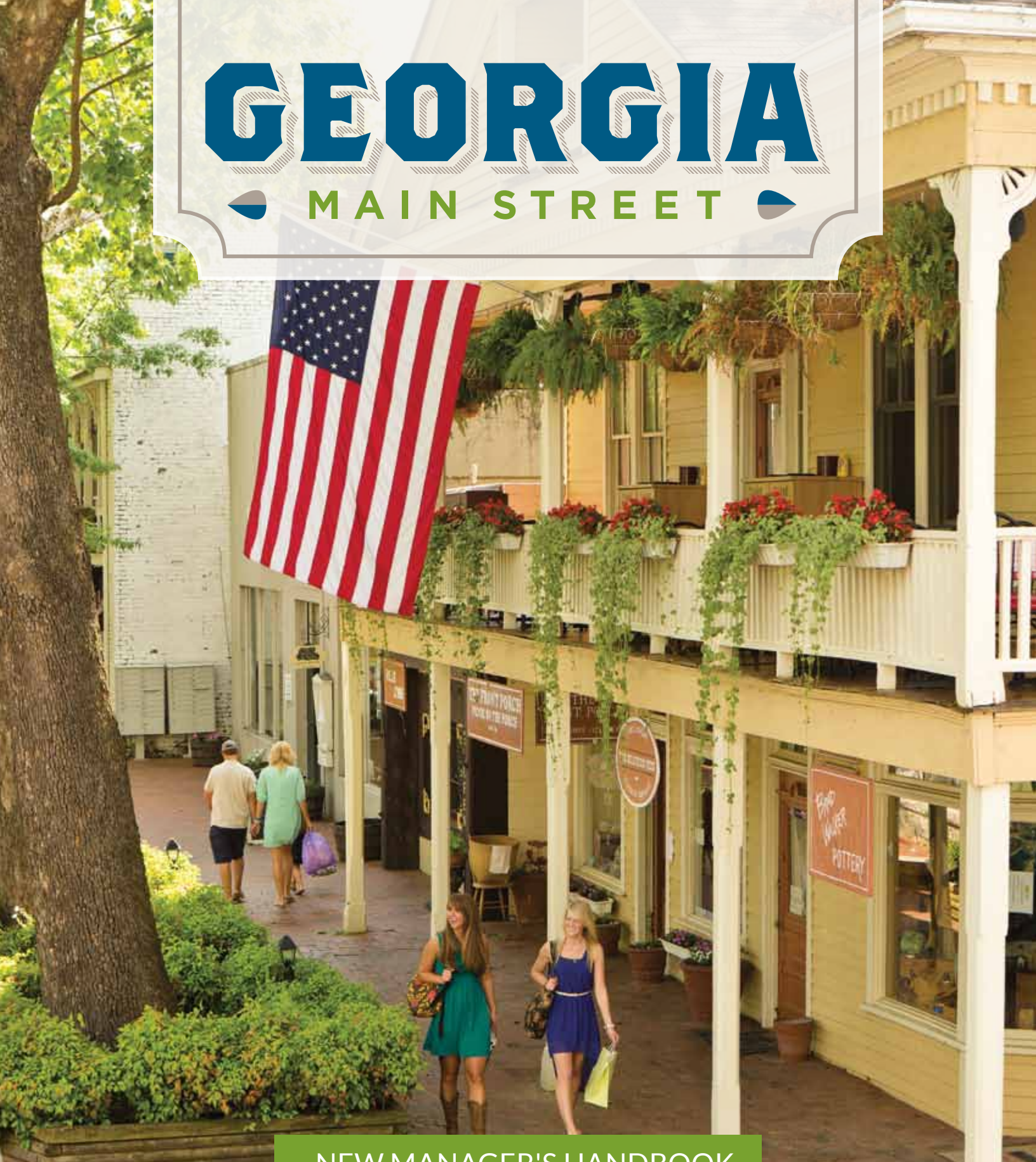


GEORGIA

MAIN STREET



NEW MANAGER'S HANDBOOK

Growing Business. Preserving History.



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



Cover: Dahlonga, GEMS
Georgia Department of Economic Development

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WELCOME TO MAIN STREET

Congratulations on your new position, and welcome to the Georgia Main Street network! You are now part of a group of more than a hundred dedicated and knowledgeable Main Street managers statewide, who have also decided to take on the challenge of working to revitalize their communities' commercial historic districts. The Main Street Approach is part of a national movement whose primary focus is creating a positive economic impact. The Georgia Main Street Program, founded in 1980, is overseen by the Office of Downtown Development at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

A Main Street manager's job can be both rewarding and challenging. Keeping that in mind, we have designed this resource guide to provide you with an introduction to your new responsibilities as both a downtown development professional and a steward of your community. Our office is dedicated to helping you grow as a manager while you help your downtown become a positive catalyst for change. I encourage you to take this opportunity to learn as much as you can about your downtown and the Main Street Approach. Looking back at my time as a Main Street manager, I think networking, getting to know my board members and businesses, along with participating in new training opportunities, were some of the best things I did to help me grow both personally and professionally.

I wish you the best of luck in your new position, and please know that our staff is always here to assist you with the revitalization of your downtown.

Sincerely,

Jessica Reynolds



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NATIONAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM

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

In 2015, the center launched a new brand for the network of Main Street communities – Main Street America™ – to reinvigorate our collective look, feel, and strategy and to position them as leaders locally, regionally, and nationally.

As a nonprofit organization, the National Main Street Center provides information, offers technical assistance, holds conferences and workshops, and conducts research and advocacy on critical revitalization issues. The proven

Main Street Four-Point Approach® provides a framework for communities to organize themselves for success, improve the design of their neighborhoods, promote their districts, and enhance their economic bases.

Cumulatively, commercial districts taking part in the Main Street program have spurred the rehabilitation of more than 246,000 buildings and generated \$59.6 billion in new investment, with a net gain of more than 502,728 new jobs, and

more than 115,000 new businesses nationwide. Every dollar a community uses to support its local Main Street program leverages an average of \$18 in new investment, making Main Street one of the most successful economic development strategies in America. These community benefits would not be possible without the training, education, and leadership of the National Main Street Center.

The Main Street Approach offers a revitalization framework appropriate for communities of all types – including commercial districts in urban neighborhoods, rural towns, and smaller and mid-sized cities. Local Main Street programs can be established either as freestanding organizations or as part of an existing entity, such as a community development corporation or economic development organization. The National Main Street Program is managed on a state level. In Georgia, this program is overseen by the Office of Downtown Development at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. Working in conjunction with the Office of Downtown Development, local Main Street programs plan and implement projects that create more vibrant and healthy commercial districts.

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

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

The Main Street Approach is a common-sense, strategy-driven framework that guides community-based revitalization efforts. Building off three decades of success, this model harnesses the social, economic, physical, and cultural assets that set a place apart, with the ultimate goal of realizing tangible outcomes, such as job creation, small business development, private/public investment and building rehabilitations, which benefit the entire community.

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

The Main Street Approach is most effective in places where community residents have a strong emotional, social, and

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

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

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

Identify the Community Vision for Success

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

Create Community Transformation Strategies

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

Work on these strategies would align with the four key areas Main Streets have been using as a guiding framework for more than 35 years: economic vitality, design, promotion, and organization, known collectively as the Main Street Four Points.

THE FOUR POINTS



Economic Vitality

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



Economic Vitality

Design

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



Economic Vitality
Design

Promotion

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



Economic Vitality
Design
Promotion

Organization

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

Impact and Measurement

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

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

Coinciding with implementation is an equally important focus on measuring progress and results. Healthy Main Streets are built on a commitment to measure outcomes. We live in a time when public resources are scarce and competition for private resources is fierce. Main Streets must be able to demonstrate a wide use of resources, which translates to real change on the ground: new jobs added to a Main Street, new businesses open, buildings redeveloped, and numerous other metrics of success. The National Main Street Center, together with our partners at the Georgia Main Street Program, work to make measuring results on the local level easy and accurate.

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THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The National Main Street Center’s experience in helping reinvigorate commercial corridors across the country has shown time and time again that the Main Street Approach is a proven framework for helping communities succeed in their

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

- **Comprehensive:** No single focus – lavish public improvements, name-brand business recruitment, or endless promotional events – can revitalize Main Street. For successful, sustainable, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach, including activity in each of Main Street’s Four Points, is essential.
- **Incremental:** Baby steps come before walking. Successful revitalization programs begin with basic, simple activities that demonstrate “new things are happening” in the commercial district. As public confidence in the Main Street district grows, and participants’ understanding of the revitalization process becomes more sophisticated, Main Street can tackle increasingly complex problems and more ambitious projects. This incremental change leads to a much longer-lasting and dramatic positive change in the Main Street area.
- **Self-help:** No one else will save your Main Street. Local leaders must have the will and desire to mobilize local resources and talent. That means convincing residents and business owners of the rewards they’ll reap by investing time and money in Main Street – the heart of their community. Only local leadership can produce long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.
- **Partnerships:** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the district and must work together to achieve common goals of Main Street’s revitalization. Each sector has a role to play and each must understand the other’s strengths and limitations in order to forge an effective partnership.
- **Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets:** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities like distinctive buildings and human scale that give people a sense of belonging. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
- **Quality:** Emphasize quality in every aspect of the revitalization program. This applies to all elements of the process – from storefront designs to promotional campaigns



Moultrie, Classic Main Street Program
Moultrie Main Street Program

to educational programs. Shoestring budgets and “cut and paste” efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.

- **Change:** When skeptics turn into believers, attitudes on Main Street will turn around. Changes in attitude and practice are slow but definite – public support for change will build as the Main Street program grows and consistently meets its goals. Change also means engaging in better business practices,

Shoestring budgets and “cut and paste” efforts reinforce a negative image of the commercial district. Instead, concentrate on quality projects over quantity.

altering ways of thinking, and improving the physical appearance of the commercial district. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

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

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

The Main Street America™ National Accreditation Standards of Performance were developed by the National Main Street Center and coordinating program partners such as the Georgia Main Street Program. These standards are used for designating programs as Main Street America accredited members. A qualifying program:

1. Has broad-based community support for a Commercial District revitalization process with active participation from both the public and private sectors

At its best, a local Main Street program represents and involves a coalition of organizations, agencies, businesses, and individuals from the entire community. This includes not only property or businesses in the commercial district or those who have a direct economic tie to it, but all members of the community who are interested in the community's overall economic, cultural and historical health. Involvement by both the public and private sectors is critical as well; neither sector can revitalize the commercial district without the skills and vantage points of the other. Ideally, both sectors will participate in the revitalization process by providing funding, leadership, ideas, and by encouraging collaboration between existing programs to assist in the revitalization process.

By actively involving a broad range of interests and perspectives in the development of your historic district, the Main Street program leverages the community's collective skills and resources to its maximum advantage. The overall goal is for a broad range of constituencies from both sectors to understand and be philosophically committed to the revitalization process, and to leverage the maximum resources possible to achieve the goal of revitalizing the commercial district.

2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage

A mission statement communicates the organization's sense of purpose and overall direction. A vision statement communicates and describes the look and feel of the district when the mission has been accomplished. The mission statement should additionally identify the method to achieve the community's vision for their downtown. Be mindful that neither is simply a slogan. Both statements should be developed with the participation of the board, committees, program volunteers, and the community.

3. Has annual comprehensive Main Street Work Plan based on the Main Street Approach™

A comprehensive annual work plan provides a detailed blueprint for the organization's activities; reinforces the program's accountability both within the organization and in the broader community; and provides measurable objectives by which the program will track its progress. Tasks, with names of people assigned to complete them, budgets and timelines are important components that add to the strength of this document.

4. Possesses a historic preservation ethic

Historic preservation is central to a Main Street program's purpose. The historic buildings and public spaces of a traditional commercial district enrich civic life and add value on many levels to the community. Developing a historic preservation ethic is an ongoing process of education and discovery for a community and for a local Main Street program. Main Street programs that have embraced a strong historic preservation ethic are successful in saving, rehabilitating, and finding new uses for traditional commercial buildings. A strong focus should be on intensifying the uses of the district's buildings, through both specific building improvement projects and through policy and regulatory changes, which make it easier to develop property within the commercial district.

Many Main Street programs support preservation values, but do not fully understand that preservation is a shared responsibility and ethic, not just an activity or group of activities. Historic preservation involves not only the process of preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, or renovating older commercial buildings, but also the process of adopting long-term preservation-sensitive planning and positive land use policies, and removing barriers to downtown investment.

5. Has an active board of directors, committees and volunteers utilizing the Main Street Approach

Main Street revitalization is an ongoing process of changing a community's attitudes about its traditional commercial district(s). The direct involvement of an active board of

directors and active volunteers is vital to this process. The Main Street director is responsible for facilitating the work of volunteers, not for single-handedly revitalizing the commercial district. In some cases, local Main Street programs were originated by or have merged with other organizations that have a broader agenda (such as local government, a chamber of commerce, or a convention and visitors bureau). A local Main Street program with this structure has a better chance of long-term success if it maintains focus on its particular purpose and if its mission statement, work plan, budget, and governing body remain distinct from that of the larger organization in which it is contained. A full board that meets regularly, as stated in its by-laws, is extremely important in supporting this success.

6. Has an operating budget with income from a variety of sources

To be successful, a local Main Street program must have the financial resources necessary to carry out the annual program of work. The size of a program's budget will change as the program matures (in its early years, it may need less money than in high-growth years). In addition, program budgets are likely to vary according to regional economic differences and community size.

7. Has a paid professional manager

Coordinating a successful Main Street program requires a trained, professional staff person whose sole focus is the success of their downtown. Main Street managers come from a broad range of academic and professional backgrounds. The most successful Main Street managers are those who are good communicators, support and motivate volunteers, have good project management skills and keeping revitalization activities moving forward on schedule and on budget.

8. Participates in or provides ongoing training for staff, board, government officials and volunteers

To meet new challenges and ensure a strong organization, Main Street program participants must receive and participate in ongoing training opportunities. Participants, both staff and volunteers, need different skills in different phases of the revitalization process. For that reason, the skills a program's participants learn in the program's catalyst phase are rarely adequate for the growth or management phases. As staff and volunteer turnover occurs, new staff members and new volunteers will need basic Main Street training. Moreover, all program participants should stay current on issues that affect

traditional commercial districts and recent revitalization techniques and models. Regular attendance at trainings and networking events is required for Main Street executive staff.

