded, keep the information in a safe place until you are ready to proceed to Phase 2. The next step in Phase 1 is to distribute a downtown information gathering and research survey. This survey can be distributed to both downtown business owners and community members alike, but keep in mind that the survey should speak specifically to each individual group's needs and perspective. Providing folks with a platform from which they can engage and have a voice is an important step in making downtown merchants believe they are being "heard." This survey should provide an anonymous way of giving open and honest feedback without fear, retribution or discrimination from the city, board, Main Street Program or other merchants. The Main Street Program staff should collect and collate the information provided

“... a community visioning session will help to familiarize downtown business owners and the broader community with the purpose and players of the Main Street Program.”

and use it in Phase 2 as part of the board retreat process. For managers and staff who need a framework of questions around which to structure their downtown survey, we have created two examples for your use. These examples can be found online under the "Resource Library" section of the Georgia Main Street Program's website.

Finally, the last step in Phase 1 is to host a community visioning session. When conducted properly, a community visioning session will help to familiarize downtown business owners and the broader community with the purpose and players of the Main Street Program. Visioning sessions should focus on collecting necessary feedback regarding the desired future direction of the downtown, along with identifying potential problems that may cause roadblocks down the road. Community visioning sessions are not intended to serve as a one-stop problem-solving workshop or a complaint session but should be used as an opportunity to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and potential threats to the downtown. It can at times be both exciting and frustrating to hear the good, the bad and the ugly truth about your community's perception of Main Street. It is important, though, to keep in mind that different people bring different perspectives, and all opinions are valid. Keep in mind that not everyone who wants to participate in your visioning session may be able to do so, which is why it is so important to have first distributed a downtown survey. For additional support and resources available for hosting your own visioning session reach out to the Office of Downtown Development staff.



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CREATING A UNIFIED VISION

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The specific inputs identified in Phase 1 will ideally assist you in Phase 2 as you select the Transformation Strategy best suited for your Main Street Program and downtown district. The data collected will help to identify your strategies in two major ways. The first is by identifying one overarching theme around which the work plan will focus, moving forward. The second is by shaping the actual tasks outlined in your work plan to better support those customers visiting downtown.

One of the key things to keep in mind is that all 15 of the Georgia Main Street Program's Catalyst Strategies were designed to be scalable, depending on the size of your community. They will also be applicable to different consumers and business sectors. For example, two different cities may select the "Ecotourism and Recreational Economy" Transformation Strategy. While they may both have a natural asset that drives tourism in their local economies, the specific businesses they seek to recruit, the events they create and the target audience for marketing will be different. Just as no two cities are alike, no two Transformation Strategies are the same upon implementation. Ultimately, each will be made up of exclusive characteristics that are applicable only to the individual downtown.

Outlining of specific goals for the work plan is the main component to establish during "the objectives" section of Transformation Strategy development; this is best done through a board retreat or facilitated planning session. During the board retreat, the Main Street manager and board members will have the opportunity to discuss the plans for the direction of the Main

Street Program. To prepare for this retreat the Main Street manager should pull together historical documents, including master plans, community surveys, historic resource studies and even prior work plans to identify patterns, trends or gaps in services.

While we recommend that the Main Street manager serve as the facilitator for the community visioning session, the Office of Downtown Development recommends bringing in a professional meeting facilitator to help enable dialogue and discussions among the group during your board retreat. A meeting facilitator can often say the things that need to be said and ask questions that can lead to deeper insight and reflection. A meeting facilitator can help to alleviate a manager's concerns about voicing an opinion for fear of reprisal or hurting someone's feelings. A manager needing a meeting facilitator should first reach out to the Office of Downtown Development to see who within their region may be available to provide these types of services.

One technique that can help the board focus on a unified vision is a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is a simple but useful framework for analyzing your organization's Strengths,

Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Done correctly, it can help the board focus on its strengths, minimize threats and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you as an organization. To complete your own SWOT analysis internally, ask yourself these questions, keeping in mind that you should be both realistic and rigorous with your answers.

Once all the participants have completed their organizational

SWOT analysis, ask them to share their responses. Assign someone to keep track of common themes and comments repeated throughout the process. Once everyone has shared, ask the group to vote on the ideas that best reflect your organization. Tally the votes, and work as a group to tackle the core issues identified through this process. This consensus will provide your organization direction when deciding how to proceed.

STRENGTHS

What do we do well?

What unique resources can we draw upon to achieve our goals?

What do others see as our strengths?

If you're having any difficulty identifying strengths, try writing down a list of your organization's characteristics. Some of these will likely be strengths! When looking at your strengths, think about them in relation to your competitors. For example, if all of your competitors provide high quality service, then high quality service is not a strength in your organization's market. It's a necessity.

OPPORTUNITIES

What opportunities are open to us?

What trends could we take advantage of to maximize our opportunities?

How can we turn our strengths into opportunities?

A useful approach when looking at opportunities is to look at your strengths and ask yourself whether these open up any opportunities. Alternatively, look at your weaknesses and ask yourself whether you could open up opportunities by eliminating them.

WEAKNESSES

What are areas upon which we could improve?

Where do we have fewer resources than others?

What are others likely to see as our weaknesses?

Again, consider this from an internal and external perspective. Do other people seem to perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Is there someone else doing something better than you do it? It's best to be realistic now and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

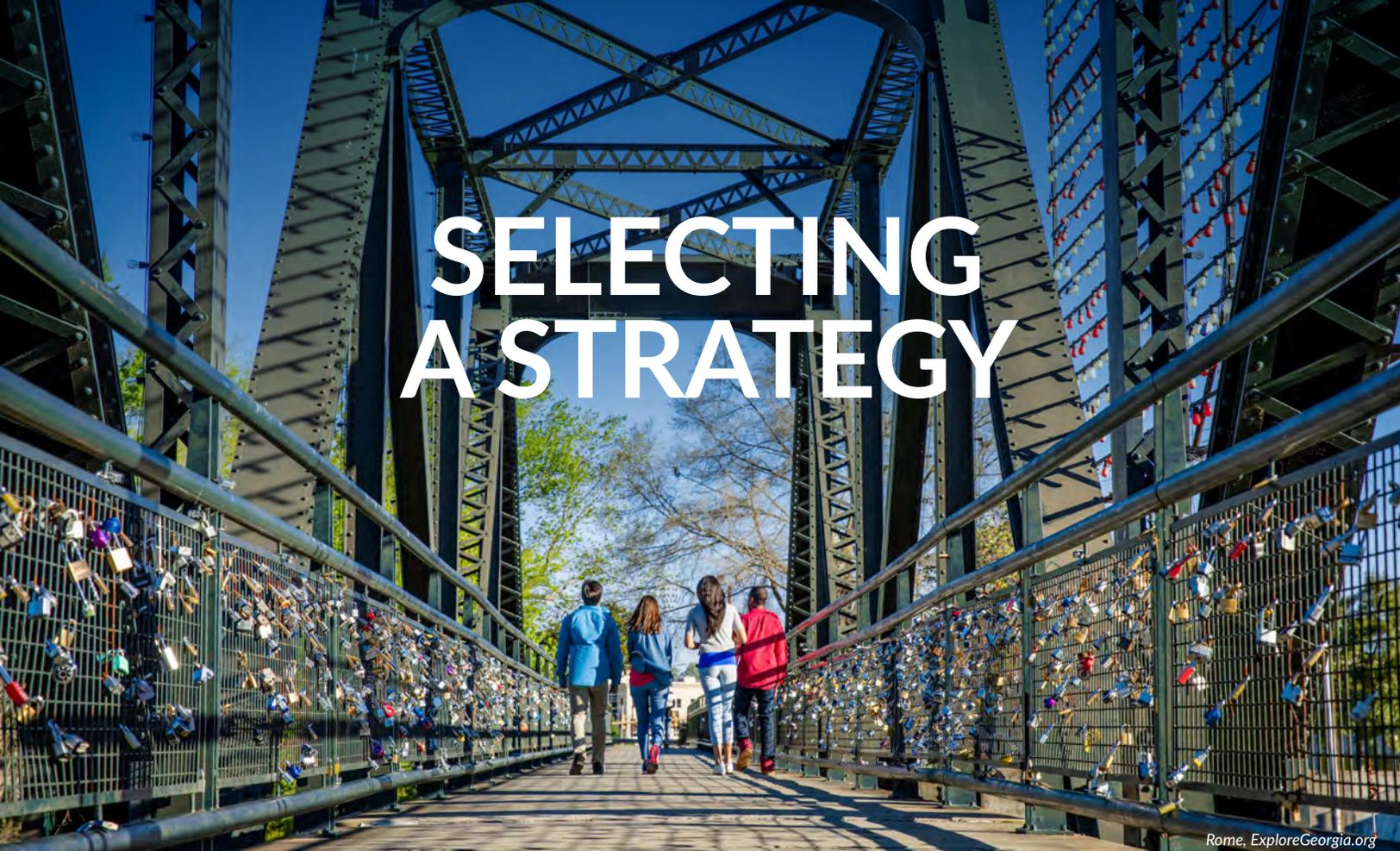
THREATS

What threats could harm us?

What are other Main Street programs doing that we aren't?

What threats do our weaknesses expose us to, and how can we minimize those risks?

When looking at opportunities and threats, don't overlook external factors, such as new regulations or technological changes.



SELECTING A STRATEGY

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Now it's time to select a Transformation Strategy. Communities who aren't ready to dive into the world of completely customized strategies can get started by using one of the 15 "off the shelf" Catalyst Strategies created by the Office of Downtown Development. On the next pages you will see each of the strategies developed by the Georgia Main Street Program. For a quick reference we have also included a table of contents and brief overview for each strategy.

Here are some things to keep in mind when picking a strategy that is best for your downtown:

CONSIDER WHERE YOU ARE NOW: You've done your research; you know where you are, and you know where you want to go. Getting there is the challenge. Transformation Strategies should be a stretch, but they should also be realistic. Make sure during the board retreat that you consider what assets the downtown currently has in place to support any strategy you choose to take on, as well as the political will to do so. These two things don't have to define which strategy you pick but can become huge roadblocks at a later date if not considered thoroughly.

THE LOW HANGING FRUIT: Success garners success. Is there a strategy that you need to accomplish before you can take on your ultimate goal? For example, maybe your organization wants to focus on a Tourism Strategy; however, you don't have partners at the table, and you haven't a platform to share your story. In this situation it might be best first to tackle the Storytelling Strategy to develop these partnerships and platforms, thereby laying a foundation for success and preparing the program to take on the Tourism Strategy at a later date.

TOMATO vs TOMÁTO: Several of the Transformation Strategies may sound similar on the surface. Just as good projects and events overlap in the Four Points, good strategies will also overlap each other's needs. Keep in mind that perspective and execution will make the difference between one strategy and the next. For example, Greenspace and Placemaking may sound similar on the surface. Greenspaces can even be a component of the Placemaking Strategy, but ultimately each stands alone through the point of view placed on each strategy. While façade grants may serve a purpose in more than one Catalyst Strategy, the "why" behind what you are doing will be different. This overlap is OK and was intentionally planned, with the idea that as you move forward to newer strategies, certain elements of your program can remain the same. You shouldn't have to start from scratch every time you pick a new strategy; you should build upon the work you have already done.



COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

Each strategy includes:

- A summary of the overall purpose and idea behind each strategy
- Key words which are commonly used to describe each strategy
- The pros and cons associated with your desired strategy
- Special considerations that should be taken into account before you begin
- Questions to ask yourself when trying to decide if this strategy is the best fit for your program and community
- Work plan tasks and programs that can be implemented in each area of the Main Street Four Point Approach™
- Partners who can assist in the development, implementation and execution of this strategy.

BONUS! CTS 16

For all new and transitioning programs, we have developed a special 16th strategy, Foundation Building, to serve as your primary Transformation Strategy during the program's developmental phase. This strategy was designed to address foundational elements that must be fully developed in order to grow a successful and sustainable Main Street Program. Due to its fundamental nature, this strategy would not be applicable for programs further along in the developmental process. While the other strategies may be applicable for a period of three to five years, this strategy is designed to be completed within one year.

QUICK REFERENCE

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Arts and Entertainment	For programs wanting to support an arts or entertainment-focused environment within the downtown district.	14
Beautification Initiatives and Design	For improving the visual appeal of the residential and commercial historic district.	16
Business Activation and Development	For activating currently vacant sectors of the downtown or to support the growth and development of already established businesses.	18
Downtown Living	For developing a downtown environment conducive to residential living.	20
Community Serving	For developing an environment that is entrepreneur-friendly and intentionally incentivizes businesses, which serve the needs of the residents in the city and greater region.	22
Transportation and Pedestrian Experience	For addressing the downtown district's mobility needs for both tourists and residents alike.	24
Ecotourism and Recreation Economy	For focusing on the built environment and recreational activities currently driving tourism for the local economy.	26
Agricultural Focus	For an agricultural-based economy, where residents, businesses and community stakeholders are dependent on the success and growth of a particular agricultural industry in their area.	28
Environmental Sustainability	For creating an eco-friendly and sustainable approach to downtown revitalization, keeping in mind that the greenest building is one already built.	30
Public Health and Wellness	For the development and support of business and a built environment that supports public health initiatives and an improved quality of life.	32
Greenspace	For the development and activation of underutilized or under-capitalized amenities or public spaces.	34
Maintaining Authenticity	For the preservation of downtown's built environment.	36
Placemaking	For developing an inclusive environment that in return brings people together.	38
Storytelling	For refining the brand and identity of the commercial business district.	40
Tourism	For developing your downtown's central business district as a regional or statewide tourist destination.	42

Arts and Entertainment

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy was created to support an arts or entertainment focused environment within the downtown district. This strategy should seek to grow existing creative initiatives and to build upon foundational policies and ordinances to support original and innovative projects and programming. Main Street districts wishing to adopt this Transformation Strategy should identify the specific type of art or entertainment development that they would like to facilitate as part of this plan, knowing that the terms “art” and “entertainment” are broad descriptors and should be more narrowly defined to serve a particular group or niche of people.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Nightlife, galleries, public art, maker spaces, music, culture, history, museums, venues, public spaces, connectivity, educational institutions, film, performing arts, patrons, murals, artists in residence, poetry and dance.

