

Main Street Design 101
Baltimore Main Streets

National Trust Main Street Center

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Design: Integral to the Main Street Approach.

Image in Commercial District Revitalization


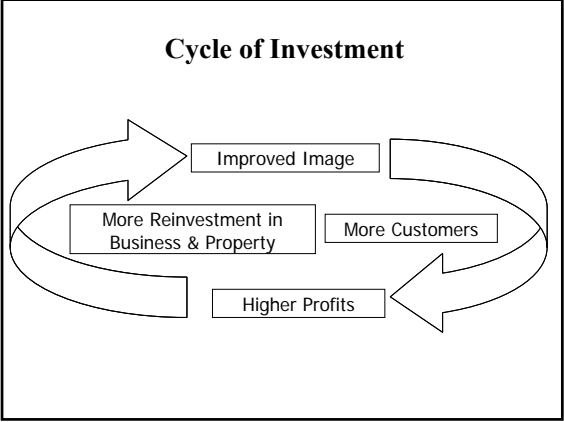


Image denotes value!



Main Street Design Goals

- Increase appreciation of downtown design qualities.
- Increase investment in downtown buildings and infrastructure
- Manage physical design effectively



Eight Main Street Principles Applied to Design

- Address all aspects of design including overlap with the other points in the Main Street Approach.
- Small improvements will lead to bigger improvements
- Design success will require local business and property owner stepping up.
- Design Committee volunteers should build effective partnerships.



Chicago, Illinois

Eight Main Street Principles Applied to Design continued



Libertyville, Illinois

- Base design improvements on the inherent quality of existing neighborhood design context.
- New design and construction should attempt to match the quality of the original.
- Design success will require appreciation for the historic resources.
- Plans must get off the drawing board.

Design Committee Roles


- Design Education
- Design Assistance
- Design Management; Planning & Review
- Public infrastructure and streetscaping.

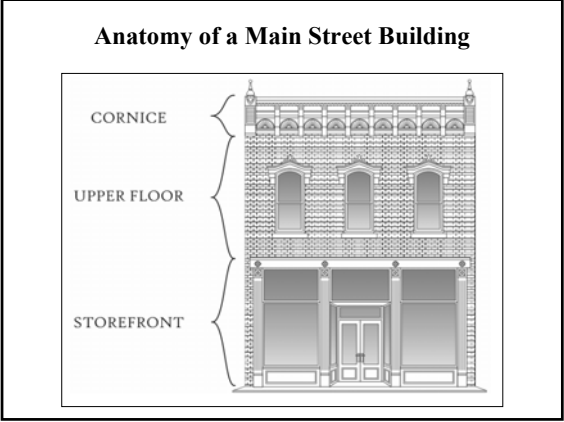


Calumet, Michigan

Main Street Design Principles *Again*

- Base design improvements on the inherent quality of existing neighborhood design context.
 - Achieving design authenticity
 - Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation






Design Committee Roles



- Design Assistance
- Design Education
- Design Management; Planning & Review
- Public Infrastructure and Streetscaping.
 - Parking management
 - Environmental features



Design Assistance




- Recommendation-based assistance to property & business owners
 - Building, storefront, signage renovation renderings.
 - Scrapbook of great design ideas
 - Individual visits with store owners
- Who provides it?
 - Main Street program staff and Design Committee
 - Outside professionals
 - Main Street coordinating program.

Resource-Based Design Assistance


- Rehab resources library
- Contractor referral list
- Paint and awning sample kits
- Workshops

Preservation Briefs



- National Park Service
 - Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation
 - Preservation Briefs (44)
 - Technical Reports



Starting in Design Assistance

- Asset/Building Inventory
 - Evaluate current condition of privately owned property
 - Work with ER Committee
- Photograph
 - Historic landmarks
 - Open spaces, streetscape
 - Building material
 - Architectural styles
 - Intact qualities



Starting in Design Assistance II



- Determine level of intervention needed
 - Maintenance
 - Rehabilitation/adaptive use
 - Restoration
 - Infill construction
- Identify key early projects
- Develop incentives to encourage quality work

Financial Incentives

- Façade grant programs
- Sign and awning Programs
- Low-interest loan programs
- Federal and State historic preservation tax credits
- Easements



