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Evaluation of Main Street Iowa's Rural Main Street program

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Evaluation of Main Street Iowa's Rural Main Street program

by

Donovan Gene Olson

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of MASTER OF COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL PLANNING

Major: Community and Regional Planning
Major Professor: Stuart H. Huntington

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This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

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has met the thesis requirements of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION
   Purpose of the Study 4
   Parameters of the Study 6
   Study Design 8
   Review of Major Sources 10
   Contribution to the Field of Planning 14

CHAPTER 2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN STREET
   Hey-Day of Main Street 16
   Decline of Main Street 18
   Historic Preservation Movement 22

CHAPTER 3. THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM
   National Trust for Historic Preservation 23
   National Main Street Center 28
   Main Street Iowa Program 37
   Rural Main Street Program 38
   Phases of Program Development 44

CHAPTER 4. PROGRAM EVALUATION
   Review of Evaluation Method 47
   Evaluation of the Rural Main Street Program 52

CHAPTER 5. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION
   Summary 76
   Conclusion 81

APPENDIX A. APPLICATIONS AND LETTERS 83

APPENDIX B. COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE 90

REFERENCES 97
Main street is an indelible image to any Iowan who has had the opportunity to traverse the state and visit the many small communities that it contains. Main Street is a place that has been used daily by many people for over a hundred years; a place where people work, shop, and a place people go to meet friends, neighbors and other members of the community. Main Street is also a place that reminds people of home. While many people make a main street community their home, many more have left those communities to seek opportunities elsewhere. But many of those people remember main street as it was when they were a child.

Much of what I remember of the main street in my community has disappeared or changed over time. In late summer, the family went downtown to buy shoes and clothes at main street stores in preparation for the upcoming school year. I was not old enough to recall the main street buildings as they were before metal slip covers and boarded-up windows, but I do remember the old parts of main street. Main street was lined with businesses with well-kept storefronts and big glass display windows filled with expensive merchandise. I remember the roll-up awnings, the cafe where a person could buy a small glass of Coca-Cola for a quarter and the buildings with tall ceilings covered with a mosaic of impressed tin panels. But as I grew older I abandoned main street looking for new and exciting places, places like the regional shopping malls in surrounding larger cities.

While many people gave up on their old main street commercial districts as a place to shop or socialize, many more people in Iowa communities have held onto these areas and understand the importance
of keeping them as an expression of a community's heritage and history. More people are beginning to realize that main street is a place worth saving. But just saving main street as a memorial to the past or preserving these areas as a museum is not the way Iowans do things. Recalling the practicality and sensibility of the rural way of life so engrained in the heart of every Iowan, these old commercial districts must have a use, and must serve a practical purpose, or they will be seen as a liability.

When these old buildings become a liability, rather than saving them, many communities are glad to remove the outdated main street commercial structures.

The Main Street program came to Iowa in 1986. Its primary objective was to preserve the history and integrity of the main street commercial district by improving the economic conditions within the district. In 1990, the Main Street Iowa program expanded to include not only small towns but very small towns. To do this, the Main Street program conducted a demonstration where it applied its revitalization methods for small communities to very small communities. It was my intent to see if this experimental venture on the part of Main Street Iowa and the National Main Street Center is working.

In 1996, Main Street Iowa celebrated its tenth anniversary. With ten years of experience at hand, the Main Street program continues to thrive with twelve Main Street communities, fourteen Rural Main Street communities and six partner communities. Is the Rural Main Street program working? What should happen in the future? What size communities will best use services provided by Main Street Iowa? Hopefully this thesis will answer some of those questions.
Main street has different meanings to different people. Main street can be a road through a community, it can be a name for a community's traditional downtown or it can be a place that contains a wealth of historic and architectural significance. Today, Main Street is the name of a program created to save and preserve all of the things mentioned in this paragraph.

During the years up until World War II, main street was a destination. People in and around a community recognized main street as the social, economic and political center of the community. It was intuitive that prosperity was directly tied to this community center.

The people who built main street over the course of a hundred years did not build it to be preserved and praised simply for its age. They built their downtown or main street for a functional purpose, in response to economic factors and the most modern technology of the time, and expected their main street to provide a return on their investment. The buildings on main street reflect the philosophies of planning and land use of a time when main street was designed to provide an environment for people rather than to accommodate automobiles. At a time when land was a seemingly limitless resource, main street businesses built their buildings as close to main street as possible to take advantage of the pedestrian traffic that the district generated. Being close together and possessing a limited amount of storefront, store owners often applied elaborate and up-to-date architectural detailing to the storefronts to make a statement and to attract attention. Over time, these buildings came to reflect character unique to its period of development, creating a story-book of downtown development over time.
World War II became a turning point for main street. After World War II, commercial district development changed from pedestrian-oriented development to favor auto-oriented development. Ease of automobile travel was the highest concern. Some main street buildings were modified or inappropriately altered. While many more were bulldozed to make room for modern facilities or parking lots.

Many main streets became faced with competition from shopping malls and strip malls who built on bare land and near highways. Main street commercial districts which were not able to compete fell into disrepair, or were inappropriately modified. The automobile continued to dominate commercial center planning and design.

In the past, preservation organizations were concerned only with creating museums and preserving famous person's homes. They soon realized the importance of preserving main street commercial districts when they became deteriorated and began to disappear. Preservationists at the National Trust for Historic Preservation responded to the deteriorating conditions of main street by creating the Main Street program in 1980. This program was intended to preserve the character and history of main street in communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000 by finding solutions to main street's depressed economy.

In 1985 political leaders in Iowa considered funding the Main Street program in Iowa to improve the economic conditions in the traditional downtown. In 1986, Governor Terry Branstad announced the creation of Main Street Iowa, and the selection of the first five communities in which to demonstrate this new program.

In 1990, there were sixteen Main Street communities in Iowa with populations of 5,000 to 50,000. That same year, Main Street Iowa and the National Main Street Center partnered together to begin a state-wide demonstration where the downtown revitalization principles used in
communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000 would be applied to very small towns with populations of under 5,000. Five pilot project communities were accepted that year.

Today, Main Street Iowa provides training and technical services to eleven small communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000 as part of its Main Street program, and fourteen very small communities with populations under 5,000 as part of its Rural Main Street program. In addition, Main Street Iowa provides limited training and technical services to five non-program communities called partner communities. Since 1986, ten past participating communities were unable to follow the Main Street revitalization principles and have since dropped from the program. All Main Street program, Rural Main Street program, partner and past participating communities are shown in Figure 1.

![Figure 1. All communities participating in the Main Street Iowa program from 1986-1996.](image-url)
Iowa Governor Terry Branstad refers to the Main Street Iowa program as the "best program we've got" and says that "we need more communities in it" (Evans, 1993). In addition, Main Street programs in other states consider the Main Street Iowa program one of the best state-wide programs in the nation (Evans, 1993). The selection of the Department of Economic Development as the parent organization is believed to be the primary reason for its success.

The researcher became interested in the program when he was hired as program manager for the Rural Main Street program in Ogden, Iowa, in August of 1995. The researcher soon became aware of the challenges faced by main streets in both small towns and very small towns as they tried to retain small businesses and compete with malls, marts and regional shopping centers for customers. It was his curiosity and desire to learn more about main street historically, architecturally and economically that led to this study.

The researcher traveled to many Main Street and Rural Main Street communities for workshops and training programs designed by Main Street Iowa for its program managers. Through these travels and his work, he noticed that the Rural Main Street program communities had two significant disadvantages as compared to the Main Street programs. First, the Rural Main Street programs had much smaller populations from which to draw volunteers to run and maintain the local program. Second, the Rural Main Street program communities operated on less staff and money than the small town programs. It was for these reasons that the researcher selected this research topic.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the demonstration project called the Rural Main Street program. This demonstration project, initiated
by Main Street Iowa and the National Main Street Center, was constructed to see if the revitalization principles created for communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000 would work for communities with populations under 5,000 in Iowa. The idea for creating this type of program and applying the Main Street revitalization techniques to these very small communities was not spontaneous or created by internal pressure to expand the program. It was driven by calls for help to Main Street Iowa from very small communities. Communities like Bonaparte, Iowa, who through grass-root efforts became self-initiated to the Main Street Iowa program and used the Main Street revitalization techniques to save their historic resources and improve their depressed economy (Buehler, 1996).

It was the intent of this research to (a) discuss the history, development, and decline of the traditional downtown, (b) discuss the creation of the historic preservation movement and the creation of the Main Street program, (c) evaluate the demonstration project called the Rural Main Street program, and (d) recommend a future direction for the Rural Main Street program.

The researcher evaluated the impact of the Rural Main Street program to determine whether it had been successful in its effort to revitalize the economy and preserve historic resources in participating communities. In order to measure the Rural Main Street program’s success, the evaluation compared the Rural Main Street program to the Main Street program. Data was collected that measured the activity of both programs. In addition, the data was treated with a per capita average to measure and estimate the impact on the respective programs per 1,000 people.

This evaluation uses concepts developed by James A. Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson’s book: Community Development in Perspective (1989). The book outlines three general dimensions of review: The function, phase,
and method of evaluation of community development (Christenson and Robinson, 1989):

1. The function discusses the purpose of the evaluation research. The function is defined in Chapter 1 as the purpose of the study.
2. The phase defines the point in time of the community development process at which the evaluation occurs. The phase dimension of the Main Street program is defined in Chapter 3.
3. The research method or logic reveals the evaluation design that is used in the evaluation process. Each dimension contains several sub-dimensions outlined in their respective sections. The method is outlined in Chapter 4.

Parameters of the Study

The selection of a model for evaluation became a primary force in creating research parameters. Finding a method to analyze the effects of Main Street Iowa's Rural Main Street program was a difficult task.

The Rural Main Street program does not lend itself well to analysis for three reasons. First, non-Main Street program communities do not keep intensive, up-to-date statistics on the downtown. Thus, it would be difficult to compare Main Street and non-Main Street program communities. Second, it would be difficult to determine if Main Street program communities would have functioned as well if they were not affiliated with Main Street Iowa. In addition, the uniqueness of each community's downtown, whether or not they belong to the Main Street program, makes it difficult to conduct a comparative study of individual participating and non-participating communities. Finally, the most important effects are qualitative and immeasurable, such as making the downtown a more pleasant place to be, re-focusing of community activity to downtown,
rehabilitating the character of historic buildings through quality design, and recreating a positive image for the downtown area.

The final decision was to conduct a comparative evaluation of the Rural Main Street program. The evaluation compares the Rural Main Street program, population 5,000 and under, to the Main Street program, population 5,000 to 50,000. The comparison categories are discussed below.

The research identified four general categories that were important to the success of the program. These were developed under the general goal and objective of the Main Street program and were used to evaluate the Rural Main Street program.

Goal and objective of the Main Street Iowa program (Main Street Iowa, 1996):

- **Goal**: Improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa’s communities by assisting selected communities to capitalize on the unique identity, assets and character of their downtown area.
- **Objective**: Foster economic development within the context of historic preservation.

Evaluation categories as identified by the research methodology:

- **Sustainability**: The ability of the program to sustain a long-term revitalization effort in the traditional downtown.
- **Volunteerism**: The ability of the program to involve local volunteers in a broad-based and community-wide revitalization effort in the traditional downtown.
- **Economic Impact**: The ability of the program to improve the economic activity in the traditional downtown.
• **Historic Preservation**: The ability of the program to promote preservation and preservation planning to preserve the history and the character of the traditional downtown.

**Study Design**

Chapter 1 is an introduction. This chapter outlines the purpose of the study, or what Christenson and Robinson (1989) define as the function of evaluation research. This chapter includes a summation of the purpose of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a brief history of the small town traditional commercial district, and discusses the major technological changes that led to the decline of the traditional downtown. This chapter continues with an overview of the historic preservation movement and begins to present the creation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Chapter 3 continues with discussion of the evolution of the nationwide Main Street program from a preservation movement to the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Main Street Center, the parent organization of the Main Street Iowa program. The study reviews the creation and development of the Main Street Iowa program. It continues by discussing the development of the small town program in Iowa and its evolution into the current Main Street Iowa program and the creation of the Rural Main Street program. This chapter presents Christenson and Robinson's (1989) second dimension or phase of the community development evaluation process and how it relates to the development of the local Main Street program in the evaluation. The phase dimension defines the chronological period that each program goes through, and discusses the types of evaluation that can occur during these periods.