“ The arts are not for the privileged few, but for the many. Their place is not on the periphery of daily life, but at its center. They should function not merely as another form of entertainment but, rather, should contribute significantly to our well being and happiness.”

— John D. Rockefeller III

PROS

- The district is alive at night, vibrant and can appeal to a diverse audience.
- The district can appeal to tourists and residents alike.
- The district can be family-friendly.
- The district develops a returning clientele.
- The district creates an economy with spin-off expenditures.

CONS

- The district can be viewed as elitist or artsy-fartsy.
- The district is usually the first type of funding to be cut.
- Art is subjective.
- The district can bring in businesses that can be perceived as controversial (e.g. tattoo parlors).
- Who is responsible for approving the art and maintaining it?

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- These types of business have the potential to keep odd hours.
- Noise regulations may be necessary.
- These districts are most successful with a complimentary business mix.
- These districts may require legal ordinances, e.g. open container policies, or overlay districts to be successful.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What is the audience you are trying to reach?
- How will people be able to interact with the venues, the people, the art and the district?
- What existing environment or businesses do you have to build upon?
- What special funding opportunities could you access?
- Does your community currently support the arts?

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FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Recruit and incentivize niche businesses and industries: sip and strokes, coffee shops, galleries, jewelry stores, art supply stores, dance studios, record shops and music stores.
- Actively promote art installations and art demonstrations.
- Encourage local businesses or artists to utilize crowd-sourcing as a funding mechanism.
- Partner with educational institutions to develop workforce to support the film industry.
- Become a “Camera Ready” designated community.
- Develop an artist-in-residence program utilizing vacant upper-story property downtown.
- Utilize vacant store fronts to host pop-up shops for artisans or makers.

DESIGN

- Create and promote the use of passive performance spaces.
- Install banners featuring designs by local artists
- Install benches downtown that enhance the arts and entertainment feel of the environment.
- Install non-traditional bike racks or paint sidewalks to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Develop a rotating public art program that highlights artists from the community and the region.
- Designate an area in or around downtown for “pop-up performances” equipped with a stage and electrical outlets.
- Utilize arts and local artists to transform underutilized surfaces (i.e. street lights, electric boxes, sidewalks, trashcans, etc.).
- Install downtown plaques to recognize art-tourism. For example, Covington uses bronze plaques to commemorate the actors, characters and movies filmed in their downtown.

PROMOTIONS

- Create an online community calendar.
- Develop a tailored website to your specific type of art or entertainment.
- Offer online artist profiles of local artists-in-residence.
- Develop new events/festivals or evolve existing ones to incorporate the arts.
- Develop and implement a #madeby or #madein campaign.
- Offer an art contest for the creation of public art pieces.
- Develop festivals inspired by local artists or local music legends as a fundraiser for the Main Street program.
- Develop a walking tour of public art or sculptural installations.
- Develop a newsletter that specifically highlights the arts or type of entertainment you are trying to promote downtown.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop a patron program as a way of collecting sustainable membership revenue.
- Partner with existing schools or institutions to develop an emerging artists program downtown.
- Create or serve as part of a local art council or artist guild.
- Develop filming guidelines and application process to encourage filming cooperation in your downtown.
- Develop event applications and guidelines to encourage outside partners and programs to bring their existing events downtown.
- Develop mural guidelines and a grant for local artists to encourage the creation and installation of art downtown.
- Develop ordinances to support an arts and entertainment overlay district.
- Educate owners of establishments that serve alcohol, about the law, if you have an open container district.

PARTNERS

Georgia Council for the Arts

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Georgia Museum of Arts

Fox Theatre Institute

Georgia Film Academy

Local convention and visitors bureau

Georgia Association of Museums and Galleries

Local radio stations

Local artist guild or art alliance

Georgia Arts Network

Local educational institutions

Chambers of Commerce

Beautification Initiatives and Design

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is for Main Street programs who want to improve the visual appeal of the residential and commercial historic district. This strategy should seek to support and to develop ordinances, policies, projects and programs to address the visual attributes of the buildings and the downtown's built environment. Special consideration should be given to initiatives serving to enhance the business environment through community engagement, accessibility and preservation. Keep in mind, the creation and maintenance of this area can only be supported through both public and private investment.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Clean, organized, safe, welcoming, design standards, codes enforcement, aesthetic enhancements, art, partners, plant palettes, developing an aesthetic, color palettes, design guidelines, façade grants, design incentive programs, property owner relations, murals, preservation, user experience, environment enhancers, atmosphere enhancers, pride in public buildings and storefront window merchandising.

“Design is *human*. It's not about 'Is it pretty,' but about the *connection* it creates between a product and our lives.”
— Jenny Arden

PROS

- These initiatives make downtown visually appealing.
- Design can unite character areas.
- These projects have the potential for high impact, low investment.
- These projects can incorporate community history and heritage through the use of public markers and plaques.

CONS

- These projects can be seen as frivolous.
- Maintenance is an important consideration.
- Time investment is another consideration.
- Taste in design is subjective.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- These efforts may require significant buy-in from property owners and the public sector to maintain.
- These initiatives need public input.
- Funding for installation and maintenance must be considered.
- Design projects can unify people or cause controversy.
- These initiatives create places for interaction.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Is the proposed design consistent with the current community aesthetic?
- What is the capacity for maintenance?
- What role will this Transformation Strategy play in enhancing the downtown environment?
- Which existing partners can be your community cheerleaders?
- How does this plan fit into your current downtown master plan?

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FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Identify planters or other fixtures that can be used as additional signage for businesses.
- Develop and implement a facade grant program that focuses its dollars on investing in good design and beautification initiatives by local businesses.
- Develop and offer a visual merchandising workshop.
- Develop a “This place is full of potential!” campaign to increase excitement and awareness for vacant properties downtown.
- Host a downtown open house for local real estate professionals and the chamber of commerce to showcase vacant properties.
- Develop an available property listing either online or in print form.
- Establish a land bank to allow you to acquire property more easily for development/redevelopment.

DESIGN

- Install attractive planters, bike racks, trash cans or benches to enhance the visual appeal of the downtown district.
- Encourage arts in underutilized spaces. Examples include utility boxes, light poles, painted crosswalks, banners and planters.
- Develop a seasonal planting plan and rotate greenery out accordingly.
- Develop a suggested paint palette for downtown.
- Consider the installation of a diverse type of lights downtown, including streetlights, signage, twinkle lights in trees and lights outlining rooftops.
- Enhance the pedestrian crosswalk experience with signage, bump outs, raised or painted crosswalks, brick pavers and greenery.
- Develop and install a comprehensive parking signage program.
- Develop downtown design guidelines.
- Develop and implement the use of form-based codes.
- Design a city-wide wayfinding program that helps people find downtown and its attractions.

PROMOTIONS

- Consider sponsorship opportunities for design elements downtown, such as bike racks, benches, swings, trees, gazebos, tables and chairs, planters and more.
- Identify partner organizations that can help maintain the existing design elements downtown.
- Develop and install a historic marker program to highlight the history or significant events that occurred downtown.
- Offer a “window of the month” featuring one business each month, on social media, that exhibits good visual merchandising practices.
- Create a downtown photo contest to grow engagement with the community and to develop a reserve of artistic and beautiful photos.
- Install “selfie” spots downtown, in alley ways or other underutilized spaces.
- Participate in the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s “This Place Matters” campaign.
- Use before and after photos to highlight projects and their impact on social media.
- Use window clings to highlight and to recognize facade grant recipients.

ORGANIZATION

- Organize with partners community planting days or community cleanup days.
- Host an annual awards event to recognize the best preservation and beautification projects.
- Develop a downtown ambassador program to serve as the “friendly faces” of downtown.
- Host monthly merchant meetings as a way for businesses to meet key city employees and to learn more about local incentive programs offered by Main Street and the state.
- Develop a youth leadership program in conjunction with the city to inspire future generations to be invested in downtown.
- Institute a vacancy registry or blight ordinance to address neglect by owners.
- Adopt tree ordinances to reduce the unnecessary elimination of trees downtown and to reduce the heat island effect.
- Adopt demolition ordinances that would restrict and define how and why a building would be taken down.
- Develop sign ordinances specific to the downtown district.
- Work with partners to create and implement a downtown master plan.
- Develop a downtown waste management plan to specifically address the needs of business.
- Adopt the international property maintenance code to enhance code enforcement

PARTNERS

Keep America Beautiful
Garden clubs
Civic organizations
Educational institutions
Churches
Chamber of commerce
Merchant association
Cooperative Extension
Service offices
City and county parks and recreation departments
Public works department
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
Georgia Council for the Arts
Tourism Product Development Grants
Walking or cycling clubs
Georgia Cities Foundation

Business Activation and Development

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is for Main Street districts wishing either to activate currently vacant sectors of the downtown or to support the growth and development of already established businesses. Business Activation and Development are separate approaches to downtown revitalization and should be treated as such. Incentives created for new businesses should be crafted in a unique way to address the needs of the district while incentives for existing businesses should be designed to support the specific needs of those merchants.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Recruitment and retention, niche markets, small business workshops, growth, expansion, incentives, resources, relationship building, promotions, welcome packets, open for business, community building, networking and training, communication and collaboration, market analysis, business plan development, financial institutions, education, local resident buy-in, one-on-one, Main Street as a visible resource and entrepreneur friendly.

“Great things in business are never done by one person. They’re done by a team of people.”

— Steve Jobs

PROS

These activities pair well with other focused strategies.

This strategy is a major component for a healthy, viable downtown.

If properly deployed, this strategy will add to the long-term stability and sustainability of the downtown economy.

CONS

This strategy can focus on new development at the detriment of existing businesses.

The best laid plans can be held hostage by the property owners’ own priorities.

Political opposition can result from efforts being focused on downtown.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

You need to meet local entrepreneurs where they are.

Incentives and initiatives need to be targeted and market-based.

This strategy requires a network of stakeholders and partners to initiate.

Main Street should make regular presentations to elected officials at city council meetings.

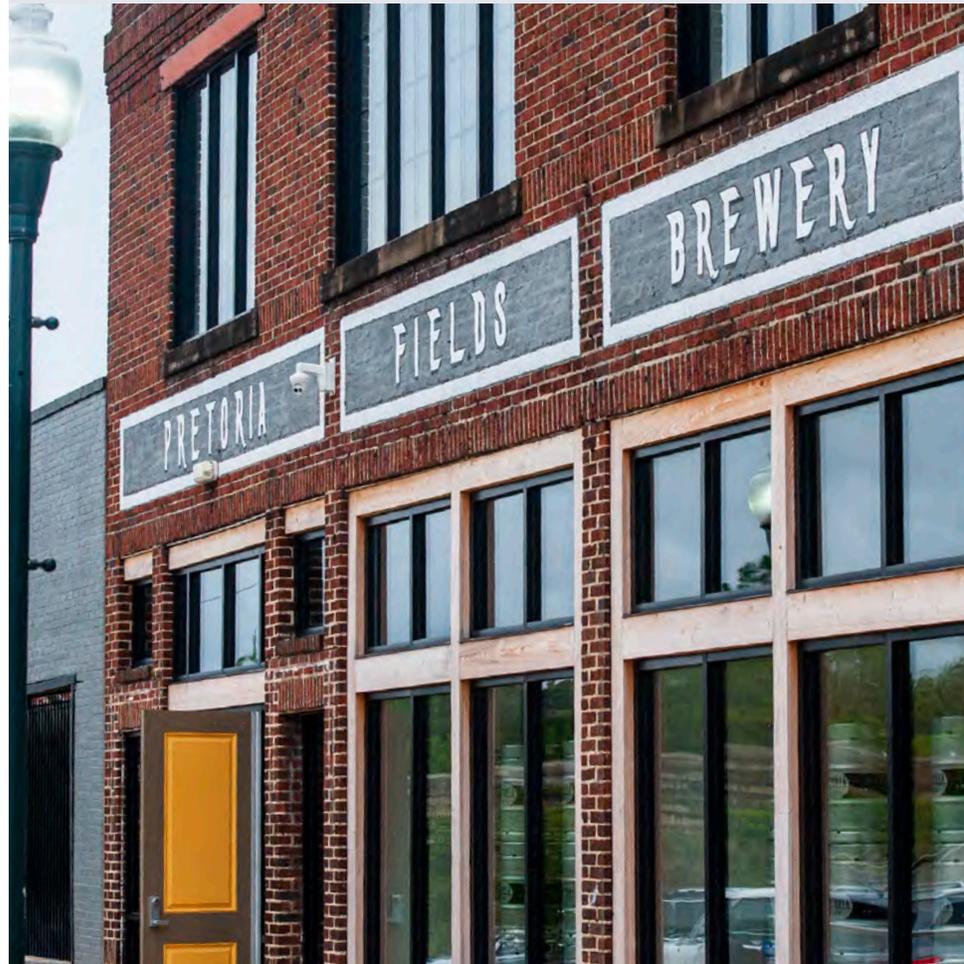
QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What are the current road blocks to business expansion and recruitment?

Have you recently conducted any market research to examine the current economic climate or potential niche markets?

How does Main Street fit in to the business development process in your community?

Albany, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Conduct a market study to identify existing business gaps and potential new markets.
- Calculate your downtown's current vacancy rate and average cost per square foot.
- Define and refine the process to open various types of business in your downtown.
- Offer grants to support the build-out and development of the interior of buildings.
- Develop incentives for targeted business types.
- Offer a small business boot camp for potential entrepreneurs.
- Offer small business workshops geared towards businesses that are already up and running.
- Develop a property owner database and business inventory.
- Identify underutilized second-story space.
- Consider using the DDA to purchase properties with the potential to spark catalytic projects and then redeveloping them through a public-private partnership.
- Establish a land bank to allow you to acquire property more easily for development/redevelopment.
- Develop a how-to guide for business prospects to tell them where to go for permits, inspections, etc.

DESIGN

- Develop, support and implement a facade grant program.
- Develop a visual building inventory that allows existing properties downtown to be cataloged and recorded as time and development progresses.
- Utilize local design services to help business owners envision the potential for new or existing properties.
- Ensure sidewalks are clean and accessible.
- Add plants and green spaces to increase visual appeal.
- Activate and energize vacant storefronts using artwork or photographs.
- Develop design guidelines and use the local historic preservation commission as a resource to promote historic preservation and to guide good development practices.
- Develop a wayfinding signage program to highlight businesses and downtown amenities.

