

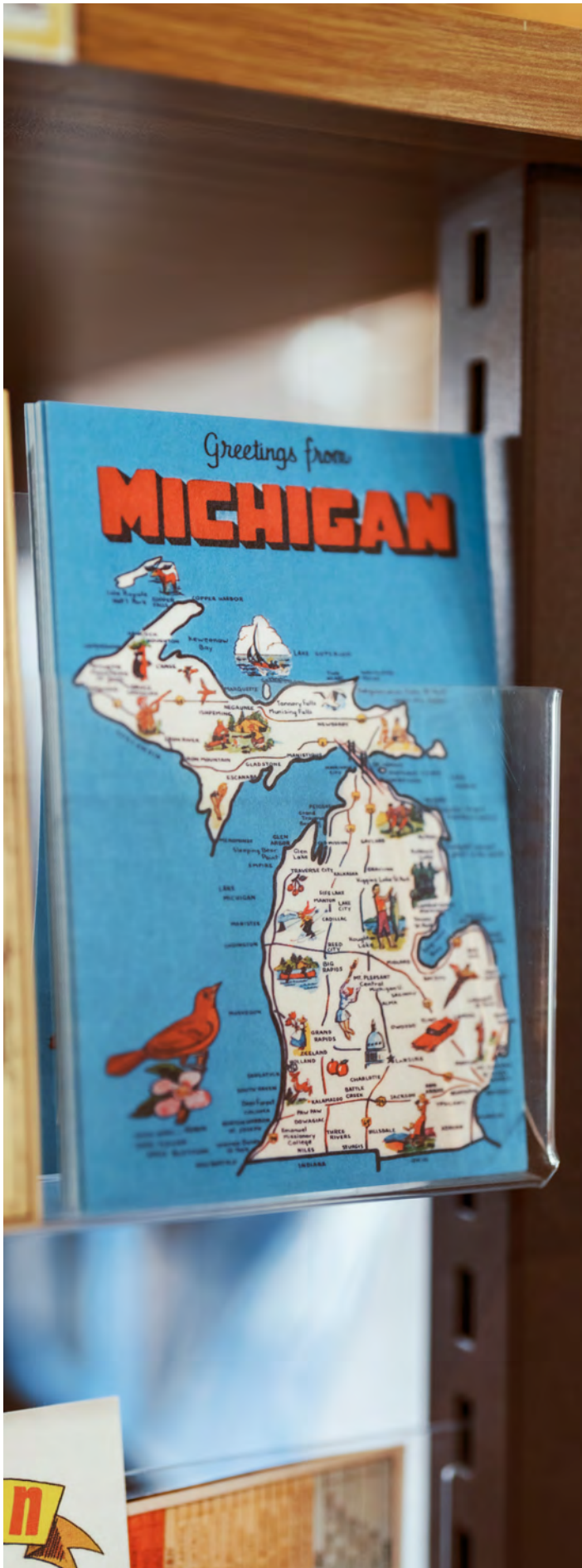


# TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY GUIDEBOOK

## MICHIGAN MAIN STREET







## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will provide an overview on the process Michigan Main Street uses with communities to implement the Main Street Approach.



**Community Vision + Market Understanding**  
Establish a community vision for the Main Street district that acknowledges market realities and provides a foundation for future (re)development.

*Key tools: local surveys, market data*

### Transformation Strategies

Select a strategy aligned with the community vision and local market to guide programming, planning and investment in the downtown district.

*Key tools: focused strategy, implementable goals*

### Implementation and Measurement

Identify programming, partners and capital needed to implement transformation strategy; define measures of success to track impact over time.

*Key tools: project work plans, data collection and tracking*

# MAIN STREET FOUR POINTS®

## ECONOMIC VITALITY

Economic vitality strengthens the existing economic assets while diversifying the economic base of the Main Street District to support and improve profitability. The goal is to build a strong commercial district that creates a supportive environment for small businesses, entrepreneurs and consumers.

**Examples of economic vitality activities include:** analyzing current market forces, providing a balanced commercial mix, supporting and expanding existing businesses, recruiting new businesses, supporting housing options, developing infill space, and converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property.

## DESIGN

Design capitalizes on and enhances the visual aspects of a Main Street District to create a safe, appealing and inviting atmosphere for people to shop and spend time. The physical elements such as the storefronts and building architecture, streetscape, public art, street furniture, parking areas, and public spaces are used to convey a positive image for the downtown.

**Examples of design actions include:** improving the physical appearance of the Main Street District, quality maintenance practices, historic building rehabilitation and adaptive use, and design review processes.

## ORGANIZATION

A successful Main Street organization builds consensus between the many vested stakeholders throughout a Main Street District to ensure everyone is mobilized and working toward a shared vision for the future of the district. Organizational structure can take many forms depending on community capacity.

**Examples of organization actions include:** fundraising, volunteer recruitment and development, public relations, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and developing work plans to guide the organization's work.

