TOWN COUNCIL
Work Session
Civic Center
January 7, 2016
Immediately Following Public Hearing

1. Call to Order: Roll Call

2. Order of Business

   A. Virginia Main Street Presentation – Kyle Meyer, Community Development Administrator, Dept of Housing and Community Development

3. Motion to Adjourn

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

VIRGINIA MAIN STREET PROGRAM
Department of Housing and Community Development
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May 2013

The Virginia Main Street Program: "Building Vitality Downtown!"

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INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Main Street Program is a preservation-based economic and community development program that follows the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach™. Virginia Main Street offers a range of services and assistance to meet the variety of needs of communities interested in revitalization. While the program was designed to address the need for revitalization and on-going management of smaller to mid-sized downtowns, aspects of the Main Street Approach™ may be applied successfully in other commercial settings.

The focal point of the program is assistance to competitively selected communities that are working in traditional downtown settings and meet certain threshold criteria. Communities with a population of 75,000 or less with a high degree of commitment and readiness that wish to use the Main Street Approach™ in a traditional downtown setting may apply for formal Virginia Main Street designation. If you are just getting started, do not want full Main Street designation, or for communities that wish to use the Main Street Approach™ in compact, pedestrian-oriented commercial settings, there is an Affiliate Program. Communities of any size, counties, and cities with neighborhood commercial districts may participate in the Affiliate Program.

Virginia Main Street also serves as general clearinghouse on the latest tools and techniques in downtown development. General information, primary and secondary research and audio-visual and resource materials are available from the program to any individual or organization with a general interest in Main Street and downtown development. Virginia Main Street staff is available as resources permit to provide on-site visits.

For additional information, or to use our resource material, contact us at:

Virginia Main Street Program
Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
600 East Main Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-371-7030
mainstreet@dhcd.virginia.gov
www.dhcd.virginia.gov/mainstreet

MAIN STREET COMMUNITY DESIGNATION

Virginia Main Street provides a full-range of assistance to designated communities; 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 for downtown revitalization such as design and economic incentives, market driven promotions and volunteer recruitment programs. Virginia Main Street provides resources and guidance to help local programs create core competencies in revitalization.

How to Apply

Application rounds are held every three to four years as state resources permit. Communities with an interest in seeking Main Street designation are encouraged to participate as an Affiliate community first.

Eligibility Criteria

Towns, cities or counties must meet the following requirements to be eligible to apply for full Main Street designation:

1. **Have a population of no more than 75,000 based on the 2000 Census (cities and towns only).**
   There is no population maximum for Counties that apply on behalf of an unincorporated area or village.

2. **Have at least 50 commercial enterprises and 70 commercial structures in the proposed Main Street district.** Experience shows that there must be a critical mass of buildings and businesses in a traditional district to form a foundation for revitalization efforts (see discussion of traditional districts on Page 8). It is also critical that there is a concentration of structures that would be eligible for frequently used rehabilitation incentives. Counties may submit an application on behalf of an unincorporated area that has at least 50 commercial enterprises and 70 commercial structures in the proposed Main Street district.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Where to House the Program - Experience has shown that a Main Street program functions most successfully as an independent nonprofit organization. Although vital partners, Chambers of Commerce or local economic development offices are not effective organizational structures for downtown development. If your community is interested in full Main Street designation, you will need an independent nonprofit organization. If a Special Assessment District is in place for the proposed Main Street district, and the Executive Director would have department head status, Virginia Main Street may consider a proposal to house the program as a department of local government, but this option is not preferred.

Your Financial Commitment - Virginia Main Street uses an initial minimum funding period of five years to correspond with our intensive new community services. Most communities realize a strong return on their financial investment in the Main Street effort and both the private and public sectors choose to make an on-going financial commitment. We rank higher applications that show proof of a strong on-going financial commitment. An adequate budget is required to maintain Main Street designation and to receive on-going services.

Clerical Support - Executive directors need clerical support to be effective. Communities should consider providing the equivalent of 20-hour minimum per week of clerical support through paid staff or volunteers. (Small communities - 15 hours).

Designation Requirements

Communities selected to join Virginia Main Street must meet the following designation criteria and continue to meet them to maintain their designation and receive VMS services.

DESIGNATED MAIN STREET COMMUNITY REQUIREMENTS	
Work in a traditional Main Street district	Main Street districts must be a physical setting conducive to applying the Main Street Approach™, including a pedestrian scale and orientation; critical mass of buildings and businesses; and critical mass of structures that would be eligible for frequently used rehabilitation incentives. See Page 8 for the specific criteria for a traditional Main Street district.
Use the Main Street Approach™	Main Street provides the only comprehensive approach specifically designed to address the issues and opportunities of traditional downtown commercial districts. It is proven to work and following the approach is a requirement of initial and on-going designation. Economic development in the context of historic preservation is central to the approach as are four active, standing committees: Design, Organization, Economic Restructuring and Promotion.
Have a downtown organization	The downtown constituency is unique and has not been adequately served by traditional economic and business development groups. A separate, independent organization with a mission to act as the advocate for downtown is the best way to reverse decline and foster progress. The downtown organization should include a wide variety of stakeholders and have strong support from both public and private sectors.
Have sustainable program funding	Financial stability of the Main Street organization is crucial to staying focussed on the program's mission. Besides covering salaries, downtown organizations must provide an adequate operating budget to cover an active program of work, clerical assistance, and travel and training for both board members and staff. Budgets will vary by community and samples are available from VMS.
Employ an executive director	Paid professional staff to manage the downtown and the revitalization work is critical. Communities with populations under 5,000 can have success with a part-time executive director (a minimum of 25 hours per week). Other communities must have full-time management to be effective (minimum 40 hours per week). Salaries should be commensurate with public-oriented professionals in the area.
Have organizational systems and structures	Administrative systems and tools help effectively manage program activities throughout the organization while benchmarking progress. Each year a comprehensive work plan and budget should outline activities of the four committees as well as those of signature programs or events.
Sign a Letter of Agreement (LOA)	Local commitment and support is critical to Main Street success. In designated communities, local government, the downtown organization and DHCD sign a letter of agreement that clearly specifies the responsibilities of each. Newly designated communities sign a letter of agreement each year until they reach the mature stage. Mature communities sign a letter of agreement every three years.
Maintain standards of excellence	Each designated community must be recognized as a National Main Street Community at least once every three years in order to demonstrate the performance standards of the organization; national recognition is an additional benefit. Building skills through regular attendance at VMS trainings is also required.
Submit information to VMS	All designated Main Street communities must submit the following each year: 1) twelve monthly reports (submitted quarterly); 2) salary survey; 3) program survey; and 4) an annual report that includes: a) a vision and mission statement, b) the actual budget, including revenues and expenses, c) a list of the board of directors, d) dates and topics of training for board, volunteers and staff (including attendance record for VMS training), e) key accomplishments and achievements, and f) the current Comprehensive Main Street work plan.