PROMOTIONS

- Develop and implement a Downtown Dollars or discount card program to support local reinvestment.
- Create a downtown list-serve for all downtown stakeholders to share ideas and resources and to keep current on the latest developments downtown.
- Establish group marketing campaigns or group ad buys to help make everyone's dollar go further.
- Host a "First Friday" type of event that encourage the retailers to stay open past regular business hours.
- Offer a marketing grant to local businesses.
- When organizing or hosting all events happening downtown, consider the impact on the local businesses. If the impact is deemed to be negative, see what adjustments can be made so the event will be more beneficial to them.
- Develop an internship program for high school students with local businesses.
- Host a local Shark Tank competition with community partners.
- Host Small Business Saturday activities and regular shop local campaigns.
- Develop a welcome packet on how to open a business in your downtown.
- Work with SBDC to create a workforce development program to target the needs of businesses downtown.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop relationships with the planning department, code enforcement, health department, city clerk and others involved in the permitting process so that the Main Street program stays up-to-date as things develop downtown.
- Manager and board members should learn from city staff the requirements to open a new business downtown so that they can better assist new business inquiries.
- Refine existing codes and ordinances to make them more "business friendly."
- Develop a membership program to provide financial and in-kind incentives to downtown businesses.
- Establish a merchants' association to give downtown business owners a platform to be heard.
- Approve a special taxing district to support supplementary services for downtown.
- Appoint downtown business owners, community stakeholders and property owners to the Main Street board of directors.
- If eligible, apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Rural Zone designation.
- If eligible, apply for Opportunity Zone designation.
- If eligible, apply for Enterprise Zone designation.
- Apply for the state's Entrepreneur Friendly designation from the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

PARTNERS

Chamber of commerce
Small Business Development Center
Civic clubs
Local convention and visitors bureau
DDA or other development authorities
County/city economic development office
Historic preservation commission
Georgia Cities Foundation
Local banks
High school and higher education institutions
Technical college
Local association of real estate professionals
Power companies
Regional commissions
Georgia Department of Community Affairs
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Tax assessor or tax commissioner

Downtown Living

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is designed for Main Street programs who wish to focus on developing a downtown environment conducive to residential living. This strategy should seek to provide multifaceted living environments that cater to the community's complex and diverse existing and potential regional economic climate. Keeping in mind that retail follows rooftops, this strategy should also be coupled with incentives to open and to develop convenience-based goods and service hubs that can support downtown residents, as well as residents in the broader community.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Diversity in housing options, varied price-points and style, developer relationships, codes and ordinances, walkability, community needs, community wants, commuter metrics, engagement, promotions, incentives, uses, convenience, community gathering spaces, beautification, user experience, partnerships, grocery stores, entrepreneur-friendly, safety, transportation solutions and amenities, greenspace, programming, education, public/private services, social opportunities and accessibility.

“ The generation that grew up watching shows like ‘Sesame Street’ and ‘Seinfeld’ sees living downtown as a totally viable option.”

— *Patty Burk*

PROS

Downtown living creates after-hours vitality.
Downtown residents are a captive market.
Downtown living utilizes vacant upper-story units.
Downtown living can meet additional housing needs with lower infrastructure costs.

CONS

Parking and traffic are important considerations.
Property owners may be unwilling to invest.
Accessibility may be a challenge.
Some people perceive high rehabilitation costs.
Some people have a negative perception of downtown residents.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Housing should cater to varied price points and family sizes.
Building codes and the permitting process are important considerations.
Consider infill projects and building rehabilitation.
Rehabilitation should be preservation-sensitive.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Do our current codes and ordinances support downtown living?
Who is going to live downtown?
Are there any design guidelines or special processes that would need to be taken into consideration?
What amenities are needed to support downtown living?

Rome, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Encourage property owners to offer rental rates that the market can bear; this will require statistical data when considering setting the rates.
- Identify developers who have completed other downtown housing projects within your region.
- Activate businesses that will encourage, support and serve downtown residents.
- Encourage business owners to consider residents' schedules when setting hours of operation; this will most likely require the support of statistical data, particularly drive-time and commuter metrics.
- Encourage the use of state and federal rehabilitation incentives to preserve historic homes and buildings.
- Incentivize a home ownership program to reduce renting.
- Work with banks to develop a first-time home buyers' programs.
- Establish a land bank to allow you to acquire property more easily for development/redevelopment.
- Consider using the DDA to purchase properties that could become mixed use or lofts and then redeveloping them through a public-private partnership.
- Consider a parking management program.
- Consider requiring developers to provide parking on- or off-site for residents.

DESIGN

- Develop design guidelines that specifically speak to downtown residential living for mixed-use commercial spaces.
- Create green spaces where kids and animals can play.
- Create a downtown that is pedestrian-friendly and enhances walkability.
- Update and maintain public spaces for Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.
- Develop a list of trusted professionals and workers skilled in preservation-sensitive rehabilitations.
- Install public art to enhance and encourage engagement in the built environment.
- Create pet-friendly amenities, e.g. dog park and dog sanitation stations.
- Consider form-based codes to promote the types of development sought.
- Consider revising codes to encourage smaller setbacks from the sidewalk and requiring parking behind the building or in a deck that integrated into the construction.
- Incentivize new construction projects that save historic trees and replant new trees when an old tree dies or is damaged and must be cut down.
- Consider requiring larger-scale redevelopment or new construction projects require greenspaces as part of the construction.

PROMOTIONS

- Develop promotional materials to educate and inform people regarding historic tax credit programs and local/state incentives available for redevelopment.
- Host a developer's "open house" for vacant properties that have potential to be redeveloped to accommodate downtown living.
- Develop a list of available properties in both print and digital media.
- Once properties have been redeveloped to offer residential living, host a downtown open house to showcase available units.
- Host or create downtown events specifically geared towards residents, such as a back-to-school event, homecoming event, trick-or-treating, holiday event or celebratory parade.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop ordinances that address the use of sidewalks by businesses, e.g. tables, chairs and product merchandising. Ensure ADA compliance.
- Apply for Georgia Department of Community Affairs Rural Zone designation.
- Nominate the downtown district or individual properties for National Register designation so that historic tax credits can be utilized on eligible projects.
- Create a community revitalization/redevelopment plan to aid in the application of Low-Income Housing Tax Credits.
- Define or refine ordinances that address downtown living.
- Maintain strong residential zoning for historic traditional neighborhoods surrounding downtown.
- Work with local code enforcement officer to educate residents and property owners regarding downtown ordinances.

PARTNERS

Realtors

Developers and property managers who have experience with mixed-use projects

Downtown property owners

Local tax commission

Local tax assessor

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

State Historic Preservation Division

Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

Georgia Cities Foundation

Local planning and zoning staff

Your downtown's building inspector

Local historic preservation commission

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development

Parking and Transportation Association of Georgia

Community Serving

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on developing an environment that is entrepreneur-friendly and intentionally incentivizes businesses, which serve the needs of the residents in the city and greater region. A Community Serving strategy is designed not only to address comprehensively the wants and needs of those who live in your city but also should serve those who live beyond the traditional “walls” of the central business district. Special consideration should be given to creating community gathering spaces, as well as to the support and development of inclusive public amenities. The types of businesses recruited and their standard hours of operation should reflect the day-to-day needs of residents and their target audience, with the understanding that more metro-based cities may need to accommodate a commuter workforce.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Business diversity, walkability, knowing your audience, commuter metrics, business hours, engagement, promotions, incentives, uses, convenience, community gathering spaces, beautification, accessibility, user experience and amenities, participation, volunteer base, accessible necessities, grocery stores, entrepreneur friendly, safety, transportation solutions and amenities, education, public amenities, educational institution engagement, public/ private services and professional services.



Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

— Jane Jacobs

PROS

- This strategy creates a district where people want to live.
- This strategy increases the quality of life for residents.
- A Community Serving strategy can build overall community support.
- When you build a place where people want to live, you are inherently creating a place where people want to visit.
- This strategy helps support the business community.

CONS

- Public infrastructure requires maintenance.
- You may find it difficult initially to garner support.
- Opponents may say a Community Serving cannot deliver quick and tangible results.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Retail follows rooftops.
- You need to understand your local market.
- What are the demographics of your population base?
- Where do your downtown workers live?

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What can your market support?
- How do commuter metrics affect your daily population?
- What current amenities exist to support residents?
- What transportation infrastructure is available?
- Does downtown feel inclusive for all residents in the community?

Thomasville, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Create an online business directory highlighting a business of the week/month.
- Develop an incentive packet highlighting the financial resources available for potential new businesses and work to bring in particular resident serving businesses, i.e. grocery stores, daycares, hair salons, hardware stores, restaurants and retail.
- Educate business owners about the importance of business hours that coincide with commuter metrics and local residential needs, i.e. businesses open after 6 p.m. and open on Sundays and Mondays.
- Work with business owners to develop a “love your local” campaign in which local businesses would offer discounts to city residents.
- Work with local banks to offer low interest loans specifically geared towards local residents opening businesses downtown.

DESIGN

- Develop wayfinding signage to identify both businesses and local amenities.
- Conduct a sidewalk inventory to identify gaps in walkability for pedestrian traffic.
- Add or repair sidewalks to make them more pedestrian friendly and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Add bike lanes with bike hubs downtown.
- Plant a community garden specifically for downtown residents.
- Build a dog park and dog sanitation stations.
- Install or update downtown lighting to illuminate alley ways and parking lots for increased safety and visibility.
- Develop special parking for residents only.
- Add benches and other furnishings to encourage people to spend more time downtown.

PROMOTIONS

- Create a residential amenities guide focusing on shops, restaurants and services to serve the local community. Offer this guide online and in print.
- Create a “welcome to downtown” campaign to reintroduce downtown to the greater community and to create a feeling of inclusiveness.
- Work with partners to develop a community calendar with events.
- Develop a special section on your website with information and deals for locals only.
- Design and distribute a newsletter both in digital and print.
- Host events that serve the residents, such as trick-or-treating, Easter egg hunts, a farmers’ market, movie nights and creation of a shop local/shop small campaign.
- Write news releases/create social media videos promoting business and property owners who give back to the community.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop a welcome packet for new residents and work with local partners such as real estate professionals and the chamber of commerce to distribute.
- Work with Georgia Power, Georgia Electric Membership Corp., Electric Cities of Georgia or other local utility companies to pull drive-time metrics reports, retail leakage surveys, tapestry reports and demographic reports to understand better the needs of your community’s residents.
- Develop a relationship with Main Street and the greater community’s neighborhood associations to develop a shop local campaign.
- Create volunteer opportunities downtown for students and civic organizations.
- Offer a community input survey in print and online to learn how your downtown and Main Street program can work better to serve the community.

PARTNERS

AARP

Association of real estate professionals

Chamber of commerce

Higher education institutions

Neighborhood associations

Civic clubs

City and county government

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Local convention and visitors bureau

Business or merchants’ association

Community foundations

Power companies

Georgia Department of Community Affairs Design Studio

Georgia Council for the Arts

Local media outlets

Financial institutions

Transportation and Pedestrian Experience

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is designed specifically to address the mobility needs for both tourists and residents alike. All modes of transportation from foot traffic to bikes, and buses to cars should be considered. Often times residents and visitors inability to park and effectively to navigate the downtown district can be a deterrent to people coming downtown. This strategy, like most strategies, is most successful when approached using the Four Points, considering design elements, the businesses' needs and the best way to communicate effectively the transportation and pedestrian amenities of the district.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Walkability, Bike-ability, wayfinding, parking, amenities, user experience, aesthetics, street level experience, street plantings, traffic flow, accessibility, convenience, safety, complete streets, parking and benches and street furnishings.



Streets and their sidewalks – the main public places of a city – are its most vital organs.”

– Jane Jacobs

PROS

- This strategy enhances mobility for tourists and residents.
- This strategy promotes active living.
- This strategy increases safety and decreases auto traffic by using alternative modes of transportation.
- This strategy improves the street-level experience for retail shoppers.

CONS

- This strategy can spark public opposition to non-auto-centric traffic.
- Major overhaul projects can be costly.
- Flexibility is limited for state-controlled roads.
- You can easily make bad decisions without proper technical guidance.

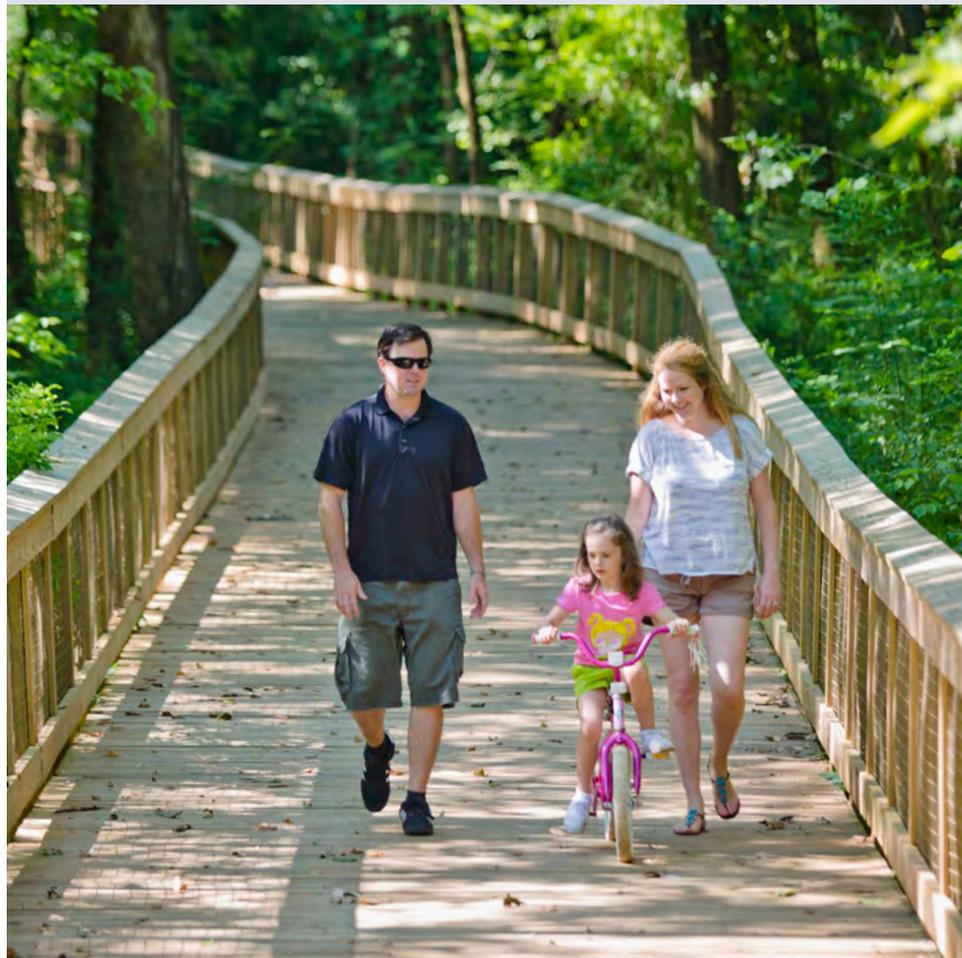
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Building codes can be adapted to meet the needs of historic properties.
- Establishing relationships with partners and other agencies is of the utmost importance.
- Check your downtown's current walk score.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Who manages the roads in and around downtown? How are people getting in, to and around downtown? What modes of transportation are underdeveloped?
- What funding resources are available at the local, state and national level?
- What is the local support for alternate transportation?
- Does downtown feel inclusive for all residents in the community?