## PROMOTION

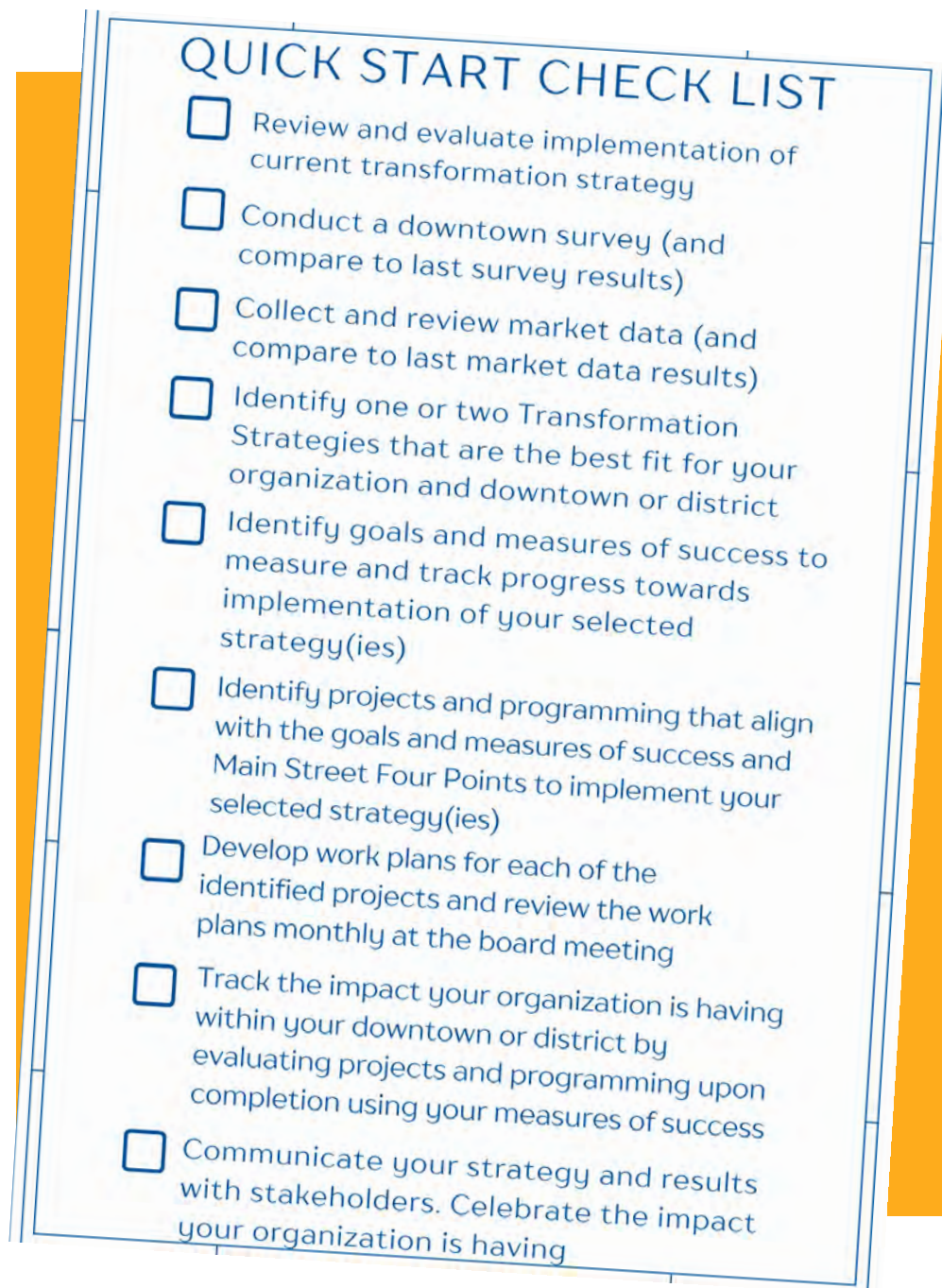
Effective promotion creates a positive image of the Main Street District to instill community pride and encourage commercial activity and investment in the area. Promotions can be used to communicate the unique characteristics of a Main Street District to spark interest in shopping, dining, living or investing in the community.

**Examples of promotion actions include:** marketing an enticing image, social media campaigns, street festivals, parades, and retail or other special events.



The guide will include step-by-step instructions for communities in three areas:

- 1) **Transformation Strategy Identification (pages 8-12)** – selecting an appropriate strategy based on community input and market data
- 2) **Strategy Development (pages 13-16)** - developing goals and measures of success to customize the selected strategy to meet the community’s unique position
- 3) **Strategy Implementation (pages 17-25)** – aligning projects and programming and developing work plans to implement the selected strategy using the Main Street Four Points



# INTRODUCTION TO TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. Grounded by both an understanding of the underlying drivers of the local and regional economy, as well as community feedback and engagement, a Transformation Strategy should describe a market position that the commercial district can successfully fulfill.

An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates an authentic destination. Simply stated, a Transformation Strategy is a comprehensive economic development strategy that guides the direction of the revitalization journey and, over time, transforms the district.