Chapter 4 presents an evaluation of the subjects by analyzing primary and secondary data collected from all participating Main Street and Rural
Main Street program communities in Iowa. Two data groups will be used in the evaluation. The evaluation required all program communities to be currently part of the Main Street Iowa program. The first data group includes all Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities in the Main Street Iowa program. The second data group includes all Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities participating in the Main Street Iowa program from 1991-1996. In addition, a per capita average was applied to evaluate the impact in relation to community population. This chapter follows Christenson and Robinson's (1989) method or the third dimension of quantitative evaluation method for community development.

The evaluation of the Rural Main Street program performed by the researcher will attempt to follow the professional standards developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (Christenson and Robinson, 1989). The standards required by this Joint Committee call for evaluations to have four features: Utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. These points are as follows:

- **Utility.** This research was intended to inform researchers, individuals, volunteers and professionals about the success of Main Street Iowa demonstrations in the area of economic development within the context of historic preservation.
- **Feasibility.** The research was intended to be a general and brief study of whether the Main Street approach can be effectively applied to very small towns using readily available statistics and information.
- **Propriety.** The research was conducted in a fair and ethical manner.
- **Accuracy.** The study attempts to show that the study of the application of the Main Street revitalization to the Rural Main Street program will yield accurate and usable information for those who may be interested in the results.
The evaluation measures the success of the Rural Main Street program by comparing the Main Street and Rural Main Street program data utilizing a specific method of evaluation. The evaluation framework is as follows:

- Review of the evaluation method.
- Evaluation of Rural Main Street program in four categories:
  Sustainability, volunteerism, economic impact and preservation.

Chapter five will provide recommendations for future directions and concluding remarks.

Review of Major Sources

The researcher began the study by reviewing historic preservation publications that discussed the history of main street as a traditional downtown commercial district. In order to fully understand the traditional downtown and how it functions as a commercial district, one must understand the downtown's historical development, its architectural tradition and the general reasons for its decline. This review helped the researcher to gain knowledge and understanding of how the traditional downtown developed over time. The following publications were major contributors to the historical overview of the downtown in Chapter Two.

*Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* by James Marston Fitch defines preservation as an activity and a movement. He discusses the economic sense of preservation and outlines techniques for reusing and restoring old buildings. Articles in the book *Old & New Architecture: Design Relationship* by Robert Burley, Giorgio Cavaglieri and Louis Sauer discuss the harmony and relationship of new and old buildings and how old buildings contribute to the character, importance and sense of
community in the urban environment. **Main Street: The face of Urban America** by Carole Rifkind outlines the origins of main street, its development over time and the effects of changes to main street as the economic and social center of a community. **Lost America: From the Atlantic to the Mississippi** by Constance Grief chronicles the loss of numerous buildings of historical and architectural significance and attempts to raise our consciousness about old buildings as representations of our culture and our past. **Remembering Main Street: An American Album** by Pat Ross provides a brief history of main street USA and ten prototypical main streets in the country. The article **Appreciating Small Town Commercial Buildings** by Patricia Duncan published in *Preservation in Print* provides an abstract view of the prototypical development of the buildings along main streets found in America. **An Iowa Album: A Photographic History, 1860-1920** by Mary Burnett attempts to put into perspective the development of main street into much of what it is today.

Research included review of National Trust for Historic Preservation and National Main Street Center Publications. After a general understanding of the development and demise of main street was established, an overview was developed that discussed the beginnings of the preservation movement, the creation of the first pilot program and finally, today's Main Street Iowa program. These publications contributed to Chapter Three and chronicled the creation and development of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Main Street Center and the Main Street Iowa program.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation published several publications that provided useful information about the Program. **The History of the National Trust for Historic Preservation 1963-1973** by Elizabeth Mulloy outlines the historical developments that led to the creation of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. **Main Street: Open**
for Business by Linda S. Glisson from the National Main Street Center discusses the creation and development of the program and discusses the outcome of the initial pilot program. This publication profiles six state-wide programs and their achievements until 1984. Revitalizing Downtown by Kennedy Lawson Smith from the National Trust for Historic Preservation is the "Bible" of the local Main Street organizations. This publication, written in 1988, discusses the historical development of the program and defines the elements of the Main Street Four-Point approach as they relate to local programs. The Main Street Approach: Making Downtowns Come Alive! by Elizabeth Jackson and Doug Loescher of the National Main Street Center is an abstract of the National Trust for Historic Preservation publication Revitalizing Downtown. This publication outlines how the Main Street Four-Point approach affects positive economic and historic transformation in the downtown. The 1996 National Main Street Network Membership Directory by the National Trust for Historic Preservation provided an inventory of participating states and communities.

The National Main Street Center publishes a monthly newsletter in which information is distributed to local programs throughout the nation. Main Street: How Main Street Programs Evolve and Change discusses the historical development of local programs through time and pin-points specific phases in their development.

Main Street Iowa produced several publications that provided resource information for this study. These publications discuss community histories, community economic impacts and community activities of the participating communities.

Celebrate the Spirit: Main Street Iowa by Main Street Iowa is a Ten Year Anniversary edition that discusses the progress of all Main Street program communities and outlines past achievements and future directions of the Main Street Iowa program. The Main Street Iowa Five Year Report
briefly introduces each Main Street community and provides data concerning the program's economic impact at its five year anniversary. Several editions of the *Main Street Messenger*, the newsletter of the Main Street Iowa program, were studied to get an understanding of the activities within the Main Street Iowa program. The newsletter provided studies that were useful to the program evaluations in Chapter Four.

The researcher designed and mailed a local program questionnaire to all active Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in Iowa. The questionnaire was designed to be answered by the local program manager. It was intended to identify the relationship between local programs and other local organizations, record the employment of local program managers, reveal local commitment to program activities and show the cooperation of local programs with other organizations.

Two publications focusing on economic development provided resource information that guided the evaluation of the Rural Main Street program. *Community Economics: Economic Structure and Change in Smaller Communities* by Ron Shaffer provided guidance and reference while defining the role of Main Street economic development strategies. *Community Development in Perspective* by James A. Christenson and Jerry W. Robinson helped to define the concepts of community development and provided guidance for the comparative evaluation in Chapter Four.

Several publications by the U.S. Department of the Interior were reviewed and provided information and guidance in the study of the National Register of Historic Places. *National Register Bulletin Number 16* provided information and an historical perspective concerning National Register listings and how to complete the National Register of Historic Places forms. The *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation defines the purpose and provisions of the certified local governments.
Contribution to the Field of Planning

The Main Street and Rural Main Street programs make important contributions to the field of planning. Noting the importance of economic development to planners Friedman and Darragh (1988), discuss that planners:

- are often leaders in economic development, (planners) ...must...
- understand the importance of a strong economy, familiarize themselves with approaches to enhancing community growth, and be aware of the impact of physical development on community economic health (Friedman and Darragh, 1988, p.287).

Thus, Friedman and Darragh (1988) establish a dependent relationship between the activity of planning in communities and programs designed to improve economic conditions in those communities.

Not only must planners understand the economic development process and its tools and methods, they must also depend upon this knowledge to direct their physical planning efforts.

The Main Street program, in effect, is a tool that can be used by planners to control, manage and guide growth of commercial activity in a community. When a community begins its Main Street program, it makes a commitment to redeveloping its old commercial center. The program encourages the improvement of existing and location of new commercial activity in the towns old commercial district. This act of reusing existing buildings in the old downtown decreases the burden on communities to build new infrastructure, and encourages appropriate land use by encouraging commercial activity to locate in one centralized location.

Hollander, Pollack, Reckinger and Beal (1988) discuss the trend in the 1970's to focus on growth management. In their article, they claim that
growth management “has as much to do with maintaining a desired quality of life as with giving order to growth.” By maintaining and reusing existing old downtown buildings through preservation of the historic commercial center, the demand for new infrastructure and land for development is lessened. When the burden to create new development is lessened, development that tends to concentrate around the periphery of a community can be decreased. In this context, the Main Street program can be considered a growth management tool used by planners and city officials to create a positive commercial redevelopment policy in the downtown.

Historic preservation thus becomes a growth management tool. Historic preservation contributes two things to the field of planning and growth management. First, historic preservation preserves tangible remnants of a community’s past and, through this element, strives to preserve what Pollack, Reckinger and Beal (1988) describe as “a way of life that is the Achilles heel of growth management.” Secondly, historic preservation reduces the need to expand infrastructure by reusing old infrastructure, thus reducing the need to provide new development services on the outer fringes of the community. Not only does preservation of old commercial buildings save tangible elements of our past, it also conserves energy in the built environment and ultimately maintains the quality, character, and way of life of a community’s traditional downtown.
CHAPTER 2
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAIN STREET

It was called Towne Street when it was a single wilderness road...But as Main Street, it was uniquely American, a powerful symbol of shared experience, of common memory, of the challenge and struggle of building a civilization (Carole Rifkind, 1977, p.xi).

Hey-Day of Main Street

Main street, or the traditional downtown, is much different than the one which existed around, or before, the turn-of-the-century. At the turn-of-the-century, main street to most people was the heart of a town. It held most of the significant architectural resources of the community; commercial buildings, manufacturing buildings, civic structures, churches and more. A traveler or a new person in a community would go to main street to orient himself to that community.

Main street was the commercial center of a community. Main street was where a person would go to trade, to socialize, and to find excitement. A single operator provided telephone services for the community. Many grocery stores offered goods that were stored and displayed in barrels, jars, large bins or sacks, as individual packaging did not develop until after 1900. Cash seldom changed hands. Instead, goods were charged to a weekly or monthly charge account. Customers negotiated the best price they could extract from the clerk (Duncan, 1996).

Traditional downtown buildings of the late 19th century shared various common characteristics. The buildings covered all available land adjoining the sidewalk or street and spreading all the way to the property line. Many a building had architectural ornament only on the facade, except in cases where the building was on the corner lot, which allowed for
ornament on its side elevation. The late 19th century saw the development of a three part approach to the placement of ornament on the building. The first floor included the treatment of the first floor shop front, decoration of the upper story wall surface above the shop, and the capping of the whole with an ornamental cornice (Duncan, 1996).

Transportation shaped late 19th century communities. These communities developed at a time when the locomotive and the horse and buggy were the dominant transportation modes throughout the country. These modes of transportation also defined the evolution of the traditional downtown. Commercial buildings were constructed close together and were grouped around a courthouse, along a transportation route or near a train station (Duncan, 1996). Main street was usually teeming with activity. Merchants traveled to the station to pick up orders from the railroad, farmers came to town to do business or market their crops, locals and rural residents came to main street to purchase goods and services.

The railroad depot came to be seen as an important civic structure. Depots were observed as being the community's gateway to the world. It was a place of activity and where visitors most often entered into a community. The location of the depot influenced the location of the community. Often many towns developed around the depot, which was usually located at one end of the main street. If the depots came later, they often located very near the community's downtown. The direct context of the train depot characteristically included hotels, blacksmith shops and restaurants (Grant, 1978).

Main street was often the only place for an entrepreneur to set up a business. There was no other logical place to locate a business. Agglomeration of commercial activities and transportation networks made main street the only profitable place to locate. Add to that transportation limitations set by the horse-and-buggy, and main street was a self-made
monopoly. It was likely that business owners believed that locating their store on main street would assure economic prosperity.

In spite of this confidence, merchants could not predict the future, nor the direction development would take in the future. Progress took development away from the heart of the city and with it, the shoppers. These changes would challenge even the most stable economic base of once-thriving central business districts (Bennett, 1990).

Decline of Main Street

While many believe that main street began to decline after World War II, decline of the traditional downtown can also be traced back to the turn of the century and the public's desire for new technology and new types of transportation; namely, the automobile and the safety and efficiency improvements of new highway systems of post World War II development. These changes and improvements, intended to improve the lives of people, had an adverse effect on main street in many communities.

During the period following World War II, the traditional way of life on main street was dramatically altered in many communities. Troops returning after the end of World War II created an unprecedented demand for housing, goods and services. These returning troops desired a life filled with all the excitement they had experienced as soldiers and rejected returning to the old lifestyle they and their families had experienced during the Great Depression. They wanted a new house in the suburbs, financed by their G.I. loans, and a new way of life that represented regeneration and rebirth brought about by the end of the War. They found what they wanted in the suburban Levittowns built specifically for them, drove their automobiles down new highways and purchased needed goods and services in suburban shopping malls and shopping centers.
Fitch (1990) notes that mechanization made it possible for the unprecedented fluid movement of people and goods, allowing commercial and industrial activities that historically located in the central city to move out; followed closely by populations connected with those activities. New homes and businesses chose to locate in the outlying areas of the cities (Glisson, 1984).