Milledgeville, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Seek out training opportunities for alternative transportation options.
- Businesses offer discounts to citizens who bike or walk, taking advantage of alternative transportation options.
- Develop wayfinding signage that connects steps/distance to downtown businesses and attractions.
- Establish a bike share program with hub stations located downtown.
- Install electric car charging stations downtown.
- Encourage businesses to offer step count discounts, such as 5% off for 5k steps, 10% off for 10k steps, etc.
- Offer facade grants to revitalize the back entrance of businesses and alleyways so that pedestrian have multiple means of egress and access to downtown businesses.
- Adopt a special tax district to offset cost related to enhancing the main transportation corridor or pedestrian experience.

DESIGN

- Design creative bike racks.
- Develop a comprehensive parking signage campaign that is on brand with downtown.
- Update sidewalks to design connectivity to create a complete sidewalk network.
- Install mile markers downtown associated with established routes/paths.
- Enhance landscape and greenery to provide more shade, especially on routes connecting parking lots to businesses.
- Create dog/pet friendly amenities, e.g. dog park and pet sanitation stations.
- Install water fountains for pets and people.
- Paint bright crosswalks that tie in to local amenities and tourism initiatives.
- Utilize conceptual drawings for how a space could be used to help sell the vision.
- Place benches and other street furnishings downtown to encourage walking.

PROMOTIONS

- Design a public safety campaign to create awareness of bikers and pedestrians while highlighting safety and best practices for sharing the road.
- Organize a “car free” day downtown, either on select roads or the entire district.
- Host a pop-up bike lane with a bike giveaway.
- Develop an alternative routes map to downtown, highlighting paths that are not auto-centric.
- Develop a walking tour of downtown and connect to an architecture tour, history tour or game.
- Offer an outdoor sports activity that promotes utilizing the transportation corridors, e.g. color runs, 5k races, bike rides and scooter rides.
- Designate a ride-share pick-up and drop-off spot downtown.
- Enhance the visual appeal and safety of bus stops or trolley stops downtown.
- Design and install “walk your city” signs that celebrate short walks to local amenities.

ORGANIZATION

- Establish a relationship with your local Georgia Department of Transportation district office.
- Create a sidewalk inventory to identify gaps or areas that need repair.
- Conduct regular walk audits with outside partners for the areas in and around downtown.
- Establish relationships with city and/or county public works/ transportation departments.
- Conduct a complete streets inventory and adopt a complete streets policy.
- Adopt a tree removal ordinance.
- Adopt the international property maintenance code.
- Lower local speed limits on roads leading in, to or through downtown as a traffic-calming measure.
- Adopt a golf cart ordinance.
- Work with Georgia Department of Transportation to de-designate state routes in downtown to give more local control.
- Identify traffic accident hot spots in conjunction with your public safety departments.

PARTNERS

Georgia Department of Transportation
Regional commission
Local public safety and emergency services
Smart Growth America
Georgia Bikes Association
Local electric providers
Local public works/ transportation
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Local transportation authorities
Local convention and visitors bureau
Local bike clubs or regional trail organizations
Metropolitan planning organization (MPO)
Parking and Transportation Association of Georgia
City or County Recreation department

Ecotourism and Recreation Economy

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on the built environment and recreational activities that currently serve as drivers of tourism for the local economy. This strategy should seek to provide a balanced approach to address all facets of a tourism and recreation based economy, ranging from lodging and events to businesses and organizational policies, which will in turn support new or existing infrastructure. This strategy capitalizes on existing regional resources that can serve as economic drivers for the downtown district.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Natural resources, outdoor activities, cultural tourism, supporting industry, outfitter businesses, youth leagues, experiential, volunteerism, lodging, public facilities, public partners, regionalism, active and healthy living, forest bathing, nature enthusiast, volunteers and youth engagement.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

— John Muir

PROS

- This strategy can encourage a healthy lifestyle.
- This strategy appeals to varied ages, abilities and lifestyle interests.
- It connects downtown to regional amenities.
- It can highlight local history and culture.

CONS

- There can be a large initial investment cost.
- Land acquisition costs can be expensive or challenging.
- Climate and seasonal considerations can pose challenges.

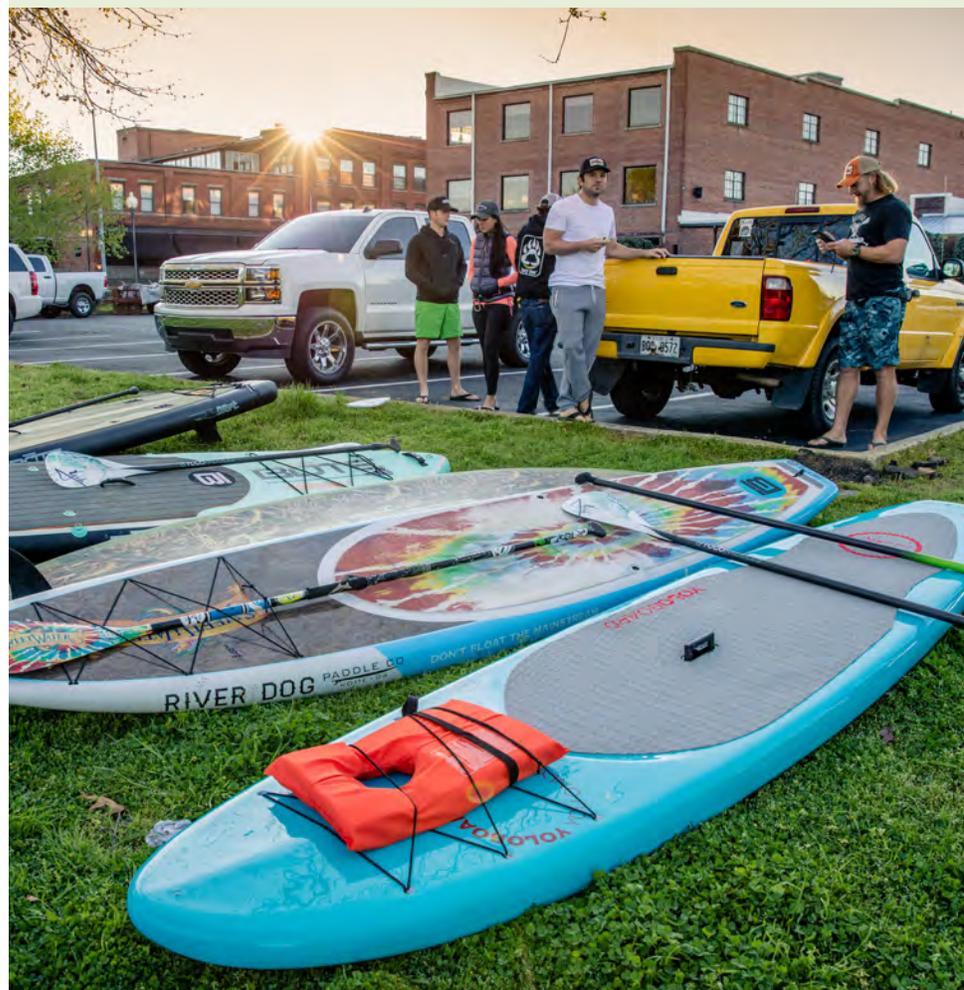
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Amenities can be leveraged to serve multiple purposes.
- It is important to define your “niche” because you won’t be able to serve everyone and everything.
- Consider handicap accessibility.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What recreational attractions or amenities already exist?
- What businesses do you have to leverage your resources?
- What are these amenities connection to downtown?
- Where will tourists stay?
- What existing wayfinding tools exist or need to be developed?

Rome, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a diverse business mix to support the existing recreational amenities (i.e. outfitters, equipment rental, etc.).
- Work with the community and downtown to provide diverse lodging options and price points.
- Encourage restaurants to offer brown bag lunches or food that is portable and travel-friendly.
- Recruit new business that provide food-to-go or convenience store options.
- Develop infrastructure to engage the existing natural amenities and directly connect them to downtown. For example, connect to a river with walkways or docks, encourage trails to have spurs that lead downtown and connect to parks and greenspaces downtown.
- Businesses offer discounts to citizens who bike or walk, taking advantage of alternative transportation options.

DESIGN

- Develop wayfinding signage to assist with navigating downtown businesses and how to access recreational sites.
- Consider including a step counter or a mile marker to illustrate how close or far local resources are located to downtown.
- Offer scooter or bike rental opportunities and provide additional bike stand stations downtown to encourage people to consider alternative transportation options.
- Install fitness stations on existing trails or paths to enhance the user experience.
- Install water refill stations and public restrooms.
- Develop infrastructure to encourage owners to bring their pets to downtown. For example, set out water bowls for pets, develop a dog park and set up pet sanitation disposal stations.
- Consider adding bike lanes to make cyclists feel safer on downtown streets.

PROMOTIONS

- Develop a Downtown Dollars program or shop local campaign that is specifically geared to support these niche businesses.
- When possible consider how you can take a regional focus and partner with other organizations or Main Streets.
- Highlight cultural and heritage tourism attractions through both physical and digital marketing pieces.
- Create incentive-based programs to connect regional amenities to downtown businesses, such as a city pass, one day discount or coupons.
- Offer to host awards ceremony downtown for local or regional sports competitions.
- Host a recreation fair downtown.
- Develop a website dedicated to promoting your region's specific ecotourism and recreation amenities and connecting them to downtown.
- Develop a hashtag that connects your downtown to the recreational amenities. Examples include #kayakcolumbus and #hiketoccoa.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop a multi-community business association to support regional amenities.
- Appoint board members who represent local amenities.
- Join water trails or rail-to-trails organizations/ partnerships and take advantage of available training opportunities.
- Work with local elected officials to identify diverse funding streams, such as SPLOST and hotel/motel tax dollars.
- Partner with local governments to promote regional amenities.
- Work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development to host a Tourism Product Development Team or walking audit to identify local resources and amenities.
- Work with local partners to develop a walking tour of downtown buildings and sites of interests.
- Work with local partners to develop a bicycle tour or shuttle service that connects downtown sites and resources with assets outside downtown.

PARTNERS

Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia River Network
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
PATH Foundation
Other local governments in the region
Land and Water Conservation Fund
Local convention and visitors bureau
Recreational Trails Program
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia Trail Summit
State visitor centers
Georgia Botanical Society
Audubon Society
Local and regional outdoor clubs and destination hoteliers
Managers of ecotourism and recreational assets

Agricultural Focus

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is built around an agricultural-based economy, where residents, businesses and community stakeholders are dependent on the success and growth of a particular agricultural industry in their area. This strategy should seek a balanced approach to grow and to support an already existing economic climate that is unique to your region of the state. Consider how your downtown can work to support this economy through business development, business retention, educational programming and/or volunteer initiatives.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Locally grown, locally raised, plants and animals, agri-tourism, food production, packaging, farms, farmers' market, community supported agriculture, big industry, Georgia grown, makers, USDA, insurance, farm-to-table, machinery, stock shows, animal auctions, fairs and festivals, community identity, regionalism and forestry.



What you see depends on how you see the world. To most people, this is just dirt. To a farmer, it's potential."

– Doe Zantamata

PROS

- This strategy takes advantage of existing regional resources.
- This strategy focuses on fresh food and fresh products.
- This strategy aims to eliminate food deserts.
- It supports locally made, locally grown products.

CONS

- Water quality may present concerns.
- A lack of economic diversity can present obstacles.
- An agricultural strategy is vulnerable to environmental forces.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- This strategy requires a diverse business mix to support the local economy in a holistic way.
- You need to educate all entities on the benefits of regionalism.
- An agriculture-based strategy can create entrepreneurial opportunities for under-engaged populations.
- Not all agricultural based businesses are food driven. (e.g., timber, cotton, etc.)

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What local products are grown or made in my community?
- What existing business currently serve the agricultural economy, or could they be adapted to do so?
- How can we secure the long-term sustainability of this industry?

Thomson, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Encourage the development of co-op and CSA type of businesses.
- Develop a community garden.
- Incentivize the re-location or activation of business that support the agricultural economy.
- Incentivize sustainable agricultural practices
- Assist in the activation of businesses that specialize in farm-to-table or a makers' market.
- Offer a communal kitchen space for start-up businesses.
- Recruit a farm-to-table restaurant, serving locally sourced foods.
- Evaluate water resources to support hydroponics, fisheries, etc.
- Develop an online business directory highlighting businesses with locally made or grown products.