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Each Transformation Strategy has several important characteristics:

- It is rooted in the community's vision for the district.
- It is based on a solid analysis and understanding of the district's economy and its best economic opportunities.
- It is comprehensive, in that it is implemented through a broad range of activities that span the four broad areas of work represented by the Four Points of Organization, Design, Promotion and Economic Vitality.
- It is measurable, making it possible to track progress.
- It provides guidance for program activities for a three- to five-year period, after which the revitalization program should examine progress and make adjustments, as needed.

In general, a revitalization organization should work with one or two Transformation Strategies at a time.





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

Michigan Main Street and Main Street America have developed a set of Catalyst Strategies that communities may choose to use as a starting point. You are not limited to the Catalyst Strategies; it is very possible that you will need to define a customized Transformation Strategy for your district. The Catalyst Strategies may at first sound somewhat generic—and they are. They’re designed to be adaptable to a variety of places and circumstances and then can be refined and customized over time, as you gain deeper understanding of your local and regional market and as you assess your success in achieving your goals.

A Catalyst Strategy is a place to start, and the Four Points provide a framework for putting the strategies into action. Using one or more of the Catalyst Strategies can save you time, whether you are just getting started in your revitalization work or you are seeking to bring more structure and economic focus to your current work.

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

In the following pages we will speak directly to the 16 Catalyst Strategies developed by the Michigan Main Street Program and Main Street America.



# CATALYST STRATEGY LIST

## Transformation Strategy

### Brief Description

#### Arts and Culture Economy

For organizations wanting to support performing and/or visual arts or a culture and/or community heritage focused environment within the downtown or district.

#### Entertainment

For organizations wanting to support an entertainment-focused environment within the downtown district, which could include increasing the activity level during the day and night focus and/or during the weekday and weekend.

#### Downtown Living

For developing a downtown environment conducive to residential living.

#### Active Living

For developing an environment that is entrepreneur-friendly and supports the growth and development and intentionally incentivizes businesses, which serve the needs of the residents in the community and greater region. Focus could include convenience goods and services, health and wellness related businesses, arts and culture, outdoor recreation, and/or entertainment and activity that support the needs of workers and residents in the community.

#### Outdoor Recreation Economy

For focusing on the outdoor specific built environment, natural amenities and recreational activities currently driving the local economy.

#### Agricultural Economy

For an agricultural-based community, where residents, businesses and community stakeholders are dependent on the success and growth of a particular agricultural industry in their area.

#### Environmental Sustainability

For creating an eco-friendly and sustainable approach to revitalization, keeping in mind initiatives that work to expand available products, services, and amenities in the downtown or district.

#### Tourism Economy

For developing your downtown or district as a regional or statewide tourist destination. This could include your downtown or district as a day-trip destination versus a weekend/longer trip destination based on the amenities (like hotels/places to stay) that currently exist.

#### Family Focused Economy

For the development of a downtown or district environment that supports an improved quality of life for all ages. Key initiatives should be oriented to all key age demographics present in your community and could include elder-friendly, family-friendly, young adult-friendly, college and high school-friendly, and youth-friendly initiatives.



**Business Cluster Economy**

For leveraging and supporting the growth and development of an established retail business niche or cluster, or intentionally incentivizing new businesses within a specific retail niche or cluster. Business niche and clusters could include apparel, home-goods, home furnishings, health and wellness, outdoor recreation, sports and gym, convenience goods and services, wedding-related, etc.

**Welcoming and Inclusive District**

For ensuring key demographics (race/ethnicity, income levels, age groups, etc.) are represented in all facets of downtown revitalization from events and activities to businesses, and products and services. A focus could also include increasing accessibility and mobility within the downtown or district.

**Food Experience Economy**

For leveraging and supporting the growth and development of an established food-based business niche or cluster, or intentionally incentivizing new food-based businesses. Food-based businesses could include restaurants/eateries, breweries/distilleries, bakery and coffee-shops, tea-houses, and food-based products and services.

**Tech-based Entrepreneurship**

For leveraging and supporting the growth and development of already established tech-based businesses and entrepreneurs, or intentionally incentivizing new tech-based businesses in the downtown or district.

**Small-Scale Manufacturing Economy**

For developing an environment that is entrepreneur-friendly and supports the growth and development and intentionally incentivizes businesses that focus on the small-scale manufacturing industry.

**Experience Based Retail Economy**

For leveraging and supporting the growth and development of already established experience-based retail businesses and entrepreneurs, or intentionally incentivizing new experience-based retail businesses in the downtown or district.

**Community Gathering**

For a focus on bringing the community together via activity, arts, culture, entertainment, placemaking, and businesses in the downtown or district.