The automobile drew activity out of town. By the 1950's, shopping centers dominated retail trade and impoverished many downtown merchants. With the development of the interstate highway system, main street was no longer the place at the end of the road (Rifkind, 1977).

The creation of the interstate highway system and subsequent growth of suburban communities transformed the way in which Americans live, work, and spend their time leisure time (National Main Street Center, 1988). With improved transportation routes, people found it easier to travel longer distances to work and shop. Even rural residents who once considered main street the only place to purchase goods, services and entertainment, were able to experience regional shopping malls and retail centers. They found these destinations to hold more variety, discount prices, unlimited product supply and numerous exciting experiences not available on main street. This experience was designed by shopping mall management specifically for auto-bound shoppers (National Main Street Center, 1988).

Peoples shopping habits changed. Rather than riding, walking or driving to the traditional downtown, shoppers found it easier and more efficient to drive to malls and regional shopping centers to purchase goods and services. The traditional downtown was not able to provide the ease of travel, the variety of goods, and the exciting experiences that the malls and shopping centers had to offer. Business in the traditional downtown declined.
With fewer customers, merchant sales dropped. As time went on and these factors multiplied, they adversely affected commerce on main street. Property values and sales tax revenues dropped. Within time, neglected buildings were boarded-up, storefronts emptied and trash strewn streets began to create the perception that nothing was happening downtown (National Main Street Center, 1988).

The face of main street changed. Politicians and community leaders, eager to encourage commercial development, ignored the historic and architectural value of main street commercial buildings and encouraged old buildings to be replaced with new buildings. As Constance Grieff (1971) notes;

The insatiable democratic drive for commerce driven by economic factors, less than the obsolescence of buildings, created tax policies and governmental regulations concerning real estate that encouraged the replacement of once noteworthy buildings by newer and larger structures that better fit contemporary commercial activity (Grieff, 1971, p.91).

Because of the cumulative effects of aging buildings, improvements in transportation, and changing shopping habits, traditional downtowns around the country were dying. People soon perceived the downtown as obsolete, ugly, impractical, and unfit for modern society (Rifkind 1977). Many believed that main street would never survive, that the old commercial centers were unfit for commerce, and that traveling to regional shopping centers was the way of the future.

With new retail and service centers popping up, people continued to travel to the outer fringes to shop. To cope with the loss of shoppers, many main street building owners who stayed on main street chose to modernize their stores in an attempt to attract more retail activity. Sometimes merchants and development groups initiated grand efforts to revive their
downtowns. Many believed that in making their old downtowns look simplified, sleek and modern, they could duplicate the success of the new retail centers in the outer fringes.

Main street business owners initiated changes that often mimicked the look of shopping malls. They believed that by imitating their competition - the shopping malls - they could halt the decline. But main street buildings did not adapt well to this type of change. These buildings, with their narrow, deep floor plan, tall glass storefronts and masonry walls did not accept the modernizations applied to their interiors and exteriors.

Main street buildings, remade to mimic shopping malls and retail centers, lost their historic integrity and character. Main street became a clutter of metal slipcovers, poor signage, altered windows and other inappropriate modifications. The result was a traditional downtown with the same buildings, stripped of architectural elements, with their visual and historic character degraded or destroyed. Instead of improving main street's appearance or economic stability, these misguided efforts merely blurred the distinction between the traditional downtown and competing retail shopping centers. In trying to save the traditional downtown, main street merchants denied the qualities that made main street unique, gave it character, and allowed it to function in its own way as a commercial district (Glisson, 1984).

Main Streets across the country became recognized as being full of modified buildings that could not compete with the malls and shopping centers for customers. So called improvements ignored the traditional downtown's historic assets. They failed to realize that the wide range of problems in the downtown included declining economic conditions and a lack of a cooperative, organized effort among main street businesses, local government, local leaders and citizens of the community to improve the
appearance and the economic conditions of the traditional downtown. (Glisson, 1984).

Historic Preservation Movement

The health and vitality of main street waned in even the strong communities through the 1950's, 60's and 70's. While many main streets lost the battle to retain their traditional buildings and business practices, there were some that were able to survive and retain elements of their historic past. Even these, however, were in a state of physical decline and disrepair.

The historic preservation movement, particularly in regards to the traditional commercial district, developed as a reaction to contemporary development and change that ignored the character and architectural heritage that developed in communities over the last one hundred years. The pedestrian-oriented environment of main street is often imitated, but cannot be duplicated by strip malls and shopping centers designed specifically to accommodate the automobile.

Today, many communities are recognizing and reasserting the value of the historic fabric in their traditional downtowns. They are beginning to see these resources as assets rather than liabilities. A number of these communities are starting or are in the process of establishing historic districts and adding properties to the National Register of Historic Places. Other communities are looking to programs which specifically address the economic condition of the traditional downtown as a solution to the problem of deterioration of commercial buildings. The key to preserving the historic character of main street depends on taking the correct steps to preserve the character and architectural heritage of the traditional commercial district.
CHAPTER 3
THE MAIN STREET PROGRAM

National Trust for Historic Preservation

In the past several years, the historic preservation movement has gained significant ground in its move to save valuable historic buildings, structures and sites. But the term preservation until only recently has meant saving and restoring buildings of national significance and turning them into museums where citizens could come for inspiration (Mulloy, 1976). The definition was not usually associated with a common commercial district and was rarely associated with a main street in any community.

The historic preservation movement began in the United States with efforts of private groups such as the Mount Vernon Ladies Association and their preservation of George Washington's Mount Vernon home in 1858 (Mulloy, 1976). Their goal was simple: to protect and preserve the home of America's most famous President. As time moved on, the preservation movement began to expand. Soon sites connected with a past period of time, such as Williamsburg, Va., were considered to have historic significance. The expansion continued to include novelties, such as Henry Ford's Greenfield Village, buildings from contrasting times and locations interpret numerous historic periods from our past. The work of preservation was regarded as the work of historians and antiquarians, or a diversion of the well-to-do. The idea of saving buildings from the past, not connected with famous people, could not be comprehended by post-war modern thinkers and was considered an obstacle to progress (Mulloy, 1976).

After the turn-of-the-century, a number of people believed that an organization had to be created to preserve buildings that allowed us to
remember our past. As a result, the National Park Service, created in 1916 by an act of Congress, was charged to promote and regulate the use of federal areas such as national parks, monuments and reservations:

> to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations (Mulloy, 1976, p.6).

This new legislation not only empowered the National Park Service to take over sites administered by other departments, but created an impetus and growth in preservation legislation at the state and local level (Mulloy, 1976). Soon the Federal government realized the need for an agency to oversee the federal preservation activities.

Even with the stand-still of preservation activity during World War II, preservationists realized that in order to be successful in preservation efforts, they would have to form an organization committed to preservation of our cultural resources. In 1947, delegates met to create a private, non-governmental organization that would be more successful in coordinating future preservation efforts. This organization would enlist voluntary support, handle emergencies in a more efficient way and act as a liaison between public and private agencies. On October 26, 1949, President Harry S. Truman signed the congressional charter creating the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Mulloy, 1976).

After World War II the United States went through a period of purging itself of the old and replacing it with new. This period of renewal was disastrous to the character and identity of communities and their main streets across the country. It seemed at that time the destiny of our historic resources inside and outside old commercial centers was controlled by how fast these old buildings could be bulldozed down for parking lots. But there
were communities that resisted this fate. Many communities valued their historic resources as well as their old main street commercial buildings. But there was a problem to overcome. Many of these old and established areas were economically depressed.

Many people did not realize that it was not the buildings that caused the economic depression, it was a combination of the economic, social and political forces that controlled the growth of downtowns and cities. Downtown developers had not been challenged with the job of incorporating new development into older commercial areas. In order to be saved, traditional downtowns across the country needed to be renewed. Rebirth and regeneration were needed to inspire people to recognize that traditional downtowns were vital and important. Communities needed to empower business owners, citizens and local leaders to create innovative solutions to their economic problems.

Communities that recognized this turned to a preservation organization for help. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, while it knew how to perform preservation and adaptive reuse in the traditional downtown, knew little about economic development. The National Trust for Historic Preservation realized that in order to save traditional downtown's across the country it would have to develop a new way to address the downtown's unique problem; how do you preserve the unique architecture and historic character while improving the economic viability of the downtown (Glisson, 1984)?

The Main Street project was begun in 1977 in response to inquiries from communities across the country that were looking for ways to address the economic and physical ills of the traditional downtown. It was believed that the Main Street program could help communities reestablish the traditional downtown as a community focal point and a center of activity.
The National Trust for Historic Preservation selected three towns out of seventy applicants to participate. The towns; Galesburg, Illinois (population 38,000), Hot Springs, South Dakota (population 5,000), and Madison, Indiana (population 13,000), would implement the Main Street Project's revitalization principles to improve their downtowns. The comprehensive principles encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation. They believed that if each town used this comprehensive economic development strategy, each could revitalize their dying older downtown (Glisson, 1984).

The three-year demonstration project was designed to study the reasons downtowns were dying, identify the many factors that have an impact on downtown health and, finally, develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy that would revitalize their downtowns. The National Trust for Historic Preservation provided selected communities with an analysis of each downtown's assets and needs and performed architectural and economic profiles which would serve as the basis of the economic strategies and design improvements. A project manager was hired for each community to serve as an advocate for the downtown, coordinate project activities and convince business owners and local governments to commit funds now for long-term benefits later (Glisson, 1984).

The Main Street Project found common problems in the downtown districts of the demonstration communities. One of the first responsibilities was to change people's perceptions of the downtown. The Main Street Project identified four specific initial goals through which they could improve the downtown (Glisson, 1984):

1) Help the community build a common vision for Main Street's future.
2) Build stronger community leadership to improve Main Street's image among residents and customers.
3) Foster an appreciation of good design.
4) Encourage awareness that main street's economic functions would have to change.

The demonstration project was a success. By almost any standard of measurement, business improved in all three downtowns during the Main Street Project. Seven new businesses opened in Hot Springs, while the downtown occupancy rate in Galesburg rose to ninety-five percent. For every dollar spent on managing the local Main Street project, eleven dollars were invested by private businesses in rehabilitation and adaptive-use projects (Glisson, 1984).

The results of the three-year demonstration revealed the importance of a strong public/private partnership, a committed organization, a full-time project manager, a commitment to good design, quality promotional programs, and a coordinated, incremental approach to economic development (Glisson, 1984). These five elements soon formed the foundation for Main Street organization principles.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation decided to put on a second demonstration to share the success of the first demonstration with more communities. But this demonstration, administered by the newly created National Main Street Center, would offer the program to states, rather than individual communities. They believed that individual states would better understand the needs of their communities and could better address those needs (Glisson, 1984). The National Main Street Center would take over the administration of the project.
National Main Street Center

The three-year demonstration identified the need for a separate entity to study, identify and develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy. Also, it needed to determine a way to best provide these services to the communities that needed them the most. With the success of the three-year pilot project under its belt, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with the assistance of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Transportation, the Economic Development Administration and the Small Business Administration, created the National Main Street Center in 1980. The Main Street Project staff relocated its staff from Chicago, Galesburg, Hot Springs and Madison, to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Headquarters in Washington, DC. The National Main Street Center would take over the responsibility of providing services to selected communities from the Main Street Project (Glisson, 1984).

For its first project, six states were to be selected in 1980 to serve as a national demonstration for small community (population under 50,000) revitalization. The National Main Street Center reviewed thirty-eight applications from interested states. From those applicants they selected Colorado, Georgia, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas (Glisson, 1984).

The goal of the National Main Street Center is the same today as it was to the Main Street Project in 1977; to encourage economic development within the context of historic preservation (Buehler, 1996). The National Main Street Center believes that by preserving and building upon the downtown's traditional assets, the community can build a lasting positive physical and emotional image for everyone who uses the downtown (Glisson, 1984). By applying its revitalization principles, it can bring people back downtown and recreate the downtown as the center of community activity.
The eight principles

During the demonstration, the National Main Street Center identified eight general principles that create the basis for its revitalization approach. These principles form the basis for many different revitalization programs, but are integrated into a comprehensive program to obtain the goal of economic development within the context of historic preservation.

