

WASHINGTON STATE Main Street NEWS

Special Bulletin

Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development

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Washington State
Main Street Program
(WSMSP)

The Main Street Approach™

Many of Washington's communities, like thousands of communities across the country, are using the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Approach™ to comprehensively address the complex issues facing their older traditional commercial districts. This approach provides a flexible framework that puts assets, such as unique architecture and locally-owned businesses, to work as a catalyst for economic growth and community pride.

Organization builds consensus and cooperation between the many individuals and groups who have a role in the revitalization process.

Promotion creates excitement. It reinforces and markets a positive image to local citizens, customers, potential investors, new businesses, and visitors based on the special attributes of a district.

Design enhances the unique visual qualities of a district while preserving its historic features.

Economic Restructuring strengthens the district's existing economic assets while finding ways to further develop its market potential.

Main Street™ relies on eight guiding principles:

1. **Comprehensive.** A single project cannot revitalize a downtown or neighborhood commercial district. An ongoing series of

initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.

2. **Incremental.** Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate "things are happening" in the district and hone the skills and confidence a program needs to tackle more complex projects.

3. **Self-Help.** The State can provide valuable direction and technical assistance, but only local leadership can breed long-term success by fostering community involvement and commitment in the effort.

4. **Public/Private Partnership.** Every local revitalization program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.

5. **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Unique offerings and local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful revitalization initiative.

6. **Quality.** From storefront design to promotional campaigns and special events, quality must be instilled in the program.

7. **Change.** Changing community attitudes and habits is essential for a commercial district renaissance. A carefully planned program helps shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain a revitalization effort.

8. **Action Oriented.** Frequent visible changes in the look and feel of the district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small, but dramatic, improvements early on will remind the community that revitalization is underway.

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The WSMSP and the "Tier System" Network

The Washington State Main Street Program (WSMSP) helps communities throughout the state revitalize the economy, appearance, and image of their traditional business districts using a range of services and assistance to meet the needs of communities interested in revitalization.

From the basics of Main Street™ to advanced downtown development topics, regular training opportunities are provided. This includes the annual statewide Downtown Revitalization Training Institute, a multi-day comprehensive training program with a 20-year history.

The WSMSP also serves as a resource center with information and examples compiled from communities throughout the state and the nation. Staff respond to hundreds of questions yearly on subjects ranging from promotions to parking lots to the new Main Street tax credit incentive program.

Staff also help communities launch revitalization efforts and tackle more complicated issues and projects. Services are provided through a tiered system and increase as a community's commitment and ability to move forward with a comprehensive downtown revitalization strategy increases.

The **AFFILIATE LEVEL** is ideal for communities just beginning to explore downtown revitalization, those that do not want full Main Street™ designation, or wish to use the Main Street Approach™ in a non-traditional commercial setting. Affiliate communities have access to the Downtown Revitalization Resource Library and information exchange, telephone consultations, limited technical assistance, awards program, and a discount

to various training events. Communities of all sizes are eligible to participate as an Affiliate and may join at any time by completing a brief application.

The **START-UP LEVEL** is for communities exploring the possibility of future Main Street designation. Services at this level help communities build an appropriate organization and funding base to start a comprehensive program, as well as help prepare them for the Main Street application process. Participation does not guarantee selection as a designated Main Street community, but it can help strengthen local revitalization efforts. Services are provided for a two-year period. Application rounds are held as resources permit.

The **MAIN STREET DESIGNATION LEVEL** is for communities that have a population of less than 100,000, or for neighborhood commercial districts, with a high degree of commitment and readiness towards using the Main Street Approach in a traditional downtown setting. A full-range of assistance is provided to communities at this level, from intensive services to meet the needs of newly designated communities to services that help mature programs maintain focus and effectiveness. Designated Main Street™ programs work to develop the critical tools needed to undertake comprehensive downtown revitalization. Application rounds are held as resources permit.

The WSMSP is a partner, but true revitalization success is built squarely on local commitment, initiative, and follow-through.

For additional information, contact Susan Kempf at 360-725-4056.

For more information, please check out the state Main Street Program's website at www.downtown.wa.gov or the National Trust Main Street Center website at www.mainstreet.org.

Downtown Revitalization is Economic Development

"Economic Development is a process of innovation that increases the capacity of individuals and organizations to produce goods and services and thereby create wealth. This, in turn, can lead to jobs, income, and a tax base for communities, states, and regions."

From the Higher Education - Economic Development Connection published by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities in agreement with the Economic Development Administration.

How does downtown revitalization fit this definition?

- Downtown revitalization creates jobs and puts people to work.
- Downtown revitalization attracts new businesses and encourages entrepreneurship.
- New and expanding downtown businesses generate increased sales tax.
- Downtown development offers local investment opportunities.
- Many downtown businesses attract tourists and a restored historic downtown acts as a tourist destination.
- Downtown festivals and special events attract outside people and outside dollars.
- The downtown can act as a regional shopping district, pulling in shoppers from a radius beyond the city limits.
- A healthy downtown attracts industrial businesses.
- Many downtown businesses (manufacturing and service) attract export dollars to the community.
- Downtowns are typically dominated by local businesses. Profits generated by these businesses typically circulate

within the local economy. Profits from chain stores are often transferred to corporate headquarters.