# Transformation Strategy Review

Starting in 2017-18, Michigan Main Street began the process of providing all Michigan Main Street communities, both new and existing, with Transformation Strategies. To date, every Michigan Main Street community has been through the process of identifying a transformation strategy, developing goals and measures of success, and aligning current programming or developing new programming to meet the goals and measures of success for the successful implementation of the organization's chosen transformation strategy. Transformation strategies are meant to be implemented over a three-to-five year period. It is recommended that Main Street organizations review their transformation strategy, goals and measures of success on a yearly basis and after the three-to-five year time period, your organization should begin discussing if the transformation strategy has been successfully implemented.

Guiding questions to reflect on your organization's current transformation strategy include:



- What have we learned from the community and downtown or district through the implementation of the transformation strategy?
- What have we accomplished under this strategy including:
  - What key projects and programming have been implemented under the transformation strategy?
  - What impact and changes have been made in the downtown or district because of the transformation strategy?
  - What new partners have been engaged because of the transformation strategy?
- Which of the organization's goals and measures of success have been met from successful transformation strategy implementation?
- How is the organization able to meet the National Main Street Standards for Accreditation because of successful implementation of the transformation strategy?

Once your organization has reviewed and evaluated the implementation of its current transformation strategy, you may decide the strategy has been successfully implemented and it is time for your organization to take on a new challenge by identifying and implementing a new transformation strategy for the downtown or district. The following sections will guide your organization through the process of identifying, developing, and implementing a new transformation strategy to guide the organization's work.

# STRATEGY IDENTIFICATION

This section is designed specifically to provide guidance on how to identify and select your program's Community Transformation Strategy.

Identifying a Community Transformation Strategy that best serves your downtown or district should be a multifaceted process involving feedback and support from the community at large, the businesses and the Main Street Program's board members and staff. A well-rounded strategy will be selected using a set of key inputs or data-driven information about the vision of the community and economic market realities of the district.

The set of key inputs include:

**Community Survey** – Michigan Main Street has created Community, Youth and/or Pulse Poll Survey Templates for each community with the goal of engaging the community to provide essential feedback about the state of your downtown or district. This survey should be distributed widely to business owners, community residents and youth, and community leaders. The Main Street Organization should collect and collate the information provided organizing feedback regarding the desired future direction of the downtown or district, along with identifying potential problems within the downtown or district. Survey data will also provide insight into how often, specific timing during the week and weekend, and for what purposes people visit your downtown or district.



Key information collected includes:

- Frequency and timing of visits to downtown or district
- Purpose of visits to downtown or district
- Desired new or expanded eating/drinking establishments and retail establishments
- Recent trends in downtown (improving/making progress, holding steady, or declining)
- Improvements to downtown
- Information about downtown or district housing
- Demographic data from respondents

**Market Data Snapshot** - Market data that summarizes local and regional demographic, lifestyle and retail data is critical information that provides a starting point for evaluating the market, identifying potential opportunities, and assessing downtown or district enhancement strategies; and for benchmarking and tracking changes in the market and possible implications for the downtown or district.



Key information contained in market data snapshots includes:

- **DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT** - Understanding your community's makeup is a critical component in developing a Transformation Strategy. Knowing the age, race and education of the people who make up your community will help the Main Street Program develop projects and programming to better serve the community. Average household income and the percentage of homeowners compared to renters can illustrate how much disposable income residents may have to spend downtown, as well as the demand that may exist for downtown residential development.
- **TAPESTRY SEGMENTATION REPORT** - Esri's Community Tapestry is a geodemographic segmentation system that integrates consumer traits with residential characteristics to identify markets and classify U.S. neighborhoods. Tapestry Segmentation combines the "who" of lifestyle demography with the "where" of local geography to create a classification with 67 distinct behavioral market segments.
- **RETAIL REPORT** - The Retail Surplus and Leakage Report is useful to understand what consumers buy in your community and what products they leave your community to purchase elsewhere. It can identify gaps in the market and illustrate areas in which the market may have a strong retail cluster or business niche.

Other helpful information to collect:

- **COMMUTER METRICS** - When they leave, the distance and destination to which your workforce drives every day can help businesses maximize the impact during their hours of operation. Many residents may commute regularly for work; only a small percentage of the population may be available to shop during the traditional 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. store hours. Understanding your city's commuter metrics can help Main Street staff lead informed discussions with downtown business owners regarding the advantages of staying open later.



**Place-Based Assets** – An analysis of your community’s assets is a positive and enjoyable approach to learning about your community. It enables you to think positively about the place in which you live, work, or play. It also challenges you to recognize how other people see and experience the same community. Once you have a list of the valued assets within your community, you can collectively strategize about how to build on the assets in order better understand your market as part of a sustainable and equitable downtown or district revitalization effort.

- **BUILDING INVENTORY ASSESSMENT** – Conduct an inventory of the properties within your downtown or district to determine the storefront and upper story vacancy rate as well as identify redevelopment opportunities on empty lots or buildings in need of rehabilitation. The building inventory can also help identify the assets your downtown or district has in the building stock. Connect with the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office for building survey information of historic or listed buildings.
- **BUSINESS INVENTORY ASSESSMENT** - Look at your current business mix to see if you have economic clusters or strengths (or unrealized opportunities). These numbers can help you determine strengths, weaknesses, and assets regarding your downtown or district’s current economic climate.
- **ASSET MAPPING** – This process allows the community to identify community assets in several different areas, both tangible and intangible: Natural, Social, Built, Economic and Service. The process of asset mapping will provide your organization with an inventory of all the good things about your community, a ranking of the most valued aspects of your community, and the reasons why people place high value on assets in your community.