9. Reports key statistics in a timely manner and is in good standing with critical state mandates

Tracking statistics – reinvestment, job and business creation, etc. – provide a tangible measurement of the local Main Street program's impact and are crucial to securing financial and programmatic support for the revitalization effort. Statistics must be collected on a regular, ongoing basis, and shared as needed.

10. Is a current member of the National Main Street Center

Participation in the National Main Street Network membership program connects local programs to their counterparts throughout the nation, providing them with valuable information and resources. Membership with the National Main Street Center is required for a community to be eligible to receive a national designation. Membership status can be checked or obtained via email at mainstreet_membership@savingplaces.org.



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GEORGIA MAIN STREET PROGRAM

The Office of Downtown Development, housed at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, serves as the state's only coordinating organization for the acclaimed Georgia Main Street Program. Founded in 1980, the Georgia Main Street Program launched in five local communities and has grown to serve more than 100 cities statewide. In serving Georgia's commercial historic districts, our office oversees training, technical services and the framework created to determine each community's threshold for meeting the National Main Street Center's Standards of Performance. As a testament to the success of the Main Street Approach™ these accredited programs have been instrumental in leading the country in historic preservation, job creation and private/public investment, while providing a positive road map for public-private partnerships.

Since Georgia Main Street Program's inception, the participating downtowns have:

- ▶ Leveraged more than **\$4.3 billion** in public and private reinvestment downtown.
- ▶ Assisted in the development of more than **13,500 net new small businesses**.
- ▶ Produced more than **70,000 net new jobs** for Georgia's economy.

Georgia's Main Street communities are locally driven programs of work that focus on implementing the nationally recognized Main Street Approach in their commercial historic districts. The communities within the Georgia Main Street network are committed to providing staff and financial resources needed to address the community-based approach of sustainable revitalization. Each community is responsible for developing the framework from which the

Braselton, Classic Main Street Program
City of Braselton



program will be delivered locally, including the board that will direct the program, the staff that will execute the program, and the partnerships needed to secure the long-term viability of the program.

The communities that make up the network of Georgia's Main Street Program represent some of the strongest historic business districts in both the state and the Southeast. While the program has various reporting and training requirements, the benefits of the delivery from the Georgia Main Street Program staff make this a great resource in your economic development toolkit. Here's a quick snapshot of what our communities can expect:

- **It's FREE to become a Main Street program in Georgia.** Many other state coordinating programs charge an annual fee to participate in their Main Street network. Georgia values the work of our downtown programs and, since 1980, any community wishing to participate in the Georgia Main Street Program may do so through a signed letter of agreement and Memorandum of Understanding. While there are national requirements that must be met in order to receive the Main Street America™ designation, any community that is interested in joining our network can do so at the affiliate level at no cost.

- **Free and reduced-rate training.** Communities that are on the forefront of downtown development participate in an ongoing regimen of training for their staff, elected officials, and volunteers. The Office of Downtown Development offers free monthly webinars and access to specialized Main Street training courses at discounted rates for designated communities.
- **Reduced-rate design assistance from the Downtown Design Studio.** The studio staff is made up of certified professionals in the field of design, providing communities across Georgia with access to concept drawings, sketches and renderings, to build a more appealing downtown. Our Classic Main Street and Georgia's Exceptional Main Streets designated communities receive a special rate for services that include façade renderings, in-fill development, site plans, trail and corridor development plans, sign designs, and much more.
- **Loan interest rates as low as 2 percent!** Classic Main Street and GEMS designated communities with business and other development projects occurring downtown are eligible to receive low-interest loan rates on qualifying Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRRLF) projects. DCA's DDRRLF program can be used as a subordinating loan that can cover up to 40 percent, up to \$250,000, of the total proj-



Athens, Downtown
Affiliate Network
Georgia Department of Economic
Development

ect costs. Applicable for both acquisition and renovations of historic properties, this financial incentive program can save Main Street programs and their projects thousands of dollars.

- Track your community's success through the online reporting system.** Classic Main Street and GEMS designated programs provide monthly economic activity reports to the Office of Downtown Development through a proprietary data collection system. This system provides a snapshot of the individual programs, regions and the state program in real-time. The Office of Downtown Development provides each program with an end-of-the-year annual report of their community's economic impact. This document is a great resource to both managers and staff to help communicate the many successes and initiatives of the local program.
- A network of peers and professionals.** The benefit of being connected to a program that has been established for 35-plus years is having access to the expansive network of downtown development professionals. Rarely are there issues that your downtown will face that others have not already tackled. From weekly emails to a private Main Street Managers Facebook group, the extensive network and reach of the Georgia Main Street Program can help provide your city with best practices and national trends in the area of downtown development.

MEET OUR STAFF

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GEORGIA MAIN STREET TIERS

The Georgia Main Street Program has three distinct and unique tiers available for communities to participate in: Downtown Affiliate Network, Classic Main Street Program, and Georgia's Exceptional Main Streets. Each of these tiers is designed to correlate with a designation offered by the National Main Street Center. While the majority of the cities in Georgia fall under the Classic Main Street Program designation, there are two additional levels designed to fit the needs of all community or revitalization based organizations. Any city in the state of Georgia can participate in the Georgia Main Street Program.



Downtown Affiliate Network

Georgia's Downtown Affiliate Network designation is available to communities, neighborhoods, and nontraditional business districts that desire a more flexible approach to downtown revitalization. While these communities are highly encouraged to participate in monthly reporting, compliance in this area is not required. The Main Street Affiliate program is designed as a capacity-building platform that helps create leadership and community vision while setting the stage for future growth and development.

National Designation

Affiliate programs that maintain their membership with the National Main Street Center will receive the Main Street America Affiliate™ designation. Cities are not required to participate at the national level but are highly encouraged to do so.



Classic Main Street Program

All Classic Main Street programs are designated annually by the state of Georgia and nationally accredited by the National Main Street Center. As part of the annual accreditation process all Classic Main Street communities are required to meet the National Accreditation Standards of Performance. These standards place an emphasis on historic preservation education as well as economic development, leading to an active and vibrant downtown.

National Designation

Classic Main Street programs that maintain their membership with the National Main Street Center shall receive the Main Street America Accredited™ designation along with all the incentives offered through the National Main Street Center's membership program.



Georgia's Exceptional Main Streets (GEMS)

Georgia's Exceptional Main Street communities, better known as GEMS, represent some of the best of the best Main Street programs that the state has to offer. These Main Street programs have gone above and beyond expectations by making a strong and positive impact in their communities as measured by the monthly reporting and the annual assessment process. GEMS-level communities are entitled to special one-on-one technical services offered through the Office of Downtown Development, as well as discounted training opportunities.

National Designation

At this time there is not a special designation recognized by the NMSC for GEMS. Current GEMS communities must maintain their membership with the NMSC and will receive the Main Street America Accredited™ designation. When the NMSC releases their Premier Designation level all GEMS level communities will be recommended for consideration.

BENEFITS	Downtown Affiliate Network	Classic Main Street Program	Georgia Exceptional Main Street
TRAININGS			
Can participate in Main Street related trainings	✓	✓	✓
Discounted rates on Main Street 101 and 201 trainings	✓	✓	✓
Discounted rates for additional DCA training opportunities		✓ Better Rate	✓ Best Rate
DISCOUNTED SERVICES			
Discounted rates for DCA's Design Studio services		✓ Better Rate	✓ Best Rate
Special low interest rate on DDRLF-approved projects		✓	✓
RESOURCES AND TOOLS			
Access to latest resources and information on downtown development	✓	✓	✓
Use of the state's proprietary reporting system to help measure the community economic impact	as needed	✓	✓
Access to limited technical assistance to help communities establish building blocks for success	as needed	✓	✓
Direct point of contact with DCA's Office of Downtown Development	✓	✓	✓
Access to private Facebook group		✓	✓
PROMOTION AND MARKETING			
Community contact information and economic impact featured on the Georgia Main Street Program's website		✓	✓
Community highlighted quarterly on the Georgia Main Street website and on all social media outlets			✓
When available communities will receive the designation of "Main Street American Premier"			✓
OTHER			
First right of refusal on all scholarships and financial incentive programs offered by the Office of Downtown Development			✓

Designation and Accreditation

While the National Main Street Center and the Office of Downtown Development work closely together to meet the needs of Main Street cities in Georgia, each of them possesses a unique and individual responsibility that is part of the designation and accreditation process.

Georgia's Office of Downtown Development is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to officially designated Main Street America™ cities, while the National Main Street Center coordinates national efforts on behalf of their membership.

Even though the National Main Street Center creates the National Accreditation Standards of Performance, each state coordinating program interprets these standards by crafting a

Even though the National Main Street Center creates the National Accreditation Standards of Performance each state coordinating program interprets these standards by crafting a framework for communities to operate under.

framework for communities to operate under.

In Georgia the Georgia's Annual Standards for Accreditation document, referred to as the annual assessment, evaluates communities according to the National Accreditation Standards of Performance. The annual assessment is required for Georgia Classic Main Street Program and GEM designation and Main Street America™ national accreditation. Read more about the

annual assessment and process as well as state requirements for each tier designation in Section 3.

The chart below outlines the roles each of these organizations plays in regards to serving the greater Georgia Main Street Program network.

National Main Street Center	Office of Downtown Development
Owns the rights to the Main Street America™ name and all subsequent designations that fall under the Main Street America™ umbrella.	Is contracted with the National Main Street Center to license and sub-license the Main Street America™ name and all subsequent designations that fall under the Main Street America™ umbrella.
Coordinates national efforts on behalf of their National Main Street Center members.	Coordinates statewide efforts for all communities officially associated with the Georgia Main Street Program.
Creates the National Accreditation Standards of Performance.	Is responsible for interpreting the National Accreditation Standards of Performance and creating a framework under which communities can operate.
Accredits local programs based on the designation recommendations received from the Office of Downtown Development.	Makes designation recommendations to the National Main Street Center.
Monitors and assesses each state's coordinating program.	Assesses each local program's ability to meet the National Accreditation Standards of Performance through the completion of the Georgia Main Street Program's annual assessment document.

AVERAGE ANNUAL STATE IMPACT

The one-hundred-plus communities that make up the Georgia Main Street network lead the nation annually in their downtown revitalization impact. While our state is one of 44 nationwide coordinating programs, our accredited Main Street cities make up 12 percent of the total National Main Street Network. The net jobs created annually in Georgia's historic districts make up 13 percent of the total 28,000 jobs generated nationwide and our program's annual private and public investments contribute to 12 percent of the nation's \$3.91 billion impact. The average economic impact made by our communities' downtown revitalization efforts across Georgia each year is illustrated here.

Georgia Main Street focuses on placemaking with impact. Our communities represent some of the strongest central business districts in both the state and the Southeast. These cities lead the state in small business development and job creation, and leverage public and private investment to increase tourism and revitalization.

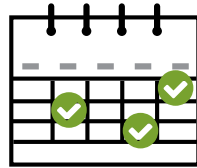


NEW JOBS

4,000 Total
140 for Business Expansions
3,050 Net

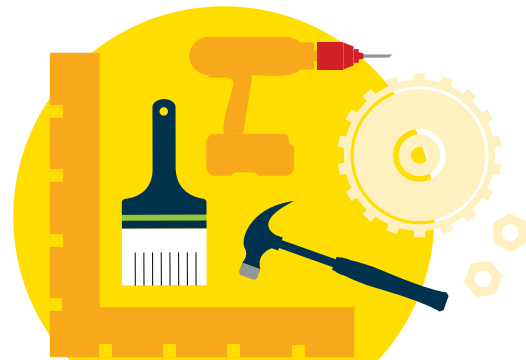
PROMOTIONAL EVENTS

240,000 Events
4,000,000 Attended



VOLUNTEER HOURS

233,000 Total
\$5,250,000 as Investment



\$137 million

Spent on 560 Building Rehabilitations



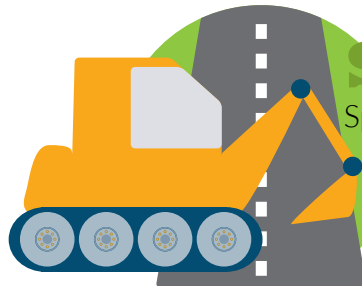
260 NEW
HOUSING
UNITS



800 NEW
BUSINESSES



140 BUSINESS
EXPANSIONS



\$35 million

Spent on 260 Public Improvement Projects

\$250 million

Total Public/Private Investment



Augusta
Georgia Department of Economic Development



Carrollton,
Classic Main Street Program
Carrollton Main Street Program



Milledgeville, Georgia Exceptional Main Street Program
Milledgeville Main Street Program

MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES: A QUICK REFERENCE

One of the challenges you will have as a new Main Street manager is understanding the day-to-day responsibilities of your position. With so many things to tackle, it is tough to know where to start. Here at the Office of Downtown Development our ultimate goal is your success at the local level. We have created an activities check list you can use to ensure that you and your program remain on track as the year progresses. The tasks identified here are primarily for communities at the Classic Main Street Program level, but these practices are beneficial to any city wishing to embrace a positive preservation ethic.

With so many things to tackle, it is tough to know where to start. Use this check list to get a jump start and stay on track.

Your First Three to Six Months

Your first several months as a new manager are all about understanding your program's foundation. Your job is to inform, educate, and inspire your community, board members, elected officials and business leaders of the Main Street Approach, highlighting best practices and identifying opportunities that ensure quality community development in your central business district. You should:

- ☐ **Gather concise budget information** so that you understand all income and revenue streams available to you for new and existing projects and programs.
- ☐ **Learn the organizational structure** of your board and your position within your organization.
 - Learn the chain of command
 - Update organizational charts
 - Review your program's bylaws
- ☐ **Plan a time to sit down individually with each board member** and get to know them, their role on the board and their interest/role in your downtown.
- ☐ Other than special events, **new managers are encouraged to plan and implement one notable and visible task or project** within three to six months. Examples include: putting up new banners, distributing funds to a façade grant recipient, highlighting through media outlets a preservation project or a historical asset in your downtown.
- ☐ **Get to know local media outlets and key contacts.**
- ☐ **Get to know your local elected officials** and key city staff.
- ☐ **Attend a city council meeting and a county commission meeting.**
- ☐ **Talk with board members and local officials** about ongoing economic development projects and/or previous projects (and why they succeeded or failed).
- ☐ **Talk to people who know the community's history** and are identified as strong leaders in the community to understand the community's identity and heritage.
- ☐ **Get to know key local leaders** (Chamber director, Tourism director, RDC, etc.). When talking with chamber, historical society, and similar groups, look for opportunities for Main Street to partner with them on events and projects.
- ☐ **Contact the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division** to be added to their email

lists and become familiar with staff so you know whom to call later when you work on projects.

