



Inspiring Great Downtowns

Presentation & Discussion

Town of Haddam, Board of Selectmen

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CT Main Street Center

*An Introduction to Membership in the CT Main Street
Network*



CT Main Street Center



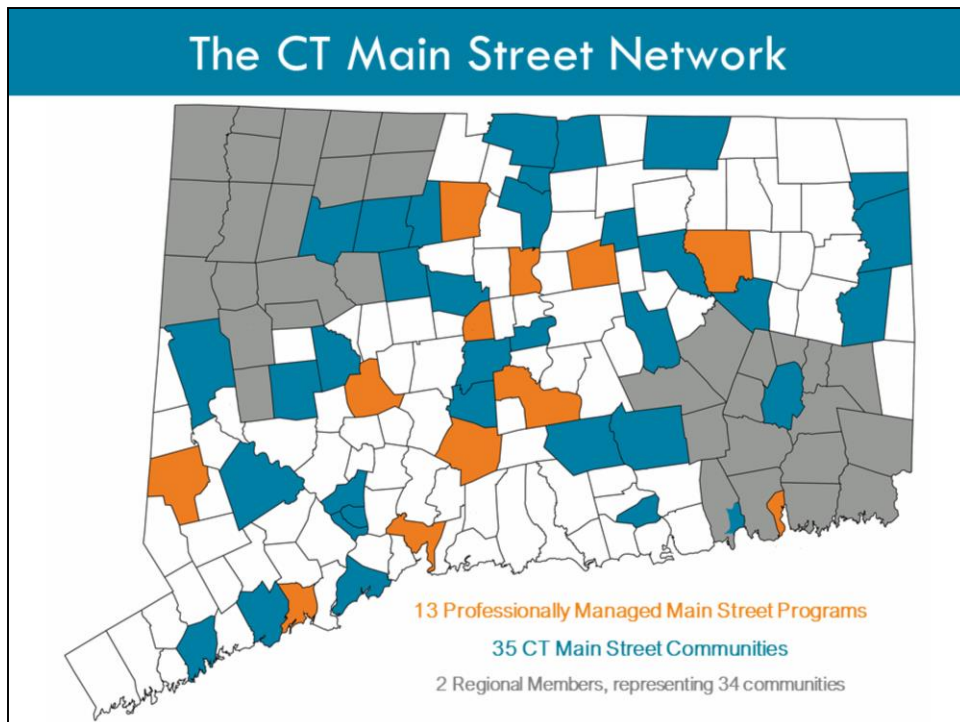
- Thought Leader & Advocate
- Education & Training
- Research / Access to information
- Expert one-on-one guidance
- Customized, a la carte services
- Publicity & Success Stories

ctmainstreet.org



CMSC's role and what we provide:

- **We are a Thought Leader and an Advocate**
 - **We provide Tools to Self-Guide**
 - **We offer Customized Solutions**
- *We help Connecticut create the places where people want to live.*
 - *We assist municipalities, downtown management organizations, small businesses and property owners be more knowledgeable.*
 - *We help communities understand how to bring about incremental & transformative economic development, appropriate to their communities.*
 - *We highlight and guide developers toward investment opportunities.*



The CT Main Street Network extends throughout our State, and this network includes professionally managed downtowns & neighborhood districts; municipal planning & economic development departments; and two regional organizations representing the interests of many towns.

We also have a **Professional Affiliate Membership** program for industry professionals. This Professional Affiliate Network provides our communities with access to specialized expertise relevant to downtown revitalization, preservation, economic and community development, real estate development, land use, transportation, marketing, and more.



The six components & corresponding elements necessary for a truly vibrant downtown that caters first to the needs of its citizens, as well as to those who may be visiting. These elements are necessary in order to attract residents, visitors, businesses, and investors.

These components work together to ensure sustainable success for downtown:

- Main Street Retail, Restaurants, and Small Businesses won't thrive without people living or working within walking distance
- People won't stroll, shop & dine without a 'sense of place': clean & attractive, walkable, interesting storefronts
- And the healthiest communities are those where the community is engaged in determining the future – those that are inclusive & welcoming, and where the environment is a priority and development is appropriate to the setting.