Newly Designated Main Street Communities

Virginia Main Street provides the most intensive service in the first five years of program designation. Special services are generally provided in the first year in order to help the community assess issues facing downtown, map out a general strategy for revitalization and train the community in the tools and techniques needed to succeed. The services listed below will be provided to communities using a performance-based approach that will require discussions between the community and VMS to set appropriate targets and outcomes.

NEWLY DESIGNATED MAIN STREET COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Special Services	
Reconnaissance Visit	State and outside specialists perform a preliminary needs assessment of the physical and economic environment of the community and downtown. (On-site)
Organizational Visit	State staff assists with organizational issues including roles and responsibilities of staff and Board. Work planning assistance is also provided. (On-site)
Resource Team Visit	A team of experts in such fields as preservation architecture, business development and marketing is assembled to address a community's specific needs. (On-site)
Core Competencies Checklist	Identifies program benchmarks and serves as the basis for committee work plans (see Page 9).
Specialist Services and Technical Assistance	
Design Assistance	Comprehensive assistance from an architect with expertise in older historic commercial architecture, including façade designs, consultations and training.
Specialist Visits	One-day visits by State staff and downtown development specialists to help communities address specific issues.
Year-End Evaluations	State staff and specialists come on-site to assess organization progress.
Program Support and Professional Development	
National Main Street Center Network Membership	Benefits include subscriptions to technical publications, newsletters and a hot line.
Program Manager Training	Regular training by state and national experts is provided. **Managers must attend.**
Regional Board Training	As needed training by State staff and experienced Board members.
Main Street 101	State staff and specialists train local programs in the Main Street Approach™.
Topical Training	State staff and specialists train local programs in specific revitalization topics. Program managers, board and committee members are encouraged to attend.
Scholarships	Scholarships to the NMSC's annual conference are provided.
Work Planning Assistance	State staff is available to facilitate local strategic and work planning.
Remote Consultation	State and National Main Street Center staff are available by phone and e-mail.
Resource & Information Sharing	State staff and specialists prepare quarterly newsletters and timely e-mail updates of opportunities for services and funding available. Networking with other communities is encouraged using VMS maintained contact lists.
Virginia Main Street Library	More than 175 titles are available for loan. Extensive files are also available.
Marketing	
Road signage	Road signs to denote Main Street designation are provided.
Public Relations	Regular press coverage and exposure is provided through media releases and marketing materials, including the Driving Tour Brochure and Annual Report.
Use of Main Street Logo	Electronic artwork is provided.

Mature Main Street Communities

Restored facades, lower vacancy rates and new streetscapes are not signs that revitalization is finished. It means that Main Street programs are entering the management or mature phase. Designated communities continuing to meet the requirements on page three are considered mature programs after their first five years of designation. Virginia Main Street provides on-going services to assist mature communities in maintaining long-term effectiveness and progress. The services listed below will be provided to communities using a performance-based approach that will require discussions between the community and VMS to set appropriate targets and outcomes.

MATURE MAIN STREET COMMUNITY SERVICES	
Specialist Services and Technical Assistance	
Design Assistance	As resources allow.
Specialist Visits	Virginia Main Street Staff available on request. Specialists, as resources allow.
Year-End Evaluations	As needed.
Research	Staff will conduct research on issues or topics of interest using state and national contacts.
Program Support and Professional Development	
Program Manager Training	Regular training by state and national experts is provided. **Managers must attend.**
Regional Board Training	As needed training by State staff and experienced Board members.
Main Street 101	State staff and specialists train local programs in the Main Street Approach™.
Topical Training	State staff and specialists train local programs in specific revitalization topics. Program managers, board and committee members are encouraged to attend.
Scholarships	Scholarships to the NMSC's annual conference are provided.
Work Planning Assistance	State staff is available to facilitate local strategic and work planning.
Remote Consultation	State and National Main Street Center staff members are available by phone and e-mail.
Resource & Information Sharing	State staff and specialists prepare quarterly newsletters and timely e-mail updates of opportunities for services and funding available to Virginia's downtowns. Networking with other communities is encouraged using VMS maintained contact lists.
Virginia Main Street Library	More than 175 titles are available for loan. Extensive files are also available.
Marketing	
Public Relations	Regular press coverage and exposure is provided through media releases and marketing materials, including the Driving Tour and Annual Report.
Use of Main Street Logo	Electronic artwork is provided.