- ☐ **Contact Georgia Power, Electric Cities of Georgia or Georgia Electric Membership Corporation** – whichever serves your community – to become familiar with the economic development staff.

Your First 12 Months

It is easy for a new manager to get weighed down in the minutia of an organization. While building a solid organization will play an integral role to both you and your program's success, there is a lot of value in participating in activities that will put you in front of the public, organizations and businesses in your community. You should:

- ☐ **Make sure your feet hit the streets.** Take time to walk around to meet each business owner within your downtown district.
- ☐ **Host a community visioning session** to introduce all board members to the community and listen to the business owners and citizens for feedback regarding the downtown district.
- ☐ **Host an annual board retreat** to develop an annual work plan derived from information gathered at the community visioning session.
- ☐ **Produce regular economic activity reports** for the City Council/DDA/Main Street Board of Directors highlighting the impact of your program in the community.
- ☐ **Review and maintain updates to your community's business inventory document.**
- ☐ **Maintain a list of active civic community groups** with contact information. Speak to as many as possible.
- ☐ **Read every study and report that has been developed on downtown.** (Yes, even the old ones.)

Monthly Reports

- ☐ **Monthly reports are due on the 30th of each month,** using the previous month's data. See page 30.

Annual Reminders

- ☐ Annual assessments are due by Jan. 15. See page 31.
- ☐ Renew your annual NMSC Membership by Dec. 31 to avoid any delays in accreditation. See page 33.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

Website

georgiamainstreet.org

The Georgia Main Street website is a great resource for downtown development professionals and community revitalization organizations across the state. From resource libraries to job postings and design services to community revitalization statistics, our website is your one-stop shop for all things Main Street.

Weekly Email

The Office of Downtown Development distributes a weekly digital publication regarding upcoming training opportunities and partner updates. Subscribing to receive our weekly newsletter is one of the best ways for you to stay connected to our office and new developments within the greater Main Street Network. You can subscribe at eepurl.com/K62en, or scan the QR code to receive our weekly newsletter.



The screenshot shows the Georgia Main Street website homepage. At the top is a blue navigation bar with the logo 'GEORGIA MAIN STREET' on the left and a menu with links: ABOUT, DESIGN SERVICES, MAIN STREETS STATEWIDE, RESOURCES, TRAINING CALENDAR, and CONTACT. A 'MONTHLY REPORTING' button is on the right. Below the navigation bar are two large photos: a street-level view of a historic brick building in Valdosta, Georgia, and an aerial view of a historic district in Milledgeville, Georgia. A green banner below the photos says 'WELCOME'. Underneath is a quote: "Georgia Main Street has been synonymous with economic development and community revitalization. Georgia Main Street communities provide the impetus for business recruitment, building renovations, downtown events, tourism, partnerships, residential living, volunteerism, and historic district designation." - Connie Tabor, Toccoa Main Street. Below the quote is a paragraph about the program's history: "The Georgia Main Street Program began in 1980 as one of the original pilot state coordinating programs of the National Main Street Initiative launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program launched with five local communities and has grown to serve 100+ communities statewide. Georgia Main Streets represent some of the strongest central business districts in the state and in the Southeast." The bottom of the page features three columns: 'LATEST NEWS' with a 'Congratulations Columbus!' announcement, 'FAST FACTS' with statistics (106 cities, 3,652 jobs, 661 buildings), and 'MAIN STREET OF THE MONTH' featuring 'Columbus, GA' with photos and statistics (Year Incorporated: 2009, Population: 202,824).

GEORGIA MAIN STREET

GROWING BUSINESS. PRESERVING HISTORY.

MONTHLY REPORTING

ABOUT DESIGN SERVICES MAIN STREETS STATEWIDE RESOURCES TRAINING CALENDAR CONTACT

VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA

WELCOME

"Georgia Main Street has been synonymous with economic development and community revitalization. Georgia Main Street communities provide the impetus for business recruitment, building renovations, downtown events, tourism, partnerships, residential living, volunteerism, and historic district designation." - Connie Tabor, Toccoa Main Street

The Georgia Main Street Program began in 1980 as one of the original pilot state coordinating programs of the National Main Street Initiative launched by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program launched with five local communities and has grown to serve 100+ communities statewide. Georgia Main Streets represent some of the strongest central business districts in the state and in the Southeast.

LATEST NEWS

Congratulations Columbus!

We are excited to announce that Uptown Columbus, Inc. has been selected as a Semi-Finalist for the 2017 Great American Main Street Award. The Great American Main Street Award (GAMSA) recognizes accredited Main Street Programs throughout the country whose local initiatives in preservation and revitalization have helped to transform their community's historic district.

FAST FACTS

106
Number of Georgia Main Street Cities

3,652
Net New Jobs created in FY 15-16

661
Completed Building Rehabilitation Projects in FY 15-16

MAIN STREET OF THE MONTH

Columbus, GA

Year Incorporated: 2009
Population: 202,824

Dropbox

All communities that are officially affiliated with our organization get a program-specific “shared” folder in the Georgia Main Street Program’s master dropbox account. Communities are responsible for establishing their own individual dropbox accounts so that our office staff may share documents and pertinent information with your community on a regular basis through this existing shared folder. Each community’s dropbox folder serves as a digital vault for important program documentation. These documents should be kept up to date and accessible in your program’s shared dropbox folder:

- Bylaws
- Meeting agendas and minutes
- Board roster and contact list
- Organizational chart
- Program boundaries
- Comprehensive training log
- Annual work plan and budget
- Mission and vision statement

For questions or help connecting to your community’s shared dropbox folder, email our staff at mainstreet@dca.ga.gov.

YouTube Channel

youtube.com/gamainst

Did you know that the Georgia Main Street Program has its very own YouTube channel? It features recordings of previous webinars offered by the Office of Downtown Development. From facade easements to National Register nominations, our YouTube channel has a little bit of something for everyone. We encourage you to check out our database of training and educational materials online at youtube.com/gamainst.

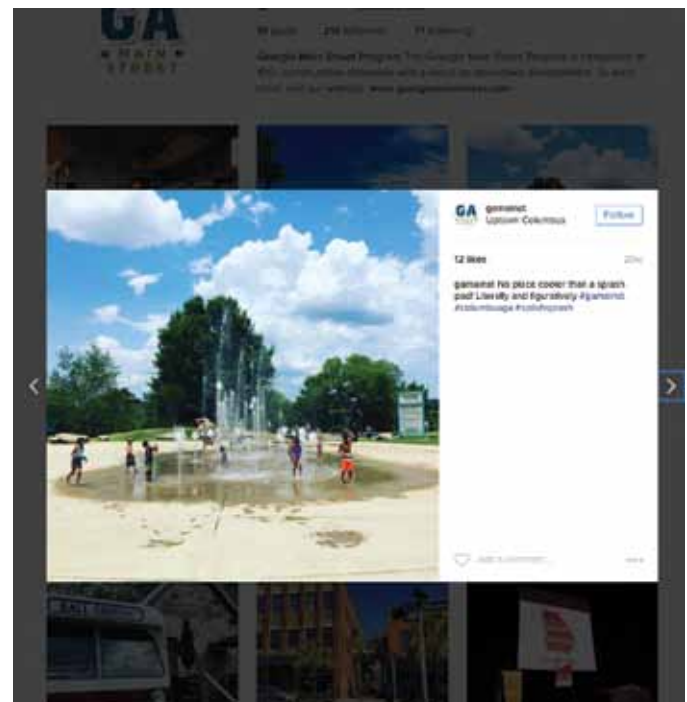
Social Media

facebook.com/gamainst | instagram.com/gamainst

Through Instagram and Facebook our office highlights each community’s impact by sharing photos and inspirational stories from around the state.

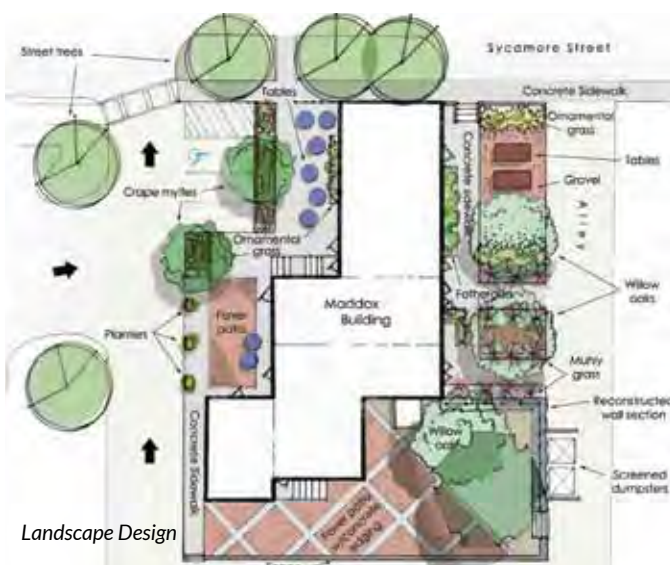
Manager Facebook Group

One of our most valuable resources for managers, whether they are new or seasoned, is the manager Facebook group. Available and accessible only to Classic and GEMS communities, this Facebook group serves as the platform for managers to share information and ideas with each other. Questions posted in the manager’s group are quickly approved by our office, then posted to the page, allowing managers from around the state to respond with relevant information. Please, reach out to the Office of Downtown Development staff at mainstreet@dca.ga.gov if you would like to be invited to the manager Facebook group.





Corridor and Gateway Design



Landscape Design



Before façade design



After façade design

DESIGN SERVICES

People are drawn to downtowns with economic and cultural vitality. Such places are not easily created. The Office of Downtown Development has an office, based in Athens, whose primary focus is supporting our downtown managers with their design and preservation needs. Our staff at the Downtown Design Studio is trained to assist in these efforts by helping Main Street managers and small business owners recognize opportunities for rehabilitation, while developing design solutions that stimulate both interest and investment.

The Office of Downtown Development can provide low-cost design services to any community in need. Services include:

- Façade rendering and design
- Streetscape designs
- Public and park space planning
- Sign package recommendations/schematic designs
- Downtown infill planning
- Comprehensive corridor improvement plans
- Historic archive research

With many elected officials and small-business owners, seeing the possibility of what can happen will help encourage the investment of both money and resources to the proposed revitalization project at hand. Whether you obtain project renderings from our office or another professional organization, we encourage you to take ownership of your revitalization projects and help to make your downtown vision a reality.

Keep in mind that cities officially affiliated with the Georgia Main Street Program are entitled to a discount on their design services fees. To obtain a quote for a potential design project, visit the design services section of our website at georgiamainstreet.org/design-services.

OFFICE OF REGIONAL SERVICES

Twelve community service representatives, listed below, provide local governments and partnering organizations with access to statewide resources and technical expertise for DCA-specific programs and funding opportunities. These representatives serve as a community's initial means of support for both community- and economic development-related initiatives.



1. Patrick Vickers
404-695-2093
region1@dca.ga.gov

2. Kathy Papa
770-362-7078
region2@dca.ga.gov

3. John VanBrunt
706-825-1356
region3@dca.ga.gov

4. Corinne Thornton
706-340-6461
region4@dca.ga.gov

5. Beth Eavenson
404-387-6977
region5@dca.ga.gov

6. Tonya Mole
404-852-6876
region6@dca.ga.gov

7. Tina Hutcheson
478-278-9434
region7@dca.ga.gov

8. Corinne Thornton
706-340-6461
region8@dca.ga.gov

9. Lynn Ashcraft
478-484-0321
region9@dca.ga.gov

10. Gina Webb
404-387-1429
region10@dca.ga.gov

11. Kelly Lane
404-227-3619
region11@dca.ga.gov

12. Jennifer Fordham
912-531-1746
region12@dca.ga.gov



3

STANDARDS AND REQUIREMENTS FOR MAIN STREET PROGRAMS

While Main Street managers are accountable for an immense number of responsibilities and activities on a day-to-day basis, a few important components must be focused on throughout the year. The Georgia Main Street Program, in conjunction with the National Main Street Center, has identified three areas of concentration that annual designation and accreditation are contingent upon: training and education, monthly reporting and annual assessment.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Training is essential to your success as a Main Street manager. A wide variety of training opportunities is provided by our office and by partners throughout the state. New managers are required to participate in a minimum of 30 hours of training annually. We highly recommend that you seek out workshops, webinars and

professional development opportunities that provide you with an in-depth learning experience in topics and concepts that may be less familiar. Managers are required to attend at least one Regional Managers meeting during each calendar year, and new managers and board members must attend Main Street 101 within your first 12 months in office.



*Suwanee, Classic Main Street Program
City of Suwanee*

Main Street 101

Main Street 101 is a one-day workshop delivered by the Office of Downtown Development. While the workshop is required for all new board members and Main Street managers, this training opportunity is a great educational experience for existing board members, city staff, elected officials and active volunteers as well. Our Main Street 101 course introduces both you and your board members to the Main Street Approach, with an in-depth look at community transformation strategies.

Our staff focuses on the roles of both the manager and board members, as well as key components to assist you in building a solid foundation for your program. During this workshop our Downtown Design Studio staff examines the evolution of the look of downtown and discusses building rehabilitation strategies that attract customers while preserving a community's architectural heritage. This workshop is offered several times throughout the year in different locations across the state. Contact the Georgia Main Street Program website or staff at mainstreet@dca.ga.gov for a list of training opportunities.

Regional Managers Meetings

Regional managers meetings are short one-day training opportunities that are traditionally held throughout the year in districts across the state. These meetings are typically only four hours in length and encompass a presentation component combined with a downtown walking tour and roundtable discussion. This training is provided by the Office of Downtown Development and is offered at no cost to the manager, board members or city staff who attend.