Every community and commercial district is different, with its own distinctive assets and sense of place. The Main Street Approach provides a practical, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is tailored to local conditions.

This framework is intended to restore value to downtown:

- Economic value
- Physical value
- Social value
- Civic value

It's referred to as the Main Street Four Point Approach – and these points must be worked on together to result in community transformation.



Main Street utilizes a preservation & place-based economic development strategy



Basic Principle

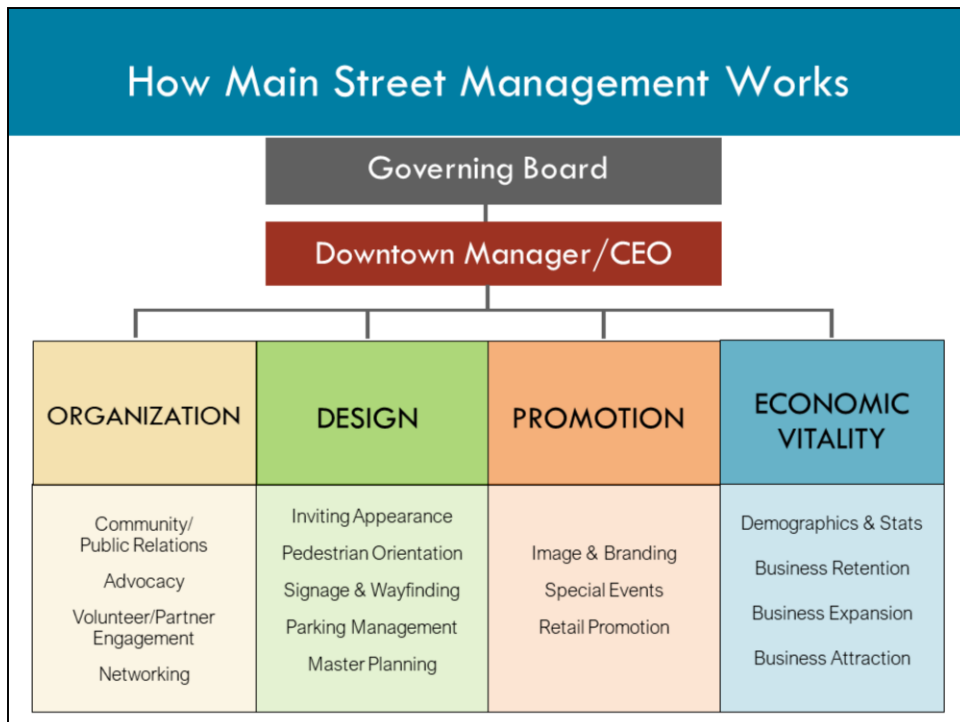
Revitalization of your downtown built around its unique natural and built environment.

- Most communities have plenty of plans and studies, but lack the capacity and organizational infrastructure to implement the recommendations.
- CT Main Street Center advises an organizing structure, that keeps you focused, around which *your own unique plan of action* is developed.



Much like a shopping mall has a management company which ensures its success, **downtown needs comprehensive management.**

This management function ensures that the 4 Point Approach is being implemented, and works to communicate effectively with public and private sector partners.



Local Main Street program’s board is representative of the community.

Start-up Phase: the 4 Point committee structure is typically grassroots oriented, with *volunteers implementing the work of the program.*

Growth Phase: a mature, higher performing program has built partnerships and secured its reputation as an effective downtown management program, so *more complex projects are often addressed by professional agencies and organizations working closely with the Main Street program.* Volunteers are still deeply involved on a project basis.

How Revitalization Works
Strategic Planning for Downtown

1. Understand Your Market
2. Develop the Vision
3. SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
4. Goal Setting
5. Work planning: Projects, resources & partners, timeline, budget
6. Implementation and communication

Developing your Main Street Action Plan begins with basic Strategic Planning for Downtown:

- **Understand the conditions on the ground (can be done simultaneously)**
 - **Understand your market:** Start with basic data: know your numbers.
 - **What do people want? Vision:** Declares your intentions for downtown / what does success look like? Should lead the way to any necessary planning & regulatory changes.
- Analyze your **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities & threats**
- **Goals:** developed out of SWOT analysis (unique to your downtown – begin with Clean, Safe, Attractive & Fun!).
- **Projects** will advance your goals, and speak to your markets and opportunities.