The National Main Street Center integrates into the Four-Point approach the following eight principles:

- **Comprehensive Four-Point Approach.** The Main Street approach is comprehensive, addressing all areas in which action must take place. Other revitalization approaches may attempt to revitalize stagnant downtowns with design improvements, building projects or urban renewal through complete building clearance and replacement to obtain one specific goal. Rather than taking this narrow approach, the Main Street approach focuses on existing assets, and at the same time builds a solid organizational base, builds effective marketing and economic development strategies and preserves the variety, character, and utility of the traditional downtown (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Incremental Process.** The Main Street Approach is incremental in nature. Through a series of small improvements in the downtown's appearance, economy and perception, the Main Street program begins to change the public's attitude about the downtown, making the area's investment climate more favorable. Gradually, the small changes build into larger ones as the local revitalization organization gains strength and becomes efficient in mobilizing
resources for downtown revival (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Self-Help Program.** The Main Street Iowa program uses two of Christenson and Robinson's major themes of community development, self-help and technical assistance, to implement its Main Street approach to downtown development.

  The self-help approach is a grass-roots effort used by Main Street in the initial application process in which local residents from the community come together to solve a problem. The community development approach assumes that people can work together to improve their situation (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). The community is motivated by some desire to initiate community improvement. The community, in order to attract this community development program, adopts an entirely new organizational structure under which all segments of the community come together to reach a common goal (Christenson and Robinson, 1989). For example, a common theme of many Main Street communities is the desire to preserve or restore the historic downtown district. Another is to revitalize a stagnant downtown economy. But simply having the desire to restore buildings or to revitalize businesses would not support a local Main Street program and is a very simplistic characterization of how to initiate a downtown revitalization program. The Main Street approach is a multi-faceted, long-term and comprehensive program for improving the downtown. Deteriorated buildings may not be the result of neglect. Rather it may be a complex combination of poor economic conditions, inability to respond to market demands, poor planning on the part of cities and developers when locating new commercial developments or loss of
community confidence in the downtown district. With the self-help approach, communities must recognize the need for change, create organizations to identify problems and search for creative solutions to those problems.

The first step a community makes when it desires to improve itself is to organize itself and look for help. Community "self-help" efforts are increasingly oriented toward obtaining needed resources from outside agencies and organizations (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). As soon as the community organizes and identifies its needs, such as improving the economic and physical condition of downtown, the community can seek help from outside organizations.

Self-help and the Main Street program in Iowa

The Main Street Iowa program is concerned with developing local programs in communities who can make long-term commitments. The Main Street selection committee looks at the community's commitment to improvement. A unified effort by a community to initiate a local program to their community is the first and most crucial step. The idea behind self-help is based on the premise that people can, will, and should collaborate to solve community problems (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). Some communities do not realize the need for this unified support. The community of Lake City, Iowa, for example, thought that hiring an outside consultant to write their Main Street application would assure their success in receiving a local program. This was not the case. Hiring a consultant did not demonstrate unified community support for the local program, which would have been the case if
written by local leaders, and thus they were overlooked by the Main Street selection committee (Guzman, 1996).

Christenson and Robinson (1989) note that in order to foster vitality, communities must assemble multi-dimensional efforts to attract new basic employers to capture existing markets, to improve efficiency of existing firms, encourage the creation of new firms and reacquire dollars taxed away by higher levels of government.

The administrative staff of the Main Street Iowa program act as the technical assistant change agents in the development process. The Main Street approach to downtown revitalization requires the local community to adopt structured, goal-oriented organizations which provide the basis of the local program's activities. In this respect, technical assistance involves the residents' desire to accept assistance because of its fundamental importance for improving the community's social, economic, and/or physical environment (Christenson & Robinson, 1989). The result being the acceptance of the Main Street approach as the primary tool for improving the economic position of the community.

When the community is granted a local program, Main Street Iowa begins to provide technical assistance to the community. The Main Street approach creates a strategy for instilling community improvement.

The local program is left on its own to carry out creative solutions to their problems but is required by contractual agreement to fulfill certain objectives. Main Street Iowa monitors the activities through a number of services provided at no cost to the community. The services are crucial in the initial set-up stage
of local program development. These services include State and National Main Street staff visits to each community to perform initial program set-up services, such as preliminary assessment, help in forming a downtown organization and program manager selection. Visits are conducted to assist the community in creating and formulating goals and objectives and organize a plan of action for the first year. Training workshops are conducted focusing on the four points, as well as program manager and volunteer workshops in various issues of downtown revitalization. Continuing resource team visits and year-end evaluations are conducted and results are presented in written reports. Main Street Iowa makes recommendations for realistic solutions to challenges and opportunities, and assessments are made of the progress of the local program. Technical assistance also occurs on-site and design assistance services are extended periodically to the local program (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Public/private partnership.** Few community development programs would be a success without a combination of support from local governments, people and business leaders. A public/private partnership is needed to make meaningful, long-term downtown revitalization possible. To make a downtown revitalization program successful, these entities must be involved. These groups combine all the skills necessary for revitalization to occur in a unified program (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Focus on existing assets.** Main street focuses on existing assets. While traditional downtowns in many small communities developed in similar ways during roughly the same period of time, each community has its own unique and special character and heritage that sets it apart from all others. By focusing on the
downtown as a unique asset, each local Main Street program builds on its own specific opportunities. In this way, the Main Street program can help a downtown adapt to change in ways it could not in the past (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Quality.** The Main Street approach relies on quality. Downtown architecture tells the history of the community. Traditional commercial buildings reflect the pride past generations felt for their communities. Quality inherent in these buildings and the goods and services provided by their businesses make the downtown unique in the marketplace and give it many marketing advantages. The projects undertaken by the local Main Street program should reflect this high level of quality. This way the downtown can capitalize on and continue to reinforce these special characteristics (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Changing Attitudes.** The Main Street program involves changing attitudes. The economic changes experienced by downtowns in recent decades have made people skeptical about the downtown’s health and economic viability. Reversing this skepticism is central to a successful downtown revitalization program (National Main Street Center, 1988).

- **Implementation/Action-Oriented.** The Main Street program is implementation oriented. The Main Street program works to break down large issues into smaller tasks. Then, through the utilization of a strong network of volunteer support, the Main Street program builds specific organizational structures capable of achieving the qualifiable tasks mapped out in the work plans (National Main Street Center, 1988).
The National Main Street Center realized that in order to accomplish their goal of economic development within the context of historic preservation, it must develop a universal organizational structure through which it could achieve its stated goals. The National Main Street Center developed the Main Street approach, a revitalization philosophy that is applied to communities and successfully guides the improvements in their downtowns. This approach utilizes the eight principles, emphasizes using main street's surviving assets and relies on voluntary participation and community support to implement a unified downtown management scheme (Glisson, 1984).

The four concepts are Design, Organization, Promotion and Business Improvement/Economic Restructuring (Glisson, 1984, Redman, 1991):

1) **Design.** This point involves improving the downtown's image by enhancing its physical appearance. The traditional downtown has a unique advantage because it has a special character and unique heritage that cannot be duplicated. But inappropriate physical changes have deteriorated the downtown's appearance. In order to improve its image, attention must be paid to all elements of the downtown environment: buildings, storefronts, signs, public improvements, landscaping, merchandising displays and promotional materials.

2) **Organization.** Many downtowns have lost or never had an organized, cooperative effort specifically created to promote the traditional downtown. Establishing a consensus and cooperation by building partnerships will allow the development of a consistent revitalization program and permit the emergence of effective management and advocacy of the downtown. Key players include diverse groups - bankers, city government, merchants, the
Chamber of Commerce, civic groups, and individual citizens - who must work together to improve the downtown. Efforts are coordinated by a paid program manager to create a strong organization dedicated to revitalizing downtown.

3) **Promotion.** Many traditional downtowns have lost their spark, interest and character. Promotion involves positioning the downtown as a focus for community pride, social activity and economic development potential. The objective is to create a positive image of the business district to attract customers and investors and rekindle community city pride. Promotion includes the development of sophisticated sales events and festivals and the creation of a consistent image through graphic and media presentations.

4) **Business Improvement/Economic Restructuring.** This point involves strengthening the existing economic assets of the business district while diversifying its economic base. This point involves diversifying the downtown economy by recruiting new stores to provide a balanced retail mix; converting unused space into housing, offices, entertainment or cultural facilities; and sharpening the competitiveness of main street's traditional merchants.

By applying the principles learned in the regional and state demonstrations, the National Main Street Center has helped to preserve and strengthen many downtowns across the country. Today, the National Main Street Center provides training programs, consulting services, publications and audiovisual materials to fifty-four National Main Street Network members, including forty-nine states, the District of Columbia, the Territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and the countries of
Main Street Iowa Program

Local leaders and legislators became aware of the positive benefit created by the Main Street program in communities across the country. It was believed that the implementation of such a program would bring economic prosperity to Iowa communities who had experienced economic hardships. In 1986 the National Main Street Center initiated the Main Street Iowa program following the approval of the program by the Iowa Legislature. The intent was to address the needs of old downtowns in Iowa communities with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 (Buehler, 1996).

The Main Street Iowa program was intended to help communities rebuild their downtowns and re-establish them as community focal points and centers of activity. By using this approach, many Iowa communities are working to strengthen the overall economic health of their central business districts. By applying Main Street's revitalization principles, a community can re-establish its self-reliance and rebuild its downtown based on its traditional assets: personal service, local ownership, unique architecture and a sense of community (Redman, 1991).

In 1986, communities from across the state were invited to submit an application to become a Main Street demonstration community. A competition was held and five communities were selected to participate in the demonstration program. From the applications the Main Street Iowa staff chose Oskaloosa, Keokuk, Fort Madison, Grinnell and Burlington. Each community demonstrated a commitment to downtown revitalization and improved each year. As allocations from the State Legislature increased, Main Street Iowa accepted new communities on an annual basis (Buehler, 1996).
Today, Main Street Iowa provides training and services to eleven communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000: Burlington, Cedar Falls, Charles City, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Keokuk, LeMars, Oskaloosa, Spencer, Waverly and West Des Moines.

A limited number of communities, with their demonstrated commitment to downtown revitalization, are accepted as self-initiated or Main Street Partner communities. The contractual agreement with these communities has the same requirements in regards to budgets, staffing and programming as other Main Street programs, but provides limited training and technical services and no grant dollars. Also called self-initiated communities, these partner communities demonstrated their readiness to implement Main Street revitalization principles, but have not become official demonstration communities. Many become partner communities with the hopes of receiving the Main Street designation in the near future (Buehler, 1996).

Main Street Iowa provides training and services to four partner communities: Dubuque, population 57,546, and Sioux City, population 80,505, both Urban Main Street programs which, because of their size do not qualify for the traditional program; Hamilton County, the first countywide Main Street demonstration in the United States; and New Hampton, population 3,660 (Buehler, 1996).

In 1990, Main Street Iowa selected five communities; Anamosa, Bonaparte, Conrad, Corning and Sibley to participate in the newly created Rural Main Street program.

**Rural Main Street Program**

By 1989, Main Street Iowa was receiving frequent contacts from very small Iowa communities (those under 5,000 in population) requesting
technical assistance and training to help improve the economic health of their downtowns (Buehler, 1996).

The National Main Street Center and Main Street Iowa realized the need to initiate demonstration programs in communities that did not fit the established population criterion. The majority of cities in Iowa do not fit the official Main Street population criteria of 5,000 to 50,000. Still, they need help.

To address the specific needs of these communities, the Iowa Legislature, in 1989, adopted the Rural Main Street program. This program, utilizing downtown revitalization principles designed for communities with populations from 5,000 to 50,000, would now be offered to very small communities.

Initially, coordinators at the National Main Street Center were skeptical about the potential for the Rural Main Street program's success. Rojean Evans, of the National Main Street Center, said it was never the intent of the National Trust for Historic Preservation to apply the Main Street methodology to communities with populations of less than 5,000 in population. The National Main Street Center believed that these very small towns did not have sufficient resources to adequately fund the program and could not sustain the volunteer commitment needed to administer the revitalization process.

But it would only be a matter of time before Main Street Iowa would have to deal with very small town revitalization, since Iowa has a proportionately large number of very small communities. The National Main Street Center defines a small town as consisting of 5,000 to 50,000 in population and a very small town as having less than 5,000 in population. The research found that, according to the 1990 census, Iowa has sixty-seven communities with populations of 5,000 to 50,000, eight communities above 50,000 in population and 1,106 cities and villages that have
populations of under 5,000. Eventually, the number of communities with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 receiving assistance from Main Street Iowa would reach a saturation point. In order for the Main Street Iowa program to prosper and grow, it would eventually have to expand its services to very small communities.