Board Training and Education

All new board members are required to attend Main Street 101 training within their first 12 months of appointment. A well-educated and informed board makes the job of downtown revitalization much easier. Having board members that are familiar with the Main Street Approach ensures that the manager and board are working together and provides the manager time to implement the annual work plan. Board members who attend training regularly are exposed to best practices from around the state and are better equipped to make decisions that benefit the entire downtown.



Athens, Downtown Affiliate Program
Athens Downtown Development Authority

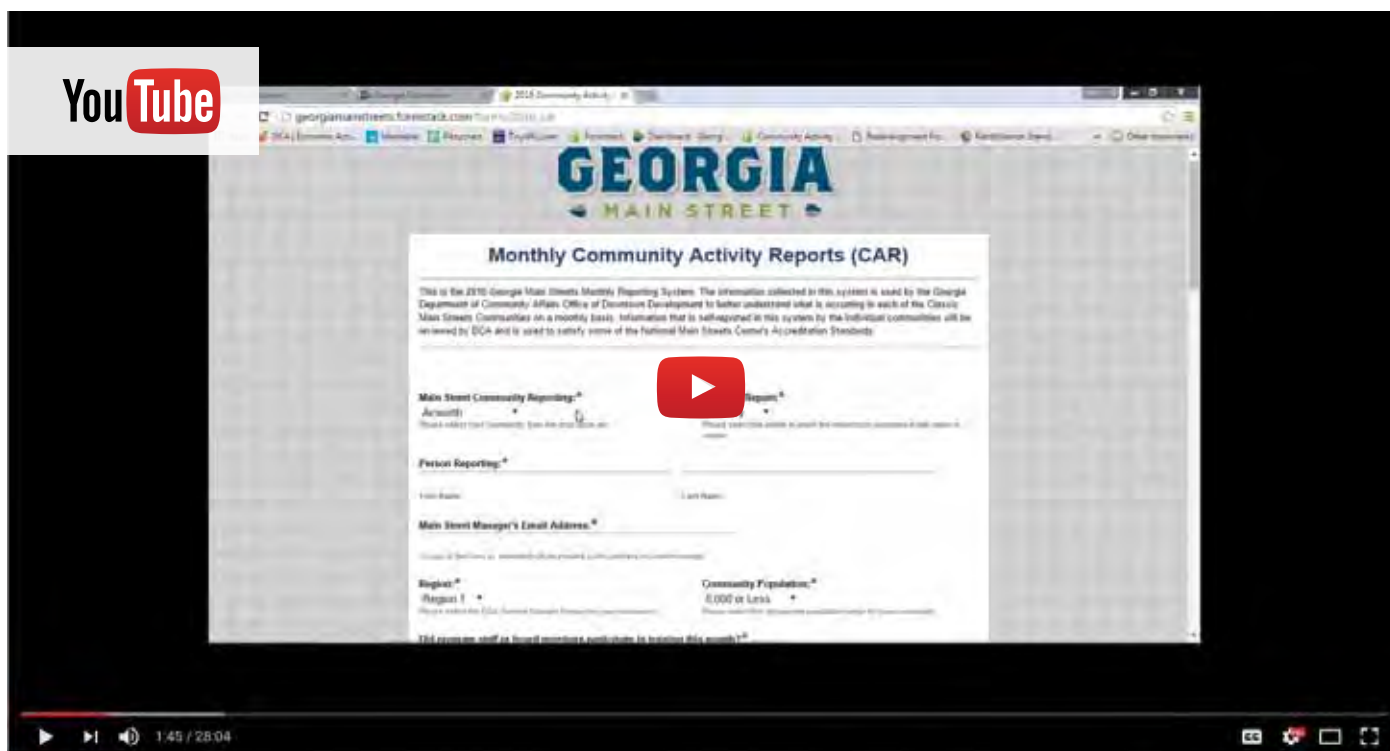
Community/Volunteer Training and Education

Community visioning sessions and yearly planning retreats are just two examples of broad-based training and education. Ongoing community education is essential to the success of a program. Educating volunteers about the vision and mission of the local Main Street program will help them understand how best to serve the organization while becoming advocates for the program's cause.

Although it is not required, the education of your mayor and city council is imperative. Most programs are funded through the city budget that is directly controlled by the mayor and council. For them to know what needs funding, they need to be up to date on the latest community development trends. Always invite your elected officials to Georgia Downtown conference and training opportunities as this will be time well spent.

Keep up to date on Georgia Main Street trainings and offerings at georgiamainstreet.org/training-calendar.





MONTHLY PROGRAM REPORTING

For communities to gauge their economic impact, it is important that we capture specific data in a timely manner. At the end of each month Main Street communities have 30 days to input their information into a monthly Community Activity Report (CAR) link located on the top right-hand side of the Georgia Main Street Program website.

At the end of each month Main Street communities have 30 days to input their information into a Monthly Community Activity Report ...

All information reported is based on the information from the previous month's impact. For example, the monthly report for April should be completed by the end of May, and the monthly report for May should be completed by the end of June.

Upon completion of this report, managers will receive an email providing a copy of that month's information submitted for your community. These emails are a great tool to help you track your own program's impact. We strongly recommend that you provide a copy of your program's current monthly report to your Main Street board of directors and city council. At the end of the year, the Office of Downtown Development will provide all reporting communities with an annual report of their community's statistics.

We have created a video to walk you through how to complete the monthly report for your community. You can access this video along with other recorded webinars through our Georgia Main Street YouTube channel at youtube.com/watch?v=QjYsw0F2vTY.



ANNUAL ASSESSMENT

A Georgia community that wishes to be eligible for a Classic Main Street Program or a Georgia's Exceptional Main Street designation as well as a Main Street America™ designation from the National Main Street Center, must complete the Georgia Annual Standards for Accreditation and submit it to the Office of Downtown Development each year.

The Georgia Annual Standards for Accreditation document, referred to as the annual assessment, evaluates communities according to the National Accreditation Standards of Performance. These 10 standards, developed by the National Main Street Center (NMSC), in cooperation with the Georgia Main Street coordinating program, provide guidelines on how Main Street revitalization programs should optimally function and serve as an incentive for programs to operate more effectively. In the annual assessment the Office of Downtown Development identifies benchmarks for measuring each program's success in meeting each of the standards.


National Accreditation Standards of Performance

1. Broad-based community support
2. Vision and mission statements
3. Comprehensive work plan
4. Historic preservation ethic
5. Active board and committees
6. Adequate operating budget
7. Paid professional staff
8. Program of ongoing training
9. Reporting of key statistics
10. National Main Street Network membership

More details on the National Accreditation Standards of Performance on page 10.

The purpose of the Georgia Main Street Program's annual year-end assessment is to recognize program accomplishments made during the calendar year, to address and discuss additional downtown revitalization issues, and to eliminate barriers to achieving work plan goals and activities. It is not meant to be a qualitative ranking to compare your community's downtown revitalization and management activities with other programs, and no official "report card" will be issued. Main Street programs vary considerably in scope, staffing and available resources, so direct comparison between communities is not always possible. Instead, this evaluation examines the effectiveness of the local Main Street

Annual Assessment Timeline

- 
- Work on annual assessment, Jan. 1– Dec. 31
 - Submit annual assessment from the previous calendar year to Office of Downtown Development (ODD) by Jan. 15 of the current year
 - ODD internal review of all assessments, Jan. 15-March 1
 - Department of Community Affairs Customer Service Regional Representatives review annual assessment for all programs within their service delivery area, March 2-14
 - ODD notifies local programs of recommended accreditation by March 15
 - ODD makes recommendation of local program designations to NMSC by March 31

program within its own context and outlines a level of activity the organization and community are prepared to undertake in the coming year to accomplish the local program's overall goals and objectives.

During the annual assessment, information might be collected from several sources, including input from municipal partners and on-site interviews with the board, committee members and staff. The annual assessment is important for many reasons. Locally, the annual assessment can serve as an essential tool for tracking the progress of your current projects and goals. Assessments are a great way to keep track of your activity for end-of-the-year reports to your local government



and board of directors. On a state level, the annual assessment gauges your local program's impact on the community and the downtown. The annual assessment is an opportunity for the local Main Street program to tell its story in a way that highlights its qualitative and quantitative impacts.

The annual assessment for each community must be submitted to the Office of Downtown Development by Jan. 15 and will always be based on the information collected and implemented during the prior calendar year. Annual assessments are submitted to the Office of Downtown Development staff through each community's Dropbox folder and are thoroughly reviewed by staff.

After reviewing this document the Office of Downtown Development will make recommendations to the National Main Street Center regarding the appropriate designation for each community. The National Main Street Center will then accredit local programs based on these recommendations as long as they maintain an active membership with the National Main Street Center. The local Main Street program will receive

feedback regarding its accomplishments, and staff can use this opportunity to address any areas that may need improvement.

See Addendum A on the Georgia Main Street USB drive provided to you with this handbook for a full detailed copy of the current Georgia Main Street Annual Standards for Accreditation. You can also email the Office of Downtown Development staff at mainstreet@dca.ga.gov for an updated copy of this document.

OVERVIEW OF STATE REQUISITES

The state requirements below must be met in order for participating communities to receive a designation from the Georgia Main Street Program. Communities that wish to use the Main Street America™ name must receive accreditation from the National Main Street Center. To be eligible for national accreditation each program must meet all of the state requirements, listed here, and maintain an active membership with the National Main Street Center. To check on your organization's current membership status email the National Main Street Center staff at mainstreet_membership@savingplaces.org.

REQUISITES	Downtown Affiliate Network	Classic Main Street Program	Georgia Exceptional Main Street
STAFF			
Provide DCA with official point of contact	✓	✓	✓
Paid professional staff, dedicated office space, phone number and email address for Main Street manager		✓	✓
TRAINING AND EDUCATION			
Must send new managers and board members to Main Street 101 training within the first year		✓	✓
Participate in ongoing manager training of at least 30 hours annually		✓	✓
REPORTING AND ANNUAL REQUIREMENTS			
Must sign annual memorandum of understanding and letter of commitment	✓	✓	✓
Must complete monthly economic activity reports		✓	✓
Complete and submit program's annual assessment to DCA by Jan. 15		✓	✓
Host an annual community visioning session		✓	✓
Have an annual work plan		✓	✓
Programs must meet the National Accreditation Standards of Performance as outlined by the Office of Downtown Development in the the Georgia Annual Standards for Accreditation document		✓	✓
ADDITIONAL GEM PREREQUISITES			
A minimum of 10 years designated as a Georgia Main Street community			✓
Stable leadership			✓
Current on all reporting over the last three years			✓
Able to demonstrate exemplary achievements for your community and your downtown			✓
A formal presentation or site visit for applicable communities may be required			✓



4

MAIN STREET'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

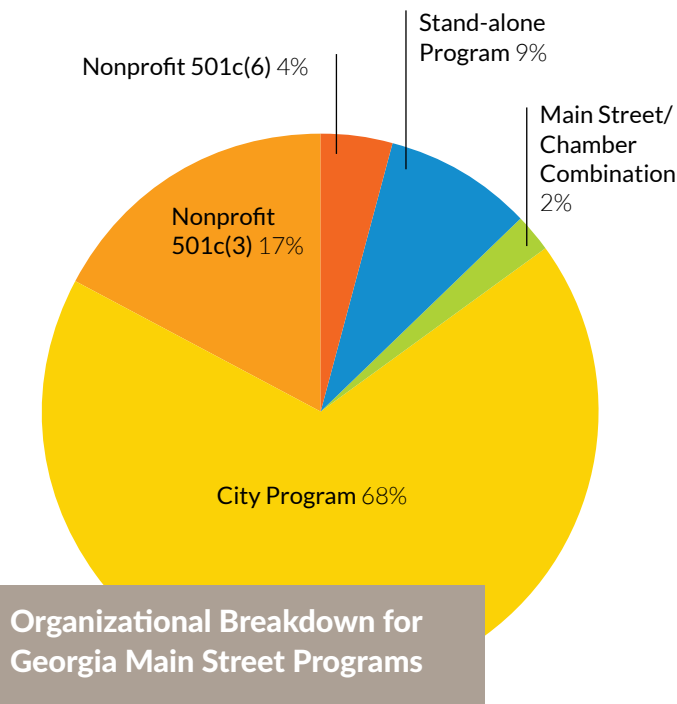
The organizational structure for each of our local Georgia Main Street programs is uniquely adapted to fit each community's needs. While most programs are traditionally housed within the local municipal government, it is not uncommon for some to operate under the umbrella of a nonprofit organization, downtown development authority or chamber of commerce. While each of these frameworks has its benefits we recommend that you consider the needs of your local program before deciding to adopt or alter any existing organizational structures.

A CITY PROGRAM

According to a recent survey of our programs 67 percent of our local Main Street organizations are housed under the local government. Another 20 percent embrace the concept of private/public partnership with the Main Street manager serving as a city employee, while overseeing the Main

Street organization, which may also hold a special nonprofit designation.

In the Office of Downtown Development, we encourage Main Streets to be officially affiliated with their local municipal government. Main Street programs that operate under the umbrella of the city typically are in a better position financially and organizationally. The value provided by the



support of the local government cannot be overstated. All programs, regardless of their structure, are required to have the local government sign off on an annual Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between their organization, the local government and DCA. This is to help ensure that the roles and responsibilities of each participant are clearly defined and understood by all parties.

Who Does the Main Street Manager Report to?

Just as the structure of a Main Street program varies from city to city, the office that houses the program also varies. The majority of the Georgia Main Street programs are housed under either an economic development or community development department or, in some cases, the manager reports directly to executive staff, possibly the city manager. While the Main Street manager will be accountable to many people, it is important for the manager to know exactly who the direct supervisor is. All Main Street programs are required to keep an updated organizational chart in their community's dropbox folder. This document should outline where the Main Street program falls within the city's structure and who the manager's direct supervisor is. The document is a valuable tool in understanding your program's organizational structure for both the Main Street manager and the Office of Downtown Development staff.

Open Records and Open Meetings

Both the Open Records Law and the Open Meetings Law apply to all entities that are an "agency" of the state or local

government in Georgia. In addition, they apply to associations whose members are themselves "agencies" if the association itself receives a substantial part of its budget from agencies. All Main Street programs in Georgia, regardless of their official affiliation with their local government, are recommended to observe and act according to Georgia's Sunshine Laws.

See Addendum B on the Georgia Main Street USB drive provided to you with this handbook for a full and detailed copy of the current Georgia Sunshine Laws.