## Incorporating Previous Transformation Strategy into Selection of New Transformation Strategy

Just because you are selecting a new Transformation Strategy does not mean that your organization will completely abandon your previous Transformation Strategy. Instead, your previous transformation strategy will continue to be a focus and guide your work.

Your downtown or district will have added assets and amenities that were a result of the successful implementation of your organization's previous Transformation Strategy. In addition, your organization likely has on-going projects and programming that will continue because of the success of your previous Transformation Strategy. These assets, amenities and projects or programs should continue to guide your organization and be a focus, even when selecting a new strategy.



Key questions to ask:

- What assets, amenities and projects or programs were developed and successful that we can build off from when selecting and implementing a new Transformation Strategy?
- How can we leverage the successes of our previous Transformation Strategy when selecting and implementing a new Transformation Strategy?

## SELECTING A STRATEGY

The strategies you select are not permanent. Think of them as three-to-five-year plans. After conducting research to gather information related to all the key inputs, screen the catalyst strategies and select a list of potential transformation strategies that follow key themes from the community feedback, help meet the needs of a key customer base or community demographic, and/or that are focused around one of your community's unique niches as determined by your downtown or district business mix and assets. If none of the catalyst strategies are a perfect fit for your community's unique needs you may choose to identify a customized strategy that is a combination of one or more catalyst strategies or that speaks to a particular need or challenge within your community.

Once you select a list of potential transformation strategies, your organization can assess the fit and feasibility of the strategies you are considering.



The “temperature scales” will help bring some focus to your discussions and sorting of potential strategies. Do your ratings help you to eliminate any of the strategies? Do any strategies rise to the top? Has your list of possible strategies grown longer? Are there strategies you believe you need further information to be able to assess? Note that even if some of your answers fall on the left side of the scale, that alone may not take it off the table. But it may mean that you will have to work harder to overcome significant barriers.

Your selected strategies should align with your best market opportunities, but they also need to align with your community's aspirations. Most of the strategies build on a local strength or opportunity, such as a cluster of businesses in a particular sector, an important local or visitor demographic, or a key business or institution. A successful strategy builds on an inherent strength or characteristic that can be nurtured and grown.

For most organizations, you should plan to choose one or two Transformation Strategies. The strategies you choose should be compatible with each other (so they can coexist in the same area at the same time). In some cases, they may be complementary (e.g., a daytime strategy paired with an evening strategy). In other cases, one strategy may be more of a short-term strategy with low-hanging fruit that can be easily accomplished versus a second strategy that may be more of a long-term strategy that the community can work to aspire to as it has aspects that are more challenging to implement. Choosing more than two strategies makes it harder to maintain a rigorous focus on a deliberate direction. If you select more than one Transformation Strategy, you should also take stock of whether you have the capacity (within your own organization and your partners) to advance the strategies effectively.

**\*\*Once you have selected a transformation strategy, share your chosen strategy with Michigan Main Street and several key points highlighting the board's decision-making process\*\***



# STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

This section is designed specifically to provide guidance on how to develop goals and measures of success so your community can customize your chosen Transformation Strategy to your unique community needs and the future vision for your downtown or district.

## Defining the Vision for the Desired Future State of the Downtown or District

One of the first steps in the Strategy Development process is defining the desired future state of your downtown or district through a visioning process. The future state is not intended to be a “wish-list,” but a defined and descriptive vision of where your downtown or district will be in three-to-five years.

Guiding questions to help define the Desired Future State include:



- What will successful implementation of the transformation strategy look like in downtown for the next 3-5 years?
- What do you need to see in downtown to achieve the transformation strategy (e.g. increase, decrease, create, sustain, etc.)?
- What will be different?
- What will be the same?



One technique that can help the board focus on a unified vision is a SOAR analysis. A SOAR analysis is a simple but useful framework for analyzing your organization’s Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results. Done correctly, it can help the board focus on its strengths, take the greatest possible advantage of opportunities available to you as an organization, identify aspirations for the downtown or district, and the results that will be accomplished after improvements and change have been made. To complete your own SOAR analysis, ask yourself these questions, keeping in mind that you should be both realistic and rigorous with your answers.



Once your organization answers the guiding questions and conducts a SOAR analysis you can develop your Desired Future State. Focus on tracking the common patterns and common themes as well as the comments repeated throughout the process. Take a vote on the ideas that best reflect your organization. Tally the votes and work as a group to identify the core issues identified throughout the process. This consensus will provide your organization with direction in crafting your Desired Future State. The Desired Future State should be a short statement (1-2 sentences) that sets a vision for your downtown or district and will be used as a touchstone for setting goals, and as a filter to guide decision-making.