Maintaining Designation

Virginia Main Street is committed to maintaining long-term relationships with designated communities and will assist organizations in continuing to meet the requirements listed on the previous page as a means of remaining an active, effective downtown revitalization program and receiving VMS services. Organizations that decide that they can not or do not want to continue to meet the designation requirements may become an Affiliate at any time and receive the services outlined on page seven.

However, if a community with an interest in maintaining designation is having difficulty meeting the designation requirements in one or more areas, the organization should contact VMS as soon as possible to discuss the situation, arrange assistance and develop a schedule to address the issues in a timely manner. VMS will also review the administrative information that programs submit annually (see box on this page) and will work with localities, as needed, to strengthen areas that may impact the program's effectiveness and its ability to meet designation requirements. In such cases, VMS will offer targeted assistance to the program, including helping the program develop a detailed work plan to address areas of concern in a timely fashion. Dedicated and well-planned efforts by the local program to meet designation requirements are vital to continued economic health in downtown and a strong partnership with VMS. Since services from VMS are provided using a performance-based approach, additional special services such as consultant visits and design services will be postponed while the organization focuses their energies on meeting designation requirements and strengthening their organization.

As soon as the organization again meets the designation requirements, full services will be restored to the community immediately. In the event that an organization is unable to meet designation requirements within a year of initial discussions with VMS about the issue, the community will be invited to participate as an Affiliate at this time. As a DHCD Commercial District Affiliate, the community will have access to VMS trainings, networking opportunities, consultation with state staff on downtown revitalization issues and access to the VMS library and files. As an Affiliate, the community will no longer be included in VMS marketing materials and will need to remove Virginia Main Street road signs and return them to VMS (the original purchase price of the signs will be reimbursed to the community).

Formerly designated communities may re-apply to become fully designated again once they have been active as an Affiliate for three or more years. They must apply during a regular VMS designation round, complete the current application and will be competitively evaluated along with all other applicants.

Information Reviewed by VMS

As noted in the designation requirements on page three, a variety of information must be submitted to VMS each year. This serves the dual purpose of determining eligibility for recognition as a National Main Street Community and providing an opportunity for targeted assistance from VMS as needed. Communities must submit:

- Monthly reports
- Salary survey
- Program survey
- An annual report that includes:
  - Vision and mission statement,
  - The actual budget, including revenues and expenses,
  - The board of directors,
  - Dates and topics of training for board, volunteers and staff (including attendance record for VMS training),
  - Key accomplishments and achievements, and
  - The current Comprehensive Main Street work plan

If these items are not submitted, or indicate that the organization may not be meeting designation requirements, VMS will immediately begin working with the community on a plan to maintain designation.

THE AFFILIATE OPTION

The Affiliate option provides a range of services and assistance to meet a variety of community commitment and readiness levels. It is for communities that are exploring downtown revitalization, that are preparing for designation or those that may not be eligible for designation.

> ***How to Apply***
> Communities may become an Affiliate at anytime with successful completion of a two-page application.

A core feature of the service to Affiliates is access to training by state and national downtown development experts. Previously, this training was limited to fully designated Main Street communities. Now Affiliates have the opportunity to learn about best practices in the field and to network with peers from around the state.

It should be noted that communities that complete the application will be referred to as DHCD Commercial District Affiliates and the term "Affiliate" describes the *relationship* between a community and DHCD's Virginia Main Street program. It is only intended for use in public relations or educational communication, but not for marketing materials, public displays, signs or similar promotional tools, as this use could misleadingly convey that the community has achieved full VMS designation – a hard won benefit of competitively selected communities.

AFFILIATE COMMUNITIES	
Services	
Main Street 101	State staff and specialists train local programs in the Main Street Approach™.
Topical Training	State staff and specialists train local programs in specific revitalization topics.
Scholarships	Scholarships to the Virginia Downtown Development Association conference and/or National Main Street Center's conference are provided on a limited basis as funds allow.
Remote Consultation	State staff is available by phone and e-mail.
Resource & Information Sharing	State staff and specialists prepare quarterly newsletters and timely e-mail updates of opportunities for services and funding available to Virginia's downtowns. Networking with other communities is encouraged using VMS maintained contact lists.
Virginia Main Street Library	More than 175 titles are available for loan. Extensive files are also available.
Requirements	
Work in a pedestrian-oriented commercial district	While Affiliates are not required to have a traditional Main Street district (see Page 8), they should have a pedestrian-oriented commercial area with a high percentage of locally owned businesses. A county may become an Affiliate on behalf of one or more communities within the county. A city may become an affiliate on behalf of one or more neighborhood commercial districts within a city.
Have a broad-based revitalization organization	This organization does not have to be an independent nonprofit and may include Chambers of Commerce, departments of local government or other structures.
Use the comprehensive Main Street Approach™	This is the foundation of all Virginia Main Street assistance.
Active Participation	Affiliate communities must keep their contact information current and utilize VMS services at least once each year to remain active. Affiliates that remain inactive for a period of more than one year will be notified and dropped from the Affiliate roster. Communities dropped from the affiliate roster may re-apply by completing the Affiliate application again.

TRADITIONAL MAIN STREET DISTRICTS

The Virginia Main Street Program is a preservation-based economic and community development program that follows the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach™. The program was designed to address the need for revitalization and on-going management of smaller to mid-sized downtowns and uses the traditional assets of downtowns as a catalyst for revitalization. Nationwide and in Virginia, successful Main Street districts share certain common characteristics:

- ✓ A pedestrian scale and orientation;
- ✓ A critical mass of buildings and businesses which form the foundation for revitalization efforts;
- ✓ A critical mass of structures that would be eligible for frequently used rehabilitation incentives (state and federal tax credits and local tax abatement).