DESIGN

- Plant edible landscape elements in or around the downtown district.
- Encourage habitat creation through downtown landscaping.
- Offer locally made downtown amenities like bike racks, benches and planters.
- Create a physical environment to support a local farmers' market or makers' market, such as:
 - A pavilion, a large grassy area or gravel sites
 - Public restrooms
 - Gathering spaces that include benches and tables
- Use rainwater harvesting to irrigate downtown vegetation.
- Develop a public arts program which ties in to the agricultural history of the community and broader region.

PROMOTIONS

- Offer a local wildlife or locally grown dinner downtown as a fundraising event.
- Create an edible garden of the month club and use local farms to help talk about best practices for growing fruits and vegetables in your region of the state.
- Work regionally to host an agricultural fair or livestock show.
- Host a touch a tractor/truck event downtown.
- Develop a locally grown or regionally grown logo specific to your community and market it as part of a comprehensive shop local campaign.
- Offer a weekly farmers market and encourage the market vendors to accept EBT recipients.
- Work regionally with partners to develop an online community calendar highlighting all agricultural based events and activities.
- Host an agricultural based event or festival focusing on a regionally grown product.
- Encourage experiential tourism with pumpkin patches or Christmas tree lots hosted downtown.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop variances that allow for small scale agricultural processing to take place downtown.
- Install irrigation meters.
- Sign up to participate in the Georgia Grown farm trail program.
- Recruit a representative of the local agricultural economy to serve on your Main Street program's board of directors.
- Partner with schools or educational institutions to develop programs highlighting the importance of the agricultural economy and the role that it has historically played in supporting and shaping the downtown. Use the information gathered to develop marketing materials and fun, collaborative pieces, such as a downtown coloring book to share your story.

PARTNERS

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Future Farmers of America
Small Business Development Center
Community Development Block Grant
Georgia Grown
American Farm Bureau Federation
National Farmers Organization
4-H clubs
Georgia Department of Agriculture
Georgia Department of Economic Development
Georgia Farmer's Market Association
Locally established growers association
State, agricultural industry organizations
Cooperative Extension Service offices
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Sustainability

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy is designed for a community trying to create an eco-friendly and sustainable approach to downtown revitalization, keeping in mind that the greenest building is one already built. Utilizing the Four Point Approach™, this strategy should focus on incentivizing green development, create a strong and resilient infrastructure and lay the foundation for policies and ordinances to encourage the highest and best use of existing resources.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Recycling, storm water management, resiliency, emergency preparedness, green infrastructure, LEED certification, renewable energy, regionalism, healthy, reuse, environment, renewable, eco-friendly, sustainable, compostable, biodegradable, low carbon footprint, net zero, low VOC, all natural, balanced, alternative, clean, energy-saving, innovative, responsible, salvaged, fair trade, farm-raised, non-toxic, conscious, efficient, waste-reducing, salvaged.



Sustainable development is that which meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

— Gro Harlem Brundtland

PROS

This strategy aims to reduce lifetime energy costs.
A goal of this strategy is renewable energy.
Environmental sustainability encourages community resilience.
This strategy is forward thinking.

CONS

This strategy can require a high initial investment.
This strategy can be political.
Environmental sustainability needs a champion.

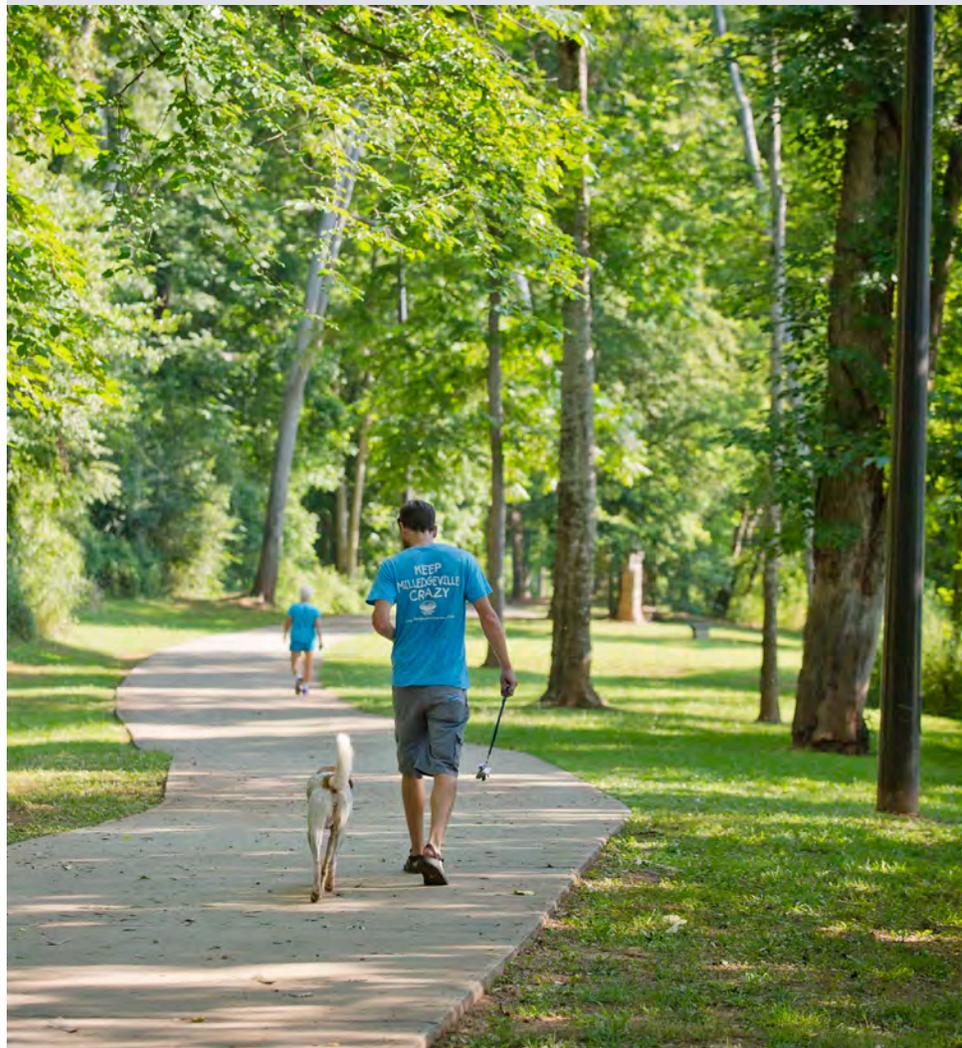
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This strategy needs to be marketed to like-minded people and organizations.
It can be controversial if the scope is not clearly defined.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What is your community's existing environmental ethic?
What are your downtown's environmental vulnerabilities?
Do you have any existing community partners or stakeholders that are already working on this initiative?
Do you have any good potential adaptive reuse projects?
Is there sufficient political will to support this strategy?

Milledgeville, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develop incentives to encourage preservation sensitive building updates.
- Offer a matching grant or facade grant program to encourage these updates.
- Work with power companies to provide energy audits for downtown businesses and offer a matching grant to those businesses who take advantage of the recommended changes.
- Provide communal grease traps.
- Recruit niche industries that are: zero waste, farm-to-table, regional and/or environmentally friendly.
- Offer tax abatements or tax freezes for newly renovated buildings that become LEED certified.
- Consider using the DDA to purchase historic buildings that have the potential to spark catalytic projects and then redeveloping them in a public-private partnership.
- Promote the rebate program offered through the Georgia Cities Foundation's Green Communities Fund.

DESIGN

- Educate local businesses about the positive impact of functional transom windows.
- Encourage the use of native plants and landscaping.
- Add recycling receptacles use by businesses and individual consumers.
- Use bioswales to enhance landscaping and to create positive environmental impact.
- Install a community rain garden and use it to water downtown vegetation.
- Consider permeable pavement for repaving projects downtown.
- Install bike racks.
- Install dog sanitation receptacles.
- Switch all lights downtown to LED bulbs.
- Install vehicle charging stations.
- Plant a pollinator garden.

PROMOTIONS

- Develop marketing materials to encourage alternative modes of transportation.
- Develop educational programs to encourage and explain the importance for energy and resource conservation.
- Identify partner organization and associations already doing similar things and see how the Main Street program can work more closely with them.
- Include recycling bins at events and festivals.
- Partner with youth organizations, civic clubs or higher educational institutions to host a litter pickup day.
- Develop a composting competition for local restaurants.
- Host a "dine downtown" week that offers menu items that are locally sourced and encourage farm-to-table eating.
- Encourage experiential tourism with pumpkin patches or Christmas tree lots hosted downtown.

ORGANIZATION

- Develop design guidelines to focus on energy efficiency and to encourage sustainable development to support LEED or Earthcraft standards.
- Develop ordinances to support the use of alternative power sources. i.e. solar panels.
- Adopt a tree ordinance.
- Adopt a demolition ordinance that spells out the types of properties and the conditions under which they can be demolished.
- Develop a local downtown composting program.
- Plant a community garden.
- Work with local emergency management services to develop an emergency preparedness plan specific to downtown.

PARTNERS

Keep America Beautiful

Trees Atlanta

Georgia River Network

Audubon Society

Garden clubs

Land trusts

Forest service

Earthcraft, a program by Southface

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Environmental Protection Agency

Local schools and educational institutions

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Georgia Cities Foundation

Public Health and Wellness

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy centers around the development and support of business and a built environment that supports public health initiatives and an improved quality of life. This strategy makes the most sense for a community seeking a unique strategy for its citizens by building relationships with local health and wellness centers. Keep in mind that this strategy can connect with existing health and wellness apps — including Fitbit, Apple Health, Couch to 5K, Healthy Out, Happy Cow and My Fitness Pal — without reinventing the wheel. This strategy is most successful when health and wellness are approached in a fun and creative environment.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Healthy living, nutrition, exercise, walkability, mindful, longevity, community-oriented, natural, age independent, workforce, local, wellness, step count, quality of life, strong, farm-to-table, physical fitness, active lifestyle, therapy, mental health, greenspace, outdoors, family, food desert and clean water.

“Health is a state of body.
Wellness is a state of
being.”

— J. Stanford

PROS

- These initiatives make a healthier community.
- People live longer.
- These initiatives increase quality of life.
- These programs build a sense of community.
- These programs support varied industries.
- These programs are easy to get behind publicly.

CONS

- These programs can take longer to see results.
- Some impacts may be hard to quantify.
- New Year's resolution syndrome can stymie progress.
- There can be an educational learning curve.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Requires a variety of infrastructure – whether its business, public facilities, recreation equipment or greenspace.
- Needs educational programming to be successful.
- Overcoming stigmas can be challenging.
- Health also includes mental health.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What is your community's greatest health need?
- What is your city's commitment to healthy living?
- What existing programs, or partners do you have in place to support this strategy?
- Where can people buy groceries in your community?
- What public facilities or programming do you have for sports or recreation?

Statesboro, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Develop a walking tour to share your community's story while also encouraging an active lifestyle.
- Encourage downtown employers to offer wellness incentive programs.
- Incentivize doctor cooperative businesses and other potential niche industries to locate downtown, e.g. grocery stores, gyms, fitness studios, specialty food or drink establishments, outdoor/recreation businesses, dance studios and karate studios.
- Develop an online wellness directory to highlight community and downtown assets and businesses.
- Work with businesses to eliminate the use of single-serving plastics, i.e. straws, plastic plates and cups.
- Work with local restaurants to offer healthy eating/ nutrition classes.

DESIGN

- Build a dog park and install dog sanitation stations.
- Offer public recreation amenities that encourage an active lifestyle, such as Frisbee golf, bike paths or pickleball.
- Install wayfinding signage that is step-count- or miles-based.
- Create publicly accessible exercise stations along walking trails.
- Install bike racks and scooter stations downtown.
- Install water fountains or bottle refill stations.
- Offer public restrooms and family bathrooms.
- Plant a community garden.
- Plant landscaping that encourages cross pollination.
- Plant edible landscaping.

PROMOTIONS

- Host a farmers' market or makers' market downtown.
- Host a citywide health fair downtown.
- Work with downtown restaurants to offer healthy cooking classes.
- Incorporate active lifestyle and wellness components to existing events.
- Host a walk-a-thon or dance-a-thon as a fundraiser.
- Work with businesses to offer discounts tied to step counts. Examples are 10% off for 10,000 steps or 5% off for 5,000 steps.
- Host a "healthy eating week." Collaborate with local restaurants to offer specials for those with unique dietary needs, i.e. vegan, vegetarian and gluten free.
- Work with a local gym or club to host an exercise bootcamp downtown.
- Host a touch-a-truck event downtown to minimize stigmas existing between the community and law enforcement.

ORGANIZATION

- Declare a healthy living week for downtown businesses.
- Pass a resolution to support healthy living.
- Promote and educate the public regarding the Georgia Rural Hospital Tax Credit program.
- Make EBT available at the farmers' market.
- Put together and sell a healthy downtown cookbook with healthy meals.
- Partner with hospitals and other health-based organizations to host their events downtown.
- Designate an ex-officio position to be held by someone in the health and wellness sector, preferably someone who is not a downtown business owner so that a broader community engagement may occur.
- Install "little libraries" and "little food pantries" downtown. Work with community partners to keep them stocked and maintained.
- Develop programming to encourage indoor physical fitness opportunities in buildings that may traditionally serve another purpose, i.e. train depot, art center, community center, church.

PARTNERS

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Community supported agriculture

Community gardens

Georgia Grown

Georgia Farmers' Market Association

Georgia Organics

Keep America Beautiful

AARP

Department of Health Services

Department of Education

Local hospitals or wellness clinics

Cooperative Extension Service offices

Greenspace

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on the development and activation of underutilized or under-capitalized amenities or public spaces; however, this strategy is more robust than flowerbeds and alley ways. This strategy, when highly executed, will consider how to incorporate more greenery into the existing built environment, the sustainability of public spaces and the programming of greenspaces. Consideration should also be given to how greenspaces interact with the central business district, as well as the diversity and inclusivity of use and of user experience.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Parks, recreation, nature, scale, experimentation, community scale, installations, enhance environment, lifestyle, health and wellness, environmental infrastructure, water runoff, bioswales, storm water, transportation corridors, user experience, planning, programming, intergovernmental coordination, public venues, maintenance, diversity in use and users, funding and sustainability.

“ Attractive landscaping, seating, lighting and sculpture alone will not make things happen, but it does provide a backdrop for the important elements and gives a sense of place and identity to set the stage for a transformation.”