Niantic Main Street

Vision Statement

Downtown Niantic is an inviting seaside village easily accessible by car, foot, boat and train. It is a wonderful place to live, work and play where residents and visitors gather for specialty shopping, creative entertainment and arts, gourmet dining and water activities within a village that has recaptured its historic past.

Through a focus group model of visioning, the board of Niantic Main Street and invited representatives articulated their **Vision for Niantic Village**.

It is well-written, evocative, and specific to a unique place and, most importantly, it “Declares their intentions for downtown” (*residential, commercial, transit, arts, tourism*).

- It was quickly identified that zoning changes would be necessary to allow increased residential/mixed-use, outdoor dining, a shared parking agreement with multiple property owners in the Village Center.
- A clear vision statement is a tool that you can come back to time-and-time-again – to ensure that decisions made about downtown align with what the community wants.



Niantic Main Street, Inc.

Goals

1. Become the coordinating agency for the revitalization of downtown Niantic.
2. Improve the image of downtown Niantic.
3. Improve the competitiveness, selection, variety and quality of downtown Niantic businesses.

Using the work you've done, articulate your strategic goals.

*To assist you in developing your goals, consider **Strengths** that will minimize **Weaknesses**, while taking advantage of **Opportunities** to stave off **Threats**.*

With the knowledge shared from their SWOT Analysis, Niantic Main Street came to consensus on three major start-up/catalytic goals:

- 1) Establish the Niantic Main Street organization as the downtown management organization (*the voice for downtown*)
- 2) Enhance downtown's image and brand (*visual & marketing*)
- 3) Address the seasonal and under-performing business culture to make it a year 'round downtown for the community – thus, strengthening the local economy.

Niantic Main Street Action Plan – Year 1				
Goals	Organization	Design	Economic	Promotion
1) <i>Become the coordinating agency for the revitalization of Niantic Village</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop membership program for individuals & businesses Establish Speakers Bureau 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo inventory/audit Organize Spring Clean-Up Day Develop private fundraising campaign for Streetscape project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bldng/Prpty inventory Neighborhood (consumer) Survey Initiate zoning revision to expand residential options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop/launch website & social media Events calendar Establish retail advisory cmtee
2) <i>Improve the image of Niantic Village</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce newsletter, featuring businesses & partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Guidelines Master Streetscape-Phase 1 Support/promote Boardwalk project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate shared-parking dialogue with property owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch branding program Create new "maritime" event
3) <i>Improve the competitiveness, selection, variety and quality of Niantic businesses</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish monthly "Merchant Mixers" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft & shepherd outdoor dining ordinance Façade Improvement for 267-277 Main Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Survey Business networking & training program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build downtown customer DB Create retail tie-in event w/ movie theater

Niantic Main Street’s first year Action Plan has a good balance. I’ve highlighted:

- **Projects in blue:** get a handle on data, and conditions on the ground as a first start.
- **Projects (in red)** required coordination with municipal departments (guidelines, streetscape, façade program, zoning issues). This was an opportunity to establish trust and long-term relationships with Town staff.
- In order to establish trust and build relationships with small business owners, NMS kicked off with the **projects in orange**.

This summary sheet helps coordinate and attract partners & volunteers. The workplan discipline keeps you organized and helps measure the return on investment in a Main Street Program.

Sometimes the lead on a project will be the municipality, sometimes a citizen volunteer, and sometimes a local anchor institution or civic organization.

Higganum Center Study

Prepared for:
The Town of Haddam, Connecticut

Prepared by: Mullin Associates,
Inc. and LADA P.C. Land Planners

December 30, 2019



Higganum Center has been the beneficiary of a number of different studies.

This most recent study proposes strategies that can bring vibrancy to the Center, looked at through the lens of land use.