## Defining Goals

Once your organization has developed your Desired Future State, you can then craft goals that are a reflection of existing assets, the community survey and economic market data, and the SOAR analysis. These goals are intended to:

- Be broad and continuous over a three-to-five-year timeframe
- Serve to guide decision-making
- Organize specific, annual activities focused on achieving the defined vision/transformation strategy
- Are cross-cutting; committees or work groups each contribute to and/or support the larger goals
- Stimulate thinking about partnering organizations

Your organization should aim to create two to three broad goals, that if accomplished will lead to the successful implementation of your selected Transformation Strategy. Guiding questions your organization can use to evaluate if the goals crafted are appropriate include:



- Will these goals move the organization toward its defined vision?
- Do they broadly define what you need to accomplish?
- Will they enhance a sense of place?
- Will they change the vibrancy and economic conditions within the community?



## Defining Measures of Success

Next is to determine what measures of success are expected. Measures of success serve to answer the question, “What happens if we accomplish the goal?” They assist in setting benchmarks that the organization will look for as it develops activities and deploys its project work plans. They are indicators of performance relative to the goals, help to track whether a particular project or program is working, encourage and allow for adjustment and help to quantify the results expected of a particular goal and associated projects and programs. Example measures of success are: increase in businesses related to the transformation strategy, # changes to products/services, positive shift in attitudes/perceptions, # of buildings rehabbed, % increase in foot traffic, average transaction amounts, increase in gross sales, changes to demographics frequenting district, etc.

Your organization should define at least 5, but less than 10 measures of success for each of your goals. Guiding questions to help your organization define measures of success include:



- If we achieve the goal, what will be different?
- What specifically do we want to accomplish?
- What are some indicators of performance or progress?
- What are some benchmarks, or incremental changes we might expect to see?
- What are some means to measure performance or progress?

### 2018 Boyne City Main Street - Outdoor Recreation Transformation Strategy Development Plan

*Desired Future State: “Downtown Boyne City is a well-known, welcoming, four-seasons community-on-the-water, with successful, full businesses, comprehensive signage, high-quality public facilities – accessible for everyone – that maximizes the experience of Boyne.”*

Overarching Goals	Measures of Success (Examples)	Projects/Activities
Improve public amenities to ensure availability and accessibility for all outdoor recreation users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in # of amenities</li> <li>Increase in users expressing satisfaction with public amenities</li> <li>Increase in private investment</li> <li>Increase in outdoor recreation users</li> <li>“landing” in downtown Boyne City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand and update marina</li> <li>• Replace and expand public restrooms in Old City Park</li> <li>• Update the community pavilion</li> <li>• Develop robust signage that directs people both into the MSA and to the surrounding areas</li> </ul>
Ensure availability of year-round businesses that are welcoming to outdoor recreation users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in # of new, year-round businesses</li> <li>Increase in # of downtown outdoor recreation activities</li> <li>Increase in outdoor recreation users</li> <li>“landing” in downtown Boyne City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market the downtown as a recreation hub/destination</li> <li>• Encourage business development targeted to diverse customer bases</li> <li>• Develop robust signage that directs people both into the MSA and to the surrounding areas</li> <li>• Support full occupancy of Dilworth building</li> </ul>
Align projects/activities with those of outlying outdoor recreation options to maximize the experience of Boyne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promotional messaging is consistent between businesses/organizations</li> <li>Increase in outdoor recreation users</li> <li>“landing” in downtown Boyne City</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop robust signage that directs people both into the MSA and to the surrounding areas</li> <li>• Market the downtown as a recreation hub/destination</li> </ul>

**\*\*Once you have a defined desired future state and defined goals and measures of success, share your Strategy Development Plan with Michigan Main Street to highlight the desired future state, goals and measures of success the board created. \*\***



# STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Following the selection of the transformation strategy(ies) and development of goals and measures of success, the board should then engage your committee members and volunteers to develop projects designed to move the organization closer to achieving the strategy(ies). Work plans should be created for each project, and committees/project teams should be formed to implement the board-approved projects. The board is then responsible for acquiring and allocating the necessary financial resources to ensure project success.

## Annual Project and Program Planning

The following is a framework that should be used to guide the organization's strategic planning session that should occur annually, in which current projects/programming are evaluated and potential projects are identified. This process should be completed through coordination and collaboration between the Main Street Board and the Committees/Project Teams.

1. Identify current projects and programming that are in process, or will continue from year to year.
2. Identify existing time and resources (human + financial) needed for current projects and programming.
3. Assess alignment of current projects and programming with Board-defined goals and measures of success and the Main Street Four Points
4. Identify gaps in current programming relative to the transformation strategy, goals and measures of success and the Main Street Four Points
5. Address gaps in programming through either enhancing current programming or through identifying new programming to strategically fill the gaps
6. Brainstorm potential projects and assess how each aligns with goals, measures of success and the Main Street Four Points.
7. Identify the time and resources (human + financial) necessary to complete potential projects.
8. Determine projects to move forward with (both current and potential) based on available resources.
9. Complete List of Annual Projects at the committee/project team level.
10. Board approves the list of projects based on alignment with Strategy (goals + measures of success) and the Main Street Four Points.