Main Street Budget

Main Street revitalization is the shared responsibility of both public and private sectors. Neither sector can – or should – support the revitalization initiative singlehandedly. Any organization, agency, or individual who might benefit from the district's revitalization should consider investing in your program.

In communities where the true public/private partnership is embraced, the local government might pay for the Main Street manager and staff's salaries and training expenses while money for projects and programs for the downtown district are raised through fundraising efforts.

It is important to keep in mind that program funding is different than project funding. The program itself needs ongoing, annual funding to cover the costs for everything from postage to utilities. The program will undertake many projects over the years – everything from festivals to business assistance workshops. Funding for operations is most likely to come from government sources, corporations, and foundations, while funding for projects and programs will most likely come from pledges, memberships, special assessments, and earned income.

Keep in mind that the Georgia Main Street Program recommends that all local programs have an assorted and diversified funding stream. Having this stream ensures the financial stability of your program, safeguarding that any change in funding from a primary source will not negatively impact the progress of your efforts in the community.

Here are a few things to keep in mind if your Main Street program receives funding or is directly funded from the city:

- The Georgia Main Street Program recommends that your Main Street program have its own budgetary allocation and line items accounted for in the city's annual budget.
- Ensure that there is money set aside to meet your annual training requirements for managers, staff, and board members.

- Funding should cover the costs of, but not be limited to, program administration. Revitalizing a Main Street district involves funding for specific activities, as well as organizing festivals, offering training programs for business owners, creating incentive programs to encourage property improvements, and much more.

Main Street Committees and Task Forces

Main Street programs are traditionally built on the support of grassroots initiatives. As a catalyst for revitalization, good Main Street programs realize that to be an agent of change they must elicit support from the entire community. This support typically comes in the form of volunteers serving on committees or task forces to help plan and execute projects or goals of the Main Street program’s annual work plan. While some Main Street programs still embrace the traditional four-point committee structure we encourage you as the new manager to find a balance that works best for you, your board of directors and your downtown.

With the advancement of technology volunteers and committee members no longer have to be in the same room to communicate and share ideas with each other. Facebook groups can be a great way to interact and facilitate discussion with volunteers who are working together on a specific project. Google Docs or Dropbox can be a great way to share relevant files and documents among group members.

It is important to keep in mind that a volunteer’s time is valuable. As a manager you should help facilitate the dialogue between committee members and work with the committee chair ahead of time to make sure there is an agenda and goals outlined for every meeting. While some volunteers might be willing to serve on a committee for an indeterminate amount of time, others might prefer to work on task forces that are created to address short-term goals and objectives. Allowing volunteers the flexibility to roll on and off of committees and short-term task forces as desired can help prevent volunteer burnout and encourage new participation from untapped resources in the community.

With the advancement of technology volunteers and committee members no longer have to be in the same room to communicate and share ideas with each other.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Not all nonprofits are created equal. While most people are familiar with the traditional 501(c)3 nonprofit designation, you may not realize that the Internal Revenue Code provides for many tax-exempt designations for nonprofit organizations. The two main designations that are traditionally used for Georgia Main Street programs are the 501(c)3 and the 501(c)6. Both entities can be beneficial to the local Main Street program. The table below outlines key differences between the two designations to help you as a manager decide which one might be the better fit for your program’s needs. When in doubt, we always recommend that you consult an attorney with experience in tax exempt designations for any additional questions that may arise.

501(c)3	501(c)6
Donations are tax deductible as charitable contributions by donors on their tax returns	Donations are not deductible as charitable contributions, though businesses may be able to deduct these expenses as advertising; dues may be deductible as a business expense
Organizational requirements	No requirements (or less stringent)
Assets must be dedicated to charitable purposes	No requirements to dedicate assets
Social activities must be insubstantial	Social activity may be anything less than “primary”
Legislative activity must be insubstantial or less than 20 percent	There is no limit on legislative activity as long as it furthers the exempt purpose. Legislative expenditures may limit the deductibility of dues
Absolute prohibition against political activity	Political activity permitted but taxed
Must serve a public purpose	Can serve the business purposes of the members
Must take care to generate enough public support to avoid classification as a private foundation	Not an issue under the (c)6 designation
Eligible for low-cost nonprofit bulk mailing rate	Not eligible for lowest bulk mail rate
Exempt from federal income tax unless the organization has unrelated business income	Exempt from federal income tax unless the organization has unrelated business income

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

Downtown Development Authorities (DDAs) are used in cities throughout the state as a mechanism to revitalize and redevelop municipal central business districts. In some communities that have a Main Street program, the DDA also serves as the Main Street governing board of directors. Some communities prefer to keep the organizations separate while encouraging each organization to work together on specific downtown development initiatives. The Office of Downtown Development does not have a preference for how your DDA and Main Street program work together, but encourages an overlap and good communication between the two organizations if the DDA board does not also serve as the Main Street advisory board.

How Are DDAs Created?

Downtown development authorities have been authorized by the General Assembly so that every city in Georgia may enact its own DDA*. However, downtown development authorities cannot transact any business or exercise any powers until activated. Activation consists of adopting and passing a local resolution and filing the proper paperwork with the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Georgia Secretary of State's office. The resolution must declare the need for the authority, specify the boundaries of the downtown development area that constitutes the central business district, and appoint the initial directors.

**The information provided here speaks only to statutory downtown development authorities. Constitutionally formed DDAs have powers and regulations unique to their organizations.*

What Powers Does a DDA Have?

The Official Code of Georgia (36-42-8) lists the general powers of downtown development authorities. As with other types of authorities in Georgia, downtown development authorities may accept grants and apply for loans. They can also own, acquire and improve property, and they are empowered to enter into contracts and intergovernmental agreements. DDAs also have the authority to issue revenue bonds.

How Many Members Serve on a DDA Board?

A DDA consists of a board of seven directors who are appointed by the municipal governing authority to serve staggered four-year terms. Directors are appointed by the

governing body and must be taxpayers who live in the city or they must own or operate a business located within the downtown development area. They must also be taxpayers who live in the county in which the city is located. One member can live outside the county if still a Georgia resident if the member has an economic interest in the DDA area. One of the directors can be a member of the municipal governing authority. Board members do not receive any compensation for serving on the DDA except for reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in performing their duties.

What Are the Training Requirements for a DDA Board Member?

With the exception of a member who also serves on the city council, all DDA board members must take at least eight hours of training on downtown development and redevelopment programs within the first 12 months of their appointment to the DDA. DDA boards that also serve as Main Street advisory boards or program governing boards are also required to participate in Main Street 101 within the first 12 months of their appointment.

What Is the Difference between a DDA and the Main Street Program?

The Main Street programs provide resources for cities across Georgia that seek to develop their downtown areas. Cities are not required to participate in the Main Street program, but they may choose to do so in order to take advantage of the technical assistance and other resources available through the Office of Downtown Development.

In the early 1980s, the Main Street program was initiated in three Midwestern cities by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as a pilot project to show that downtown development and historic preservation could go hand in hand. In 1980, after the pilot effort proved to be a success, states were encouraged to apply to participate in an expanded National Main Street Program, and Georgia was one of six states selected. The state agency administering the program in each state chose five cities to work with.

In Georgia, the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) selected Athens, Canton, LaGrange, Swainsboro and Waycross to be the first Main Street cities. Today, there are more than 100 Main Street cities across the state. The Georgia Main Street Program is administered by DCA's Office of Downtown Development while Downtown Development Authority compliance is managed by DCA's Office of Codes and Research.

Organizational Differences Between DDA and Main Street Programs

	Downtown Development Authority	Main Street
Legal Status	Defined in State Law O.C.G.A 36-42 (1-16)	Organization varies – committee, 501(c)3, 501(c)4, 501(c)6.
Board Structure	<p>Seven voting members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four must have business interest in district (live in city or in county) • One may be a councilman/mayor • One may have a business interest and live outside the county • City residents unless one of the above 	Membership of board varies based on organizational bylaws.
Board Appointments	Appointed by city council.	Varies based on bylaws/membership.
Board Terms	Four years (though original board will have staggered terms).	Varies based on bylaws.
Debt Capacity	Defined by revenue stream. DDAs can offer for sale revenue bonds.	Defined by market.
Governmental Contractual Rights	Can contract with any government entity for a maximum of 50 years through an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) with city, county, development authority, and state agency.	Can contract with governmental entity as approved in standard terms. Maximum contract is four years (no contract longer than the term ending date of most recently sworn-in elected official on the other side of the contract).
Liability Protection	Generally covered under the city's liability policy as a corporate board and as individuals carrying out board duties. Check with city.	Not covered under municipal insurance. Coverage determined by the organization.
State Loans/Grants	Eligible to apply for and receive state loans and grants and to be a conduit of such funds to the private sector.	Ineligible to apply for state loans and grants.
Fiduciary Responsibility	Must be annually audited and presented as a discretely reported attached unit of the city in its annual audit. Must complete annual report of local government authority finances with DCA.	Audits determined by funding sources. Any state or local dollars flowing through the authority may trigger an annual audit. Audits may be determined by IRS status.
Reporting	Annual registration with DCA as a local governmental authority.	Monthly online activity reports to DCA. Annual Program Assessment to DCA.
Staffing	No staff required by law.	Required to be staffed through a Memorandum of Understanding with DCA. Paid staff is a requirement for accreditation by the National Main Street Center to become a Main Street community.
Open Meetings/ Records	Required by law to observe both the open meetings and open records acts of Georgia. This means public meetings when a quorum is gathered, proper notice of all meetings and meeting summaries, a copy of all minutes available for public review.	Not required by law, but is a good principle to follow to build public trust and goodwill. If your organization does receive public funding, you should follow the acts.
Fiscal Year	Generally follows municipality.	Varies by bylaws.



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STRATEGIC PLANNING

At this point we know that Main Street organizations consist of volunteers, business owners and community stakeholders, all equally invested in seeing the success and revitalization of your community's commercial historic district. Your team's success will be determined by two key components: your leadership abilities and your organization's ability to create and follow a comprehensive strategic plan. A Main Street strategic plan is developed through community visioning, a board planning session and an annual work plan.

Good work plan development is one of the most important building blocks of your organization's foundation and your local Main Street program's success can be unnecessarily compromised if your foundation is not well developed and stable. Building a solid foundation in the early years of your program will not only help you, as a manager, reach your full potential but will also result in a better downtown as a whole. The challenge that most new managers face is not having enough patience to see this process through in a

comprehensive and strategic way. By taking the time to develop a clear and detail-oriented work plan for your Main Street district, you will set yourself up to accomplish substantial revitalization initiatives in a measured and meaningful way. Once created, this document will help guide you, the board, and your volunteers through a series of projects and tasks that will ultimately lead to the success and the revitalization of your historic district.

COMMUNITY VISIONING SESSION

A community visioning session provides the local Main Street program an opportunity to invite a diverse and varied representation of the public to participate and contribute ideas and recommendations to help craft the work plan. While the size and scope of the community visioning session will vary from town to town, the purpose it plays in work plan development remains the same. The ideas expressed here will serve as a framework for you, your board of directors and your comprehensive downtown district for years to come.

One of the most important things to keep in mind when planning a community visioning session is that these meetings should be used to gather feedback and information, while serving solely as a listening session. It can at times be both exciting and frustrating for you, as the Main Street manager, and the board to hear the good, the bad and the ugly truth about the local perceptions of Main Street. It is important, though, to consider that different people bring different perspectives, and all opinions are valuable. Keep in mind that not everyone who wants to participate in your community visioning session is able to do so. With that in mind, it can be helpful to provide additional avenues for public input and feedback, such as an online or printed survey.

Here is a **step-by-step guide** for hosting a community visioning session for your downtown. We recommend that you scale your event up or down to fit your community's needs.

Set an Agenda

One of the most important factors that will drive participation in your visioning session is your agenda. It will help guide your meeting and ensure engagement, effective communication and efficient time management. It is important to work with the board of directors to select the topics and subjects to be discussed, the role they will play in the presentation and the overall time and flow of the event.

When in doubt, we recommend pre-approving your agenda with the Georgia Main Street Program staff. Their feedback on the tentative agenda items can help keep the discussion on track with a positive and constructive focus.

Take time to identify any potential issues or topics that might become controversial so that you have adequate time to put safeguards in place to address these concerns.

Once your agenda has been set, prepare handouts, reports or presentations that can assist in effectively communicating your message and agenda during your meeting. All printed publications should be of high quality and visually attractive to draw the attention and interest of the audience.

We recommend that you provide materials for citizen groups with special needs, such as language translation or larger print. Make sure that text and graphics in PowerPoint or other displayed presentations are large enough to be read by everyone in the room.

Don't forget a microphone if your meeting will be in a larger space.

We also recommend that you provide a sign-in sheet. This is a great opportunity to provide attendees a chance to express interest in volunteering for future events. Name tags for attendees can encourage group dialogue and social networking between participants.

Who Should Be Invited?

When planning your visioning session, it is important to identify your target audience and stakeholders whose input will be valuable to the Main Street program. While deciding what groups and organizations to reach out to about participating, consider which potential partners and stakeholders the Main Street program is most likely to work with in the upcoming year. Think about whose input is important for creating a vision for your downtown and make sure that you seek out and include under-represented groups in your community.

Some examples include:

- Local residents
- Chamber of Commerce
- Mayor and City Council
- Downtown business owners
- Downtown property owners
- Civic clubs
- City/County development authorities
- Convention and visitors bureau
- Local churches
- Tourism board
- Planning or zoning board
- Planning commission
- Regional commission staff
- Local merchants and business associations
- Current and potential Main Street volunteers
- Historical/preservation society
- Local financial institutions
- Historic preservation commission
- City staff
- Local media

When Should We Meet?

Meetings should be held at a time that is most convenient to the public, keeping in mind that we want to encourage the greatest number of participants possible. If your community's population is greater than 15,000, you might want to consider holding multiple meetings or smaller focus groups, at different times and on different days, to encourage more participation from the greater community. If you are planning to host your visioning session during the evening hours, it can be valuable to provide childcare options, as well as complimentary food and beverages, to encourage attendance.

Where Should We Meet?

The location of the meeting space is extremely important. The community visioning session should be held in a publicly-accessible location whose facilities meet ADA standards. When selecting a location, you want to consider a space that is comfortable and large enough to accommodate your projected number of attendees. If you are planning to use technology, make sure to select a space that can accommodate all your needs. Ensure that there is adequate parking or close access to public transportation for all attendees, and make sure to arrive

early on the day of the event to confirm that the room has been set up properly to meet your specifications and needs.