In order to assure a physical setting conducive to applying the Main Street Approach™ to commercial revitalization, designated Main Street districts must have:

- At least **50 commercial enterprises** and **70 commercial structures**;
- At least **2/3rds of the structures are commercial** (or commercially zoned) buildings and have a pedestrian scale and orientation including such elements as ground floor storefronts;
- At least **25 percent** of the linear street frontage has **a setback of 15' or less** from the sidewalk;
- A **compact size** and regular pattern of sidewalks so that it can be comfortably walked by pedestrians.

Communities interested in Main Street designation may request that Virginia Main Street review a potential district for its appropriateness. Existing Main Street programs seeking to enlarge the boundaries of their current districts must also meet these guidelines for the expanded district. Affiliates are not required to have a traditional district, but must have a pedestrian-oriented commercial district and submit the appropriate maps along with their application. For Affiliate communities that plan to pursue designation in the future, it is suggested that the traditional district criteria be used in order to prevent the need for a change to the boundaries when application for designation is made.

Roles and Responsibilities

The **community** must propose specific boundaries for the commercial district revitalization effort and provide evidence that the district meets these criteria. Virginia Main Street can provide assistance with methods for compiling this information including building and business inventories, as well as guidance on how to measure setback.

Virginia Main Street will review the district criteria and make an on-site visual assessment of the commercial district at the request of the community to determine the appropriateness of the proposed new or expanded district. A written summary of the assessment will also be provided.

REQUIRED CORE COMPETENCIES

To assist designated Main Street communities in the incremental and comprehensive development of an active downtown revitalization program, Virginia Main Street has developed the following list of core competencies. While individual projects and activities are unique to the community, there are some general tasks and types of projects Virginia Main Street has found to be vital to the progressive growth of a Main Street program and organization. These competencies are meant to be a base level of activity, and communities should strive to undertake more challenging projects as they build capacity.

Steady progress in meeting core competencies must occur during the first three to five years of the organization's Main Street Designation in order for specialist services to continue. Core competencies must be in place in order for a community to progress to Mature Main Street designation. Progress in meeting the core competencies will be assessed during the annual Year-End Evaluations.

The core competencies are listed below and categorized according to the Main Street Approach™. In order to build a strong foundation for the program, a very active Organization Committee (often the Board of Directors) is required to work on the numerous projects listed under this category. Although there are many important organizational tasks, it is necessary to remember that the Main Street Approach™ is comprehensive and activities in the areas of Promotion, Design and Economic Restructuring, as well as Organization, are essential for an action-oriented program that achieves successful, on-going revitalization of the central business district.

Core competencies often build upon each other and are often related to competencies in other categories. While each community will complete the core competencies in their own time frame within the three to five year window, it is recommended that they be completed in the general sequence in which they are listed.

ORGANIZATION

This element of the Main Street Approach™ focuses on building collaboration among a broad range of public and private sector groups, organizations and constituencies.

The Organization Committee plays a key role in keeping the board, committees and staff functioning by attracting people and money to the Main Street Program. To succeed, this committee must take responsibility for managing these financial and logistical aspects of the non-profit organization:

⇨ Raising money - for projects and administration, from donations and sponsorships;
⇨ Overseeing volunteer activities- by recruiting and supervising people, and rewarding good work;
⇨ Promoting the program - to downtown interests and the public;
⇨ Managing finances - by developing good accounting procedures.

ORGANIZATION CORE COMPETENCIES

The below activities are grouped by *basic*, *intermediate* and *advanced*. In general, projects grouped in the basic category should be completed before the organization moves onto intermediate activities. Intermediate activities should be completed before tackling advanced projects. This progression will serve to build a strong foundation upon which the organization can build a long-term, successful program.

Basic

- ❑ Develop an organizational structure, Articles of Incorporation and By-laws
- ❑ Formulate accounting systems (It is also suggested that all programs have an annual audit by a CPA)
- ❑ Bookkeeping system
- ❑ Payroll/employee number
- ❑ Registrations: state, county, city
- ❑ Bank/charge accounts
- ❑ Hire a Program Manager
- ❑ Set up Main Street office including:
    - Permanent Location
    - Equipment
    - Furnishings
- ❑ Develop a clear, shared mission and write it as a mission statement
- ❑ Hold annual work planning sessions
- ❑ Develop a written work plan
    - Achieve Board approval
    - Send to VMS
- ❑ Form committees and hold regular meetings

Intermediate

- ❑ Develop an organization logo (letterhead, etc.)
- ❑ Decide on tax-exempt status and make application to IRS
- ❑ Develop an annual budget
  - Achieve Board approval
  - Send to VMS
- ❑ Initiate an annual, signed agreement with local government
- ❑ Create and regularly update job descriptions for both staff and volunteers
- ❑ Compile and send Board of Directors list and contact information to VMS

Advanced

- ❑ Develop a long-term fundraising plan including:
  - Sustainable and diverse income base
  - List of private contributors
  - At least one fundraising event
  - Produce an informational brochure about the organization
  - Develop various methods for communicating with donors throughout the year
- ❑ Create a mailing list for the organization including:
  - Downtown business owners
  - Downtown property owners
  - Local interest groups
  - Officials
  - Supporters
- ❑ Develop a regularly publish a newsletter
- ❑ Build a volunteer database

PROMOTION

This element of the Main Street Approach™ deals with marketing the district's assets to residents, visitors, investors and others through special events, retail promotion and activities that improve the way the district is perceived.

The Promotion Committee has the job of promoting downtown as the center of commerce, culture and community life for residents and visitors alike. To be effective this committee must move beyond cookie-cutter downtown promotion ideas. Specifically:

⇨ Understanding the changing market - identifying both potential shoppers and the competition;
⇨ Identifying downtown assets - including people, buildings, heritage and institutions;
⇨ Defining Main Street's market niche - its unique position in the marketplace;
⇨ Creating new image campaigns, retail promotions and special events - to bring people back to downtown.