- New downtown businesses may "plug" the leakage of dollars spent at retail businesses outside of the community.
- New housing can be generated downtown thereby helping to keep the labor force in town.

Why is downtown's role in the economic development process important?

- Shift from a labor intensive economy to a technology intensive economy.
- Shift from a goods producing economy to a service producing economy.
- Shift from national to global economy.
- Small businesses are playing a greater role in our economy.
- Emphasis on compact development is growing.
- Downtown is once again seen as a mixed-use development opportunity.

Main Street™ Stats:
In 2008 alone, the ten certified Main Street™ communities in our state reporting statistics saw increases in downtown reinvestment by the private sector including: 163 acquisitions, expansions, and new businesses; 432 new jobs; 75 buildings rehabilitated; and \$8,060,993 in building rehabilitation and new construction.

Main Street™ Cities

New Jobs, Businesses, & Rehabilitation Investment by Downtown Areas

City	Reporting Begins	Period Ends	Acquisitions, Expansions, & New Businesses	New Jobs	Building Rehabs	Rehab Investment	Business Failures & Reloc. Out	Jobs Lost	Net Jobs
Bainbridge Isl.	10/1/98	12/31/08	230	685	121	18,121,033	94	325	360
Chelan	7/1/08	12/31/08	7	18	8	623,500	10	19	(1)
Ellensburg	1/1/07	12/31/08	35	110	17	348,175	17	64	46
Kennewick	4/1/03	12/31/08	58	189	39	9,558,242	31	238	(49)
Olympia	7/1/08	12/31/08	15	36	6	108,250	25	55	(19)
Port Angeles	8/1/91	12/31/08	442	1118	254	19,364,994	217	560	558
Port Townsend	8/1/91	12/31/08	234	524	163	26,245,073	110	235	289
Puyallup	3/1/92	12/31/08	283	808	137	39,161,458	106	315	493
Walla Walla	3/1/92	12/31/08	431	1551	506	81,802,057	145	720	831
Wenatchee	5/1/92	12/31/08	421	1341	260	22,911,157	167	553	788
+ Inactive Towns (9)			1378	5010	894	170,607,617	526	1549	3461
TOTALS			3,534	11,390	2,405	388,851,556	1,448	4,633	6,757

Tier System Network

Main Street™ Designation Level: Bainbridge Island Downtown Assn., Historic Downtown Chelan Assn. (new), Ellensburg Downtown Assn., Historic Downtown Kennewick Partnership, Mount Vernon Downtown Assn. (new), Olympia Downtown Assn. (new), Port Angeles Downtown Assn., Port Townsend Main Street Program, Puyallup Main Street Assn., Downtown Walla Walla Foundation, Wenatchee Downtown Assn.

Start-Up Level: Colfax Downtown Assn., Coupeville Historic Waterfront Assn., Gig Harbor Historic Waterfront Assn., Prosser Downtown Assn. **Affiliate Level:** City of Airway Heights, Anacortes Chamber of Commerce, Auburn Downtown Assn., Bellingham's Downtown Renaissance Network, Benton City EDC, City of Blaine, City of Bothell, Downtown Bremerton Assn., City of Burien, Downtown Camas Vision Coalition, Town of Cathlamet, City of Centralia, Centralia Downtown Assn., City of Chehalis, Cheney Pathways to Progress, Clallam Bay/Seki Chamber of Commerce, Cle Elum Downtown Assn., Connell Downtown Development Assn., City of Des Moines, City of Duvall, East Lewis County Chamber of Commerce, Town of Eatonville, Downtown Edmonds Merchants Assn., Ferndale Chamber of Commerce, Ferndale Downtown Development Assn., City of Forks, City of Hoquiam, City of Ilwaco, Inter*Im Community Development Assn. (Seattle), Council for Historic Downtown Issaquah, City of Kelso, Kelso Downtown Revitalization Assn., Kelso Longview Chamber of Commerce, Kent Downtown Partnership, City of Kettle Falls, Downtown Kingston Assn., Kirkland Downtown Assn., City of Lake Stevens, Langley Merchants Assn., City of Longview, Longview Downtowners, City of Monroe, City of Morton, Moses Lake Business Assn., Harborside Merchants Assn. (Oak Harbor), City of Omak, City of Othello, Palouse EDC, City of Port Orchard, Historic District of Poulsbo Assn., City of Renton, City of Richland, Ritzville Downtown Development Assn., Roslyn Revitalization, San Juan Island Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Seattle Assn., Sedro-Woolley Downtown Revitalization Committee, Historic Downtown Snohomish, City of Snoqualmie, City of Soap Lake, City of Spokane, City of Stanwood, City of Sultan, Sumner Downtown Assn., City of Tacoma, Tacoma Neighborhood Districts: Business Assn. of Midland, Dome District Development Group, Old Town, Sixth Ave. Merchants Assn., and Upper Tacoma, Vancouver's Downtown Assn., White Center CDA, Wilbur Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Woodland Revitalization, Committee for Downtown Yakima.