



**NC SMALL TOWN  
MAIN STREET**  
*Designated Community*

Name of City/Town \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**2024-2025 Annual Agreement  
North Carolina Small Town Main Street® Designation**

**Designated Small Town Main Street communities (Small Town Main Street Coordinator and Town Manager, Clerk or Mayor depending on who is managing the program) must sign this document and return to the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center no later than June 28, 2024, to remain active in the program.**

A signed document confirms that the local Small Town Main Street program has a thorough understanding of the benefits and requirements of active participation in the NC Main Street program. **The Small-Town Main Street Coordinator should share a copy of the signed document with the Small Town Main Street Committee or Board.**

**Program Background**

**Nationally:**

**Main Street America™** has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years. Today it is a network of more than 1,200 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Main Street America is a mark of distinction. It is a seal, recognizing that participating programs, organizations, and communities are part of a national movement with a proven track record for celebrating community character, preserving local history, and generating impressive economic returns. Since 1980, over 2,000 communities have been part of Main Street, bringing renewed energy and activity to America's downtowns and commercial districts, securing more than \$101.6 billion in new investment, creating 168,693 net new businesses and 746,897 net new jobs, and rehabilitating 326,119 buildings.

Main Street America is a time-tested strategy. Main Street America communities are encouraged to make use of a time-tested approach, known as the Main Street Approach. The Main Street Approach is rooted in a commitment to broad-based community engagement, a holistic understanding of the factors that impact the quality of life in a community, and strategic focus on the core principles of downtown and neighborhood revitalization: Economic Vitality, Quality Design, Effective Promotion, and Sustainable Organization. For more information, visit [www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org).

## **In North Carolina:**

The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center within the N.C. Department of Commerce is the licensed agency that is charged with administering the Main Street program throughout the state. The Center is committed to following the program guidelines and licensing agreement as outlined by the National Main Street Center and signed by the N.C. Department of Commerce.

The N.C. Department of Commerce designates communities as a “North Carolina Small Town Main Street community”. When designated, the local city or town government, and specifically the chief elected official, is notified of the designation. The city or town government determines who will administer the Small-Town Main Street program at the local level and the town manager communicates that information to the N.C. Main Street & Rural Planning Center. **From time-to-time, that administration may change. If there is a change, this document outlines the steps that must be followed for a change in local administration to occur.**

## **Benefits for NC Small Town Main Street Communities**

**North Carolina Small Town Main Street communities’ benefit from the following:**

### **Partnership:**

- Communities selected to participate in the Small-Town Main Street program become partners with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center in a long-term, asset-based economic development effort that has proven to have a positive impact on investment and job creation.
- Small Town Main Street communities are limited in number and therefore receive focused and personal attention from NC Main Street staff.
- North Carolina communities are selected through a competitive process and only a few are designated; therefore, Small Town Main Street designation is an honor bestowed upon only a few special communities.
- In the first several years of a local Small Town Main Street program, the state of North Carolina invests approximately \$100,000 in on-site visits, training, and technical assistance. After the initial start-up phase, the state annually invests approximately \$5,000 in each Small-Town Main Street community in the form of ongoing town-specific technical assistance, and statewide and on-site training for directors and volunteers.

### **Training:**

- Small Town Main Street communities are eligible to attend and participate in the NC Main Street Conference, NC Main Street Basic Training, Board and Committee Training, Biannual Regional Meetings, and subject specific workshops.
- Designated North Carolina Small Town Main Street communities receive one free registration to the North Carolina Main Street Conference held in March.

**Technical Assistance:**

- The North Carolina Main Street program staff guides designated communities through a strategic planning process which helps communities create a vision, develop economic development strategies that will transform downtown, and produce action plans so that limited resources are focused, and results are magnified.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff guide participating communities through board development, volunteer development and downtown manager training.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff provide guidance and support to communities on ways to find and develop financial resources.
- Property and business owners in Small Town Main Street communities receive **upon request free building exterior design recommendations** from design specialists at the UNC-Greensboro Department of Interior Architecture, in collaboration with the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center staff.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff can provide upon request **retail market analysis** for Main Street & Small-Town Main Street programs.
- North Carolina Main Street staff has extensive experience in organizational development and nonprofit management, historic preservation, building rehabilitation, investment tax credits, incentive programs, tourism development, marketing, image building, special event development, communications, and a range of other pertinent areas.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff is among the nation's leading authorities on downtown development with experience helping North Carolina towns with revitalization challenges.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff conducts an annual program assessment and review of each Small-Town Main Street program.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff conducts an annual budget and salary analysis of Small-Town Main Street programs.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff conducts an annual statistical data collection and analysis.