By 1989, small towns were searching for a method to implement a downtown revitalization strategy. The citizens of Bonaparte believed that they could potentially benefit from implementing the Main Street Approach. But Iowa did not, at that point, have a program for small towns. Bonaparte took the initiative in 1989. It became a self-initiated community that year.

The following year, Main Street Iowa and the National Main Street Center entered into a demonstration called the Rural Main Street program. This demonstration applied the criteria for towns with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 to towns with populations under 5,000. The National Trust for Historic Preservation identified only eleven communities in six states outside of Iowa that are Main Street Network members and that have populations of less than 5,000 people. This was not a new concept. Other states had already instituted small town programs to serve the needs of very small towns with populations under 5,000. But Iowa was one of the first states in the nation to apply Main Street revitalization principles for towns with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 to very small towns with populations under 5,000 (Guzman, 1996).

Bonaparte, population 465, in 1986 organized Township Stores, a company created to address local development issues, the lack of manufacturing, population growth and the overall decline of the community. The company raised over $100,000 to initiate its efforts. The efforts soon proved to be successful. In 1989, the Historic Riverfront District was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and Bonaparte became a self-initiated Main Street community. One year later Bonaparte was officially
designated as a Rural Main Street program (Buehler, 1996). The Main Street approach would be used to guide further downtown revitalization and continue the efforts initiated by Township Stores.

When proposed, the National Main Street Center and Main Street Iowa identified four objectives to fulfill by developing the Rural Main Street program (Main Street Iowa, 1989):

1. Develop a model (manual) for small town commercial development based upon the Main Street Approach.
2. Utilize the organizational framework of the Main Street Iowa program to deliver technical assistance to the demonstration communities.
3. Evaluate the Small Town Program's successes and disseminate this information to other Iowa small towns.
4. Gather and evaluate information from small town programs in other states.

In fulfilling these objectives, the National Main Street Center and Main Street Iowa intended to (Smith, 1989):

- Help communities develop creative solutions to specific revitalization problems.
- Structure programs to maintain and generate jobs in demonstration communities.
- Develop strategies to stimulate continued commercial reinvestment in small communities.
- Investigate factors affecting the development of affordable downtown housing and develop programs to help communities develop downtown housing development.
- Analyze the impact of historic preservation in downtown revitalization activity in small towns and seek ways of integrating
balanced preservation planning into community economic development programs.

- Develop planning tools to help small towns integrate commercial development strategies into their existing organizations and planning processes.

Kennedy Lawson Smith, as part of her small town program concept paper, outlined the methods and timetables to obtain these objectives (Smith, 1989):

- Appoint a committee of individuals involved in small town Main Street programs throughout the country to examine economic conditions, physical resources and organizational capacity in Iowa towns.
- Develop a model for small town commercial revitalization programs using the Four-Point Main Street Approach.
- Select five communities to participate in the demonstration program.
- Operate the demonstration program for two years, providing in-depth technical assistance in all phases of the revitalization activity.
- Monitor activities.

Today, Main Street Iowa provides training and services to 14 Rural Main Street communities: Adel, Anamosa, Bedford, Bloomfield, Bonaparte, Conrad, Corning, Dunlap, Elkader, Greenfield, Hampton, Ogden, Sac City and Sigourney.
Past participants

A number of communities, selected as Main Street demonstration communities, were unable to maintain their local programs and dropped out of the program. Those communities are considered past participants.

Smith (1996) identifies six general reasons why a program fails in its initial start-up or catalyst phase of development (Smith, 1996). The failure to:

- work comprehensively in all areas of the Main Street approach.
- forge a true public/private partnership.
- grasp the interdisciplinary approach, duplicating activities already taking place in the community.
- examine the effect of all the economic, political and cultural factors effecting the district.
- hire full-time staff.
- make long-term commitment to the revitalization process.

Smith (1996) suggests that all of these problems can be traced to the failure to complete three major tasks during the catalyst phase: build collaborative partnerships, develop basic revitalization skills and establish a credible presence in the community. In any case, ten programs became officially inactive and Main Street Iowa services were withdrawn. Since 1986, nine Main Street programs and one Rural Main Street program dropped out of the Main Street Iowa program.

The past participating communities completed the initial three-year start-up phase but left in the years following. Those communities are: Centerville, Clinton, Fort Madison, Grinnell, Harlan, Knoxville, Maquoketa, Muscatine, Sibley and Webster City.
Phases of Program Development

Successful Main Street programs go through three distinct phases; the catalyst phase, the growth phase and the management phase (Smith, 1996).

Catalyst phase

The catalyst phase, typically lasting two to four years, is the most exciting phase of the program. During this phase, the program is characterized by enthusiasm, high hopes, and opportunities. Program participants learn basic revitalization skills and build a strong, locally-oriented design management program. The program must understand and articulate an understanding of the district's economic strengths and weaknesses, and must build and establish itself in the community. The program must build collaborative partnerships and a strong volunteer base, achieve highly visible "victories" through the use of work plans that follow the goals and objectives identified early on in the building of the program and must establish funding to enable the program to develop (Smith, 1996).

Several failures can deter the local program from further development. Failure to understand the market and the comprehensive and interdisciplinary nature of the Main Street program, failure to create a true public private partnership, failure to hire full-time staff and to make a long-term commitment to the revitalization process (Smith, 1996). Christenson and Robinson (1989) warn that during a program's initial formation, improper implementation is one of the major contributors to failure. Noting that even potentially effective strategies can fail, Christenson and Robinson point out that this is one of the most serious problems in carrying out social interventions such as community development.
Growth phase

During the growth phase, typically lasting eight to twelve years, program leaders use the skills learned and partnerships created in the catalyst phase to handle tougher problems. Major reinvestment usually occurs during this period; facade improvements, upper floor apartments, new businesses and new commercial buildings. Volunteers possess the skills needed to take the program to a higher level of development and reinvestment in the commercial district (Smith, 1996).

At this point, the program has made significant progress, creating public awareness, improving at least seventy percent of all commercial district buildings, lowering upper-floor vacancy rate to below twenty percent, and overcoming impedance to full utilization of the downtown commercial buildings (Smith, 1996). Smith (1996) points out challenges to this second phase including creating a comprehensive economic development strategy for the commercial district, the ability to raise needed capital for major building rehabilitation projects and the ability to overcome barriers for full utilization of the commercial district's buildings.

Christenson and Robinson (1989) recommend that during the formative period, evaluations are valuable in helping to determine what a program can and should achieve by focusing on program processes and program improvement (Christenson and Robinson, 1989).

Management phase

Communities in the management phase, which is on-going, find that most of the major reinvestment has already taken place and the marketplace is monitored and maintained. The district's infrastructure is in good condition, it is safe, marketing is on target and effective, program staff assumes greater management responsibility and potential threats are kept in check (Smith, 1996).
During this phase, the commercial district is no longer perceived as being in distress, and the district supports a broad range of uses. The program leaders can redefine or articulate the organization's mission to reflect the progress made during the transition from the revitalization to the ongoing management of the district (Smith, 1988).

At this phase, the program can be evaluated for its impact. In what Christenson and Robinson (1989) call the summative evaluation, the program is evaluated for its worth and its impact. The focus of the evaluation is the outcome (Christenson and Robinson, 1989). While the Main Street program in Iowa does not have an end and is on-going, it can be reviewed at a certain point in time for its impact on a community. The evaluation must consider at what phase of development each program is in to accurately measure its impact.

The Main Street and Rural Main Street programs began at different times and each program contains communities that are in different phases of development. The Rural Main Street program, created in 1990, is today seven years old, while the Main Street program is now in its eleventh year. Many of the communities in the Rural Main Street program are in the initial or what Smith (1996) defines as the Catalyst phase of a three-phase development, where the program builds, develops and establishes itself in a community. Whereas the eleven communities in the Main Street program are in either the Growth or Management Phase of development, where most of the major reinvestment takes place or where much of the reinvestment has already taken place and the marketplace is monitored and maintained. Therefore, to create a specific comparison between the two programs, study groups were assembled so that the programs could be evaluated in similar stages of development. This way general comparisons between the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs could be made to measure the relative success of the Rural Main Street program.
CHAPTER 4
PROGRAM EVALUATION

Review of Evaluation Method

This chapter attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of applying the Main Street revitalization principles to selected Iowa communities with populations under 5,000 by comparing the Rural Main Street program to the Main Street program. In order to accomplish this task, the researcher collected several forms of data. The researcher collected and analyzed secondary data from Main Street Iowa and the National Main Street Center and primary data through a survey of Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities. Main Street and Rural Main Street program evaluations conducted in this study are based on Christenson and Robinson's (1989) evaluation for community development.

Two data sets were used for the evaluation. The first data set includes all program communities who were actively in the Main Street Iowa program and were officially designated as Main Street program communities as of December 1996. The objective was to collect data from all programs participating in the Main Street Iowa program. This data set does not include programs considered self-initiated, partner communities or past participants. Data was collected from these program communities through a local program questionnaire. Programs included in the first data set are listed in the primary data section below.

The second data set includes all Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities who are today officially Main Street communities and have been active members of the Main Street Iowa program since at least 1991. The objective was to collect data from programs who participated for at least five years. This data set does not include programs considered self-
initiated, partner communities or past participants. Programs included in the second data set are listed in the secondary data section below.

Where applicable, a per capita assessment was utilized to put in perspective the activity and accomplishments of the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in terms of community population. To create a per capita measurement, the populations of all communities in the respective Main Street and Rural Main Street program data sets were added and then averaged. Data in each section of this chapter was divided by the population average. In order to make per capita calculations of very small numbers understandable, the resulting number was then multiplied by 1,000 to create a data figure per 1,000 people.

It was the goal of the researcher to make the evaluation as simple as possible. The research methodology identified four general study categories under which the evaluation was to be performed. The data sets used in the evaluation are identified in their respective categories. Study categories include sustainability, volunteerism, economic impact and historic preservation.

Information for this research required the collection of primary and secondary data. Primary data included a local program questionnaire sent to all Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in November 1996. Secondary data consisted of reviewing publications from Main Street Iowa, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Main Street Center.

Limitations of this study

There are limitations that must be considered in this comparison. The method of study is general and must be so for two reasons. First, the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs are significantly different in size. For example, the average population (1990 census) of the Main Street
program data set was 18,508 persons. The average population (1990 census) of the Rural Main Street program data set was 2,250 people. This thesis does not infer that the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs are the same or that a direct comparison will yield a “winner” or a “looser.” Rather, it attempts to measure the overall effect of applying Main Street revitalization principles to very small communities to see if they have been as successful as their larger counterparts.

Second, the Rural Main Street program began four years later than the Main Street program and has had less time to develop, succeed or fail. In order to compensate for this age difference, the researcher attempted to study data from a range of years and compare each program in similar periods of development. For example, the Rural Main Street program communities in the data group have today been in the program for an average of five and one-half years, while the Main Street program communities in the data group have been in the program an average of nine years. Therefore, in order to examine the two programs at the same point of development, the Main Street program data group information was examined in 1993 when the average age of participating communities was six years.

Primary data: The research questionnaire

A mailed questionnaire was used to collect primary data in this evaluation. The questionnaire surveyed program managers in all active Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in Iowa. Each program manager was asked to answer forty-three questions concerning the organization, employment, commitment, activity level and cooperation of their respective local Main Street programs. The questionnaire attempted to collect data concerning different aspects of the local programs, create a
comparison or contrast and reveal indicators of success or failure of different parts of the local program activities.

Input for the development of the questionnaire was received from Stuart Huntington, Department of Community and Regional Planning, Dr. Riad Mahayni, Chair, Department of Community and Regional Planning, and Thom Guzman, State Coordinator for the Main Street Iowa program.

A local program questionnaire and cover letter was mailed to program managers in all Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities. The cover letter included a brief description of the study, a description of who was involved, an assertion that participation was voluntary, a statement that the results would be confidential, the time-frame for completion and revealed that the study was being conducted under the auspices of the Department of Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University with approval from Main Street Iowa.