Note how seating is arranged in the room. Consider if the room setup is favorable to participation. The seating arrangement will depend on the number of attendees, but if you will be giving a presentation, make sure that the room is set up so that everyone can easily view the presenter's screen.

Meeting Spokesperson

Ideally, the Office of Downtown Development would like the meeting spokesperson to be the Main Street manager or a member of the board. It is important for the spokesperson to be a person who is effective at public speaking, presenting information before groups and communicating with the media. A spokesperson should be able to help facilitate dialogue and direct the conversation and feedback from all participants. Keep in mind that as the spokesperson, you should remain unbiased at all times and stay open to all topics of conversation. A good spokesperson never gets defensive and understands that this is an opportunity to listen, not to solve problems.

Technical Experts

When organizing this event, consider inviting representatives from both the city and board of directors so that they may address any potential conflicts, questions or issues that may arise throughout the course of the event. Be patient, and keep in mind that just as citizens don't see city and county lines, they also don't see organizational boundaries. Be aware that ideas and topics brought up during the meeting may fall into categories that are beyond the scope, reach or responsibility of the Main Street program. Having representation from community organizations and elected officials will allow the spokesperson the opportunity to address any matters beyond the traditional role of the Main Street program.

Advertising and Marketing

Effective advertising of your visioning session will help to ensure good attendance for your meeting. The meeting date(s) should be set and advertised throughout the community (including the business community) at least 30 days prior to the meeting. Managers should work with the local media to publicize the event and encourage media attendance at the meeting. Meeting announcements should be advertised in multiple media outlets including print and radio in order to reach a larger portion of the community. Social media and online resources can be a great and inexpensive way to promote and market your upcoming meeting. A Facebook group or website can be created for easy access to relevant materials and provide a simple process of collecting feedback. Meeting schedules, agendas, minutes and links to other important information should be available on these sites.

BOARD PLANNING SESSION

Now that you have gathered community input, it is time to sit down as a board to discuss the feedback received. This is best done through a board retreat or planning session. During the board retreat the Main Street manager and fellow board members will have the opportunity to discuss and plan for the future direction of the Main Street program. In preparation for this retreat the Main Street managers should pull together historical documents including master plans, community surveys, historic resource studies and even prior work plans so that patterns, trends or gaps in services can be identified and addressed.

While we recommend that the Main Street manager serve as the facilitator for the community visioning session, the Office of Downtown Development recommends that you consider bringing in a professional meeting facilitator to help enable dialogue and discussions during your board retreat. Meeting facilitators can often say things that need to be said and ask questions that can lead to deeper probing and reflection. In certain situations managers may feel uncomfortable voicing their opinions for fear of possible retaliation or hurt feelings; a meeting facilitator can help alleviate these concerns. New managers in need of a meeting facilitator should first reach out to their DCA customer service representatives to see who within their region may be available to provide these types of services.

Setting Goals

During the board planning session, the board and manager should identify areas of focus for the next one to two years. When working to develop an annual plan of work, we want to make sure that we approach downtown development and revitalization with a wide-angle lens. Earlier in this handbook, you learned about the Main Street Approach and the role that the four points can have in creating a balanced and harmonious downtown. Now we want to make sure that we are thinking about the big picture by asking ourselves the following questions.

Will what we are doing or proposing:

- Be good for the downtown?
- Be good for the businesses?
- Complement our program's vision and mission?
- Positively impact the community?
- Be fair to all concerned?
- Negatively impact any of our key partners and stakeholders?

If you can answer yes to the first five of the above, then what you are proposing is most likely on the right track. Keep in mind that Main Street cannot be everything to everyone. While it is important to make sure that we are serving the greater good, it's just as relevant to ensure that we remain effective and focused in our efforts.

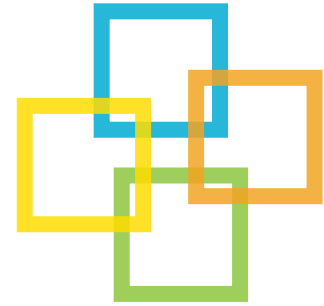
Sample Work Plan Outline

Community Transformation Strategy:				
Work Plan Objectives	Assigned To	Timeline	Budget	Potential Partners

SWOT Analysis

One technique that can be used to help focus your organization is a SWOT analysis. The analysis is a simple but useful framework for analyzing your organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Done correctly it can help you as an organization focus on your strengths, minimize threats and take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you.

To complete your own SWOT analysis internally you should ask yourself these questions, and keep in mind that when carrying out your analysis, you should be both realistic and rigorous with your answers.



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.

Summing it all up: 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 they believe most reflect your organization. Tally the votes, and then work as a group to tackle the core issues identified through this process. This consensus will help provide your organization with a compass when trying to decide what direction to move in.



Augusta
Georgia Department of Economic Development

THE ANNUAL WORK PLAN

The program's annual work plan should reflect the organization's major priorities and goals for the next one to two years. It should serve as a framework for the goals, projects, programs and tasks that need to be undertaken to accomplish the transformation strategies identified during the board retreat. A well-developed work plan will include measurable goals with necessary objectives identified to accomplish each goal. Each individual task should have ownership either by an individual, a board member or a committee and should lay out the desired time frame for accomplishing each objective.

Understanding how many steps it will take to complete a project can help you as a manager identify the resources needed and potential partners necessary to execute your plan. Good work plans have benefits beyond organizing work. They are a useful public relations tool and should be posted on your website and shared with the public to help educate the community regarding your organization's purpose.

The Main Street manager should ensure that the organization does not take on activities that do not serve the purpose of supporting the program's overall mission and work plan. With limited time and resources available to complete the program's outlined goals, the work plan must remain focused and timeline oriented. It is easy to get sidetracked by "great ideas" and "can't miss opportunities." As the Main Street manager, you will want to make sure that your organization remains open to new ideas while remaining optimistically cautious in evaluating the time, money and resources that may be diverted away from the existing work plan.

Work plans are a crucial budgeting tool that can help assist the manager in managing the budget, sponsorship and fundraising opportunities. It is also important to measure

the impact, both quantitative and qualitative, of the projects and programs put in place by the annual work plan. Nothing builds more credibility for a Main Street organization than being able to report back the program's annual work plan accomplishments at the end of the year.

We recommend tracking:

- The sources from which funding was received and the amount.
- The dollar value of all media exposure (even if it was donated in kind).
- The return on your investment for all projects and events, taking into account staff's time, salary and benefits when measuring your investment as related to your return.
- The number of successful partnerships. (Identify organizations with whom you collaborated and identify for what project the collaboration occurred.)
- Volunteer hours.

Your program's track record in accomplishing work plan goals and objectives can have a direct impact on your organization's success in appealing for continued or increased support from your local government or other community stakeholders. Main Street programs that can demonstrate the visual impact of their projects are more likely to gain future support from businesses, the community and elected officials.

Sample Chart for Sources and Use of Funding

Event Name	Date	Source of Funds	Use of Funds	Amount

Sample Chart for Tracking Media Exposure

Event Advertised:		Total Funds Allocated:		
Media Entity Advertised In	Number of Ads Run	Total Cost of Advertising	Total Retail Value of Advertising	Cost Per Ad

Sample Chart for Partnerships

Project/Event Name	Partner	Involvement	Financial Contribution	Primary Contact	Contact Information

See Addendum A on the Georgia Main Street USB drive provided to you with this handbook for these chart templates.

Sample Event Return on Investment (ROI) Calculator

	Input	Investment
Manager		
Annual Salary	\$	-- (Annual Salary/52 weeks/40 hours) x Manager Hours on Project = Manager Investment
Manager Hours on Project		
Support Staff		
Annual Salary	\$	-- (Annual Salary/52 weeks/40 hours) x Manager Hours on Project = Manager Investment
Support Staff Hours on Project		
Additional Support Staff		
Annual Salary	\$	-- (Annual Salary/52 weeks/40 hours) x Manager Hours on Project = Manager Investment
Support Staff Hours on Project		
Event Costs		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
Event Income		
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$

Sample ROI Calculator continued...

Volunteer Impact		
Volunteer Name	Number of Hours	Impact
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
		\$
Totals		
Total Manager Impact	\$	— — — Manager Investment
Total Support Impact	\$	— — — Support Staff Investment plus Additional Support Staff Investment
Total Event Cost	\$	
Total Event Income	\$	
Total Volunteer Impact	\$	
Total Return On Investment (ROI) of Event	\$	— — — Sum of all Totals

See Addendum A on the Georgia Main Street USB drive provided to you with this handbook for an Excel Template of the ROI Calculator with built-in formulas.



Carrollton, Classic Main Street Program
Carrollton Main Street Program

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT
REVOLVING LOAN FUND
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT
COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT
DISTRICT
TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT
SPLOST
HOTEL-MOTEL TAX

6

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR MAIN STREET PROGRAMS

The way a Main Street program makes itself financially sustainable can vary from community to community. While there are many different avenues to achieve financial independence, we typically see the items listed here used most frequently in local programs across the state.

- Membership
- Hotel-motel tax
- Special event revenue
- Special tax district (BID, CID, TAD)
- Donations and sponsorships
- Grants
- City governments
- County governments
- Chamber
- Convention and visitors bureau
- Designated marketing organization
- SPLOST – not splosh! (Special Local Option Sales Tax)

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The purpose of the Downtown Development Revolving Loan Fund (DDRLF) is to assist cities, counties, and development authorities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by providing below-market-rate financing to fund capital projects in core historic downtown areas and adjacent historic neighborhoods where DDRLF will spur commercial redevelopment.

Since 1999, this fund has helped finance projects in downtowns across the state, helping property owners, local governments, and entire communities rebuild, reuse, and preserve pieces of our state's heritage and history.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants for this program are municipalities with a population of 100,000 or fewer and counties with a population of 100,000 or fewer proposing projects in a core historic commercial area, as well as development authorities proposing projects in a core historic commercial area in municipalities or counties with a population of 100,000 or fewer. The ultimate user of funds may be a private business or a public entity such as a city or development authority.

Loan Amounts

The maximum loan is \$250,000 per project, not to exceed 40 percent of total eligible project costs. Typically, the DDRLF program works as a 50-40-10 split, with 50 percent of the project being funded through traditional bank financing, 40 percent being made up of the DDRLF gap financing, and 10 percent being owner-injected equity.

Eligible Use

Applicants must demonstrate that they have a viable downtown development project and clearly identify the proposed uses of the loan proceeds. Once approved, funds may be used for activities such as real estate acquisition, development, redevelopment, and new construction; rehabilitation of public and private infrastructure and facilities; and purchase of equipment and other assets (on a limited basis).

Loan Terms

Interest rates are below-market with Main Street cities currently receiving a 2 percent rate and all other cities receiving a 3 percent rate. Repayment period is typically 15 years. Security is usually project collateral and personal guarantees.

Applications

Applications are accepted throughout the year.

Questions

The DDRLF program is overseen by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs. For more information regarding the DDRLF program, contact Cherie Bennett at cherie.bennett@dca.ga.gov or 404-831-2058. If you believe that your organization or one of your local businesses has a project that would be a good fit for the DDRLF program contact your DCA regional customer service representative, found on page 25, to set up an initial site visit.



BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

A business improvement district (BID) is a defined area in which businesses and residential properties are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) to fund projects or provide supplemental services within the district's boundaries. The BID is often funded primarily through the levy but can also draw on other public and private funding streams, such as surcharges on existing business licenses and

occupational taxes. BIDs are the primary special tax districts implemented in a Main Street program's boundaries as a means for providing additional funding and resources for the local Main Street organization.

The creation of a BID requires support from at least 51 percent of the municipal taxpayers of the district proposed for creation or municipal taxpayers owning at least 51 percent of

A BID is a defined area in which business and residential properties are required to pay an additional tax (or levy) to fund projects or provide services within the district's boundaries.



the taxable property subject to ad valorem real and personal property taxation in the district.

BIDs can be created for a period of five or 10 years. To enact the proposed BID, the petition must be verified by the city, noticed, and approved during a public meeting. The BID will have a board of appointed property owners who create the budget and are responsible for expending and allocating funds. The local Downtown Development Authority can serve as the board of directors for the BID.

Supplemental Services

Supplemental services are defined as those services provided for the improvement and promotion of the district, including, but not limited to, advertising, promotion, sanitation, security, business recruitment and development.

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

Authorized by the Georgia Constitution (Article IX, Section VII), a community improvement district (CID) is a mechanism for funding certain governmental services, including street

and road construction and maintenance, parks and recreation, storm water and sewage systems, water systems, public transportation systems, and other services and facilities. The administrative body of the CID, which can be the city governing authority, may levy taxes, fees and assessments within the CID, not to exceed 2.5 percent of the assessed value of the real property. Such taxes, fees and assessments may only be levied on real property that is used for nonresidential purposes and revenues may be used only to provide governmental services and facilities within the CID. Bonded debt is permitted, but such debt may not be considered an obligation of the state or any other unit of government other than the CID.

The General Assembly may create a CID by local legislation. The creation of a CID is conditioned on approval of the municipal government if the CID would be entirely within

A CID is a mechanism for funding certain governmental services including street and road construction and maintenance, parks and recreation, storm water and sewage systems, and water systems.



the municipality and approval from both the municipal government and the county government if the CID would be partially in the incorporated area and partially within the unincorporated area.

The creation of a CID is also contingent on receiving the written consent of a majority of the owners of the real property within the CID that would be subject to CID taxes, fees and assessments, as well as the owners of the real property within the CID that constitutes at least 75 percent by value of all real property within the CID that will be subject to CID taxes, fees and assessments.

TAX ALLOCATION DISTRICT

A tax allocation district (TAD) is established for the purpose of catalyzing investment by financing certain redevelopment activities in underdeveloped or blighted areas using public dollars. Redevelopment costs are financed through the pledge of future incremental increases in property taxes generated by the resulting new development. Typically, upon creation, TADs

have vacant commercial and residential properties, blighted conditions and numerous vacant buildings, or are in need of significant environmental remediation.