**Network:**

- North Carolina Small Town Main Street communities may use the Main Street trademarks on materials designed to promote the work of their program in collaboration with the state of North Carolina and the National Main Street Center.
- The North Carolina Main Street network possesses some of the most experienced downtown development professionals in the country.
- Small Town Main Street communities may take advantage of and participate in a special network of Main Street cities statewide and nationally, with over 1,200 communities across the nation, and 45 city, state, and regional Coordinating Programs, that participate in the Main Street program. This allows them to learn best practices, techniques, and strategies for downtown development.

**Funding:**

- When available, Main Street communities are eligible to apply for downtown revitalization funding programs to assist small business development and property rehabilitation, as well as funding to support public building and infrastructure improvements.
- The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center maintains and distributes a funding guide of federal, state, corporate and foundation sources commonly used for funding downtown projects.

**Resources:**

- Through the North Carolina Main Street program, communities can identify resource people, consultants, and specialists on topics of interest to the community.

**Economic Impact:**

- Since 1980, over 117 communities have directly benefitted from the North Carolina Main Street program, bringing economic strength to North Carolina's downtown commercial districts, securing over \$5 billion in new investment creating more than 35,143 net new jobs and rehabilitating 7,833 buildings.
- The North Carolina Main Street staff facilitate statewide economic impact studies and collect data to determine trends in Main Street and Small-Town Main Street communities.

**Recognition:**

- Designated North Carolina Small Town Main Street communities are eligible to receive statewide recognition through the North Carolina Small Town Main Street Awards program.
- North Carolina Small Town Main Street communities receive publicity about their programs through press releases distributed through the N.C. Department of Commerce, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center updates and annual reports, Main Street presentations and the NC Main Street Center social media sites.

\*Note – in the event of a natural disaster or pandemic event, programs and services may be changed, conducted virtually or cancelled in accordance to recommended guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and NC State Emergency Management.

**Requirements of Designated N.C Small Town Main Street Communities**

Small Town Main Street communities are 5,000 and under in population at the time of designation.

- 1. Participate in all services provided to the local community by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center.**
- 2. Staffing Requirements: Designate a paid OR volunteer Small Town Main Street Coordinator (5 hours/week minimum) who will coordinate and facilitate the work of the program.** If your town decides to move up to NC Main Street designation you must hire a director and meet the following criteria: Employ a full-time - 40 hours/week paid professional Main Street Director, who is dedicated to downtown and will coordinate and facilitate the work of the program. Communities with a population of 5,001-9,999 **MAY** employ two or more persons that equal one or more full-time equivalent position(s). One of the positions must be designated as the director. Communities with a population of 5,000 or less **MAY** employ a part-time - 20+ hours/week position paid professional Main Street Director.
  - The Main Street Director should be paid a salary consistent with those of other community development professionals within the city, state, or region in which the program operates.
  - The Director should be adequately trained — and should continue learning about revitalization techniques and about issues affecting traditional commercial districts.
  - The Director should have a written job description that correlates with the roles and responsibilities of a Main Street Director.
  - There should be a formal system in place for evaluating the performance of the Director on an annual basis.

- Adequate staff management policies and procedures should be in place.
3. Obtain a 501(c) 3, 4, or 6 nonprofit designation **OR** be designated as a department of the local municipal government. The Small Town Main Street program should be an advisory board of the City OR a non-profit that the city has appointed to manage the administration of the Small Town Main Street program.
  4. Establish **broad-based community commitment** to revitalization for the commercial district with strong support from both the public and private sectors. This includes:
    - **Partnerships and Collaborations** with local governments as well as with both nonprofit organizations and private sector entities that demonstrate shared responsibilities for the district’s revitalization and its program. Examples:
      - Participation in strategy development and planning.
      - Collaboration in the implementation of programming or work plans.
      - Monetary and non-monetary resources for the Main Street program.
      - Engagement of elected officials and/or staff in the Main Street program Board and committees.
      - Promoting the district revitalization and their partnership with Main Street.
      - **\*\*It is required by Main Street America™ and the expectation of the NC Main Street program that the city contribute monetarily to the Main Street program. Contributions should be enough to cover at minimum the director’s salary and benefits or in the case of the Small Town Main Street program, programming and projects that will have an economic impact on the downtown district.**
      - **Community Outreach** to connect and engage with ALL sectors of the community such as businesses, property owners, workforce, other organizations, and residents. Examples include:
        - The program’s external marketing, online, printed, social media, etc. clearly promotes the role and impact of the Main Street program.
        - Main Street’s leadership and staff are actively engaged in public relations activities that educate, build awareness, and promote the Main Street program.
        - Main Street highlights positive stories about the district through a variety of media tools.
      - Main Street has **maintained communication and implemented public relations** that inform and educate the public sector or local government about the district and the Main Street program.
      - Main Street has **promoted the district’s positive image, brand identity, and assets**. Examples of this include:
        - A distinctive brand has been created and implemented for **the district**.
        - A distinctive brand has been created and implemented for **the organization**.
        - Social media platforms are used to promote the value of the district and the Main Street program.
        - An annual report is produced noting success across the Four Points.
  5. **Inclusive Leadership and Organizational Capacity**. Main Street’s greatest resource are PEOPLE and a belief that everyone in the community has a place in Main Street. Main Street places a strong priority on human capital and developing a clear operational structure and practices that increase the organization’s capacity to engage **ALL sectors of the community** and leverage their participation in their revitalization efforts. This includes:
    - Having an **inclusive organizational structure and diverse volunteer engagement** demonstrating commitment to diverse, inclusive, and equitable district and community engagement. Examples of this include:
      - The organization’s **stated mission and core values show a commitment to engaging ALL sectors** of the community it serves.

