

Foundation Building

SUMMARY

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

KEY DESCRIPTORS

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

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

—Margaret Mead

PROS

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

This strategy develops a unified vision.

This strategy builds community buy-in.

CONS

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

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

This strategy cannot be achieved solely by the Main Street manager.

Foundation Building requires an active and engaged board of directors.

Political buy-in and community support are critical.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

Where does our program currently stand?

Do we have a unified vision for our downtown?

How will our program be funded?

Where will this program be housed?

Does the community support efforts to revitalize downtown?

Do elected officials understand the value of the Main Street program?

Rome, ExploreGeorgia.org



FOUR-POINT APPROACH ACTIVITIES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

DESIGN

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

PROMOTIONS

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

ORGANIZATION

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

PARTNERS

Downtown Development Authority

Chamber of commerce

Historic preservation commission

City council

County commissioners

Civic clubs

Georgia Department of Community Affairs

Georgia Department of Economic Development

Georgia Municipal Association

Regional commissions

Power companies

Local convention and visitors bureau

National Main Street Center