



# Is Main Street a Match for Buda?

*City Council*  
*March 5, 2013*



# What is Main Street?

- National template method of comprehensive downtown revitalization
- Place-based economic development
- Improving traditional business districts through design, marketing, business and job retention and creation, and organization
- Community-based program
- Some grant money available through Dept. of Ag, similar to Tx Capital Fund and CDBG, but no guarantees (don't join simply in hopes for outside grant funding)



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*real places telling real stories*



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.™*



# Why Are Main Streets Important?

- Historic center of community employment
- Reflection of community pride, image, prosperity & level of investment
- Ideal place for independent businesses
- 'Heart' of the community
- Tourist attraction—heritage tourism
- Sprawl reduction
- Protects commercial & residential property values
- Convenient
- Government & financial center of community
- Provides a place for the community to come together
- Represents a huge public and private investment



# Four-Point Approach

- **Organization/Political:** Managing and sustaining the process of building a vibrant downtown. Create partnerships and structure with many groups sharing an interest in downtown health work toward agreed upon vision
- **Promotion/Social:** Positioning downtown in a changing marketplace. Marketing a unified, quality image of the business district as the center of activities, goods and services
- **Design/Physical:** Using historic preservation and adaptive reuse to create a positive user and visitor experience. Includes design activities, building rehabs, ordinances, and effective planning.
- **Economic Restructuring/Economic:** Creating and maintaining an environment for business growth and job creation.



# Eight Principles

- **Comprehensive:** No single focus/issue can revitalize Main Street
- **Incremental:** Baby steps before walking. Start with basic, simple activities that demonstrate new things are happening to build support & momentum.
- **Self-Help:** No one else will save your Main Street. Local leadership must convince the community to support & become involved.
- **Partnerships:** Both public & private sector has vital interest in the district and must work together; must understand each others strengths & limitations



# Eight Principles

- **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets:** Capitalize on what makes the district unique and creates a sense of belonging.
- **Quality:** Shoestring budgets and “cut & paste” reinforce negative image. Concentrate on quality projects over quantity.
- **Change:** A carefully planned program with shift public perceptions and business practices to support and sustain the revitalization process. Changes are slow but definite.
- **Implementation:** Main Street must show visible results that can only come from completing projects. Frequent, visible changes are reminder that effort is succeeding.





# Critical Issues

- Requires support from public sector AND private sector, both inside and outside of the anticipated district
  - Corporate support for employee quality of life
  - Property owner support to stabilize/raise property values
  - Without city support, doubtful that any revitalization program will achieve long-lasting success
- Local government can provide program with staff, financial & info resources, tech skills & leadership
- Local government cannot prop the program up on its own—it requires buy-in and private support for long-term sustainability