- Internal and external messaging promotes that **Main Street has a place for everyone in the community and that diverse engagement is welcomed and valued**. Communication tools address language barriers as appropriate.
  - Work plans and programming activities **address accessibility and inclusive design** for all community members.
  - The organization’s policies address **equitable access** for all district and community stakeholders in the organization’s leadership structure (Board and committees) as well as in specific projects and activities.
- The Main Street organization has **implemented an inclusive volunteer program that demonstrates the capacity to implement approved annual work plans and programming for the district**. Examples:
  - Clearly outlined volunteer needs for approved work plans or programming activities are in place and promoted broadly.
  - A proactive effort to recruit diverse volunteers representing the entire community in a culturally competent way.
  - Active volunteer coordination throughout the year that ensures attention to thoughtful placement, rotation, and retention of new and existing volunteers.
  - Volunteers at all levels have access to and receive appropriate orientation, trainings, and leadership development throughout the year.
- **The Main Street Board of Directors is formed with a diverse and balanced representation** of district and community stakeholders. The following are recommended: district business and property owners, district and community residents, community businesses/corporations and institutions such as schools, universities, foundations, nonprofit organizations, and government.
- **The Main Street organization has developed a leadership base (board, staff, committee members, and volunteers) that reflects the district and community**, considering a broad range of dimensions of diversity, including race, ethnicity, gender, education, physical and mental ability, veteran status, and income level. The program should take proactive measures to ensure under-represented groups are included as part of Main Street’s leadership base.
- **Active board leadership and supporting volunteer base**. Board members have demonstrated active engagement in the Main Street program throughout the year. Ideally, **100 percent but no less than 75 percent of Board members have attended board meetings 75 percent of the time throughout the year, New Board members have participated in board orientation and existing Board members participated in at least one training offered by the Coordinating program**. Board members have played an active role on the board by leading a committee, a task force or key initiative. Board members have advocated for the program and the district within the community, in coordination with Main Street staff and the rest of the board.
- **Professional staff management**. The Main Street organization has maintained the level of professional staff necessary to achieve its mission, goals, and annual work. This includes meeting the minimum staffing requirements as noted above in #2. For the STMS the expectation is to have someone with the city/town who will manage the program OR a volunteer coordinator who manages the program. It is NOT a requirement to have paid staff at the STMS designation level. ONLY if you elect to move up to Main Street designation status.