11. Committees/project teams begin to complete work plans.

12. Board approves work plans based on the available time and resources (human + financial) needed to complete all the projects.

13. Board develops annual budget based on approved projects and related project budgets.

14. Board submits the annual budget to the municipality for approval (if necessary).

## RULES OF THUMB

- Few projects done well is better than many half-done
- Only take on projects for which you have enough capacity
- Capacity Indicators:
  - Time
  - Project Champion
  - Additional Volunteers
  - Available Money
- Prioritize Projects Based on alignment with Strategy, Goals and Measures of Success

### Project/Programming Alignment Tool

Use this worksheet to assess how current projects and programs align with Board-defined goals and measures of success and the Main Street Four Points. The tool can also be used to identify gaps in programming relative to the goals, measures of success and Four Points. Last, once all projects and programs have been identified for the year, the Board should complete this worksheet with the full list of projects/programs as it provides a good snapshot of the organization's work for the year.

The following guiding questions can be used to facilitate the process:

#### Goals and Measures of Success Alignment:

Overarching Questions:

- What current projects are you undertaking that already align well with the Transformation Strategy?
- What projects are both underperforming and are off-strategy that can be placed in the parking lot?







## Identifying Potential Projects and Programs

Once your organization has aligned current projects/programs to your selected Transformation Strategy, goals and measures of success, and the Main Street Four Points, you may find there are gaps in which your current projects/programming are not helping to meet your identified goals and measures of success and/or the Four Points. At this point, your organization can then begin to brainstorm potential projects and programs that might help to better meet the goals and measures of success, and the Main Street Four Points.

Guiding questions that can be used as a framework for this brainstorm are:



### Overarching Questions:

- Are there new priority activities that should be added to help to further advance the Transformation Strategies, goals and measures of success?

### Specific Questions:

- Where are there gaps in programming relative to the goals and measures of success? What activities could fill those gaps?
- Where are the gaps in programming relative to the Four Points? What will need to occur in the downtown or district relative to the Four Points to implement the transformation strategy, goals and measures of success?
- Is there programming that can be added to address the community's priorities for downtown?
- Are there existing projects, initiatives and/or partnerships that could be enhanced or expanded?





Your community's Master Plan, Downtown Development Plan/TIF Plan and Economic Development Strategy can be a great place to gather ideas for projects and programming as these planning documents will clearly outline objectives for the downtown or district over a period of time. Your municipality may also have goals and priorities they outline on a yearly basis that can tie into your transformation strategy and lend ideas for projects and programming. The community input you have received as part of the survey and community engagement process can also lead to ideas for projects and programming. In addition, each of the Main Street Four Points has objectives that can be accomplished to achieve comprehensive downtown management. Your organization can use this list of objectives to help identify potential projects and programming under each of the Four Points.



## Project and Program Planning Tool

Use this worksheet to facilitate the project planning process. Once your organization has identified the current and potential projects the committees/project teams would like to accomplish, you should use this worksheet to identify the project description and purpose as well as the allocation of resources and suggested project timeline. Also, you can use the worksheet to identify how the potential project aligns with the Board-defined goals and measures of success and the Main Street Four Points.

Every project should have an associated project planning worksheet completed as it is a nice tool that briefly highlights the needed capacity and intended outcomes of the planned project or program as well as how it helps implement the organization’s Transformation Strategy. Once all of your project planning sheets are completed for every project, don’t forget to complete the Programming Alignment Tool above as it will highlight every project the organization is working on and the Board can use it to keep track of the organization’s projects throughout the year.

MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION	
<b>Desired Future State/Transformation Strategy Vision</b>	
PROJECT PLANNING	
Project Name	
Project Description (Purpose + Intended Outcome)	
Project Responsibility and Resources	Project Lead:
	Project Volunteers:
	Project Budget:
Timeline of Project	

MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT													
PROJECT/ PROGRAMMING	OVERARCHING GOALS												
	Goal 1				Goal 2					Goal 3			
	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success	Measure of Success

MAIN STREET FOUR POINT ALIGNMENT												
PROJECT/PROGRAMMING	FOUR POINTS											
	Economic Vitality			Design			Promotion			Organization		
	1. Support existing economic base	2. Promote strategic use of space + development	3. Assemble resources	1. Promote physical improvements	2. Preserve + enhance existing historic fabric	3. Encourage planning + best practices	1. Position district as center of activity	2. Market district assets	3. Enhance positive image	1. Promote the revitalization effort	2. Foster community engagement	3. Encourage investment in revitalization



## Project and Program Work Plans

Once the Board has approved the list of current projects/programs, committees/project teams can begin the process of developing complete and robust project work plans. You can use the template below to facilitate the process.