Twenty-five active Main Street and Rural Main Street communities were surveyed. Twenty-four responded. Ninety-six percent of those who were questioned responded as shown in Table 1. The first data set includes Main Street programs of Burlington, Cedar Falls, Charles City, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Keokuk, LeMars, Spencer, Waverly and West Des Moines; and the Rural Main Street programs of Adel, Anamosa, Bedford, Bloomfield, Bonaparte, Conrad, Corning, Dunlap, Elkader, Greenfield, Hampton, Ogden, Sac City and Sigourney. Surveys were mailed on November 25, 1996 and the last questionnaire was received on January 13, 1997.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Questionnaires sent</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percent received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Response to the local program questionnaire.
Secondary data

The secondary data group includes fewer communities than the primary data group. Specific parameters were set in order to create a level of consistency of programs and to include an equal and reasonable number of programs in the data groups for comparison purposes. Each local program in the secondary data group was required to be an active Main Street or Rural Main Street program community in existence since at least 1991. Secondary data was aggregated from three sources: Main Street Iowa economic impact reports, Main Street Iowa local program funding reports and the National Main Street Center Newsletter. In addition, the State Historic Society of Iowa provided a list of all National Register of Historic Places properties in Iowa as of October 1996.

Main Street communities keep statistics on the progress of the designated Main Street districts of their local programs. Each month, local Main Street managers file a report in which they outline the activity in the downtown area during that month. The monthly reports outline specific accomplishments of each Main Street committee and the board of directors. Categories include costs associated with promotions, investments in buildings in the designated district, organizational activities and volunteer hours accrued in the month of the report. Statistics are kept in a running total and are published and distributed periodically during the year. In addition, each program is required to create annual proposed budgets and identify their funding sources. Other useful information is periodically published in the Main Street News, the newsletter of the National Main Street Center, that discusses the general climate of the nation-wide Main Street program. The researcher found the statistics available from these sources were useful tools in creating generalizations about the health and direction of the Main Street and Rural Main Street program.
Nine Main Street programs and eight Rural Main Street programs were included in the secondary data collection as part of the second data set. The second data set includes the Main Street program communities of Burlington, Cedar Falls, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Keokuk, Oskaloosa, Spencer, Waverly and West Des Moines; and the Rural Main Street program communities of Anamosa, Bonaparte, Conrad, Corning, Elkader, Hampton, Ogden and Sigourney.

Evaluation of the Rural Main Street Program

The following is an evaluation of the Rural Main Street program. The research methodology includes four general study categories, sustainability, volunteerism, economic impact and historic preservation, under which the evaluation was to be performed. Each category was identified as contributing to the long term performance and success of the local programs.

Sustainability

Sustainability is the ability of the program to sustain a long-term revitalization effort in the traditional downtown. Three general categories contribute to the sustainability of a Main Street or Rural Main Street program. First, the community must maintain active participation in the Main Street Iowa program, second, the program must partner with other local organizations and third, the community must generate continued program funding from local governments, property and business owners, financial institutions, corporations and private individuals through a public/private partnership.

Active participation

The total number of Main Street and Rural Main Street programs that were active and have dropped out of the Main Street Iowa program were
examined to determine which program was more successful in maintaining program involvement. The data set included all program communities accepted since 1986 and all communities that have dropped out of the program since 1986.

From 1986 to 1996, Main Street Iowa selected a total of thirty-five communities to participate in the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs. The Main Street program began in 1986 and the Rural Main Street program began four years later in 1990. Table 2 shows the number of communities accepted, according to the respective year they were accepted, from 1986 to 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Main Street program</th>
<th>Rural Main Street program</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that Main Street Iowa has accepted more communities into the Rural Main Street program from 1994 to 1996 than the Main Street program. This suggests that the Rural Main Street program was more successful. According to Beuhler (1996), Main Street Iowa has experienced
significant growth in the Rural Main Street program in the last six years. In fact, there was a higher proportion of Rural Main Street program communities, as compared to Main Street program communities, accepted into Main Street Iowa since the Rural Main Street program began in 1990 to 1996. From 1990 to 1996, Main Street Iowa has accepted fifteen communities into the Rural Main Street program, while accepting only four communities into the Main Street program.

Not all of the thirty-five communities selected during the period from 1986-1996 were able to maintain their involvement in the Main Street Iowa program. Of the thirty-five communities who were selected during that time period, a total of twenty-five are currently active participants. Since 1986, a total of ten program communities were dropped from the program for their inability to follow the Main Street principles.

Table 3 shows the drop-out history of participating programs, where a proportionately higher drop-out rate was recorded among Main Street program communities as compared to Rural Main Street program communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Number accepted</th>
<th>Number dropped out</th>
<th>Percent active</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>71</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was contrary to the tenets of the staff at the National Main Street Center in Washington DC. According to Rojean Evans, National Main Street Center coordinator, it was not the intent of the National Main Street Center to apply Main Street revitalization principles to very small towns with
populations under 5,000. Initially, she did not believe the Rural Main Street program would be successful. She simply did not believe that very small towns could provide enough funding and volunteer support to be a success (Evans, 96).

Only fifty-five percent of the total Main Street program communities remain active, while forty-five percent have failed. Ninety-three percent of the total Rural Main Street program communities remain active, with only seven percent that have failed. By dividing the total number of drop out communities by the total number of active communities in the program, we find that seventy-one percent of all communities in Iowa who launched full-fledged Main Street and Rural Main Street programs remain active, which is low compared to the nation-wide success rate of eighty-two percent. Table 3 shows the number of Main Street program and Rural Main Street program communities accepted, the number dropped out and the percent active. Another reason for the low success rate could be related to inadequate state-wide program funding. The Main Street Iowa program was unable to add more program communities in 1988, 1992 and 1993 because of inadequate funding (Guzman, 1996). One must consider whether Main Street Iowa was able to provide needed technical assistance to the programs during this period.

In a nation-wide study *How Main Street Programs Evolve and Change*, Smith (1996) found that failure of Main Street programs typically occurs during the catalyst phase, which lasts from two to four years (Smith, 1996). As many of the Main Street programs came to the end of the catalyst phase, they were unable to make the transition to the growth phase of development. Smith (1996) also noted that of all Main Street program communities nation-wide, about eighty-two percent enjoy continued success. The remaining eighteen percent fail. Of that eighteen percent, ninety percent fail at the transition from the catalyst to the growth phase.
This suggests that the majority of programs that have been in existence for four or more years will continue to participate in the program.

The data in Table 3 suggests that the Main Street program is much less successful in maintaining program involvement than the Rural Main Street program. Table 3 shows that only fifty-five percent of all Main Street programs initiated in the state continue to participate in the program. All of these programs have completed the transition from the catalyst to the growth phase of development. This figure falls far short of Smith's (1996) nation-wide average of an eighty-two percent success rate.

The Rural Main Street program has a very high rate of success. With only one Rural Main Street program community out of fifteen dropping out of the Main Street Iowa program, the Rural Main Street program enjoys a ninety-three percent success rate. But one must consider that the Rural Main Street program is newer than the Main Street program. Five of the fourteen active Rural Main Street programs are from one to two years old, and have not completed the transition from the catalyst phase into the growth phase. While conclusions should not be drawn until more Rural Main Street program communities are older and have made a transition from the catalyst phase to the growth phase, it is likely that the Rural Main Street program will continue to have a higher success rate than the Main Street program, and will exceed Smith's (1996) national average of eighty-two percent.

*Ability to partner*

The second element of the sustainability evaluation is the ability of the local Main Street or Rural Main Street program to partner with other organizations to create a strong public/private partnership and to capitalize on each organization's strengths. This element included all active Main
Street and Rural Main Street program communities who answered the local program questionnaire.

Local programs are encouraged by Main Street Iowa to form and develop partnerships with other local organizations. These partnerships take advantage of the strengths of both organizations. Four organizations that Main Street and Rural Main street programs most often partner with include Chambers of Commerce, economic development organizations, historic preservation commissions and tourism organizations.

Most programs have Chambers of Commerce. The questionnaire revealed that of the fourteen Rural Main Street program communities, eleven have Chambers of Commerce. Five Chambers of Commerce, or forty-five percent, in those Rural Main Street program communities perform Rural Main Street promotional activities. Six respondents answered either that the Chambers of Commerce do not perform Rural Main Street promotions or answered not applicable.

Eight of eight respondent Main Street program communities have Chambers of Commerce. Three of those Chambers of Commerce, or thirty-eight percent of the total, perform Main Street promotional activities. Six respondents answered either that the Chambers of Commerce do not perform Main Street promotions, or answered not applicable. Table 4 shows the results of the survey.

Most programs have economic development organizations. The questionnaire revealed that of the fourteen Rural Main Street program communities, thirteen have economic development organizations. Five economic development organizations in those Rural Main Street program communities, or thirty-eight percent of the total, perform Rural Main Street economic restructuring. Six respondents answered either that the economic development organizations do not perform Main Street economic restructuring, or answered not applicable.
Table 4. Program partnerships with Chambers of Commerce. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have Chambers of Commerce:</th>
<th>Number with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chambers perform program promotional activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have Chambers of Commerce:</th>
<th>Number with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight of nine respondent Main Street program communities have economic development organizations. None of those economic development agencies perform Main Street economic restructuring. Eight respondents either answered that the economic development organizations do not perform economic restructuring or answered not applicable. Table 5 shows the results of the survey.

Table 5. Program partnerships with economic development organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have economic development organizations:</th>
<th>Number with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizations perform program economic restructuring:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have economic development organizations:</th>
<th>Number with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most programs have historic preservation commissions. The questionnaire revealed that of the fourteen Rural Main Street program communities, ten have city historic preservation commissions. In addition, six of the respondent Rural Main Street program communities have county historic preservation commissions. Eleven of the city and county historic
preservation organizations, or seventy-nine percent of the total, collaborate with the Rural Main Street program. Four respondents answered either that the historic preservation commission does not work with Main Street or answered not applicable.

Eight of the respondent Main Street program communities have city historic preservation commissions. In addition, two of the respondent Main Street program communities have county historic preservation commissions. Four of the city and county historic preservation commissions, or fifty percent of the total, collaborate with the Main Street program. Three respondents answered not applicable. Table 6 shows the results of the survey.

Most programs have some kind of tourism organization in their communities. The questionnaire revealed that nine of the respondent Rural Main Street program communities have tourism organizations. Six of those tourism organizations, or sixty-seven percent, work or collaborate with the Rural Main Street program. Seven respondents answered either that the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. Program partnerships with historic preservation commissions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have city historic preservation commissions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have county historic preservation commissions:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City and county commissions collaborate with program:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tourism organizations do not work or collaborate with the Rural Main Street program or answered not applicable.

Eight of the nine respondent Main Street program communities have tourism organizations. Six of those tourism organizations, or sixty-six percent, work or collaborate with the Rural Main Street program. Two respondents answered either that the tourism organizations do not work or collaborate with the Rural Main Street program or answered not applicable. Table 7 shows the results of the survey.

Table 7. Program partnerships with tourism organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have tourism organizations:</th>
<th>Number with</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations collaborate with program:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research revealed that the Main Street program communities are more likely to have more organizations in the community that perform community development activities than the Rural Main Street program communities. But the Rural Main Street programs are more likely to partner with existing organizations than the Main Street programs.

Program funding

The third element of the sustainability evaluation is the ability of the Main Street or Rural Main Street program to generate adequate and sustained program funding. Program funding is an estimate of proposed income sources for the respective programs. Each year, program managers are required to provide a proposed program budget for their next fiscal or calendar year to Main Street Iowa. Staff at Main Street Iowa collect the data
and distribute it to all Main Street Iowa program communities. Local program funding was not collected by Main Street Iowa during the year 1993 due to staffing limitations during the year 1993 (Seaton, 1997).

Secondary data was used for this part of the evaluation and included the Main Street program communities of Burlington, Cedar Falls, Fort Dodge, Iowa Falls, Keokuk, LeMars, Oskaloosa, Spencer, Waverly and West Des Moines. The Rural Main Street program communities included were Adel, Anamosa, Bonaparte, Conrad, Corning, Elkader, Hampton, Ogden and Sigourney.

Annual budget data was collected from Main Street Iowa for the above Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities in the data for each year according to the program type and source. The information was then added and averaged for the respective data group. The results are shown in Table 8 and Table 9.