– *Real Estate Review, 2008
Greenville, SC*

PROS

- This strategy catalyzes private investment and development.
- This strategy develops community gathering spaces.
- Greenspaces can be used to enhance and connect infrastructure.
- Greenspaces can attract new audiences.
- Greenspaces can add value to existing projects.

CONS

- Greenspaces require money to build and time to grow.
- It can be challenging to get financial support.
- This strategy can be a hard sell to certain audiences.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Programming of the space can make it or break it.
- There will be maintenance and programming costs after the development of the space.
- The success of this strategy is dependent on multi-partner buy-in.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What need will this strategy address?
- What is your primary goal?
- How much support will the city and residents give to this strategy?
- What would your funding streams be for design, build-out and programming?
- What enhancements do existing greenspaces need?

Savannah, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Incentivize developers who want to participate in greenscape developments (i.e. facade easements, property trades and alley way improvements).
- Incorporate wayfinding signage around existing greenspaces, directing patrons to shops, restaurants and amenities.
- Partner with neighboring businesses to utilize greenspaces for private use or as an added amenity.
- Encourage businesses to improve their own looks with the installation of their own planters and softscapes.
- Incentivize health-oriented businesses to utilize the spaces for programming and activities (e.g. a yoga studio, gym and health food shop).
- Encourage restaurants to develop picnic or brown bag meals for people to dine and unwind in public space.
- Establish a land bank to allow you to acquire property more easily for development/redevelopment.

DESIGN

- Consider greenspace additions during all design and infrastructure improvements.
- Build the space to be multi-functional and include infrastructure to provide needed resources: power, water and waste management.
- Design a greenspace that has visual markers with buffer zones to keep people safe and to ease the transition between pedestrians and traffic.
- Include interactive design elements to engage people within the spaces. Examples include swings, playground equipment, a chessboard and large-scale board games.
- Utilize native and pollinator-attracting plants in landscape design.
- Consider how permeable pavers, a rain garden or other green infrastructure could enhance the area's aesthetics while still addressing specific needs.
- Install trashcans, benches, water fountains, lighting or shade to enhance the usability of existing greenspaces.
- Consider public or rotating public art installations to anchor the space.
- Connect downtown with community wide greenspaces via sidewalks, walking trails or bike paths.

PROMOTIONS

- Activate pop-up parks.
- Publicize planning efforts to drive excitement for space activation.
- Create a public information campaign to share statistics and numbers on the benefit and impact of developing and utilizing greenspaces.
- Install plaques that speak to the history of the space and the downtown.
- Use spaces as an opportunity to reinforce the downtown's brand.
- Develop a promotional piece to illustrate step counts from amenities to businesses and back.
- Create a promotional video highlighting different ways to utilize spaces downtown.
- Buy cheap and fun toys to provide quick, easy and fun family activities in existing spaces, such as Frisbee, hula hoops, Connect 4, beach balls, bubbles and chalk.
- Activate greenspaces through programming, music, concerts, plays and other activities.

ORGANIZATION

- Create policies that guide what greenspace looks like in parking lots, infill developments and sidewalk improvements.
- Develop an application that encourages greenspaces as additional public venues.
- Implement or develop an open container district or "zones" that allow alcohol within these spaces.
- Add capital improvement projects to SPLOST.
- Conduct a strategic planning session to develop potential spaces to be utilized, needs to be met, funding partners and programming opportunities.
- Utilize a design services company to develop conceptual drawings for how a space could be utilized to help sell the vision.
- Start a farmers' market to utilize public spaces.
- Adopt a tree ordinance.

PARTNERS

Local government

Local parks and recreation departments

Health minded organizations

Civic clubs

Educational institutions

U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Project for Public Spaces

Carl Vinson Institute of Government

Archway Partnership

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Georgia Dept of Economic Development

Local art councils

Keep America Beautiful

Garden clubs

Your existing downtown businesses

Georgia botanical gardens

Georgia Council for the Arts

Maintaining Authenticity

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on preserving your downtown's built environment. While Placemaking emphasizes developing an environment to bring people together, Maintaining Authenticity emphasizes preserving the historical integrity of the buildings and the existing built environment. This strategy is most successful when ordinances and guidelines for operation are established to support the characteristics that make your downtown unique. While some may feel "preservation" is the sole responsibility of the few, maintaining authenticity is only achieved through the support of many.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Sense of place, cultural identity, historical integrity, place keeping, enhancing the built environment, historic preservation, downtown, education, maintaining, preserving, public spaces, authenticity, character areas, enhance, unique, design guidelines, facade grant, tax credit programs and storytelling.



Authentic places are those that accurately reflect the uniqueness, character and heritage of a district, leaving those who use and visit it feeling like they have been in a one-of-a-kind, memorable place."

— *International Downtown Association*

PROS

- This strategy enhances what makes your downtown unique.
- This strategy promotes and solidifies your community identity.
- It cements downtown as the "heart" of your community.
- This strategy garners community buy-in easily.

CONS

- Preservation is often misunderstood or mis-characterized.
- This strategy can lead to tunnel vision, focused only on design.
- You may have to overcome the perception that downtown has historically not been inclusive to everyone.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Preservation doesn't occur in a vacuum.
- This strategy needs to be project driven and quantifiable.
- You must be aware of laws governing historic preservation.
- This strategy needs to be inclusive.
- Maintaining authenticity isn't only about preservation.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What characteristics make your downtown unique?
- What role do property owners play in maintaining a sense of place?
- Is there a desire to change or enhance the perception of downtown?
- What existing ordinances do you have in place to support these efforts?

Macon, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Create an incentives brochure that highlights the state and federal historic tax incentive programs.
- Offer grants that allow for interior renovations- including code updates and sprinklers.
- Develop a facade grant program that provides more funding to those downtown businesses working on bricks-and-mortar renovation projects versus just cosmetic alterations.
- Use heritage tourism to drive an economic impact downtown.
- Work with businesses to develop promotional opportunities centered around events that bring people downtown.
- Take advantage of state funding opportunities such as the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund and Georgia Cities Foundation that are only available to businesses within a designated downtown district.

DESIGN

- Create design guidelines that are downtown specific; consider both commercial and residential components.
- Develop a best practices resource guide focused on good preservation practices to educate property owners.
- Use murals to share downtown's story and the community's history.
- Re-paint historic and faded "ghost" signs to give them new life.
- Use historic light fixtures, benches and other fixtures to highlight the authentic character of the district.
- Conduct a historic resource survey to identify downtown and community assets.
- Develop a visual catalogue of downtown properties that can be used to monitor renovation changes over the years.

PROMOTIONS

- Offer training opportunities regarding how to use and to implement state and federal preservation programs.
- Launch a "This Place Matters" campaign.
- Install historic plaques to tell the story and history of your downtown and community.
- Use "Throwback Thursday" posts on social media to educate the community on the history and heritage of the downtown district.
- Take and catalogue "before" and "after" photos to highlight the historic character of the downtown district.
- Develop a shop local campaign.
- Work with the merchants to offer a prize that rewards people for shopping local.
- Host or attend a Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation Ramble or Expedition.
- Create a scavenger hunt with photos of unique architectural details and other downtown features; offer downtown gift certificates as prizes.

ORGANIZATION

- Identify character areas through special designations such as overlay districts, local historic preservation districts and/or state/national register districts.
- Apply for the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Rural Zone designation.
- Host a community visioning session.
- Host a community "scrapbook" meeting to collect historic photos.
- Apply to become a Certified Local Government.
- Adopt demolition ordinances.
- Develop a downtown master plan.
- Develop and adopt a local preservation ordinance.
- Attend a historic preservation commission training to learn more about best practices.
- Attend the annual Past Forward conference hosted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Attend the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Mobilize Main Street workshop.

PARTNERS

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Local convention and visitors bureau

Georgia Historic Preservation Division

Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation

Regional commissions

Archway Partnership

Center for Community Design Preservation

Chamber of commerce

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Local historic preservation commission

Local historic society or genealogical society

Local community foundations

Local schools alumni programs

Museums or educational institutions

Watson-Brown Foundation

Placemaking

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on developing an inclusive environment that in return brings people together. When utilizing this strategy, consider how your built environment can contribute or be enhanced to attract and to engage visitors and residents alike. While Placemaking is an exciting strategy around which the community can rally, consider how new initiatives will work in tandem with existing events and programs to support and to elevate the visibility of local businesses. This strategy at its most successful level works to activate underutilized spaces and buildings to create a thriving downtown district.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Active environment, participation, engagement, identifying needs, visibility, vibrancy, infill construction, space activation and utilization, creativity, arts, tactical urbanism, health, happiness, well-being, family, community, greenspace, programming, events, people, excitement, fun and unique.



Cultures and climates differ all over the world, but people are the same. They'll gather in public if you give them a good place to do it."

—Jan Gehl

PROS

This strategy activates underutilized spaces.

This strategy can drive tourism.

Placemaking creates excitement.

Placemaking sets your downtown apart.

Placemaking can help to create or solidify your identity.

This strategy is a great way to test ideas or concepts.

CONS

Taste is subjective.

Placemaking can be viewed as frivolous.

Placemaking can seem sporadic and unfocused.

Placemaking can seem to be a standalone strategy that does not contribute to the overall downtown environment.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This strategy doesn't have to be permanent.

Placemaking can be high impact and low cost.

You need to know your audience.

This strategy requires public buy-in to be effective.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

What outcome(s) are you trying to achieve?

What support is there for this strategy?

How does it fit in to your downtown master plan and future vision for the district?

How will this contribute to other attractions and economic drivers?

Monroe, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Encourage pop-up shops to activate vacant storefronts and to encourage new potential entrepreneurs to locate downtown.
- Encourage the development of businesses that can support your downtown's existing attributes. Examples include bike shops along a trail system or sporting goods stores along the river.
- Encourage an "experience economy" in which businesses sell not only goods and products, but also an experience.
- Develop a local artist database to connect local business owners with creative people for when projects arise.
- Offer incentives to drive the development of particular niche businesses based on market research, existing economic drivers or natural resources.
- Offer a creative marketing workshop for existing businesses to educate them on alternative means to reach their target audience(s).

DESIGN

- Encourage temporary art installations to activate public spaces and to bring new life to vacant storefronts.
- Re-purpose under-utilized fixtures and spaces for art and interaction.
- Develop "third places" in which people can sit, stay and hangout. Third places are the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home ("first place") and the workplace ("second place"). Examples of third places would be environments such as churches, cafes, clubs, public libraries and parks.
- Create a permanent sculpture garden.
- Develop unique wayfinding signage that is brand specific to your downtown.
- Enhance light fixtures, or crosswalks to act as public art.
- Reactivate alleyways so that they may serve as additional means of egress for downtown businesses and access to alternative parking lots.

PROMOTIONS

- Create "selfie" spots utilizing a downtown specific hashtag or ZIP code.
- Build a website that highlights retail, restaurants and downtown experiences.
- Work with partners to develop an online community calendar.
- Create a downtown discovery map or scavenger hunt that highlights architectural features, murals, found art or community specific amenities.
- Develop a unifying brand for downtown. This should include but not be limited to a logo, a catch phrase, a color palette, a website, social media platforms and signage.
- Create programing around what makes your community unique and consider arts beyond painting and sculpture. Think music, performing arts, history, film, sports, etc.
- Develop quick and simple programming to activate spaces, e.g. corn hole, beach balls, chalk and hopscotch.

ORGANIZATION

- Engage local artists through Main Street standing committees and the board of directors.
- Adopt a mural ordinance.
- Adopt event ordinances to encourage partners outside of Main Street to host events downtown.
- Adopt alcohol ordinances to support open container districts downtown or to allow alcohol to be served at events hosted by Main Street.
- Create an ambassador program to serve as your downtown greeters.
- Develop a young artist program in conjunction with the schools or local cultural arts centers to showcase the art of students downtown.
- Work with the Georgia Department of Economic Development to host a Tourism Product Development Team.
- Adopt an overlay district to support an arts and entertainment district.
- Install "little libraries" or "little food pantries" to serve the community.

PARTNERS

- Local arts alliance or artists guild
- Georgia Council for the Arts
- Community foundations
- Educational institutions
- National Consortium for Creative Placemaking
- Local convention and visitors bureau
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Georgia Cities Foundation
- Georgia Placemaking Collaborative
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Project for Public Spaces
- Local association of real estate professionals

Storytelling

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on refining the brand and identity of the commercial business district. Creating a connection, for visitors and residents alike, to the history of and heart of downtown is critical to its success. The Storytelling Strategy is a combination of elements from the Placemaking and Maintaining Authenticity strategies, focusing not only on the built environment, but also on how people interact with it and learn from it. When implemented effectively, this strategy should build relationships, increase foot traffic, inspire hometown pride and help to shape your community's narrative.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Image, perception, brand development, marketing, investor confidence, community pride, safety, wayfinding, community engagement, advocacy, history, community narrative, job security, relationship building, education, connection, resident ownership, community culture, selling, advertising, tourism and destination marketing.

“When we own our stories, we avoid being trapped as characters in stories someone else is telling.”
— Brené Brown

PROS

- Storytelling helps to build a positive image.
- This strategy sets your community apart.
- Storytelling facilitates owning your story.
- Storytelling preserves or builds a sense of community.
- This strategy encourages public buy-in.

CONS

- Storytelling will always be an ongoing process.
- The impact and return can be hard to quantify.
- Projects can be intangible.
- It can be challenging to find one community voice.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Storytelling needs to be comprehensive and should address more than one of the Four Points.
- It takes a diverse platform to engage the public.
- It is important to know your audience.
- Marketing Main Street and downtown are two separate and unique things. One is a destination; the other is an organization.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- What is our story? Is it worth telling?
- Who are your current champions in the community?
- What are you hoping to achieve by taking on this strategy?
- What kind of budget can you commit to implement projects?
- What could prevent you from fully committing to this strategy?

Macon, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Work with local media to offer co-op advertising opportunities for local businesses so that the downtown district can be viewed as a united marketplace.
- Work with existing businesses to be your downtown's brand ambassadors.
- Offer a coupon book or discount card to unite your businesses under one brand.
- Conduct market research to identify business niches or themes that exist in your downtown.
- Attract businesses that would complement your city's assets and broader themes addressed in other community transformation strategies.
- Offer incentives like matching grants or micro-loans to encourage the growth or development of businesses that support your themes.
- Establish a crowd-funded micro-grant to encourage the community to unite in supporting this historic heart of the community, downtown.