MAIN STREET WORK PLAN								
PROJECT:								
BRIEF DESCRIPTION:								
OBJECTIVE:								
MEASURE OF SUCCESS:								
MAIN STREET POINT:				MAIN STREET POINT OVERLAP:				
TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY GOAL:				TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY GOAL OVERLAP:				
COMMITTEE/TEAM CHAIR:								
PROJECTED EXPENSES	\$	-		ACTUAL EXPENSE	\$	-		
PROJECTED REVENUE	\$	-		ACTUAL REVENUE	\$	-		
TASK	LEAD	DUE DATE	DATE COMPLETED	PROJECTED COST/REVENUE	ACTUAL COST/REVENUE	POTENTIAL PARTNERS	NOTES	STATUS

Complete work plans should have the following components:

- Project Definition
- Project Goals/Objectives
- Task list
- Timeline
- Champion and Responsibility
- Budget
- Measure of success

Once a work plan has been created, there are several ways a committee/project team should use the work plan:

- Committee/Project Team meeting agendas are based on the project work plan
- Committee/team members report progress on tasks they are assigned to at committee/project team meetings
- Coordinate tasks needing to be accomplished by the next meeting
- Committee/Team Chairs use the work plan to report to the Board on committee/project team activities
- Immediately after each project is complete, review the work plan and make changes/adjustments for next year

## Project and Program Tracking

The Board should use the Programming Alignment Tool above to visualize a high-level overview and keep track of the organization’s projects and programming throughout the year. The Board and Committees/Project Teams can use the following tool to track the progress of projects throughout the year. The committees should report to the Board on the progress they are making in accomplishing the tasks associated with each of their projects and programs monthly.

MAIN STREET TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY PROJECT TRACKER									
Transformation Strategy:									
Project/Program	Timeline	Priority (High, Medium, Low)	Capacity required (High, Medium, Low)	Status/Progress					Measure of Success Achieved
				To Do/ Not Started	Doing	Almost Done	Stalled or Delayed	Done	

## Monitoring and Evaluating Transformation Strategy Implementation

Your Main Street Organization requires widespread community support for the commercial district revitalization process from both public and private sectors. Generating this level of support from the beginning requires a leap of faith on the part of your community. Once your program is up and running, it is imperative that you continue to generate good will and support from your constituents. Collecting and reporting monthly and annual reinvestment statistics as well as establishing your measures of success and robust methods of collecting and documenting relevant data is critical to your ability to report key statistics and accomplishments back to the community.



Data collection is integral to demonstrating the value of your Main Street Organization and the success of your transformation strategy(ies). Your ultimate goal is to show the economic impact of the Main Street Organization and its projects and programming. Not only should your organization collect reinvestment statistics monthly and annually, but also every project and activity of your Main Street Organization should include a data collection component. Develop your processes for collecting data and embed them into your work plans and your expectations of volunteers and paid staff.

Consider how the data will be used. At a minimum, the board should review monthly and annual reinvestment data. Committees/project teams and the board should also review project data and reflect on its meaning. Compare the results with benchmarks or desired outcomes and measures of success and inquire about any patterns or trends. Be curious. Some data will tell you what kind of progress you've made, while others will alert you when you need to make a change.

Michigan Main Street has developed a Data Resource Guide that should be used when collecting all monthly and annual reinvestment statistics. When collecting data specific to projects/programs, the data you choose to collect is up to you. However, ensure the data you are collecting corresponds to the Board-defined goals and measures of success.

Once you have collected and analyzed the data, you can use your findings to:

- Evaluate programming
- Influence fundraising activities
- Communicate the value of your Main Street Organization to build relationships with key stakeholders
- Demonstrate economic impact

Use this framework for identifying and collecting data specific to the evaluation of your organization's projects and programming relative to the Board-identified Measures of Success.

- Define the goal(s) of the project
- Determine if your organization already collects relevant data monthly or annually through the reinvestment statistics
- Determine the additional data you need to collect
  - What do we need to know?
  - What will success look like?
- Agree on documentation methods
  - Must be observable, measurable and accessible
- Assign data collection
  - Who will collect the data?
    - > Provide tools and training
- Share and reflect on the data
- Use data to evaluate programming relative to the transformation strategy(ies) and strategic goals
- Celebrate the successes of your organization and impact you are having in your downtown or district through communicating the results with your key stakeholders

# CREDITS



The Main Street Approach: A Guide to Comprehensive Commercial District Transformation

(<https://www.mainstreet.org/viewdocument/the-main-street-approach-a-compreh-1>)

Community Engagement for Main Street Transformation

(<https://www.mainstreet.org/viewdocument/community-engagement-for-main-stree-1>)

Market Analysis for Community Transformation

(<https://www.mainstreet.org/viewdocument/market-analysis-for-community-tranf>)

Downtown and Commercial District Asset Mapping – A Tool for Market Understanding

Georgia Main Street Community Transformation Workbook

([https://www.georgiamainstreet.org/resources/cts\\_workbook/](https://www.georgiamainstreet.org/resources/cts_workbook/))

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