



# City Council Agenda Item Report

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**SUBJECT: Presentation and discussion regarding the Texas Main Street Program.**

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**1. BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

Historically, Main Street was any community's primary commercial hub. Downtown buildings usually had several tenants -- typically a ground-floor retailer and, frequently, several upper-floor offices or apartments. The presence of the post office, library, banks and local government offices added to the steady flow of people downtown, which Buda has maintained with its City Hall, Annex and Library. Main Streets served as the financial as well as social center of communities.

Changes in development patterns in post-World War II America negatively affected downtowns as businesses moved out to the Interstate and strip malls. Many buildings were shuttered in downtowns and they found themselves neglected & often forgotten. In some cases downtowns tried to directly compete with these new developments, with negative results. Businesses failed to change and adapt, leaving them without a role. As a result, the unique sense of place for most communities, including Buda, suffered.

Over the last 25 years, communities have taken a variety of approaches to reinvigorate their downtowns. These communities were motivated by desires to promote small business & entrepreneurialism, renewed interest in community history, a search to restore community identity & sense of place, and reprioritization of quality of life. The Main Street Program was born nationally as a technique to achieve such goals. To date, approximately 1,600 communities participate nationally in the program, a special initiative of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In Texas, the Texas Historical Commission serves as host for the state program, with 84 participating communities.

Buda, through both city and community initiatives, has taken a number of steps over its history to bring increased life and investment. These include, but are not limited to:

- Construction of the library in downtown
- Development of a Historic Resources Survey of the City
- Successful pursuit of getting downtown named to the National Register of Historic Places, along with a number of individual properties
- Construction and expansion of the City Hall in downtown
- Renovation of the City Hall Annex in downtown
- Construction of the gazebo

- Pursuit of enhancement grants for sidewalks, lighting and other downtown beautification
- Improvements to underground infrastructure
- Creation of the local historic district and Historic Preservation Commission
- Establishment of the Downtown Buda Merchants Association and their associated activities
- Establishment of the Farmers Market
- Promotion of festivals in and near downtown

**2. FINDINGS/CURRENT ACTIVITY**

Based on renewed interest in the community regarding the Main Street program, the attached presentation provides an overview of the Texas Main Street program in order to ascertain City Council's interest in exploring it further.

Staff has provided the links below for Council members and members of the public to learn more about specific aspects of the Main Street Program:

Texas Historic Commission Texas Main Street Program

<http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/texas-main-street>

National Trust for Historic Preservation National Main Street Program

<http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/>

**3. FINANCIAL IMPACT**

N/A

**4. ACTION OPTIONS/RECOMMENDATION**

City Council may discuss and provide direction if necessary.

**5. ATTACHMENTS**

Presentation