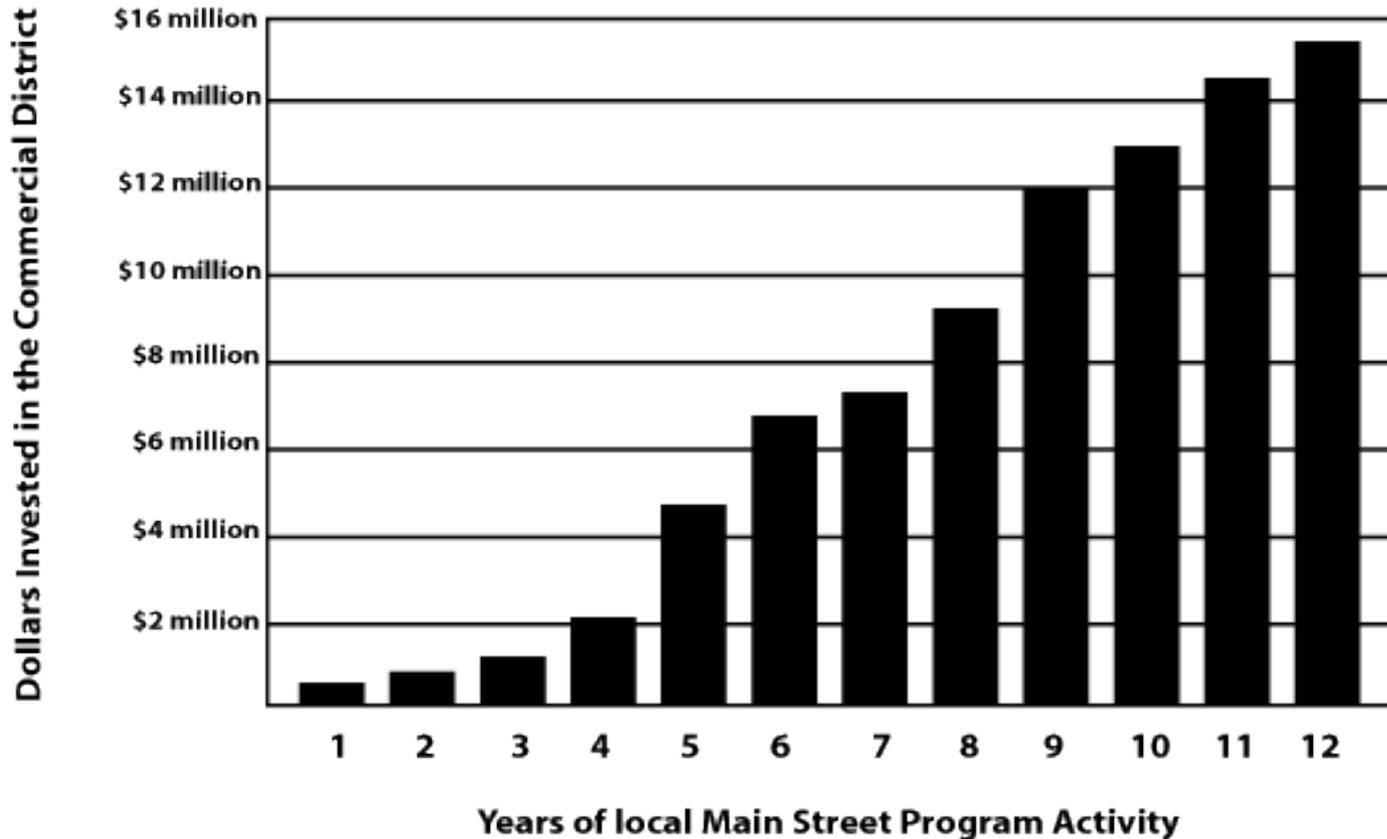


# How about tangible results?

- According to the National Main Street Center, between 1980 and 2011 Main Street districts have seen the following:
  - 104,961 net business gain
  - 448,835 net job gain
  - 229,164 building rehabilitations
  - \$53.6 billion reinvested in districts from public and private sources
  - Reinvestment ratio of \$18 to \$1 (for each dollar used to operate a Main Street program, \$18 generated within the community)
- \* This may also be affected by other economic forces that play a role in improvements