- **Effective Operational Structure.** The Main Street organization has developed appropriate operational and organizational practices to manager effectively and must include:
    - **Clearly defined mission statement** that confirms the purpose of the organization.
    - **Established by-laws**, which are reviewed annually and revised appropriately to carry out the program’s mission for the district.
    - **Operating policies and procedures** that outline internal and external communication practices, conflicts of interest, personnel management, leadership selections, elections and terms, Board roles and responsibilities, etc.
    - **Appropriate insurance** for the organization, Board/staff, and its programming.
    - **Legal and fiscal requirements** are met and maintained as required with its tax status or operation structure.
6. **Diversified Funding and Sustainable Program Operations.** A successful revitalization program must have the financial resources necessary to carry out its work and sustain its operations. Program sustainability relies on diversity of revenue streams as dependency on one primary or only source could jeopardize the program’s operations. This includes having a **Balanced Funding Structure** with a **diverse mix of public and private** sector sources, **Strategic Revenue Development and Fundraising** and **Financial Management and Best Practices**.
7. **Strategy-Driven Programming.** Change is an important guiding principle for Main Street. Main Street programs should define, and manage change from one year to the next through a **strategy-driven work plan and an aligned implementation process**. Planning is guided by **Inclusive Community and Market-Informed Inputs**. Main Street organizations must:
- Have an appropriate written **mission statement** which is **reviewed annually and updated as appropriate**.
  - Have an appropriate **vision statement** for downtown that is **reviewed annually and updated as appropriate**. The vision statement should define the economic potential of downtown.
  - Establish an annual work plan/planning process for downtown. A comprehensive annual work plan provides a detailed blueprint for the Main Street program's activities; reinforces the program's accountability both within the organization and in the broader community; and provides measurable objectives by which the program can track its progress.
  - Have a **work plan with a balance of activities in each of the four broad program** areas that comprise the Main Street approach: Economic Vitality, Quality Design, Effective Promotion, and Sustainable Organization.
  - The work plan should contain measurable objectives, including timelines, budgets, desired outcomes, and specific responsibilities.
  - The work plan should be reviewed and updated annually.
  - **Involve, ideally, the full board in developing the annual work plan.** At a minimum, the full board should adopt/approve the annual work plan which includes Transformation/Economic Development Strategies.
  - **Distribute work activities and tasks** to a broad range of volunteers and program participants.
  - Have significant progress in each of the four points based on the work plan submitted for the previous year.
  - Maintain an updated building and business inventory list.
  - Maintain an asset map recognizing distinctive place-based assets within the district that highlight unique and competitive advantages and market opportunities.
  - Have strategies that reflect opportunities driven by local and national trends.

- Have annual fund-development goals and allocations that are guided by the Transformation or Economic Development Strategies.

**8. Preservation-Based Economic Development.** A Main Street organization must adopt and exhibit a Historic Preservation Ethic and Design Management Program. A Main Street organization will focus on, **Preservation Ethics and Education on Historic and Cultural Assets, Standards and Best Practices for Place-based, People – Focused on the Design and Promotion of Historic, Heritage and Cultural Assets.** Historic preservation is central to the Main Street program's purpose and is what makes historic and traditional commercial districts authentic places.

Additionally:

- Advocates for preservation, re-use over demolition.
  - When faced with a potential demolition or substantial structural alteration of a significant, historic, or traditional building in the Main Street district, the **program actively works to prevent the demolition or alteration, including working with appropriate partners at the state, local, or national level to attempt to stay or alter the proposed activity**; developing alternative strategies for the building's use; and/or educating local leaders about the importance of retaining existing buildings and maintaining their architectural integrity.
  - The program has, or is working toward putting in place, an active and effective design management program (which may include financial incentives, design assistance, regulatory relief, design review, education, and other forms of management).
  - The program encourages appropriate building renovation, restoration, and rehabilitation projects.
  - The program works to find creative adaptive use, financing, and physical rehabilitation solutions for preserving old buildings.
  - The program recognizes the importance of planning and land-use policies that support the revitalization of existing commercial centers and works toward putting planning and land-use policies in place that make it as easy (if not easier) to develop property within the commercial district as it is outside the commercial district. Similarly, it ensures that financing, technical assistance, and other incentives are available to facilitate the process of attracting investment to the historic commercial district.
  - The program builds public awareness for the commercial district's historic buildings and for good design.
- 9. Demonstrate Impact and Results.** As a part of a national network, Main Street America™, with a proven record for generating strong economic returns and strengthening the district's position within a highly competitive marketplace the local Main Street organization **Demonstrate the Value of Main Street, Measure and Package Quantitative and Qualitative Outcomes and Promote Progress and Demonstrate Impact and Results.**
- 10. Training & Education Requirements:**
- **Orientation:** is required for a **New Main Street Director.** These are held virtually each month and new directors are required to attend a virtual orientation within three months of start date (if not previously attended as a MS Director in another MS Town).
  - **Basic Training:** is required for a **NEW Main Street Director** each time there is a change at the local level if said NEW director has not previously attended in Main Street Director attendance at Main Street Basic Training each time there is a change in management (if not previously attended).
  - **Directors Meeting:** Main Street Director's attendance at Main Street Directors' Meeting held once a year in August. (In the case of a vacancy or illness/emergency, a substitution for the director may be made for this meeting). **THIS IS ONLY REQUIRED FOR DESIGNATED NCMS PROGRAMS NOT THE SMALL TOWN MAIN STREET PROGRAM.**