The Redevelopment Powers Law outlines the possible uses for TAD funds. In Georgia, TAD funds can be used for grants for capital costs, which include: construction of new buildings; public works or improvements; renovation, rehabilitation, demolition, or expansion of existing buildings; acquisition of equipment; and clearing and grading of land. The redevelopment plan for each district specifies the permissible uses of the funds that support the goals outlined in the plan. TAD funds must be spent on uses consistent with the redevelopment plan for the TAD as approved by city council. Funds must be allocated to projects and spent within the boundaries of the district, as set forth in the redevelopment plan.

A TAD catalyzes investment by financing certain redevelopment activities in underdeveloped areas using public dollars.



Carrollton, Classic Main Street
Carrollton Main Street Program

SPLOST

A special-purpose local-option sales tax (SPLOST) is a local method for funding capital outlay projects in the state of Georgia. It is an optional 1 percent sales tax levied by any county for the purpose of funding the building of parks, schools, roads, and other public facilities. The revenue generated cannot be used toward operating expenses or most maintenance projects.

Capital Outlay Projects

Capital outlay projects are defined as major projects of a permanent, long-term nature, such as land and structures. Among the projects explicitly included are roads, streets, bridges, police cars, fire trucks, ambulances and garbage trucks. Georgia law allows counties and municipalities complete discretion over the types of projects selected for SPLOST funding. While funds cannot be used for most

SPLOST is a local method for funding capital outlay projects in Georgia.

maintenance, SPLOST law explicitly allows the expenditure of funds for maintenance and repair of roads, streets and bridges.

Procedure

Georgia's state sales tax is currently 4 percent (groceries and prescription drugs exempted), with the counties allowed to add up to 2 percent more for SPLOST.

A SPLOST is passed by a county commission, usually with the agreement of its city councils, and voted up or down by residents in a referendum, usually during the next scheduled election. A SPLOST only lasts five years, and it always begins and ends with a full calendar quarter. At that time, if the funds are still needed, it must be voted upon again. All expenditures of SPLOST funds must be in compliance with Article VIII, Section VI, Paragraph IV of the Georgia Constitution and Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) Section 48-8-115. Each SPLOST must define the projects on which the money is to be used, hence the designation of a "special purpose" tax. If enough money is raised before the full term of the tax, it may be ended at the end of an earlier calendar quarter.

Counties and school systems are required to provide an independent accountant's report examining the way the funds were allocated and attesting to the fact that the system receiving funds managed those funds appropriately. School taxes are not technically considered a SPLOST but are essentially managed the same way, with referendum dates and lists of projects to be funded being approved by county (and if applicable, city) school boards instead of county commissions and city councils.

HOTEL-MOTEL TAX

Cities in Georgia may levy and collect an excise tax at a rate of up to 3 percent or at a rate of 5-8 percent on charges made for rooms, lodging, or accommodations furnished by hotels, motels, inns, lodges, tourist camps, or campgrounds. The law provides several different provisions for levying the hotel-motel tax. The amount of the levy and expenditure requirements varies depending on which alternative is chosen.

Hotel-motel taxes are authorized by the Official Code of Georgia (O.C.G.A. § 48-13-51). Each specific paragraph within the official code has its own expenditure requirements, and each city should familiarize itself with the provisions of the paragraph under which it levies the tax. You can find more information on the use and implementation of hotel tax on the Georgia Department of Community Affairs website at dca.ga.gov.



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HISTORIC REHABILITATION TAX CREDITS

State and federal historic rehabilitation tax incentives are available for an owner of a historic property who carries out a substantial rehabilitation. All properties must be listed on, or eligible for listing on, the National/Georgia Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a National/Georgia Register Historic District. Project work must meet Secretary of the Interior/Department of Natural Resources standards for rehabilitation. Tax incentives are available for both commercial and residential properties.

FEDERAL REHABILITATION INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT

A 20 percent income tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings that are determined by the Secretary of the Interior, through the National Park Service, to be “certified historic structures.” The State Historic Preservation Offices and the National Park Service review the rehabilitation work to ensure that it complies with the secretary’s standards

for rehabilitation. The Internal Revenue Service defines qualified rehabilitation expenses on which the credit may be taken. Owner-occupied residential properties do not qualify for the federal rehabilitation tax credit.

Each year, Technical Preservation Services, a program for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, approves approximately 1,200 projects, leveraging nearly \$6 billion annually in private investment in the rehabilitation of historic buildings across the country.

The 10 percent tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of nonhistoric buildings placed in service before 1936. The building must be rehabilitated for nonresidential use. To qualify for the tax credit, the rehabilitation must meet three criteria: at least 50 percent of the existing external walls must remain in place as external walls, at least 75 percent of the existing external walls must remain in place as either external or internal walls, or at least 75 percent of the internal structural framework must remain in place. There is no formal review process for rehabilitations of non-historic buildings.

STATE PREFERENTIAL PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT FOR REHABILITATED HISTORIC PROPERTY

During its 1989 session, the Georgia General Assembly passed a statewide preferential property tax assessment program for rehabilitated historic property. This incentive program is designed to encourage rehabilitation of both residential and commercial historic buildings by freezing property tax assessments for eight-and-a-half years. The assessment of rehabilitated property is based on the rehabilitated structure, the property on which the structure is located, and not more than two acres of real property surrounding the structure. This program requires action by the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and by the appropriate local county tax commission.

What Properties Are Eligible for Historic Tax Projects?

The property must be listed or eligible for listing in the Georgia Register of Historic Places either individually or as a contributing building within a historic district.

Requirements to Participate

The cost of rehabilitation must meet the substantial rehabilitation test. This test is met by increasing the fair market value of the building by the following percentages. The county tax assessor is the official who makes this determination.

Mixed-Use (primarily owner-occupied residential and partially income-producing property)

Rehabilitation must increase the fair market value of the building by at least 75 percent.

Commercial and Professional Use (income-producing property)

Rehabilitation must increase the fair market value of the building by at least 100 percent.

- 1) The property owner must obtain preliminary and final certification of the project from HPD.
- 2) Rehabilitation must be in accordance with the Department of Natural Resources' Standards for Rehabilitation and must be completed within two years.

Application Process

The Rehabilitated Historic Property application is a two-part process: Part A and Part B, with supplemental information and amendments when necessary. The program is designed to review projects before work begins; therefore, the earlier the application materials are submitted to HPD for review, the better. Early submission of projects allows HPD to consult with the applicant if necessary and to comment on projects in a meaningful way in hopes of bringing the project into conformance with the standards.

STATE INCOME TAX CREDIT FOR REHABILITATED HISTORIC PROPERTY

The Georgia State Income Tax Credit Program for Rehabilitated Historic Property allows eligible participants to apply for a state income tax credit equaling 25 percent of qualifying rehabilitation expenses capped at \$100,000 for personal residential properties, and \$300,000 for income-producing properties.

Updates to the State Income Tax Credit Program

In 2015 Governor Deal signed into law HB 308. This law, which went into effect Jan. 1, 2016, includes changes to the existing state income tax credit program for rehabilitated historic property that create two additional categories of projects, subject to an annual cap, and allows for the sale of earned credits.

The additional categories are for large projects completed after Jan. 1, 2017, that (1) qualify for up to \$5 million in income tax credits based on total "qualified rehabilitation expenditures" (QRE) and (2) qualify for up to \$10 million in income tax credits based on total QREs with additional



employment or annual payroll requirements. While projects that do not exceed the existing program's \$300,000 credit cap for an individual project are not affected, these "large" projects are subject to an annual aggregate program cap of \$25 million. (No matter the number of projects that apply or whether they are subject to a \$5 million or \$10 million project cap, only \$25 million in credits will be available in a given year.)

The changes brought about by HB 308 require the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to revise the regulations governing the program. This process must follow procedures established by the Georgia Administrative Procedures Act, which includes consultation with the Department of Revenue and requires adoption of the revised regulations by the DNR Board.

For more information about these historic tax incentive programs contact the State Historic Preservation Division at 770-389-7844 or read more at georgiashpo.org/incentives/tax.



Above: The Baldwin, Milledgeville, Baldwin County, Georgia

The Baldwin, a mixed-use development located in the heart of downtown Milledgeville, has 15 apartment units, two commercial spaces and an internal courtyard. The Baldwin utilized state and federal historic tax credits as well as other DCA programs. The support of the Milledgeville Main Street program was important to the success of the project.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TERMS

Local Economic Development (LED) has its own language and terminology. Terms such as capacity building, empowerment, indigenous development and social capital are common and are used by a variety of actors in the local economic development field. However, many of the terms surrounding local economic development require a considerable amount of interpretation, comprehension and negotiation when applied “on the ground” in different institutional settings. In recognizing that some of these terms are not universally understood, the following provides an understanding to this terminology by describing the more commonly used words and acronyms.

Additionality: The principle that funding from a particular source is additional to that provided by national and local authorities. The additionality principle requires that funds awarded for a project should not be used merely to substitute or replace existing funds, but for additional projects and activities.

Brownfield: A general term used for sites that have been developed in the past that may or may not be contaminated. Sustainable economic development strategies encourage the beneficial reuse of these sites, even though this may be more expensive than building or developing (new, to date undeveloped) greenfield sites.

Business incubators: An economic development tool primarily designed to help create and grow new business in a community within a specific building or location. Business incubators help emerging businesses by providing various support services such as assistance with developing business and marketing plans, building management skills, and obtaining capital and access to more specialized services. They also provide flexible space to rent, shared equipment, and administrative services in managed workspace.

Business retention strategy (BRS): Systematic efforts designed to keep local companies content at their present locations within the city area. Strategies include helping companies cope with changing economic conditions, addressing new markets, and even assisting with internal company problems.

Business start-up support: Business support includes the full range of services available to people starting in business for

the first time. Initiatives include training, business advisory support, business networking and mentoring, and financial assistance. (Grants, loans and interest rate subsidies are traditional methods; a more innovative approach to financial support is to try and attract as much private sector investment as possible, rather than public sector).

Cluster: A grouping of related industries and institutions in an area or region. The industries are inter-linked and connected in many different ways. Some industries in the cluster will be suppliers to others; some will be buyers from others; some will share labor or resources. The important thing about a cluster is that the industries within the cluster are economically linked, they both collaborate and compete, and are, to some degree, dependent upon each other; ideally, they take advantage of synergies.

Entrepreneurial training: Programs that provide guidance and instruction on business basics (such as accounting and marketing) so that businesses improve their chances of success.

Export development service: can help businesses diversify their customer base, expand operations, and become more profitable. Export services include assessing company capacity for exporting; market research; information services (on exporting, trade regulations, transportation, etc.); international lead generation; and trade shows/exhibitions or promotional marketing trips.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI): Investment attracted from abroad. It can mean either greenfield investment (i.e., investment in building new facilities on hitherto undeveloped sites) or portfolio investment (i.e., buying into an established business). Inward investment can take similar forms (either greenfield or portfolio). However, it could include investment from within your country as well as from abroad.

Gap financing: A kind of loan granted for the purpose of fulfilling a financial obligation in the meantime, while the borrower is in the process of securing sufficient funds to make a full payment or find a more stable financing scheme. Also often referred to as a bridge loan or interim financing.

Greenfield: Refers to factories and offices being built on land that has hitherto not been developed. Greenfield investments also imply that facilities are designed and built for investors, rather than the investor buying a facility already built.

Growth node: A physical location where industry

and/or commercial development is deliberately directed; done either to reduce growth pressures elsewhere in the city or to redistribute growth within a city.

Forward strategy: Sometimes described as an exit or succession strategy, forward strategy is an arrangement to continue the life of projects after initial project funding stops. This should be established at the outset of all projects that are likely to need ongoing capital or revenue resources after the initial period of establishing the project.

Hard infrastructure: includes all the tangible physical assets that contribute to the economy of a city. For example, transport infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, and airports), industrial and commercial buildings, water, waste disposal, energy, and telecommunications. See also *soft infrastructure*.

High road techniques: stress the need to make more efficient use of resources and invest in processes, technological innovation, and employee skills. Labor is viewed as an important commodity and skill enhancement as a crucial, targeted investment. This entails the mobilization and upgrading of local resources and the maximization of local strengths and advantages to balance relatively higher wage rates.

Indicators: Proxy measures to provide operational definitions to the multidimensional components of LED. Indicators are expected to serve the function of defining policy problems and informing policy formulation. They should provide a basis for policy discussion and planning.

Indigenous businesses: Local businesses, usually those that have developed in the community. Increasingly, the term refers to all businesses in an area whether they are “locally grown” or not.

Industry cluster: A grouping of related industries and institutions in an area or region. The industries are inter-linked and connected in many different ways. Some industries in the cluster will be suppliers to others; some will be buyers from others; some will share labor or resources. The important thing about a cluster is that the industries within the cluster are economically linked; they both collaborate and compete and are, to some degree, dependent upon each other; and, ideally, they take advantage of synergies.

Informal sector: Not within a formal or legal sector and, therefore, not raised and not provided with services. Not able to use assets as collateral for new productive investment.

Labor market information: The body of data available on a particular labor market, including employment and unemployment statistics, occupational statistics, and average hours and earnings data.

Local economic forum: A coordinating mechanism set up to achieve the streamlining and improvement of local economic service delivery.

Low-road techniques: promote an area economic position through the lowering of production costs, especially wage rates. This is not a sustainable approach.

Mobile manufacturing (or service sector) investment: Where manufacturing (or service) companies have a wide choice of locations. Consequently, they are in very strong negotiating positions when it comes to choosing where to locate their businesses.

One-stop business service centers: Facilities where business owners can go to obtain advice and support to help them establish and expand their businesses. Sometimes these centers also issue licenses and permits needed by businesses to start up, operate, or expand. These centers improve the local business environment by reducing the number of separate agencies and offices a business may need to approach for advice or to apply for various licenses and permits. They save public and private time and improve efficiency as a result.

Soft infrastructure: relates to the less tangible aspects of LED, such as education and training provision; quality of life infrastructure, such as park, leisure and library services; housing; business support; business networking; and financing services.

SMEs: Acronym for “small and medium-sized enterprises.” There is no definitive delineation between a small and medium-sized business. As a general reference, small is often from five to 20 employees, medium from 20 up to 200. Businesses with fewer than five employees are usually called micro-enterprises. This is a guide only.

Stakeholders: Individuals and groups who have an interest in the issues at hand. They normally represent their own interests as stakeholders.