PROMOTION CORE COMPETENCIES

- ❑ Develop, approve and publish a balanced annual calendar of promotional events that includes a mix of special events, retail and image events.
- ❑ Evaluate promotional events - including information on number of attendees and impact in reaching program goals
- ❑ Develop a media resource list
- ❑ Conduct outreach / media relations activities including:
    - Press releases
    - Print media columns
    - Press liaison
    - Feature articles
    - Radio/TV talk shows
- ❑ Create a downtown business directory
- ❑ Initiate and complete at least one special event
- ❑ Initiate and complete at least one retail event
- ❑ Conduct downtown image development activities including:
    - Identify downtown's assets
    - Compile information about the marketplace
    - Analyze data
    - Match assets with market niches
    - Write a positioning statement
    - Conduct Image advertising (Examples: newspaper, radio, TV, direct mail ads)
    - Develop collateral materials (Examples: entrance signs, banner, shopping bags, buttons, Tee-shirts w/ logo)
    - Develop media relations (Examples: media kits, press releases, press receptions for major projects, TV, radio and newspaper interviews)
    - Develop image-building events (Examples: downtown progress awards ceremonies, ribbon-cutting for new projects, "before and after" renovation displays)

DESIGN

This element of the Main Street Approach™ involves improving the physical environment by renovating buildings, constructing compatible new buildings, improving signs and merchandise displays, creating attractive and usable public spaces and ensuring that planning and zoning regulations support Main Street revitalization.

The Design Committee plays a key role in shaping the physical image of Main Street as a place attractive to shoppers, investors, business owners and visitors. To succeed this committee must persuade business owners, building owners and civic leaders to adopt a specific approach for physical improvements to buildings, businesses and public improvements. Specifically:

⇨ Educating others about good design - enhancing the image of each business as well as that of the district;
⇨ Providing good design advice - encouraging quality improvements to private properties and public spaces;
⇨ Planning Main Street's development - guiding future growth and shaping regulations;
⇨ Motivating others to make changes - creating incentives and targeting key projects.

DESIGN CORE COMPETENCIES

Basic

- Develop and market improvement incentives and assistance including:
  - Working with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to list the downtown district on the National Register of Historic Places and/or the Virginia Landmarks Register
  - Design guidelines – develop a design guidelines publication *Keeping up Appearances*
  - Design Assistance – through Virginia Main Street Architect
- Evaluate existing physical assets – buildings, streets, public signs, parking lots and open spaces
- Inventory conditions of physical environment
- Façade improvements

Intermediate

- Develop and market improvement incentives and assistance including:
  - Real estate tax abatement
  - Loan programs
  - Grant programs
  - Design Assistance – through Virginia Main Street Architect
- Explore a formalized design review process with custom design guidelines
- Develop district identification signs
- Create a detailed and visually appealing map of downtown
- Photograph downtown extensively; including before, during and after photos of rehabilitation work and promotional events; use professional photographers when possible Streetscape improvements
- Mid-size rehabilitation projects

Advanced

- ❑ Conduct a traffic study
- ❑ Conduct a parking study (if appropriate)
- ❑ Continue façade improvements
- ❑ Large rehabilitation projects
- ❑ New development

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

This element of the Main Street Approach™ concentrates on strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand its economy and introduce compatible new uses.

The Economic Restructuring Committee has the job of identifying new market opportunities for the traditional commercial district, finding new uses for historic commercial buildings and stimulating investment in property. To succeed, this committee must develop a thorough understanding of the community's economic condition and opportunities for incremental market growth. Specifically:

⇨Building entrepreneurial economies;
⇨Strengthening existing businesses and recruiting new ones;
⇨ Finding new economic uses for traditional Main Street buildings;
⇨ Developing financial incentives and capital for business development and retail operations layout;
⇨ Monitoring the economic performance of the district.

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING CORE COMPETENCIES

Basic

- Complete and maintain building inventory for the downtown including:
  - Rental rates
  - Square footage
  - Age of building
  - Unique features
  - Condition
  - Ownership
  - Vacancy
  - Taxes
  - Current photograph
- Complete and maintain a business inventory for the downtown including:
  - Cumulative number of businesses
  - Ownership
  - Product / Service
  - Customers
  - Amount of sales
  - Sales patterns
  - Lease conditions
  - Availability (date / price)
- Track program impact, including:
  - Changes in sales tax revenue
  - Changes in property tax revenue
  - Net new jobs
  - Net new businesses
  - Amount of private investment
  - Number of volunteer hours

- ❑ Create a new business owners' orientation kit. Develop a network of entrepreneur development partners to assist new entrepreneurs and existing businesses (micro-enterprise development organizations, SBDC, SCORE, EDA, Chamber of Commerce, etc.)

Intermediate

- ❑ Complete market analysis including:
  - Surveys
  - Sales leakage assessment
  - Business recruitment plan
  - Business retention plan
  - Summary report
- ❑ Develop a downtown development vision and strategy
  - Identify target niche markets
  - Develop a downtown clustering/leasing plan/strategy
- ❑ Develop and market economic development incentives, including
  - Business seminars
  - Loan pool programs
  - Grant programs
- ❑ Develop a small, local business recruitment packet and procedures
- ❑ Develop business retention programs

