



Main Street Essentials Sessions

Sustainable Organizations

Speaker:

Kathy LaPlante

Senior Program Officer | National Main Street Center

A strong organizational foundation is key for a sustainable Main Street revitalization effort. This can take many forms, from a stand-alone nonprofit organization, to a special assessment district and a program housed in a municipality or existing community development entity. Regardless of the organizational type, the focus is on ensuring that all organizational resources, including partners, funding, volunteers and others, are mobilized to effectively implement the community transformation strategies.

Quality Design

Speaker:

Matt Wagner

Vice President | National Main Street Center

A focus on quality design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical elements of downtown while capitalizing on the unique assets that set the commercial district apart. Main streets enhance their appeal to residents and visitors alike with attention to public space through the creation of pedestrian-friendly streets, inclusion of public art in unexpected areas, visual merchandising, adaptive reuse of older and historic buildings, more efficiently-designed buildings, transit oriented development and much more.

Effective Promotion

Speaker:

Kathy LaPlante

Senior Program Officer | National Main Street Center

Promoting Main Street takes many forms, but the ultimate goal is to position the downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and the hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics. This can be done through highlighting cultural traditions, celebrating and preserving important architecture and history, encouraging local businesses to market cooperatively, offering coordinated specials and sales and

hosting special events aimed at changing perceptions of the district and communicating to residents, investors, businesses and property-owners.

Economic Vitality

Speaker:

Matt Wagner

Vice President | National Main Street Center

Revitalizing a downtown or neighborhood commercial district requires focusing on the underlying economic vitality of the district. This work is rooted in a commitment to making the most of a community's unique sense of place and existing historic assets, harnessing local economic opportunity and creating a supportive business environment for small business owners and the growing scores of entrepreneurs, innovators and localists alike. With the nationwide growing interest in living downtown, supporting downtown housing is also a key element of building Economic Vitality.

Hospitality Development as a Dynamic Tool for Downtown Revitalization

Speakers:

David McCormack

Waukeshaw Development | Petersburg, Virginia

Hal Craddock

Creative Boutique Hotels | Roanoke, Virginia

Todd Morgan

MB Contractors | Roanoke, Virginia

In this session, you will learn what makes a community attractive to hospitality developers and how to begin to access and implement this exciting tool. Speakers will also discuss some of the challenges developers face when looking at development in smaller communities. The speakers also will discuss the impact a successful hospitality development could have on your community and region.

Craft Beverage Led Revitalization: Resources and Case Studies

Speaker:

Steven Verson

AFID Fund Coordinator | Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

There are a variety of resources that can help bring new craft beverage producers to your downtown. Learn about these new tools and hear about how they were successfully applied in communities around the state.

Main Street Toolkit: Destination Marketplace

Reinventing your Downtown and its Businesses into Consumer Destinations

Speaker:

Jon Schallert

President | The Schallert Group Inc.

Jon Schallert is the only business consultant who has analyzed the steps of how to change a consumer-oriented business that is location-dependent into one that defies the demographics of its area, turning it into a consumer destination. This is Schallert's most requested session, customized into two distinct sections.

Part I will focus on how to get consumers to choose an independent business over a much larger retail competitor. This is especially important when an independent business is competing with an online shopping choice.

Part II will focus on the tools and tactics that every downtown and its businesses must use to become the “go-to place.” This session draws on Schallert’s on-site consulting experience from speaking in more than 500 downtowns, and the emphasis will be on tactical steps that involve marketing and capturing free publicity.

Attendees will leave both sessions with a list of concrete to-dos that any downtown director, community leader or independent business owner can immediately apply to increase consumer traffic. Attendees will have a better understanding of Schallert’s destination business strategies and tactics and will be immediately able to identify weaknesses in their downtown locations.

Attendees of these workshops will also learn how to create free publicity opportunities that gets your business in newspapers, magazines, television and online websites, how to target and attract the most profitable customers, how to draw more customers to any business, even if that location is worse and how to get a customer to love a business in the first 7 seconds after they enter its doors.

Filling Vacancies and Strengthening Businesses: Best Practices and Tips

Speaker:

Hilary Greenberg

President | Greenberg Development Services

Successful Main Street communities are ones that have both strong business retention and recruitment programs. While the economy has improved and new businesses are locating downtown, many businesses continue to struggle and attracting the “right” business is more difficult than ever. During this fast-paced session, review effective strategies that can be used to build stronger downtown business retention and attraction programs. Using a combination of case studies and experience working with communities across the country, the session will review practical tips for identifying emerging market opportunities, building upon existing business clusters, strategies for soliciting new businesses and investment, as well as ways to avoid common mistakes that could derail your efforts.

Plan to Brand: Lessons learned to uniquely position downtown as the destination

Speaker:

Ann Glave

Executive Director | Fredericksburg Main Street

Fredericksburg Main Street recently went through the process of branding their downtown. Come hear the lessons learned from their experience. This session will be broken down into three topics, including how to brand and questions you organization needs to ask, the Ps and Qs of RFPs and how to write and review proposals, and the process after you find a designer.

First Impressions are Lasting Impressions: Wayfinding systems planning and design

Speaker:

Kathy Frazier

Principal | Frazier Associates

Distinctive and attractive public sign systems can be an important component of a successful downtown and tourism programs. Wayfinding signs, including gateway signs, community-wide directional signs, parking and pedestrian-oriented signs, can enhance visitor experience, create civic pride and reflect community character. This session will review the components of a custom wayfinding system, the process to design a system, the funds needed to implement a system and the fabrication and installation process.

Extreme Makeover: Designing a community marketplace for downtown Winchester

Speaker:

Jennifer Bell

Main Street Director | Winchester, Virginia

In 2013, Winchester tore up the two-block walking mall in the heart of the downtown to replace infrastructure and completely resurface and redesign the appearance of the space to create a more dynamic updated community space. This directly impacted a majority of the retail and restaurant businesses within the downtown area. This presentation highlights lessons learned through the project, including how to assist businesses through a major project and how aspects of the redesign aided in the successful revitalization of Old Town Winchester.

Main Street Toolkit: Community Engagement Sessions

Creative Public Engagement Strategies: Tools you adapt for a lasting impact

Speaker:

Kevin Byrd

Executive Director | New River Valley Regional Commission

During this session, attendees will learn about several creative public engagement techniques utilized in the New River Valley Livability Initiative. A discussion forum will be integrated regarding transferability of the techniques along with an opportunity for attendees to share methods working in their communities. Come prepared to share, and leave with concepts to take home.

Artisans and Makers on Main Street

Speaker:

Dr. John Accordino

Professor and Director | CURA@VCU (The Center for Urban and Regional Analysis)

The artisan economy is booming in cities and towns. You may be able to expand and strengthen your Main Street by attracting more artisans and makers and helping them thrive. This session will help you find artisans and makers in your community and understand their needs. You will also learn how you can expand your Main Street district with artisan and maker spaces and partner with other organizations to grow your community's artisan/maker economy.

Building Regional Partnerships

Speakers:

Michelle Jones

Program Specialist | Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Doug Jackson

Program Specialist | Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)

Meetings that Work: Effective Practices

Speaker:

Martha Walker

Extension Specialist for Community Viability | Virginia Tech Cooperative Extension

After studying team development and the theories of motivation, are you still not sure where to begin to manage productive meetings? If this statement summarizes the way you feel when you are asked to lead a discussion, then you will want to participate in this session. Walker will explore the process and practices of planning and facilitating discussions that guide groups to achieving their purpose.