DESIGN

- Tie in the downtown's brand with downtown's design elements: bike racks, banners, planters, paint and public spaces.
- Install public art or murals that complement your community's specific assets. For example, Valdosta painted a mural with azaleas because they are the "Azalea City."
- Research, design and install downtown plaques that speak to the history or something significant to the community.
- Ensure alley ways and downtown public areas are safe and accessible.
- Activate underutilized spaces to engage the public and share your story (e.g. selfie spots, Main Street Museum, window clings, pop-up shops or art).

PROMOTIONS

- Develop a downtown newsletter or community calendar to share the impact of what is happening downtown.
- Develop and share a downtown specific hashtag. Downtown Milledgeville uses #ilovemilly.
- Unify your social media presence to create a brand that is cross-represented through all of your program's social media channels.
- Develop an asset-based brand, along with collateral marketing materials to share and distribute.
- Share impact numbers or community data to change or address community's perceptions.
- Share the Main Street program's annual impact and downtown's priorities on the city or Main Street website.
- Develop walking or audio tours that highlight your downtown's history and community assets.

ORGANIZATION

- Host a community visioning session to identify downtown's assets.
- Host a community scrapbook night to collect historical photos.
- Use a downtown ambassador program to engage with visitors and share the story of your community.
- Host a monthly or quarterly meeting with partners to share the Main Street program's vision for downtown.
- Ensure promotions-based committees are comprised of people with creative skill sets and a passion for telling the story of Main Street and downtown.
- Make regular presentations to civic clubs, city council and partners regarding your program's annual impact downtown.

PARTNERS

- Local convention and visitors bureau
- Local arts council
- Educational institutions
- Civic clubs
- Historical society or clubs
- Museums
- Local city and county governments
- Staff of local tourism amenities and destinations
- Local media outlets
- State tourism partners
- Regional tourism associations
- Chamber of commerce
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Your neighboring Main Street managers

Tourism

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy focuses on developing your downtown's central business district as a regional or statewide tourist destination. Tourism should not focus solely on attractions. An ideal downtown district will offer diverse amenities, services, restaurants and retail industry to encourage visitors to stay or return. While marketing and advertising will play strongly into the success of this strategy, the development, maintenance and inclusivity of the existing built environment will be critical to the district's long-term vitality.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Ability to serve tourists and to enhance tourism through the built environment, activities, niche industries, destination marketing, regionalism, attractions, assets, activities, heritage travelers, second home owners, outdoor enthusiasts, cultural tourism, brand identity, wayfinding, education, diversity, market analysis, service industry workers, hospitality, public and visitor amenities, authenticity, identity, cleanliness, safety and aesthetically pleasing.

“ You attract what you are, not what you want. If you want great, then be great.”
— *unknown*

PROS

- Tourists spend money.
- Tourism brings people to your community.
- Tourism can provide attractions for locals and visitors alike.
- This strategy can help to define and to solidify the community's identity.

CONS

- Locals can feel like a tourist in their own town.
- The seasonal nature of tourism can pose challenges.
- Tourism doesn't always equal more money in local business owners' pockets.
- Locals can feel overlooked in favor of tourists.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Overnight tourists require amenities beyond attractions.
- It is important to know your target audience.
- Make sure you cater to locals' needs and your local audience.
- Information needs to be readily available and accessible.
- The best tourism assets are the ones that are most authentic to your community.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

- Who is your target audience?
- What is your tourism draw?
- Do you have a natural tourism draw, or is this something you will need to create?
- What is there for tourist to do for three hours, one day or three days?
- Who are your community tourism partners?

Dahlonega, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Update businesses information on Google, Yelp and other online platforms to ensure its accuracy.
- Incentivize the development of niche and experiential businesses that support a tourism economy. For example, Covington's "Vampire Diaries" Tours offers tours of places where this TV show was filmed downtown and in the greater Covington area.
- Develop a marketing assistance program grant for downtown businesses.
- Host small business development workshops to teach business owners how to market to tourists.
- Host a workshop for businesses to learn how to develop a user-friendly website, which supports Google analytics.
- Work with other communities in your area to develop regional tourism trails. i.e. Quilters Trail, Agricultural Trails, Civil Rights Trail.

DESIGN

- Ensure you address public needs downtown: restrooms, water filling stations, electrical outlets, and car charging stations.
- Install comprehensive wayfinding signage for businesses and to direct visitors to local tourism draws.
- Consider how to address alternative transportation needs (i.e. bikes, trolleys, pedestrians and ride share programs).
- Provide pet-friendly amenities such as a dog park or dog sanitation station.
- Install information kiosks downtown and provide the information online.
- Host a walking audit to identify your downtown's assets and weaknesses.

PROMOTIONS

- Work with community partners to offer an online event based community calendar.
- Work with partners to post accurate and up-to-date information online and in printed materials.
- Utilize unique hashtags that encompass tourism initiatives.
- Develop selfie stops to encourage visitors to engage with downtown sites and to share online.
- Develop a visitor coupon program and work with partners to distribute.
- Develop a cohesive tourism brand identity. For example, Macon builds on its music heritage and utilizes events that draw in regional tourists.
- Use heritage tourism to engage local schools.
- Use a zip code capture program to see from whence your visitors are traveling.
- Install Google analytics on your website to see from whence your visitors are coming and for what they are searching.
- Offer free downtown wifi.

ORGANIZATION

- Consider your community's parking needs.
- Adopt alcohol ordinances that support outside dining and open container districts.
- Develop an ambassador program.
- Develop event procedures to encourage organizations besides Main Street to host events downtown.
- Host a Department of Economic Development Tourism Product Development Team to identify your community's assets.
- Offer an online survey to identify community assets and needs.
- Work with the local convention and visitors bureau or alternative destination marketing organization (DMO) to market downtown as a regional and statewide destination.
- Identify your ESRI tapestry segment(s).
- Adopt ordinances to address tourist-friendly lodging alternatives, such as Airbnb.
- Consider hotel-motel tax or the benefits from an increase to your current percentage rate.

PARTNERS

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Small Business Development Center

Local convention and visitors bureau

State visitor information centers

Chamber of commerce

Power companies

Regional tourism partners

Local hoteliers

Local museums

Georgia State Parks and historic sites

Civic clubs

Tourism-oriented businesses

Performing arts centers

Universities

Foundation Building

SUMMARY

This Community Transformation Strategy was created for newly-designated or probationary Main Street programs. While most transformation strategies are designed to cover a two- to three-year period, this strategy focuses on building basic foundational elements for success over a one-year period. This strategy should focus on relationship building, board development, work plan development and creating programmatic policies upon which the organization can build and develop further over the coming years.

KEY DESCRIPTORS

Organization, communication, collaboration, leadership, budget, financial support, community engagement, participation, volunteers, master and work plan development, local buy-in, purpose driven, vision, mission, diversity, inclusive, structure, outreach services, marketing, partnerships, education and training, network, resources, succession planning, board recruitment and development, ordinances and zoning.

“ Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

PROS

Foundation Building sets up the program for success and prepares you to take on more advanced Community Transformation Strategies.

This strategy develops a unified vision.
This strategy builds community buy-in.

CONS

None - This is a required transformation strategy for all new or probationary programs.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This strategy cannot be achieved solely by the Main Street manager. Foundation Building requires an active and engaged board of directors. Political buy-in and community support are critical.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Where does our program currently stand?
Do we have a unified vision for our downtown?
How will our program be funded?
Where will this program be housed?
Does the community support efforts to revitalize downtown?
Do elected officials understand the value of the Main Street program?

Rome, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Create a comprehensive business and building inventory.
- Conduct market studies to determine the economic climate downtown.
- Host a merchants' meeting to assess the current needs of downtown.
- Identify state and local resources and incentives available for business development and recruitment.
- Attend civic club meetings and build relationships with stakeholders who have a vested interest in downtown's success.
- Attend the Georgia Academy for Economic Development.
- Attend Downtown Development Authority Basic Training.
- Develop a downtown master plan.

DESIGN

- Review the district's boundaries. Does the area we serve make sense for the size of our program?
- Create design guidelines that are accordant with the scale, materiality, and visual appearance of historic structures and context.
- Update or create a visual building and property inventory database, which can be used to catalogue changes and renovations.
- Conduct walking audit with board members.
- Attend a historic preservation training.
- Solicit community input on downtown appearance, suggestions for improvement, and future development.
- Inventory public spaces and identify future locations for new ones and where existing spaces could be expanded or enhanced.
- Identify "pedestrian-friendly" areas and those lacking (without adequate sidewalks, street trees, furnishings, restrooms, or too noisy). Incorporate improvements in the master plan.

PROMOTIONS

- Host a community visioning session.
- Establish or revive social media channels.
- Update or develop a Main Street program specific website.
- Use your website or social media presence to educate the broader community about the role of Main Street.
- Develop relationships with local media channels.
- Develop a simple plug-and-play event to illustrate "stuff is happening" downtown.
- Watch past webinars offered by the Office of Downtown Development via their Youtube channel: [youtube.com/gamainst](https://www.youtube.com/gamainst)
- Join Main Street Manager's Facebook group
- Sign up to receive the weekly newsletter offered by the Office of Downtown Development.
- Connect through social media with the Georgia Main Street Program via Instagram and Facebook.

ORGANIZATION

- Ensure the Main Street manager and Board of Directors are Main Street 101 certified.
- Identify potential funding streams and revenue gaps.
- Create and adopt bylaws.
- Host a facilitated board work plan development session.
- Review previous board meeting minutes and past work plans.
- Review and update Dropbox documentation.
- Develop vacancy or blight ordinances.
- Review ordinances that impact businesses downtown.
- Address outstanding enforcement concerns.
- Develop a board member orientation handbook.
- Become a member of the Georgia Downtown Association and sign up to participate in the mentor/mentee program.
- Join or renew membership with the National Main Street Center.

PARTNERS

Downtown Development Authority

Chamber of commerce

Historic preservation commission

City council

County commissioners

Civic clubs

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Georgia Municipal Association

Regional commissions

Power companies

Local convention and visitors bureau

National Main Street Center



Atlanta, ExploreGeorgia.org

MEASURING YOUR IMPACT

Peter Drucker once said, “If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” This idea is especially true when it comes to gauging the work plan’s ultimate success or failure and the accompanying Transformation Strategy. The only way for a program to know conclusively whether something is working is by defining measurable objectives and outcomes.

Success can come in many forms, and the measurable goals should be scalable for each individual task. For one program a successful event may mean having sold a certain number of tickets; for another it may mean bringing in a certain number of sponsorship dollars. A successful façade grant program may be measured by how many people take advantage of the funds; others may gauge its success on the private dollars leveraged from the initial public investment. Different people will always define success differently. It is only through measuring our impact that we can then work to improve it.

From our experience, however, the most common reason for strategic failure is lack of organizational focus. We’ve all been there: you have been tasked with a new program, a new goal or, in our case, a new strategy, but your day-to-day work doesn’t go away. You have to keep doing what you’ve been doing and meet

the new goal, too. We call the day-to-day work the “whirlwind.” And the whirlwind is critical. In most cases, managers can’t simply walk away from it. It’s required just to keep the lights on. So how can one be expected to execute something new, especially when new behaviors are required?

The good news is that there are four rules we can keep in mind to help us focus our effort and energies during the chaos of everyday life. If you stick to these rules, they will empower and engage your team to accomplish new and better behaviors, which will in turn aid you in accomplishing your desired strategy.

► WILDLY IMPORTANT GOALS™

Sometimes to accomplish the things we want the most, we have to say “no.” This can be a scary concept for most Main Street managers, who are always positioned to do more with less and are instructed to help everyone, but by focusing on everything, we accomplish nothing with real success. In order to accomplish the strategy selected, you must narrow your focus. The reality is that most of us are trying to do too much with too little support. To keep the team engaged in the real priorities, we need to separate out the “wildly important.” A Wildly Important Goal™ is one that has a gap that needs to be closed and will, therefore, receive the organization’s best diligence and effort. There is tremendous power in focus. If you unleash people to focus on one, two or three Wildly Important Goals™ – no more – they will sense the significance of what they are doing and trying to accomplish. Be

WHAT ARE WILDLY IMPORTANT GOALS?

Franklin Covey, a world-leading company in enabling individuals and organizations to achieve results that require lasting changes in human behavior, developed the idea of Wildly Important Goals™. In their research they found that the majority of people can only concentrate on two or three big goals over a long period of time. A period of time could be a year — the time frame for an annual review. Additional goals become a distraction. Wildly Important Goals™ are simply defined: if we don't do it, we will fail.

For your work plans, we encourage each Main Street Program to define two or three Wildly Important Goals™ that you believe will help you achieve the Community Transformation Strategy selected for your downtown. Once you have set your Wildly Important Goals™, it's time to define everyone's role in achieving them. Each person must consider, "How do I contribute to achieving these goals?"

sure to establish a clear and shared understanding of the goal. Focus on those true priorities and move lower priorities to the back burner.

► THE 80/20 RULE

The 80/20 rule, also called the Pareto Principle, was named after its founder, Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto, back in 1895. He discovered that virtually all economic activity was subject to the concept suggesting two out of 10 items, on any general to-do list, will turn out to be worth more than the other eight items combined. But because people tend to feel overwhelmed by the day-to-day activities, we chip away at the smaller items that make less of an impact. By focusing our time, energy and effort on the top 20%, the things that will garner us the biggest impact, we will actually accomplish 80% of the overall mission.

So how do we do this? Up to this point we have picked out our Transformation Strategies and identified our Wildly Important Goals™. The next step is to write down the top 10 tasks you think are needed to accomplish each of the identified goals. Ask yourself if you could only accomplish one of the tasks on that list today, which one task would have the greatest positive impact on your strategy?

Then pick the second most important task. After you complete this exercise, you will find that you have determined the most important 20 percent of your tasks, which will help you move the ball forward. You should continue to work towards accomplishing the tasks you've chosen as the most valuable all the time until the job is done.