Supply chains: The products and processes that are essential to the production of a good or service. For example, to produce frozen fish, the supply chain inputs will extend from fish catching, handling, processing, and freezing to packaging, storing, and distribution. These are all elements of a supply chain. Integrated LED strategies will try and capture as much as possible of the higher value end of the value chain in their area. In this case, fish processing, packaging, storing, and distribution will add value and, therefore, be seen at the higher end of the value chain.

TRAVEL AND TOURISM TERMS

The travel and tourism industry has its own language and terminology. Terms such as ecotourism, carrying capacity, and market segmentation are common and are used by a variety of players in the local tourism industry. In recognizing that some of these terms are not universally understood, the following provides an understanding of this terminology by describing the more commonly used words and acronyms.

Accommodation capacity: The measure of accommodation stock at a defined destination. May be given by various measures: e.g., number of establishments, number of main units within an establishment (e.g., rooms, caravan stances), or capacity in terms of residents (e.g., bed spaces).

Accreditation: A process of qualifying, endorsing, and “licensing” entities that perform certification of businesses, products, processes, or services.

Adventure tourism: A form of tourism in natural areas that incorporates an element of risk, higher levels of physical exertion, and the need for specialized skills.

All-inclusive: A form of holiday package where the majority of services offered at the destination are included in the price paid prior to departure (e.g., refreshments, excursions, amenities, gratuities, etc.).

Attraction: Any visitor service or product that tourists would enjoy visiting or using. An attraction may not be an “attractor” but can still be an attraction. To be considered an attraction, a product must be findable (clearly located on maps and street addresses, and directions provided). If tourists can’t find the facility, it is not a tourist attraction.

Attractor: A significant tourist attraction, which compels visitation. The primary “must see” attractions in an area. The top reasons a tourist would choose to visit this area.

Audit: A systematic, documented, periodic, and objective evaluation and verification of how well a particular entity (company, product, program, individual, destination, etc.) is doing compared with a set of standards.

Average room rate: The total guest room revenue for a given period divided by the number of rooms occupied for the same period. Since it can be related to investment, this statistic is frequently used as a measure of economic feasibility.

Bed and breakfast (B&B): Overnight accommodations usually in a private home or boarding house, with a full American-style or continental breakfast included in the rate, often without private bath facilities.

Benchmarking: The process of comparing performance and processes within an industry to assess relative position against either a set industry standard or against those who are “best in class” (Synergy, 2000).

Best practice(s): Designates the highest quality, excellence, or superior practices in a particular field by a tourism operator.

Capacity management: A process that seeks to ensure that organizations operate at optimum capacity while maintaining customer satisfaction levels.

Capital expenditure: The cost of long-term assets, such as computer equipment, vehicles, and premises. These are bought to use over several years and not to resell.

Carrying capacity: The amount of visitor activity that a site or destination can sustain.

Certification: A voluntary procedure that assesses, monitors, and gives written assurance that a business, product, process, service, or management system conforms to specific requirements.

Certified tour professional (CTP): A designation conferred upon tour professionals who have completed a prescribed course of academic study, professional service, and tour employment and evaluation requirements. It is administered by the National Tour Association.

Certified travel counselor (CTC): A designation attesting to professional competence as a travel agent. It is conferred upon travel professionals with five or more years of industry experience who complete a two-year, graduate-level travel management program administered by the Institute of Certified Travel Agents.

Commercial rate: A special rate agreed upon by a company and a hotel. Usually the hotel agrees to supply rooms of a specified quality or better at a flat rate to corporate clients.

Computer reservation systems (CRS): Computerized reservation systems used for inventory management by airlines, hotels, and other facilities. The systems can allow direct access through terminals for intermediaries to check availability, make reservations, and print tickets.

Concessionaire: A firm that, under contract rights, operates for another party (in many cases, a government agency) food and beverage services, lodging facilities, and other services on-site at an attraction.

Concierge: A hotel employee who handles restaurant and tour reservations, travel arrangements, and other details for hotel guests.

Confidential tariff: A schedule of wholesale rates distributed in confidence to travel wholesalers and travel agents.

Consolidator: A person or company that forms groups to travel on air charters or at group fares on scheduled flights to increase sales, earn override commissions or reduce the possibility of tour cancellations.

Conversion: Active selling to get “heads in beds” or otherwise closing the sale. Differs from hospitality, which is being warm, friendly and helpful.

Cultural tourism: Travel for the purpose of learning about cultures or aspects of cultures (NEAP, 2000).

Culture: The sum total of ways of living by a group of human beings that is transmitted from one generation to another (NEAP, 2000).

Degradation: Any decline in the quality of natural or cultural resources, or the viability of ecosystems that is caused directly or indirectly by humans (NEAP, 2000).

Demographic profile: Characteristics used in research such as age, gender, occupation, income, marital status, place of residence.

Destination: The end point of a trip. This can be a town, a resort, or a stand-alone attraction. The place to which a traveler is going or any city, area, region, or country marketed as a single entity to tourists.

Destination management company (DMC): A local company that handles arrangements for tours, meetings, transportation, etc., for groups originating elsewhere.

Destination marketing organization (DMO): A company or other entity involved in the business of increasing tourism to a destination or improving its public image, such as a convention and visitors bureau.

Eco-labeling: A scheme in which a product or service may be awarded an ecological label on the basis of its “acceptable” level of environmental impact.

Ecotourism: A combination of tourism and the environment (e.g., planning before development; sustainability of resources; economic viability of a tourism product; no negative impact on either the environment or local communities; responsibility for the environment from developers, the tourism industry, and tourists; environmentally-friendly practices by all parties concerned; and economic benefits flowing to local communities).

Ecotourism certification programs: Programs that cover businesses, services, and products that describe themselves as involved in ecotourism.

Environmental impact assessment (EIA): A process of predicting and evaluating the impacts of specific developments or actions on the environment.

Environmental impact statement: The report resulting from an environmental impact assessment.

Environmental management system (EMS): Part of the overall management system that includes the organizational structure, responsibilities, practices, procedures, processes, and resources for determining and implementing the environmental policy.

Escort: A person, usually employed by a tour operator, who accompanies a tour from departure to return as guide or trouble-shooter, or a person who performs such functions only at the destination. The terms “host-escort” or “host” are often used, and are preferred, to describe this service.

Escorted service: A prearranged travel program, usually for a group, with an escort serving as guide. Fully escorted tours may also use local guide services.

Familiarization trip: A complimentary or reduced-rate travel program for travel agents, airline or rail employees, or other travel buyers designed to acquaint participants with specific destinations or suppliers and to stimulate the sale of travel. Familiarization tours, also called “fam tours,” are sometimes offered to journalists as research trips for the purpose of cultivating media coverage of specific travel products.

FIT: Acronym with multiple meanings. RTM has seen it used to mean the following: foreign individual traveler, frequent individual traveler, or fully independent traveler. Usually a “FIT package” will include lodging, meals, and attractions.

Foreign independent travel or foreign individual travel (FIT): An international pre-paid unescorted tour that includes several travel elements such as accommodations, rental cars, and sightseeing. A FIT operator specializes in preparing FIT documents at the request of retail travel agents. FITs usually receive travel vouchers to present to on-site services as verification of pre-payment.

Fulfillment piece: Promotional literature, video, or other material that is sent in response to an inquiry. Usually contains full trip planning information.

Geo-tourism (1998): Tourism that sustains or enhances the geographic character of the place being visited (e.g., its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents).

Ground operator: A company that provides local travel services, including transportation or guide services.

Group leader: A small, informal group, such as a church group, scout troop, or social group. Usually one person plans the activities for the group. Some travel shows target these planners, such as GLAMER.

Group tour: A travel agent-type company that plans motor coach trips.

Hospitality: A general term used in travel and tourism describing the “hospitality industry.” Refers to the general greeting, welcoming, food service.

Hotel package: A package offered by a hotel, sometimes consisting of no more than a room and breakfast; sometimes, especially at resort hotels, consisting of (ground) transportation, room, meals, sports facilities and other components.

Interpretation: Print materials, signage, narration, guided tours, and anything that “interprets” the site for the visitor. Interpretation helps the customer “interpret” the experience and explains why a particular product is valuable. Interpretation adds value and meaning to the experience. Common interpretation techniques used in ecotourism include commentary on guided tours, presentations and discussions, drama performances, musical performances, brochures, signs, displays, and audiovisual presentations (NEAP, 2000).

Itinerary: Travel schedule provided by a travel agent for his/her customer. A proposed or preliminary itinerary may be rather vague or specific. A final itinerary, however, provides all details (flight numbers, departure times, and reservation confirmation numbers) and describes planned activities.

Life cycle assessment: A variant of an EMS that tracks a product, process, or activity from “cradle to grave.” In the tourism industry, it assesses the use of resources and social and environmental impact during three phases: 1) departure and return travel, 2) stay at the destination, and 3) activities at the destination.

Market segmentation: A marketing approach that encompasses the identification of different groups of customers with different needs or responses to marketing activity. The market segmentation process also considers which of these segments to target.

Mass tourism: Traditional, large-scale tourism commonly, but loosely, used to refer to popular forms of leisure tourism pioneered in southern Europe, the Caribbean, and North America in the 1960s and 1970s.

Package tour: A saleable travel product offering an inclusive price with several travel elements that would otherwise be purchased separately. Usually has a predetermined price, length of time, and features but can also offer options for separate purchase.

Packager: Anyone organizing a tour including prepaid transportation and travel services, usually to more than one destination.

Personal disposable income: The amount an individual has left over for personal expenditure on goods and services after payment of personal direct taxes, national insurance, and pension contributions.

Product extension: An add-on product or service that enhances the experience of a product and generates additional revenue. For example, a state park that offers guided wildflower tours (for a fee).

Product life cycle: The cyclical pattern of demand for most products from “new and exciting” to “old and dated.” Almost all products (tourism and otherwise) have these cycles.

Rack card: Also known as a “teaser,” the typical tourism brochure sized 4” x 9” and used primarily in tourism racks.

Rack rate: The official cost posted by a hotel, attraction, or rental car company, but not used by tour operators.

Reassurance sign: When trying to locate an attraction, especially when the route is long and unclear, it is critical to offer “reassurance signs” that tell the visitor they are indeed going the right way.

Receptive operator: Someone who plans to “receive” your motor coach or tour group. They may plan your lodging, meals, attraction visits, etc., for a fee or commission. A tour operator or travel agent specializing in services for incoming visitors, such as meeting them at the airport and facilitating their transfer to lodging facilities.

Reconnaissance: An on-site evaluation of an attraction or destination from the perspective of the customer. Best performed by an outsider who is not familiar with the location and who is trained in fair and scientific methods of evaluation.

Regional Travel Association (RTA): Designates one of Georgia’s nine Travel Region Associations.

Retail agency: Travel company selling directly to the public, sometimes a subdivision of a wholesale and/or retail travel organization.

Service charge: (1) A specified percentage of a hotel’s daily rate (usually 10 percent or 15 percent) charged to the guest, who in return is relieved of the responsibility for tipping; (2) a fee charged to a client by a travel agent in addition to the commissions paid to him or her by the principals.

Small and medium enterprises (SME): These are generally companies that employ fewer than 250 but more than 10 individuals. Companies employing fewer than 10 people are generally referred to as micro-enterprises.

SMERFs: Social, military, educational, religious, and fraternal market segments. Usually targeted and separately tracked by DMOs.

Stakeholders: In the context of this report, they are environmentalists, park managers, tourism industry representatives, consumers, host countries, host communities, funders and financiers, and others who have an interest in a particular certification program.

Standard: A document approved by a recognized body that provides for common and repeated use of a prescribed set of rules, conditions, or requirements.

Step-on guide: A highly knowledgeable guide who “steps-on” an incoming motor coach and provides narrative interpretation for the experience. Some CVBs offer step-on guides for free. Sometimes an independent company offers this service for a fee.

Supplier: The actual producer of a unit of travel merchandise, such as a carrier, hotel, or sightseeing operator.

Sustainable development: Development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Sustainable tourism: According to the World Tourism Organization, it is “envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled by maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecological processes, biological diversity, and life support systems.”

Teaser piece: A teaser piece can either be a rack brochure (See **rack card**) or a mailer, giveaway, or some other promotional piece that is intended to “tease” the receiver into taking a specific action.

Tour operator: A company that creates and/or markets inclusive tours and/or performs tour services.

Tour: Any prearranged (but not necessarily prepaid) journey to one or more places and back to the point of origin.

Tourism: Travel undertaken for pleasure. The business of providing and marketing services and facilities for pleasure travelers. Thus, the concept of tourism is of direct concern to governments, carriers, and the lodging, restaurant and entertainment industries and of indirect concern to virtually every industry and business in the world.

Tourism certification programs: Programs such as AAA (Automobile Association of America) have typically measured and compared quantity, service, and price – areas deemed most important to travelers.

Tourism infrastructure: Roads, railway lines, harbors, airport runways, water, electricity, other power supplies, sewage disposal systems and other utilities to serve not only the local residents but also the tourist influx. (Suitable accommodation, restaurants, and passenger transport terminals form the superstructure of the region.)

Tourism product: Means different things to the various members of the tourism industry. To the hotel, it is “guest-nights.” To the airline, it is the “seats flown” and the “passenger miles.” To the museum, art gallery, or archaeological site, the product is measured in terms of the number of visitors. For the tourist, the product is the complete experience resulting from the package tour or travel facility purchased, from the time they leave home until their return.

Trade show: A product showcase for a specific industry. Generally it is not open to the public. Differs from a “consumer show” in that a trade show targets the professional industry, while a consumer show targets consumers.

Travel Industry Association of America (TIA): The nonprofit umbrella trade organization of companies and government agencies representing all segments of the travel industry, formed to promote travel to and within the United States.

Universal resource locator (URL): This is the term used for the address of a website. Think of an URL as similar to a phone number or street address. For example, www.rtmnet.com or www.usdm.net.

Wholesaler: A company that purchases large blocks of rooms, tickets, etc., and then resells to either the public or to other travel professionals. A company that usually creates and markets inclusive tours and FITS for sale through travel agents. Usually sells nothing at retail (as opposed to a travel agent who can sell any product) but also does not always create his/her own product; also less likely to perform local services.

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
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
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
GDEc	Georgia Department of Economic Development
GDDP	Georgia Downtown Development Professional
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

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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