Higganum Center

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Natural beauty	Lacking Sense of Place
Historic character	Need for septic system
2016 streetscape project	Lack of pedestrian orientation
Higganum Center Study (2019)	Isolated, lacking connections
	Need restaurants, retail, reasons to stroll & stay
	Limited employment opportunities
	Need a variety of residential options
	Need for small business engagement
	"Higganum Center needs a voice"
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
Underutilized Town Green	\$\$\$ for environmental clean up?
Design Guidelines	Currently, 100% leakage for retail goods
Trail network connections	
Further protection of historic structures	
Mixed Use redevelopment of HES	
Relocation of Town Garage	
Repurposing of Rossi Property	
Remediation & repurposing of Scovill Hoe	
Complete Streets approach to Center	
Creation of a Merchants Association	

In CT Main Street Center's quick scan of the observations in this study, it was possible to pull out a quick SWOT analysis. This is by no means comprehensive. A true SWOT analysis will involve a number of people, representing various stakeholder groups.

What do ~~Millennials~~ want?

many people

- Smaller
- Denser
- More affordable
- Walkable neighborhoods
- Preferably close to transit
- Interesting amenities



Main Streets are walkable, transit-bountiful, mixed-use and diverse communities that can address these many issues at once. In addition to Millennials, they are also increasingly desired by Baby Boomers, families, and lots of people.

These types of diverse communities have also been shown to weather economic downturns far better than single-use communities, creating a win-win-win for young people, boomers, and local economies.

Benefits of Membership

“CT Main Street Center builds the capacity of communities, so they can lead themselves.”



- Main Street Forums for the 21st Century
- Annual visits & presentations
- Visibility & promotional opportunities
- Community Resource Center
- Eligibility for CT Main Street Awards of Excellence
- Government Relations & Advocacy

Benefits of Membership

As mentioned earlier, CT Main Street Center is a thought-leader and advocate.

- We offer a robust program of educational & networking programs
- We are available to member communities in person, by phone and by email
- We have a large circulation for our monthly e-newsletter and social media programs
- Our website features resources for communities
- Our annual awards of excellence raises the visibility of local efforts, as well as people and organizations throughout the state doing exemplary downtown work

Education & Tools to Self Guide



CT Main Street Network members are encouraged to take advantage of our many educational and networking programs. We believe strongly in learning from each other so, in addition to guest experts in various fields, we make sure we include plenty of time for networking and information-sharing at our events and programs.

We also archive our presentations and educational materials on our website, ctmainstreet.org, so you can review and share information locally.

Resources / Expertise



One of our best resources is our Professional Affiliate membership program. Our ***Here To Help*** reference guide lists industry experts, by category, who have elected to join this network.

These industry professionals provide communities with specialized expertise relative to downtown revitalization, historic preservation, economic & community development, real estate development, land use, transportation, branding & marketing, and more.

Customized Solutions

Tax Increment Financing:

A New Tool to Help Revitalize
Connecticut Communities



A Beginner's Guide to Using TIF
in Connecticut's Downtowns and Main Streets



Tax Increment Financing, or “TIF”, is a financing method used to catalyze economic development. *It uses anticipated future increases in property tax revenues to generate incremental tax revenues from a specific development project or projects across a designated district to help pay for current costs associated with development.* These can be public and/or private costs.

TIF is a local economic development policy and program that is enabled and guided by state law, Connecticut Public Act No. 15-57. It does not require State approval and its structure and details are determined by the local legislative process.

Government Relations & Advocacy

CMSC has championed:

- Tax Increment Financing Legislation
- Community Investment Act Protection
- Historic Preservation Tax Credit Expansion



Working alongside colleague organizations, like CCAPA, Partnership for Strong Communities, as well as with local communities, we have advanced:

- Tax Increment Financing enabling legislation;
- Protection of the Community Investment Act, which supports Historic Preservation, Open Space, Agriculture and Affordable Housing; and
- Expansion of the historic preservation tax credit, which is critical for the restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures.



CT Main Street Center’s founding sponsors are Eversource and DECD.

Our growth sponsors are United Illuminating (UIL Holdings) and CT State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)



Corporate Investors

M&T Bank





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