Advanced

- ❑ Expand organization's role to develop or be a partner in the development of property in downtown (act like CDC).
- ❑ Expand organization's role to provide micro-business development services, including micro-financing, credit building, etc.
- ❑ Create new financial capital.
- ❑ Support local community banks (banks that are locally owned and rooted in a particular community), credit unions, and community development financial institutions (CDFI).
- ❑ Start a Move Your Money Campaign to get local residents to move their deposits to a local community bank or credit union or to invest in a local CDFI.
- ❑ Tap the power of local banks for local investment and work with financial institutions to create additional lending platforms (e.g. linking local deposits with local loans).
- ❑ Develop community owned and supported businesses.
- ❑ Start a Local Investment Opportunity Network (LION) or other local angel investor "club."
- ❑ Find ways to incorporate crowdfunding (e.g., Kickstarter.com, Indiegogo.com, Fundrise.com) into new business development
- ❑ Slow Money
- ❑ Cooperatives
- ❑ Unaccredited investing

Grant Funding

Downtown Improvement Grants

Purpose: Downtown Improvement Grants (DIGs) allow Main Street organizations to take on unique, one-time projects that measurably, creatively and sustainably advance the organization's economic restructuring goals and strategies. DIGs involve multiple downtown partners and require active leadership and participation by the organization's board, committees and volunteers. DIGs may not to be used for marketing, printing, continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses.

Scoring: Competitive grant based on the following scoring criteria:

Impact on Main Street's economic restructuring goals and strategies	30%
Main Street board, committee and volunteer leadership and involvement	20%
Local government support, partner involvement and matching funds	25%
Organization capacity to complete the project on time and within budget	25%
Total	**100%**

Award Amounts: Up to $25,000
Match Requirement: None
Application Period: October 7, 2013 – November 22, 2013
Project Implementation Period: Jan. 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014 (12 months)
Eligible Applicants: Designated Virginia Main Street organizations
Application Process: Applications must be completed through the DCHD's CAMS online system at https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx. All applicants must complete an organization profile before submitting an application.

CSX Transportation/VMS Downtown Improvement Grants

Purpose: CSX Transportation/VMS Downtown Improvement Grants (CSX DIGs) allow Main Street organizations to make previously identified permanent physical improvement(s) to the Main Street district for which funding is lacking. CSX DIGs are only available to Designated Virginia Main Street Communities with CSX railroad lines. CSX DIGs may not to be used for marketing, printing, continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses.

Scoring: Competitive grant based on the following scoring criteria:

Quality and permanence of physical improvement(s)	50%
Main Street board, committee and volunteer leadership and involvement	15%
Local government support, partner involvement and matching funds	15%
Organization capacity to complete the project on time and within budget	20%
Total	**100%**

Award Amounts: Up to $7,500 ($5,000 CSX; $2,500 VMS)
Match Requirement: Minimum $2,500
Application Period: March 15, 2013 – April 15, 2013
Project Implementation Period: June 1, 2013 – Nov. 30, 2013 (6 months)
Eligible Applicants: Only Designated Virginia Main Street organizations with CSX Transportation railroad lines, including: Ashland, Fredericksburg, Franklin, Hopewell, Lynchburg, St. Paul, Waynesboro and Winchester.

Application Process: Applications must be completed through the DCHD's CAMS online system at https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx. All applicants must complete an organization profile before submitting an application.

"Do It Yourself" Grants

Purpose: "Do It Yourself" Grants (DIYs) allow Main Street organizations to make small previously identified permanent physical improvement(s) to the Main Street district. DIYs may not to be used for marketing, printing, continuing operations, program administration, payroll, debts or any other operational expenses.

Scoring: Competitive grant based on the following scoring criteria:

Quality and permanence of physical improvement(s)	50%
Main Street board, committee and volunteer leadership and involvement	15%
Local government support, partner involvement and matching funds	15%
Organization capacity to complete the project on time and within budget	20%
Total	**100%**

Award Amounts: Up to $2,500
Match Requirement: None
Application Period: April 15, 2013 – May 15, 2013 (if funds available)
Project Implementation Period: June 15, 2013 – Nov. 15, 2013 (6 months)
Eligible Applicants: Only Designated Virginia Main Street organizations
Application Process: Applications must be completed through the DCHD's CAMS online system at https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx. All applicants must complete an organization profile before submitting an application.

Financial Feasibility Grants

Purpose: Financial Feasibility Grants allow Main Street organizations to work with owners of significant "white elephant" buildings to identify the highest and best use of such properties and to develop sufficient information to allow the owner or Main Street organization to "shop" the rehabilitation and reuse of the property to private developers and investors. Feasibility grants generally fund the development of preliminary engineering reports, preliminary architecture reports, market demand studies for an identified highest and best use and gap-financing research.

Scoring: Competitive grant based on the following scoring criteria:

Impact on Main Street's economic restructuring goals and strategies	50%
Financial Feasibility team credentials	10%
Leverage Funding	15%
Organization capacity to complete the project on time and within budget	25%
Total	**100%**

Award Amounts: Up to $15,000-$25,000
Match Requirement: None
Application Period: Two rounds: August 27 – October 25 and January 1 – January 31
Project Implementation Period: As established by MOU (usually 3-6 months)
Eligible Applicants: Only Designated Virginia Main Street organizations
Application Process: Applications must be completed through the DCHD's CAMS online system at https://dmz1.dhcd.virginia.gov/camsportal/Login.aspx. The application will consist of a two page letter of interest that includes: 1) a description of the property, 2) the potential benefit the property's rehabilitation/reuse for the Main Street district, 3) current threats or opportunities posed by the

property to the on-going revitalization of the Main Street district, 4) the willingness of the property owner to facilitate a feasibility study, 5) current and expected demand by investors or developers for a feasibility study, and 6) a description of how the building's redevelopment is related to the economic restructuring goals of the local Main Street organization. In addition, the applicant must provide a proposed budget (including both financial feasibility study grant funds and leverage) based on a pay-for-performance style budget that lists all expected project products, a project timeline, and a list of the local team that will develop the financial feasibility study. Photographs and a map showing the location of the property must also be submitted.