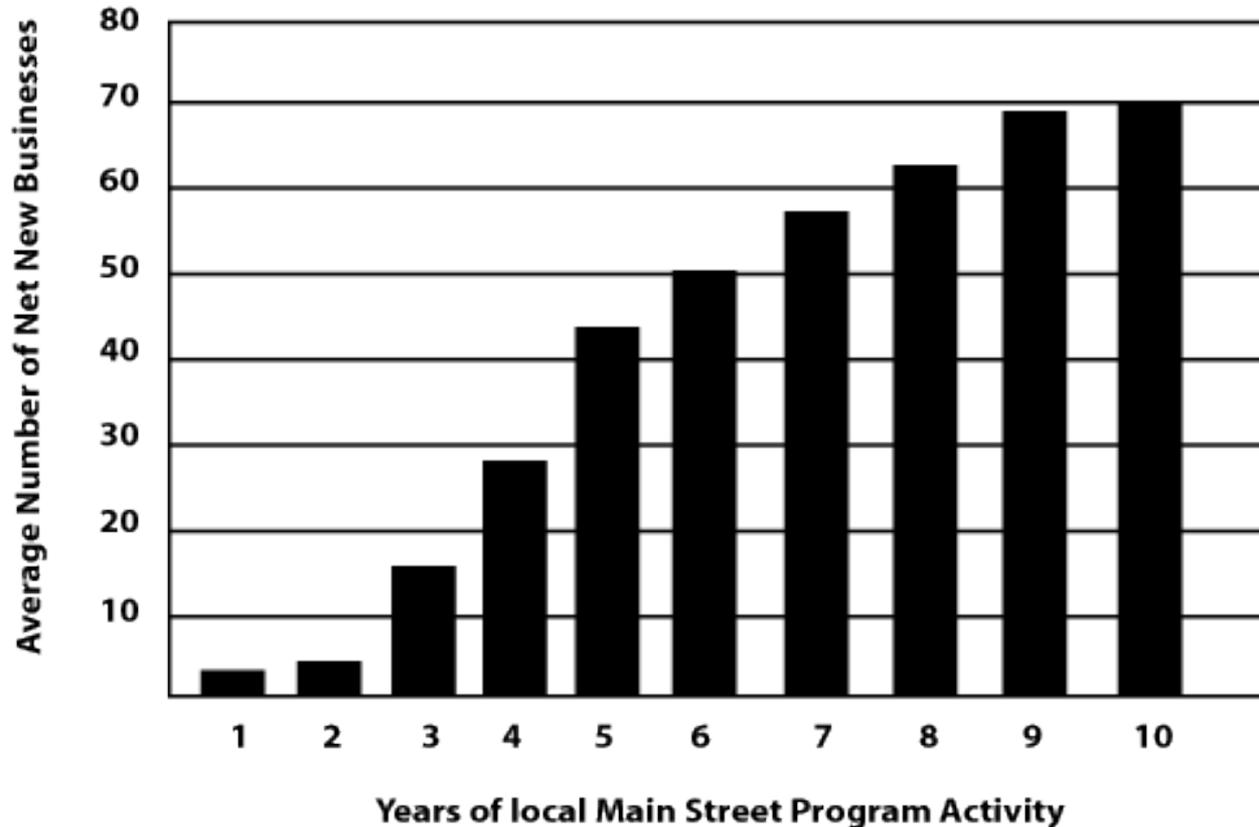
# Reinvestment Trends

## Reinvestment on Main Street Average investment in the physical environment



# Business Growth Trends

**Business Growth from the Main Street Program**  
Cumulative net business growth in communities participating in the Main Street program





# Potential Drawbacks

- Not fully-comprehensive: doesn't address social issues like housing, employment, poverty and crime (not a particular issue in Buda)
- 4-Point Approach limits flexibility regarding organizational structure – Must adhere to all four points regardless of community relevance
- Organization can sometimes lose focus and fail to maintain control if Board leadership is weak
- Requires a large volunteer base to support independent committees & other activities, particularly when competing for volunteers with other organizations
- Ability to raise funds – 40% of Main Street cities cite this as major challenge



# What can cause it to fail?

- Fundraising and financial stability of organization
- Structure
- Lack of program flexibility
- Lack of local commitment of time and resources
- **Unattainable community expectations for a 'quick fix'**



# Steps Involved

- Setting up the organization
  - 12 months—DO NOT RUSH
  - Create steering committee
  - Education on Main Street Approach
  - Define boundaries
  - Establish preliminary operating budget
  - Choose an organization to house the program
  - Reach out to other organizations
  - Begin securing funds—need diverse sources
  - Draft Articles of Incorporation & Bylaws
  - Find appropriate office location
- If a completely standalone program, don't hire a director until the board, committee structure and work plans are in place and after the program has developed a fund-raising plan that will cover operational expenses, with funding secured for 3+ years.



# Housing the Program

- Best as a standalone organization, but not always possible—especially in smaller cities
  - Can solely focus on being the commercial district's champion
  - Better poised to focus on all 4 points rather than the interest of the hosting entity
  - Has been housed in city gov't and existing nonprofit organizations
  - Hosting in city gov't gives employee access to benefits, but status of program may be jeopardized with each new administration
  - Some cities 'sponsor' the Main Street Director, but he/she is assigned and responsive to the Main Street Board



# Office Space

- Should be in prominent area of the commercial district to set up a welcoming office
- Avoid a governmental building—can create perception that it is a government program. Revitalization effort needs to be perceived as a private, community-based program with a mission distinct from the government and other local organizations
- Location needs to communicate the organization's independence



# Role of Executive Director

- Coordinating activities with Board & volunteers
- Facilitate work planning
- Support/uphold Board decisions
- Public relations
- Working with business & property owners (be highly visible)
- Handle administrative tasks with the officers/Board
- Build coalitions with gov't officials and other entities
- Educate stakeholders on the 4-point approach
- Motivate, develop & manage volunteers
- Regular communication
- Attend lots of meetings
- Provide technical assistance
- Organization should not overly-rely on the director



# Structuring the position

- Small towns of less than 5,000 often have part-time director—not recommended due to burn-out
- Splitting the position as a hybrid
  - Common for smaller cities
  - Most frequently with planning, economic development or visitor services
  - Can strengthen partnership with city along with better access to funds, supplies, benefits
  - Have to manage time to do both jobs justice
  - Stakeholders may get confused about the individual's role in the community
  - Director may have less direct contact
  - Public may not see Main Street as an independent, community-based organization



# Applying to be a Main Street City

- LOI due in mid-May (does not obligate the city)
- Applications due End of July
- October THC vote on applicants
- January 1<sup>st</sup> official entrance
- Applicant:
  - Can be stand-alone org. with city providing a portion of program funding (typical for urban applications and must be justified) or
  - Part of City gov't with director a city employee and board an Advisory Board to provide support, fundraising & advocacy (typical for smaller cities)
- Hiring process for manager should not commence until after Commission vote
- Up to five cities can be added each year
- Requires a 3-year commitment to full staffing
- 24 page application with narratives, maps, photos, letters of support, supplemental information

# What it takes

Commitment

Money

Knowledge

Working  
Together

Participation

Patience