### Table 8. Average Main Street program income sources 1991 to 1996
(Source: Main Street Iowa)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>S.S.M.I.D.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>$9,317</td>
<td>$1,667</td>
<td>$10,553</td>
<td>$2,189</td>
<td>$13,326</td>
<td>$12,538</td>
<td>$49,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$10,952</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$10,748</td>
<td>$939</td>
<td>$14,573</td>
<td>$12,468</td>
<td>$51,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$10,374</td>
<td>$1,139</td>
<td>$11,065</td>
<td>$939</td>
<td>$27,304</td>
<td>$14,034</td>
<td>$64,856</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>$11,287</td>
<td>$917</td>
<td>$9,993</td>
<td>$939</td>
<td>$27,177</td>
<td>$30,390</td>
<td>$80,703</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$9,074</td>
<td>$406</td>
<td>$12,703</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$19,759</td>
<td>$27,746</td>
<td>$69,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$51,004</td>
<td>$5,629</td>
<td>$55,062</td>
<td>$5,006</td>
<td>$102,139</td>
<td>$97,176</td>
<td>$316,015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examination of the average Main Street program budget revealed that the total average funding increased each year from 1991 to 1995. The Main Street program was able to offset minor losses in funding from county and state sources in the period from 1991 to 1996 and significantly raise its funding from private and other sources. However, in the period from 1995
to 1996, the average Main Street program total budget dropped $11,016 or by about fourteen percent.

Examination of the average Rural Main Street program budget revealed that the total average funding dropped each year from 1991 to 1994. During this period, city and state funding decreased significantly. The total average funding continued to drop until 1995, but rebounded and began to increase in 1996. The average program offset losses in state funding by increasing its funding from city, county, private and other funding sources. The average Rural Main Street program in the data group was able to increase its total funding $4,039, or sixteen percent, from 1995 to 1996.

Table 9. Average Rural Main Street program income sources 1991 to 1996 (Source: Main Street Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>S.S.M.I.D.</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>$6,750</td>
<td>$1,875</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
<td>$7,832</td>
<td>$6,155</td>
<td>$30,112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$5,094</td>
<td>$2,063</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$3,563</td>
<td>$8,179</td>
<td>$7,374</td>
<td>$26,272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$4,237</td>
<td>$1,800</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$2,031</td>
<td>$8,324</td>
<td>$7,759</td>
<td>$24,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>$4,937</td>
<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$7,249</td>
<td>$7,752</td>
<td>$21,438</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$5,687</td>
<td>$1,563</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$9,092</td>
<td>$9,135</td>
<td>$25,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$26,705</td>
<td>$8,801</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$13,094</td>
<td>$40,676</td>
<td>$38,175</td>
<td>$127,451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funding sources for the Main Street and Rural Main Street program data groups are compared in Table 10. Funding from private and other sources, which include local businesses, corporations, fund raising and other miscellaneous sources, remains approximately the same for both the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs. The combination of private and other funding for the Main Street program totals sixty-three percent, while the Rural Main Street program was just under this total at sixty-two percent. The Rural Main Street program raised more money from governmental agencies. The city and county funding for the Rural Main
Table 10. Comparison of funding sources, 1991-1996, not including 1993 (Source: Main Street Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding source</th>
<th>Main Street percent</th>
<th>Rural Main Street percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.S.M.I.D.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private and other</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Street program totaled twenty-eight percent, while three Main Street programs captured less money from these sources at a combined city and county total of eighteen percent. The Main Street program makes up this difference in the S.S.M.I.D. category. S.S.M.I.D is a self-supporting municipal improvement district tax used to fund a number of Main Street programs. Four Main Street programs use this as a tool for funding their local programs and this subsequently contributes seventeen percent to the total Main Street program budget. None of the participating Rural Main street program communities use S.S.M.I.D. as a funding tool, possibly because the small businesses in the Rural Main Street communities would not support the implementation of such a self-imposed tax.

Main Street Iowa contributed state funds to the programs during the initial start-up phase of selected local programs. During the initial grant period, typically lasting three years per community, all Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities received funds from the state. During the period from 1991 to 1996, state funds contributed two percent to the Main Street program's total funding, while the Rural Main Street program received ten percent of its total funding from Main Street Iowa state funds. The difference was related to the age of program communities. The Rural Main Street program communities in the data group were just
beginning the grant period 1991, while the Main Street program communities in the data group were at the end of the grant period by 1991.

Figure 1 compares the average Main Street and Rural Main Street program budgets from 1991 to 1996, not including 1993. The figure shows that the Main Street program budgets more money for program activities than the Rural Main Street program. In this comparison, the Main Street program data group budgeted a low of $49,589.33 in 1991 to a high of $80,703.22 in 1995 on average to run the local program. The Rural Main Street program data group budgeted a low of $21,438.00 in 1995 to a high of $30,112.38 in 1991 on average to run the local program.

The significant difference in average program funding makes sense when considering that larger communities have a larger commercial area

Figure 1. Average budget comparison, 1991 to 1996, not including 1993 (Source: Main Street Iowa).
serving more people and thus require more money for program activities. In addition, many Main Street programs have full-time managers and employ full-time and part-time support staff. The local program questionnaire revealed that all eight Main Street programs had full-time managers, whereas of the fourteen Rural Main Street programs who answered the survey, only two managers were full time.

Average program funding comparison results reversed when a per capita average was applied. The per capita averages were calculated to see how much each program budgeted per 1,000 in population. Figure 2 shows the per capita times 1,000 average for the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs. The comparison reveals that the Rural Main Street program budgets more money per 1,000 people to run the local program, spending a low of $9,528.00 per 1,000 people in 1995, to a high of $13,383.28 per 1,000 people 1991. The Main Street program on average

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Main Street</th>
<th>Rural Main Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>$14,000.00</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>$12,000.00</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>$10,000.00</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>$8,000.00</td>
<td>$4,000.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>$6,000.00</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Average per capita times 1,000 program funding comparison, 1991 to 1996, not including 1993 (Source: Main Street Iowa).
budgeted much less per 1,000 people, at a low of $2,679.35 per 1,000 people in 1991 to a high of $4,360.45 per 1,000 people in 1995.

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is the ability of the program to involve local volunteers in a broad-based and community-wide revitalization effort in the traditional downtown. Two primary measures of volunteerism include the number of volunteers per program and the number of hours committed by volunteers to program activities. Data from the local program questionnaire measured the number of volunteers on program committees and the board of directors of all Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in December 1996. Economic impact data from Main Street Iowa was evaluated to find the number of hours committed by volunteers in the respective program categories.

Number of volunteers

The average number of volunteers serving on program committees and the board of directors and the number of volunteer hours committed to program activities were collected for this element of the evaluation. The local program questionnaire asked program managers to record the number of volunteers that served on the board and committees. Table 11 compares the average number of volunteers in the Main Street program and the Rural Main Street program per volunteer category. In addition, a per capita assessment of the volunteers was created dividing the number of volunteers by the average population of the Main Street (18,508) and Rural Main Street (2,250) program data groups. This way a direct comparison could be drawn between the two programs.

Table 11 shows the Main Street program has an average of thirteen volunteers on the board of directors. The combination of all four Main
Street program committees and the board of directors reveals an average of nine volunteers. The Rural Main Street program has an average of eleven volunteers on the board of directors. The combination of all four Rural Main Street program committees and the board of directors reveals an equivalent average of nine volunteers.

Table 11. Average number of volunteers per program per category, December, 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer category</th>
<th>Main Street</th>
<th>Rural Main Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Committee</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Restructuring Committee</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Committee</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Committee</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average of all categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 reveals that the Rural Main Street program supports a level of volunteerism consistent with the Main Street program, and provides on average the same number of volunteers on its four committees and the board of directors. In addition, the Rural Main Street program exceeds the Main Street program in volunteer numbers on its promotion committee.

The average number of volunteers per 1,000 in population is shown in Table 12. In this evaluation, the total average number of volunteers in each category was divided by the average population of the respective program type. This figure was then multiplied by 1,000 to create an average number of volunteers per 1,000 people in each category. This evaluation reveals significant results. The Rural Main Street program exceeds by seven to nine times the Main Street program in people per capita who volunteer to direct the local program and carry out program activities.
Table 12. Per capita x 1,000 average of volunteers per program per category as of December, 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer category</th>
<th>Main Street per capita x 1,000</th>
<th>Rural Main Street per capita x 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>4.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Committee</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Restructuring Committee</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Committee</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion Committee</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average of all categories</strong></td>
<td><strong>.49</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer hours

A second measure of volunteerism is the number of volunteer hours that volunteers commit to program projects. Main Street and Rural Main Street program managers log monthly statistics recording the time that volunteers commit to local program activities. Average cumulative volunteer hours were calculated for each program. Table 13 shows the cumulative total volunteer hours per year for the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs. The Rural Main Street program from 1991-1996 consistently exceeded the Main Street program in the number of hours committed by program volunteers. This was a significant accomplishment considering that the average Main Street program population is eight times that of Rural Main Street communities.

Table 13. Average volunteer hours accumulated per program, 1991-1996 (Source: Main Street Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Main Street</th>
<th>Rural Main Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>954</td>
<td>961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>2,835</td>
<td>3,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>4,640</td>
<td>5,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>6,071</td>
<td>8,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>8,345</td>
<td>9,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>11,913</td>
<td>13,643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A per capita assessment was performed to evaluate the impact per 1,000 people in the program communities. The average volunteer hours for each program was divided by the population of the respective program type. This figure was then multiplied by 1,000 to create an average number of volunteer hours per 1,000 people in each category. Table 14 shows the results of this evaluation. The calculation shows that by 1996, the Rural Main Street program volunteers had committed six hours for every person in the community towards program activities, whereas Main Street program volunteers committed a little more than one-half hour for every person in the community since 1991.

Table 14. Average volunteer hours accumulated from 1991-1996, per program per capita x 1,000 (Source: Main Street Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Main Street</th>
<th>Rural Main Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>51.55</td>
<td>427.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>153.19</td>
<td>1,488.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>250.70</td>
<td>2,359.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>328.02</td>
<td>3,691.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>450.89</td>
<td>4,136.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>643.67</td>
<td>6,063.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Economic Impact

Economic Impact is the ability of the program to improve the economic activity in the traditional downtown. Results must be quantifiable and must show proven results such as more jobs, dollars and reinvestment in the program’s commercial district.

This information was taken from Main Street Iowa’s cumulative economic impact reports. This data was collected by Main Street Iowa from all programs and published in Main Street Iowa’s newsletter the Main Street Messenger. The economic impact evaluation compares the Main Street
program to the Rural Main Street program in similar periods of development. The evaluation matches the average age of each program in the data group in order to compare the programs during similar periods of development. The Rural Main Street program data group in 1996 was an average of five and one-half years old, and in 1993 the Main Street program data group was an average of six years old.

Table 15 shows the economic impact averaged per community for the Main Street and Rural Main Street programs selected for the evaluation. By 1993, the Main Street program data group was in the Main Street Iowa program six years. It realized fifty-six net new business starts, relocations and expansions. It contributed 272 new jobs and a net gain of 176 new jobs to the downtown. During this process, it invested a total of $2,484,097 in the rehabilitation of 125 buildings. An average of twenty-seven buildings were sold during this time period at a total of $1,219,101. An average of 4,640 volunteer hours were contributed to Main Street program activities.

Table 15. Economic impact averaged per program (Source: Main Street Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category and average per program</th>
<th>Main Street</th>
<th>Per capita x 1,000</th>
<th>Rural Main</th>
<th>Per capita x 1,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year of data collection</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>18,508</td>
<td>18,508</td>
<td>2,250</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in program</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business starts, relocations, expansions</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net business starts, relocations, expansions</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New jobs</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net gain in new jobs</td>
<td>176.4</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings renovated</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>6.75</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>28.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private investment in rehabilitation</td>
<td>$2,484,097</td>
<td>$134,217</td>
<td>$753,317</td>
<td>$334,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings sold</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>9.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private investment for property acquisition</td>
<td>$1,219,101</td>
<td>$65,869</td>
<td>$496,047</td>
<td>$220,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer hours</td>
<td>4,640</td>
<td>250.70</td>
<td>13,643</td>
<td>6,063.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By 1996, the Rural Main Street program data group participated in the Main Street Iowa program for an average of five and one-half years. During this time, it realized a net gain of twenty net business starts, relocations and expansions. It contributed fifty-two new jobs and a net gain of ten new jobs to the community. The Rural Main Street program data group invested an average $753,317 in the rehabilitation of sixty-five buildings. An average of twenty-one buildings were sold during this time period at an average of $496,047. Volunteers contributed an average per program of 13,643 volunteer hours to Rural Main Street activities.