Tax Credits

- Federal 20% Historic Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit
- Administered by National Park Service in partnership w/IRS and SHPO's
- Lowers amount of income taxed owed
- One dollar of tax credit = one dollar less owed. Example
 - Rehabilitation investment = \$45,000
 - Tax credit of 20% = .20 x \$45,000 = \$9,000





Tax Credits

- Must invest \$5000 or adjusted basis (whichever is greater)
 - Adjusted basis = purchase price - land +improvements - depreciation
- Rehabilitation investment = construction, design, surveys, legal fees.
 - Does NOT include furnishings, landscaping, additions, parking, etc.
- Tax Credits begin when building is placed in service
- Owner must keep building for 5 years and not perform any changes during that time



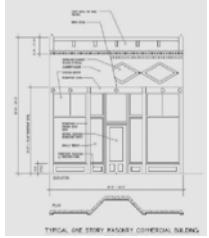
Maryland Tax Credit

- The credit is available for both owner-occupied residential property and income-producing property.
- The rehabilitation expenditure in a 24-month period must exceed \$5,000 for owner-occupied residential property, and the greater of the adjusted basis of the structure or \$5,000 for all other property.
- The rehabilitation must conform to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*
- If the credit exceeds the taxpayer's tax liability, a refund may be claimed in the amount of the excess.



Design Education

- Foster appreciation of good design and historic preservation.
 - Develop design guidelines
 - Organize educational resources.
 - Offer workshops
 - Start a reference library on rehab issues
 - Write a newspaper column: "Then and Now"





Public Improvements


- Public Improvement planning
 - Gateways and entrances
 - Sign maintenance
 - Utilities
 - Streetscaping, landscaping and pedestrian amenities
 - Infrastructure
 - Special features
- Work cooperatively with municipality





Planning and Regulatory Tools

- Sign Ordinance
 - Review existing - recommend changes
 - Allow for preservation of historic signs
- Zoning Ordinance
 - Allow for density and mixed use
 - Review and revise basic building from standards
 - Consider overlay options.
- Historic Preservation Ordinance
 - Baltimore Commission for Historical and Architectural Preservation.
 - Identify, designate and protect.
 - Issues certificates of appropriateness




Planning and Regulatory Tools

- Minimum Maintenance Ordinance
 - Ensure basic maintenance and protect for fire and safety
- Building Code
 - Maryland Building and Rehabilitation Code
 - Relationships with local building inspectors
 - Demystify building codes for local building owners.
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA)
 - Since 1992, businesses are required to make improvements whenever "readily achievable"

Master Planning

- Neighborhood Commercial District Master Plan
 - Opportunity sites
 - Historic preservation policies
 - Infill design
 - Streetscaping and infrastructure
 - Parking management



Design Committee

- Membership- recruit 5 to 7 volunteers:
 - Architects
 - Developers
 - Landscape Architects
 - Interior designers
 - Planners
 - Graphic Artists
 - Contractors
 - Preservationists
 - Merchants and property owners
 - Residents



Volunteer Responsibilities

- Commit to at least one year of service
- Work 3 to 5 hours a month
- Attend all training sessions
- Read selected orientation materials
- Learn the Main Street Approach
- Recruit/orient new members
- Prepare in advance of meetings
- Cooperatively draft an annual action plan
- Take responsibility for projects
- Always represent the organization positively to the public



Managing Design Committee Workload

- Should meet monthly, same date and time
- Set aside time at start of each meeting for staff updates on work of other committees
- Regularly schedule mini-training sessions (15 min.) on upcoming issues
- Use subcommittees for specific projects
- Begin to recruit additional volunteers immediately



Roles of Staff in Design Committee

- Provides advice to Committee on design-related issues.
- Assists members in developing Work Plan.
- Coordinates information on design assistance and incentives available.
- Point of contact for the public on commercial district preservation issues.
- Helps chair recruit, train, and reward volunteers.
- Assures that projects are completed.



Managing the Public's Expectations

- Design changes happen slowly
 - Convincing owners to spend money is hard work
- Make a big deal and any rehab activity
 - Small changes can be a big deal
- Reassure people that you are on the right track
 - Celebrate and publicize any design improvement



Words of Wisdom

- Think incrementally
- Preserve your history – *no one else will*
- Ask everyone’s opinion
 - Gaining consensus means fewer bad decisions