- **Regional Meetings:** Main Street Director/STMS Coordinator (or Volunteer if Director cannot) attendance at a minimum of one of two bi-annual regional meetings each year. (Held in May and November.) \*It is recommended that the Director (or STMS Coordinator) attend both meetings, not just one.
  - **NC Main Street Conference:** Main Street Director and a minimum of one volunteer attendance at the annual NC Main Street Conference - (NCMS provides each designated STMS community with one complimentary registration).
  - **Main to Main Trail:** Maintain and update as appropriate your community's Main to Main Trail information on your website which is linked to the [ncmainstreetandplanning.com](http://ncmainstreetandplanning.com) website. The STMS towns are not yet listed on the Main to Main Trail as this is still a work in progress for our designated NCMS towns first, but when we do include the STMS programs this will be an expectation.
  - **\*\*NEW required training as of 2024:**
    - **Small Scale Development Workshop (attend ONE out of 8)**
      - Tryon – April 24, 2024
      - New Bern – June 12, 2024
      - Washington – July 17, 2024
      - Lenoir – August 21, 2024
      - Mount Airy – Oct. 2, 2024
      - Salisbury – Nov. 13, 2024
      - Clinton – Jan. 8, 2025
      - Oxford – Feb. 12, 2025
    - **Destination Creation Training** – dates and locations TBD (these will be held in regions)
    - **Storytelling Training** – dates and locations TBD (these will be held in regions)
11. **Reporting:** Submit annual statistical data in July and Budget & Salary information and Program Assessment Survey in January, as requested, to the NCMS&RP Center.
12. **Maintain an annual membership** with the National Main Street Center at the [Main Street America Community Member](#) level.
13. **Reimbursement of NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's travel expenses**, when traveling to the local community, at the IRS state rate plus meals at the state per diem rate and lodging in accordance with the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center Travel Policy.
14. **Sublicense & Logo Placement.** The local Main Street Program **must also sign and follow the National Main Street sublicense agreement and must comply with all Accredited or Affiliate community requirements** including placing the *Designated NC Main Street Community* logo on the Main Street program website and use the logo when appropriate on social media, email, and marketing materials **Logos and website language will be sent in June by Main Street America following receipt of signed agreements.**

### **Documents Needed for a Change in Administration of the Local Main Street Program, including if the organization changes from a nonprofit, government, or quasi-public-private structure to a different structure:**

- The City/Town Council has the authority to designate another agency/entity to administer the Main Street program.
  - North Carolina Main Street Center requires:
    - A resolution from the City/Town Council that authorizes this change.
    - Minutes of the City/Town Council Meeting clearly demonstrating the majority vote.
    - Documentation demonstrating how the entity that will be administering the Main Street Program will address the items listed under the requirements section of this document.

**\*These documents must be emailed to the Director of the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center within two months of a change in administration.**

### **Benefits of Membership with The National Main Street Center**

**(Required for all active, designated N.C. Main Street and Small-Town Main Street communities.)**

Your program, as a Designated Main Street Member is a recognized leader among the largest network of commercial district organizations in the world. Tap into the expertise of our large network of Main Street Programs, BIDs, CDC's, planners, local government agencies, consultants, and others to learn, research and share useful experiences with each other. This guide explains the benefits of membership and how to access these tools.

#### **Your benefits include:**

- Access to The Point, our exclusive online member networking platform.
- Access to *Main Street News*, a weekly newsletter on new trends, stories from the field, and need-to-know information for those in the commercial district revitalization field.
- Members-only rates at the annual Main Street Now Conference, and the Main Street America Institute.
- Access to our digital library of must-read revitalization publications and resource guides, including exclusive training materials on the Main Street Approach and full archives.
- Free online training opportunities.
- Full access to the Main Street Knowledge Hub with sample documents, articles, reports, and more from your peers and experts in the field — all at your fingertips.
- Access to tailored insurance products from the National Trust Insurance Services, LLC.
- Family level membership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation including a subscription to *Preservation* magazine.
- Exclusive eligibility to be recognized as an Affiliate or Accredited Main Street America program.
- Exclusive eligibility to enter into a Licensing Agreement with the NMSC, or your Coordinating Program, to use Main Street America™ name and logo.
- Eligibility to apply for the Great American Main Street Awards and other special awards and grant programs.
- Up to six free sub-memberships to share access to resources with your team.
- And more!

#### **Annual Dues: \$375**

Information from: <https://www.mainstreet.org/join>

### Signature Page

1. Designated Small Main Street City/Town: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name of Local Small Town Main Street Administrating Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Check Which One Applies:

Public (Town) Administered

Private (Non-Profit) Administered

Quasi-Public-Private (Town/Non-Profit) Administered

4. Small-Town Main Street Coordinator (if it is a **Town Manager**, then the Mayor signs off below):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Name of Town Manager **OR Mayor** depending on Program Structure:

\_\_\_\_\_

Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Town Manager:

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_