Consultant Services

Architectural Design Services

Site visits - Site visits can include meetings with property owners and studying individual buildings to find feasible design solutions that assure historically sensitive restoration and maintenance. Design consultations with property owners will range from providing assistance in selecting exterior paint colors and compatible sign design to recommendations on entire storefront design and rehabilitation. The Contractor shall also provide general technical assistance on proper building rehabilitation techniques consistent with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The Contractor can also look at non-building improvements such as streetscape or parking lot layouts.

Long Distance Façade Renderings – Long distance façade renderings are façade improvement drawings and recommendations that property owners can use to improve their projects in a historically sensitive manner. These services are provided on a first come, first served basis.

Specialized Design Visits – A limited number of specialized design visits are offered to the designated VMS community. The purpose of the visits may include:

a. Wayfinding Sign System Issues and Opportunities. A wayfinding visit will include a preliminary inventory of existing signs, interviews with key stakeholders in the community about the need for a system, potential destinations, and current and potential graphics or system. A presentation will be made to the community summarizing these findings as well as an overview of what wayfinding is and recommendations for how the design and installation of the system can move forward. A follow-up report will be prepared and delivered to the community. This report will include schematic designs for the community including gateway and trailblazer signage and show examples from other communities and provide guidance for the best way for the community to move forward with designing and implementing a system. This guidance shall include cost estimates and examples, but need not be a construction document.
b. Feasibility Study. The purpose of this service is to assist property owners and the community in how to proceed with making improvements to "white elephant" buildings or buildings "ready for demolition." A feasibility study visit will include the evaluation of the building, which can be no more than roughly 6,000 – 9,000 sq feet of floor space. The visit will include a preliminary assessment of the building's architectural features and historic value and documentation of the building and an interview with the property owner to learn possible uses. A brief report will be prepared that includes a scope of work necessary to bring the building back into service, a building code analysis, potential uses, plans and historic tax credit potential. A range of comparable construction cost estimates will be included in the final report.
c. Other Study. In the course of the year, if another type of study related to economic development or aesthetics is determined by the VMS to be needed in a VMS community a specialized site visit can be customized to that need.

Only designated VMS communities are eligible for this service. Application for this service is competitive.

Organization Tune-Up Visits
National Main Street Center staff and Virginia Main Street staff conduct a two-day visit to evaluate the local Main Street program's structure, strategic plan, and committee work plans. The functioning of the Board and each of the four committees (Design, Promotion, ER and Organization) will be assessed. The perception of the local Main Street organization will also be evaluated by meeting with local government leaders and Main Street stakeholders. A final report providing recommendations for the local Main Street will be provided shortly after the visit.

The Main Street Four Point Approach® is based on principles of self-determination and direct community participation. It involves working simultaneously in four broad areas of revitalization with each committee responsible for working on economic and community development. Each committee should understand its role in the development of downtown.

The four local Main Street committees work in tandem to support the development of downtown and the community. The Organization Committee develops the organization's human (volunteer) and financial resources. The Promotion Committee develops customers for Main Street businesses. The Design Committee develops the spaces and places of Main Street. The Economic Restructuring Committee develops the entrepreneurs. Each committee plays an important role in the successful revitalization of downtown.

Each Main Street program is locally driven, responds to locally identified priorities, and is locally funded. The Virginia Main Street Program has committed itself to be a partner in this revitalization process for communities dedicated to following the Main Street Approach and achieving National Accreditation standards.

The purpose of the Tune-Up Visit is to evaluate the local Main Street organization's efforts, while recognizing the program's accomplishments and offering advice for the organization's future programming.

In each meeting, participants are asked what they see as the local Main Street organization's (or their committee's) successes in the past year, what they considered as challenges or frustrations, and what they are planning for the coming year. The information gathered in those meetings is used to identify several areas to focus attention on in the coming year.

This service is only effective with the full involvement of the local Main Street Board, all of the committees, staff, local government representatives and other local Main Street stakeholders.

Only designated VMS communities are eligible for this service. Application for this service is competitive. Service value estimated at $7,500.

Economic Restructuring Visits
National Main Street Center staff and Virginia Main Street staff conduct a two-day visit to assist in creating a downtown development plan, help identify and prioritize work for the Economic Restructuring Committee, and help develop a market position, if not previously accomplished. The visit usually includes a 2-3 hour clustering/leasing work session to help create a downtown development plan. A final report providing recommendations for the Main Street organization's economic restructuring strategies will be provided shortly after the visit. All visits are customized

based on the community's previously completed economic restructuring studies and planning.

This service is only effective with the full involvement of the local Main Street Board, Economic Restructuring Committee, staff, local downtown development experts and local Main Street stakeholders.

Only designated VMS communities are eligible for this service. Application for this service is competitive. Service value estimated at $7,500.

Small Town Merchant Visits

The Virginia SBDC Small Town & Merchant Program is a comprehensive collection of workshops, hands-on initiatives and resources designed to address the specific needs of main street retail and restaurant businesses. Program staff deliver targeted, relevant guidance that business owners and managers can put to use immediately. Small Town & Merchant Program highlights include: individual, comprehensive retail/restaurant check-up; confidential, on-site business visits; and, before/after hours seminars. In addition, Program staff will provide a "Community Walk Through" survey of Main Street district to give an outsiders perspective of the how attractive the district is to potential visitors and customers.

This service is provided for and requires the participation of Main Street district retail and restaurant owners.

Only designated VMS communities are eligible for this service. Application for this service is competitive. Service value estimated at $1,000.