So how do you decide on which tasks to work? This is where the expertise of the team comes in to play. Call on their knowledge and creativity to engage them fully. It is also

important to hold all team member accountable to accomplishing the tasks. The secret to achieving Wildly Important Goals™ is not to set them and hope people will somehow get them done; instead, a Main Street manager should work with the team members to decide which tasks are within their power to accomplish and hold the team accountable for acting on them. We cannot stress how important it is at this juncture to be realistic when determining your tasks. Often times the team can become frustrated and disheartened when trying to accomplish something that is ultimately out of their control or circle of influence; therefore, it is critical to choose tasks over which the Main Street Program has jurisdiction. Allowing the team to make an impact and a true difference in the desired outcome.

► KEEPING SCORE

People and teams play differently when they keep score, and the right kind of scoreboards motivate the players to win. Everything changes when you keep score, and you know if you are winning or losing. Fewer than 15% of organizations routinely track their strategic performance against their plan. In other words, hardly anyone is keeping score. Is it any wonder then why so many Main Street boards and committees are profoundly disengaged? The scoreboard enables people to track activities, to compare results and to work continuously to improve performance. By watching the scoreboard closely, they can tell if their priority tasks are well chosen. By watching the few scores that matter very closely, the team can change strategy if needed. That's what an engaged team does.

You may ask what does a scoreboard look like when it comes to a work plan? This is where knowing your team and how you measure success come in to play. It's also going to vary from task

“So how do you decide on which tasks to work? This is where the expertise of the team comes in to play. Call on their knowledge and creativity to engage them fully.”

to task and from goal to goal, but it's important to define and to identify quantifiable measures that can be tracked by the team. Take the time to customize your program's work plan to include a section that measures your progress towards completion.

During the two- to three-year period in which you implement the Transformation Strategy you've selected, there are going to be periods of great success and great failure. Keep in mind

that when we are failing, we are learning, and we are growing. When something doesn't go as planned, it doesn't mean we have to start over with a new plan or different Transformation Strategy. It means we have to change the way we look at this particular individual task or alter our expectations. Community Transformation Strategies are designed to be overarching themes

to unite a program; however, that does not mean that our goals and tasks can't evolve as the strategy evolves. These strategies and the work plans developed to support them were never designed to be written in stone. They should serve as a guiding framework that is also a living document. As needs change, so should the tasks. As information evolves, so should our anticipated outcomes. Transformation Strategies are designed to be an idea with which your program can grow. Once you believe the program has accomplished all it can under the current strategy, it's time to pick a new one.

► CREATING ACCOUNTABILITY

Great teams thrive in a culture of accountability that is frequent, positive and self-directed. But first we need to make sure that everyone on the team is there to influence the goal. It is important to include members on your Main Street board and committees who are able to “move the needle” on the scoreboard. This is where clearly defining expectations comes in to play. It is important to get team member's individual perspectives, to hear what they want to contribute, and to start assigning ownership to tasks, projects, programs or events. The counterintuitive behavior with this discipline is that you as the leader can't tell the people what to do even if they are used to it or have asked for it. It is important as the leader to clarify expectations not only of the team itself, but also of each other. This is what Stephen Covey calls a “win-win agreement” in which all parties define their “wins.”

“As needs change, so should the tasks. As information evolves, so should our anticipated outcomes. Transformation Strategies are designed to be an idea with which your program can grow.”

Once expectations have been defined, we need to establish a pattern for accountability. This does not mean that we select a strategy, establish goals, define tasks, select roles and then never look at our work plan again. This newly developed work plan will now serve as our blueprint for success, and we must treat it as such. This means regular check-ins, regular meetings and constant communication.

This work plan should be a part of every meeting we have moving forward. Our progress should be discussed at every meeting, and should help shape the reasoning for why we do what we do. As a Main Street manager, different board members and committees will assist you with unique and individual components of the work plan. It is your job to herd the cats, to celebrate successes, to avoid landmines and to keep score of the progress.

By following these principles and this process, you will do more to create a highly engaged, self-starting team than anything else you can do. The four disciplines listed above will help you go from playing not to lose, to truly playing to win. That's how transformation looks.



APPENDIX



This blank template can be used to create your very own customized Transformation Strategy. Make sure to develop each section completely to ensure a balanced approach is implemented.

Community Transformation Strategy:

Summary:

Key Descriptors:

Pros:

Cons:

Special Considerations:

Questions to ask yourself:

Four Point Approach Activities:

Economic Development:

Design:

Promotions:

Organization:

COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES MATRIX

Do you already have programs and resources in place and don't know where to start? We recommend using our matrix to see which of your Main Street organization's current programs and resources line up with our Georgia focused Community Transformation Strategies. If you have five or more resources, as identified on the left hand side of the matrix, that line up with a particular topic, as identified on the top of the matrix, then that strategy might be a good fit for your downtown.

	ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT	BEAUTIFICATION INITIATIVES AND DESIGN	BUSINESS ACTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT	DOWNTOWN LIVING	RESIDENT SERVING	TRANSPORTATION & PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE	ECOTOURISM AND RECREATION ECONOMY	AGRICULTURAL FOCUS	ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS	GREENSPACE	MAINTAINING AUTHENTICITY	PLACEMAKING	STORYTELLING	TOURISM
Ambassador Program		●											●	●	●
Available Properties Listing		●	●	●											
Small Business Bootcamp or Workshops			●		●			●		●			●		●
Business Directory		●		●		●	●		●			●		●	●
Business Recruitment Incentives	●		●	●			●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Community Calendar	●				●		●	●		●			●	●	●
Demolition Ordinances		●							●			●			
Downtown Design Guidelines		●	●	●		●			●			●			
Downtown Open House		●		●											
Façade Grant Program		●	●			●			●		●	●	●		
Farmer's Market					●			●	●	●					
Marketing Assistance Program			●				●	●		●			●	●	●
Murals or Public Art	●	●		●				●			●			●	
National Register District Designation		●	●	●	●							●	●	●	●
Rural Zone Designation			●	●								●			
Selfie Spots or Alley Way Activation	●			●	●							●	●	●	
Shop Local Campaign			●	●	●		●	●				●			●
Special District: CID, BID, TAD, Overlay	●		●			●						●	●		
Special Events	●			●	●		●	●		●	●	●	●		
Tree Ordinances		●				●			●		●				
Wayfinding signage, Bike Lanes		●			●	●	●	●		●	●		●	●	●

Blank Work Plan Template

Transformation Strategy: _____

Managers should use this template to create their Main Street Program's work plan after selecting the Community Transformation Strategy that best fits their needs.

Why?		
Wildly Important Goals™		
Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
Lead Board Member:	Lead Board Member:	Lead Board Member:
Repeat Annual Responsibilities		

Transformation Strategy: _____

Goal:	Define Success:
Partners:	

Task	Volunteer Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
			Total:		

Transformation Strategy: Downtown Living

This is what a completed work plan might look like if someone had selected Downtown Living as their Community Transformation Strategy.

<p>Why? Increase the involvement of downtown workers and Mainsville/ Main County residents as downtown customers. Downtown residents represent a large market of potential shoppers. This strategy will involve improving the mix of products, services and events offered downtown to better meet the needs of downtown residents while improving the physical environment to increase perception of safety and prosperity.</p>		
<p>Wildly Important Goals™</p>		
<p>Goal 1</p> <p>Blighted Building on S Main: Investigate ways that this blight can be eliminated and be returned as a positive economic asset soon as possible.</p> <p>Part 2: Vacant Property Windows: Improve look of vacant windows with window clings</p>	<p>Goal 2</p> <p>The Green: Seek grant from Community Foundation of Central Georgia and complete construction.</p>	<p>Goal 3</p> <p>Harvest Dinner: Organize the event with proceeds going to the BOOST Program.</p>
<p>Lead Board Member:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">John Strong</p>	<p>Lead Board Member:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mary Smart</p>	<p>Lead Board Member:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jane Sweet</p>
<p>Repeat Annual Responsibilities</p> <p>BOOST: Annual Program awarded 4 times a year, once per quarter. Use proceeds from Community Dinner to fund along with local donors.</p> <p>Façade Grant: Award 3 Façade grants during the fiscal year, not to exceed \$10,000</p> <p>Scare on the Square: One event, held on the third Saturday of the month, during October.</p> <p>Santa on the Square, Snow and Tree Lighting: Two events held annually on the 15th and 20th of December</p> <p>Candlelight Shopping: One event held annually on small business Saturday.</p> <p>Summer Concerts: A series of 6 concerts held annually between May and August.</p> <p>Second Saturday: An event hosted every second Saturday of the month downtown, in conjunction with merchant support</p> <p>Merchant Meetings: A bi-monthly event, hosted 6 times a year beginning in January.</p> <p>Newsletter: A monthly publication released on the 1st of every month.</p> <p>Social Media Marketing: Update weekly with relevant and engaging post, targeted to grow audience by 500 new followers</p>		

Transformation Strategy: Downtown Living

<p>Goal: Blighted Building on S Main: Investigate ways that this blight can be eliminated and be returned as a positive economic asset soon as possible.</p> <p>Part 2: Vacant Property Windows: Improve look of vacant windows with window clings</p>	<p>Define Success: Successfully determine most viable projects pertaining to blighted properties, develop priority list, and begin searching for partners, funding, etc. Window clings installed in 80% of vacant building windows. Aid in completing one code enforcement “win” on each blighted building in district.</p>
<p>Partners: City of Mainsville, City Attorney, Property Owners, Code Enforcement, Building Inspector, Public Works</p>	

Task	Volunteer Responsible	Staff Responsible	Due Date	Progress	Budget
1. Blighted Building: Adopt international building main code to aid in code enforcement in the future.	John Strong	Mary Smart	March 2020	In Progress	\$0
2. Blighted Building: Ask code enforcement what is currently being done to contact owner, fine, etc.	John Strong	Mary Smart	January 2020	In Progress	\$0
3. Blighted Building: Call property owner to see what they are wanting to do with vacant building	Jane Sweet	Mary Smart	January 2020	Completed	\$0
4. Blighted Building: Discuss with board what is currently being done, what options we have in moving forward	Jane Sweet	Mary Smart	February 2020	Completed	\$0
5. Blighted Building: Determine feasibility of acquiring the property, etc. Would DDRLF be an option?	Joe Real	Mary Smart	April 2020	In Progress	\$1,500
6. Vacant Property Windows: Received property owner permission to place window clings on vacant property windows	Mary Merch	Mary Smart	Jan 2020/ as become vacant	Stalled	\$0
7. Vacant Property Window: Measure approved windows and order clings with preplanned design.	Mary Merch	Mary Smart	Feb 2020/ as become vacant	Not Yet Started	\$2,000
8. Vacant Property Window: Request installation help from public works	Mary Merch	Mary Smart	April 2020/ as become vacant	Not Yet Started	\$0
				Total	\$3,500

ALPHABET SOUP

Many acronyms make up the jargon of state and local government programs. In a system where every turn of phrase, organization and program seems to have its own special language it is easy to get your CLGs confused with your QLGs. This list of acronyms and their meanings is offered to ensure that you, as a manager, won't get any LOLs at your next meeting.

A

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
AARP	American Association of Retired Persons
ACCG	Association of County Commissioners of Georgia
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ARC	Appalachian Regional Commission

B

BBB	Better Business Bureau
BID	Business Improvement District
BOE	Board of Education

C

CBD	Central Business District
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant Program
CEcD	Certified Economic Developer
CHIP	Community Home Investment Program
CID	Community Improvement District
CLG	Certified Local Government
COA	Certificate of Appropriateness
CRA	Community Reinvestment Act
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CVB	Convention and Visitors Bureau

D

DCA	Department of Community Affairs
DDA	Downtown Development Authority
DDRLF	Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DOR	Department of Revenue
DOT	Department of Transportation

E

EDFP	Economic Development Finance Professional
EIP	Employee Incentive Program
ECG	Electric Cities of Georgia
EMC	Electric Membership Corporation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPD	Environmental Protection Division
EZ	Enterprise Zone

G

GACCE	Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
GAPC	Georgia Alliance of Preservation Commissions
GCATT	Georgia Center for Advanced Telecommunications Technology
GCED	Georgia Certified Economic Developer
GCF	Georgia Cities Foundation
GCLF	Georgia Community Loan Fund
GDA	Georgia Downtown Association
GDEcD	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDDP	Georgia Downtown Development Professional
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GEDA	Georgia Economic Developers Association
GEMS	Georgia's Exceptional Main Streets
GICH	Georgia Initiative for Community Housing
GIS	Geographic Information System
GMA	Georgia Municipal Association
GMSP	Georgia Main Street Program

H

HPC	Historic Preservation Commission
HPD	Historic Preservation Division
HPF	Historic Preservation Fund
HUD	Housing and Urban Development

I	
IDA	Industrial Development Authority
IGA	Intergovernmental Agreement
IPA	Initial Project Assessment
J	
JDA	Joint Development Authority
L	
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit
LDF	Local Development Fund
LMI	Low to Moderate Income
LOA	Letter of Agreement
M	
MEAG	Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia
MGAG	Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSA	Metropolitan Service Area
N	
NEA	National Endowment for the Arts
NMSC	National Main Street Center
NMTC	New Market Tax Credit
NPS	National Park Service
NR	National Register of Historic Places
NSP	Neighborhood Stabilization Program
NTHP	National Trust for Historic Preservation
O	
ODD	Office of Downtown Development
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
OZ	Opportunity Zone

P	
PR	Public Relations
Q	
QLG	Qualified Local Government
R	
RBEG	Rural Business Enterprise Grant
REAP	Regional Economic Assistance Program
RFP	Request For Proposal
RLF	Revolving Loan Fund
S	
SBA	Small Business Administration
SBDC	Small Business Development Center
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SOS	Secretary of State
SPLOST	Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax
SSBCI	State Small Business Credit Initiative
T	
TAD	Tax Allocation District
TEA-21	Transportation Equity Act for 21st Century
TIF	Tax Increment Financing
TPD	Tourism Product Development
U	
URA	Urban Redevelopment Agency
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
V	
VIC	Visitor Information Center
W	
WIA	Workforce Investment Act



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georgiamainstreet.org |  gamainst |  gamainst |  gamainst