Virginia Main Street At-A-Glance

	New Main Street	Mature Main Street	Affiliate
Requirements			
Use Main Street Approach	X	X	X
Independent Downtown Organization	X	X	Any organization
Traditional Main Street District	X	X	
Sustainable Program Funding	X	X	
Employ Executive Director	X	X	
Provide Clerical Support	X	X	
Training and Progress Reporting	X	X	
Sign Letter of Agreement	Every year until mature stage	Once every three years	
National Main Street Community	Once every three years	Once every three years	
Services			
Reconnaissance Visit	X		
Organizational Visit	X		
Resource Team Visit	X		
National Main Street Center Membership	X		
Design Assistance	X	Limited	
Specialist Visits	X	If resources available	
Year End Assessments	X	As Needed	
Core Component Checklist	X	X	
Program Manager Meetings	X	X	
Highway Signage	X	X	
Public Relations	X	X	
Use of Main Street Name and/or Logo	X	X	
Work planning assistance	X	X	If resources available
Scholarships	X	X	If resources available
Main Street 101 Training	X	X	X
Topical Training	X	X	X
Regional Board Training	X	X	X
Remote Consultations	X	X	X
Resource & Information Sharing	X	X	X
Main Street Library	X	X	X

Talking Points

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Virginia Main Street Talking Points

- Developed by National Trust for Historic Preservation in the 1970s to save downtown districts from economic decline and physical demolition
  - Piloted in 3 communities in 3 Midwestern states
  - Success of program led to formation of National Main Street Center in 1980s (relationship with states is contractual)
  - Celebrates 30 years of Main Street in 2015
- While the Trust was interested in saving buildings, they knew they could only do so by saving their purpose or creating a new purpose -- economic development in the context of historic preservation
- Strategy is ***Four Point Main Street Approach*™** based on:
  - **Organization**—building broad-based partnerships to manage the revitalization effort
  - **Promotion**—creating and marketing a positive image for downtown
  - **Design**—improving the physical environment of downtown
  - **Economic Restructuring**—strengthening and expanding downtown's existing economic assets
- Now implemented in more than 2,200 communities in 40+ states, plus neighborhood programs in Boston, San Diego, Baltimore, Portland and Washington D.C.
- More than $50.1 billion of public and private investment nationwide to date in Main Street communities.

Additional information is available on the National Main Street Center website at www.mainstreet.org.

State Background

- Program is housed in the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development. Visit our website at : www.dhcd.virginia.gov/MainStreet

Virginia Main Street Talking Points

- Virginia Main Street was 15th state to become part of program (1985)
  - There are currently 25 designated Main Street communities in Virginia
  - Communities are competitively selected
  - There are also more than 70+ DHCD Commercial District Affiliates selected in a noncompetitive process
- Main Street program state staff provide: training, technical assistance, networking opportunities, access to state and national experts, customized design assistance and ongoing public relations and marketing
- Economic impact statistics from program inception in 1985 through year-end 2014:
  - *$848 million of private investment in building rehabilitations
  - *7,398 building rehabilitation projects
  - *6,160 new, expanded or retained businesses
  - *18,935 new or retained jobs
  - *938,370 volunteer hours (1992-2014), valued at over $21 million

Virginia Main Street Communities

Abingdon (2007)
Altavista (2007)
Ashland (2013)
Bedford (1985)
Berryville (1992)
Blackstone (2007)
Bristol (2011)
Culpeper (1988)
Farmville (2011)
Franklin (1985)
Fredericksburg (2013)
Harrisonburg (2004)
Hopewell (2011)
Luray (2004)
Lynchburg (2000)
Manassas (1988)
Marion (1995)
Martinsville (1995)
Orange (1992)
St. Paul (2011)
South Boston (2004)
Staunton (1995)
Warrenton (1989)
Waynesboro (2000)
Winchester (1985)

Economic Benefits of Downtown

- Older buildings have unique and irreplaceable historic architecture.
- Downtown is often the community's largest employment center and a significant contributor to the local tax base.
- Revitalization encourages economic growth in an area of the community already served by infrastructure.
- Downtown businesses tend to be locally owned and thus give much more back to the community economically.
- For every $100 spent at a locally owned business, $68 stays within the community. For every $100 spent at a national chain, only $43 stays within the community.
- Renovating downtown commercial storefronts has been shown in four different statewide studies to result in long-term increase in sales; also employ local contractors using locally purchased materials.
- With new construction 50 percent of cost is labor and 50 percent materials; with rehabilitation 70 percent is labor (usually local) and 30 percent materials.
- The Iowa Main Street program estimates that for every year a downtown building sits empty, it costs the community over $222,000 in reduced economic activity; and every vacant upper-story apartment space costs the community roughly $40,000 in reduced economic activity.

Downtown Investment Pays Off

- For the **residents**…. more jobs, goods, services and housing
- For the **business person**…. more customers & sales
- For the **visitor**…more reasons to visit, spend more & stay longer

- For **elected officials & city leaders**… increased real property & sales tax revenue, industrial recruitment

Community Involvement

- Main Street works through public/private partnerships at the local level, making best use of the skills and abilities of the government and nonprofit sectors, working cooperatively with private businesses and individuals
- The program works in Virginia because communities use local initiative and resources to develop revitalization strategies following the Main Street Approach™
- The state program provides guidance and expertise in support of local efforts
- Use of volunteers is cost effective and ensures that residents have a say in downtown's development and a commitment to make it work. (As of 2013, volunteer time in Virginia is valued at $24.49 per hour.)

There's No Place Like Downtown!

- We need to preserve the distinctive architecture of downtown because it defines what makes each community unique – giving it a "sense of place" and identity
- Economic revitalization provides jobs and business ownership opportunities for local residents, particularly youth who may otherwise leave the community in search of employment
- Renewed vitality enhances community "quality of life"… more cultural and recreational opportunities, better schools, better libraries, more housing options – all in a setting of heritage preserved
- Downtown is "everyone's neighborhood" – open and inclusive