The per capita x 1,000 calculation reveals significantly different results. In this comparison, the Rural Main Street program exceeds the Main Street program in economic impact in every category except net gain in new jobs when compared to similar periods of program development. The Rural Main Street program realized almost three times the net new business starts, relocations and expansions. It recorded over four times the number of buildings renovated at almost two and one-half times the money invested in that rehabilitation as compared to the Main Street program. The Rural Main Street program recorded over three times the investment in private property acquisition in the transaction of over six times the number of buildings. And the Rural Main Street program did so utilizing over twenty-four times the amount of volunteer hours than the Main Street program.

**Historic Preservation**

Historic Preservation is the ability of the program to promote preservation planning and to preserve the history and the character of the community through listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Measuring physical changes as an evaluation of historic preservation would be difficult. While Main Street Iowa tracks rehabilitation as part of its economic impact data, it would be difficult to quantify the
quality of the preservation activity. Therefore, this section considered whether the programs participate in preservation planning by measuring the number of historic preservation commissions in program communities, identifying whether they were certified local governments and determining whether the program helped to create the organization. This section also measured the number of National Register of Historic Places listings before and after program initiation.

Preservation planning

One of the most significant roles that a program can play in a community is to provide preservation planning and education to a community. To identify the success of a program in initiating preservation planning and education, the local program questionnaire provided information about the status of the program’s historic preservation commissions. Historic preservation commissions can be powerful organizations. They are empowered by the city as certified local governments to handle and transfer preservation grants, enforce legislation and protection of historic properties, maintain historic inventories and make recommendations to city officials concerning the cultural and historic importance of building fabric in the community (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 1993). They follow National Parks Service Standards for Rehabilitation when restoring or rehabilitating historic buildings. A program must have a historic preservation commission that is a certified local government in order to exercise proper preservation planning in its community. The local program questionnaire was used to identify the status of the preservation activities in program communities.

The local program questionnaire asked responding programs to list whether they had historic preservation commissions, whether the historic preservation commissions were city or county-wide, and if the historic
Table 10. Programs with city or county historic preservation commissions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have city historic preservation commissions</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street program</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street program</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have county historic preservation commissions</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preservation commissions were certified local governments. Table 10 shows the programs who have city historic preservation commissions and those who have certified local governments.

Six of the eleven Main Street community respondents have city historic preservation commissions. In addition, two of those eleven have county historic preservation commissions. Six of the eleven Main Street community respondents are also certified local governments. Ten of the fourteen Rural Main Street community respondents have historic preservation commissions. Six of those fourteen have county historic preservation commissions. Thirteen of the fourteen Main Street community respondents reported are certified local governments.

Programs were asked if they were involved in creating the certified local governments. Table 11 shows the results of the survey. Four of the eleven Main Street program respondents were involved in the creation of

Table 11. Program which are certified local governments (Source: State Historical Society of Iowa).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs which are certified local governments</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program helped create certified local government</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the certified local governments. Eight of the fourteen Rural Main Street respondents were involved in creating the certified local government.

National Register listings

A final element the researcher considered was the historic preservation activities in the community. Many communities with historically significant properties or districts may be eligible to list, or have already listed, properties on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the National Park Service, is the official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. The National Register is part of a national program to identify, evaluate and protect our historic resources (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1986).

The researcher reviewed an inventory from the State Historical Society of Iowa that contained all National Register listings in Iowa as of October 29, 1996. All active Main Street and Rural Main Street program communities with National Register properties were reviewed with two criteria: The date of the listing and the number of National Register properties in the respective communities. Data were aggregated on the basis of whether the National Register listings occurred before or after the initiation of the Main Street or Rural Main Street program. Listings include all properties both inside and outside the downtown area.

Table 12 shows the results of the data review. In Main Street program communities, seventy-three percent of the National Register listings occurred before program initiation and twenty-seven percent occurred after program initiation. In the Rural Main Street program communities, seventy-seven percent of the National Register listings occurred before program initiation and twenty-three percent occurred after program initiation.
Table 12. National Register listings before and after program initiation

Source: (Iowa State Historical Society).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program type</th>
<th>Percent listed before</th>
<th>Percent listed after</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Street</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Main Street</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were no significant trends or differences discovered that would reveal that one program type is more or less successful than the other in listing National Register properties. However, one must consider that often larger communities have a significantly larger number of historic properties. Add to that the potentially larger pool of preservationists in large communities who collectively have the potential to list many more properties on the National Register. These factors imply that the Rural Main Street program communities have made a significant achievement in maintaining the same number of National Register listings before and after program initiation as the Main Street program.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

For over a hundred years, main street was the heart of town. Small and large communities were built around this political, social and economic center of town.

Since the end of World War II, main streets across the country have experienced physical and economic decline. In order to reverse the decline, many main streets found themselves searching for ways to improve their conditions. The National Trust for Historic Preservation took action and created the National Main Street Center which today provides training and services to many communities across the nation.

Today, the Main Street Iowa program, created in 1986, provides training and services to twenty-nine communities throughout Iowa; including eleven Main Street program communities, fourteen Rural Main Street program communities and four partner communities. The Main Street Iowa program is unique from other state Main Street programs. It created the Rural Main Street program to provide technical assistance and services to very small communities using the revitalization principles originally created for small communities.

Evaluation of the Rural Main Street program

An evaluation was conducted as a part of this research to see if the Rural Main Street program was successful. The program’s success was measured by comparing data from Rural Main Street and Main Street program communities. The Main Street Iowa program has long been praised for its successes and served as the model for the evaluation. This data
comparison would reveal whether or not the Rural Main Street program was performing as well as, or better than, the Main Street program.

Two data groups were used in the study. Both data groups required individual program communities to be currently part of the Main Street Iowa program. The first data group included all program communities in the Main Street Iowa program. The second data group included all program communities actively participating in the Main Street Iowa program from 1991 to 1996. An evaluation followed.

The evaluation utilized four general study categories; sustainability, volunteerism, economic impact, and historic preservation, and measured the success of the Rural Main Street program as compared to the Main Street program. In addition, a per capita average was applied to evaluate the impact per person in relation to community population.

The Rural Main Street program is intended to be an incremental, long-term approach to revitalization. Therefore, in order for a program to be a success, program communities had to continue to be active participants in the program. The Rural Main Street program exceeded the Main Street program's ability to sustain program involvement. To date, the Rural Main Street program has a ninety-three percent success rate, exceeding the national average of eighty-six percent. The Main Street program fared less well with an average success rate of fifty-five percent.

Partnering is vital to the success of a program. Partnering with other organizations allows those organizations to be involved in the Main Street revitalization process, makes more people stakeholders in community revitalization and allows each organization to capitalize on the other's strengths and expertise. In this way a program is not seen as just another organization, but an effective, vital, incremental revitalization tool open to all organizations and individuals.
The Rural Main Street program partnered better with local economic development groups and historic preservation commissions than the Main Street program. While the Rural Main Street program showed a lower percent of participation with Chambers of Commerce and tourism organizations than the Main Street program, it still scored high in partnering with those organizations.

The Rural Main Street program increased its funding in the last two years while the Main Street program saw a decrease in funding. This was a significant achievement for the Rural Main Street program since it had to recover from a loss of state funding over the period from 1991 to 1994. Review of funding sources revealed that a higher percentage of Rural Main Street funding comes from voluntary contributions rather than taxes on local businesses. This reveals a high level of voluntary commitment from local businesses. In addition, the use of a self-imposed downtown district tax, such as the one used in some Main Street program communities, would be difficult to implement in Rural Main Street communities since a number of them provide assistance and services to the entire community, whereas Main Street communities focus only on the central business district.

The Rural Main Street program convinced political leaders, businesses and private individuals of the importance of the program. It received ninety percent of its total funding from sources such as cities, counties, private and other sources; sources that could reduce program funding at any time. The Main Street program received only seventy-nine percent of its total funding from these variable sources.

The Rural Main Street program maintained a consistent number of volunteers on its committees and board of directors as compared to the Main Street program. In addition, the Rural Main Street program exceeded the Main Street program every year from 1991 to 1996 in its ability to motivate volunteers in the community. This result seemed good, especially
since the average Main Street program community was over eight times the size of its Rural Main Street program counterpart. The average total population of Rural Main Street program communities was 2,250, and the average total population of the Main Street program communities was 18,508. Considering the difference in average population, the Rural Main Street program was either motivating a much higher number of people to volunteer, or each volunteer was contributing many more hours to Rural Main Street activities.

The Rural Main Street program equaled or exceeded the historic preservation activities of the Main Street program. The Rural Main Street program had a higher percentage of city and county historic preservation commissions than the Main Street program. In addition, almost all the historic preservation commissions in Rural Main Street program communities were certified local governments. Under sixty percent of those organizations were certified local governments in the Main Street program communities. In addition, the Rural Main Street program was able to continue listing properties on the National Register of Historic Places at the same rate as the Main Street program.

A significant difference was observed after applying the per capital per 1,000 persons assessment in the respective evaluation categories. Initially, the Rural Main Street program seemed far behind the Main Street program in many categories. Initially, funding sources revealed that, in the period from 1991 to 1996, the Main Street program budgeted from $19,476.95 to $59,265.22 more per year to run the local programs. But when these figures were assessed per capita, the impact was reversed. The Rural Main Street program on average budgeted much more per person than the Main Street program. In the period from 1991 to 1996, the Rural Main Street program budgeted $5,167.55 to $10,703.93 per 1,000 people more on average than the Main Street program. In other words, when considering
both the population and budget differences of those programs, the Rural Main Street program had on average eight times less population to fund the local program, and on average the population per capita gave up to five dollars more to fund Rural Main Street program budgets.

Even without the per capita assessment, the Rural Main Street program on average either equaled or exceeded the Main Street program in volunteerism. The Rural Main Street program communities had on average eight times less population than the Main Street program communities, but they still generated the same number of volunteers on the board of directors and committees to direct and carry out program activities.

Application of a per capita assessment revealed that Rural Main Street program communities committed on average almost ten times the volunteer hours to program activities than Main Street program communities from 1991 to 1996. In other words, the per capita assessment revealed that from 1991 to 1996, Rural Main Street program volunteers committed on average six hours toward Main Street activities for every person in the community, whereas Main Street program volunteers committed only about one-half hour for every person in the community in the same period.

The Rural Main Street program on average had a higher economic impact than the Main Street program. On average, per capita, the Rural Main Street program had three times the net business starts, relocations and expansions, renovated four times the number of buildings, invested two and one-half times the dollars in private property acquisition.

The Rural Main Street program equaled or exceeded the accomplishments of the Main Street program in preservation planning and listings on the National Register of Historic Places. However, Main Street Iowa, while it provides data on dollars spent on building rehabilitation, provides little data concerning the quality of the preservation projects in
program communities. It was therefore difficult to assess the quality of its preservation activities in program communities. In order to achieve the objective of fostering economic development within the context of historic preservation, Main Street Iowa should consider creating some way of measuring those activities and making them a part of a historic preservation impact report as it currently does with its economic impact reports.

Conclusion
The evaluation revealed that the Rural Main Street program is a success and it exceeds the Main Street program in its accomplishments in several areas. The Rural Main Street program has consistently, in every category, proved that it can sustain itself and provide valuable revitalization skills to the downtowns of very small communities. The Rural Main Street program exceeded the expectations of the National Main Street Center. They did not believe very small towns could provide enough volunteerism and funding to sustain a program. The Rural Main Street program not only proved that it could provide adequate funding, it showed that it could equal and exceed the Main street program’s accomplishments in volunteerism.

The Rural Main Street program provides tremendous potential for the renewal and rebirth of very small communities across the state. The positive impact on these communities has greatly exceeded anyone’s expectations over the past six years. The opinion of the researcher is that the National Main Street Center and Main Street Iowa should expand the Rural Main Street program and make it available to more communities. And because there are significantly more very small communities than small communities, the program should be expanded to allow a proportionately larger number of very small communities into the program each year.

The Rural Main Street program has a strong presence in the Main Street Iowa program. It currently enjoys many of the successes of the Main
Street program and exceeds the Main Street program in sustainability, volunteerism and economic impact.

The Rural Main Street program, as well as the Main Street program, contributes positively to the growth and development of participating program communities. While many economic development initiatives continually invest large amounts of money into projects to get results, the "self-help/technical assistance" approach of the Main Street program creates a self-sufficiency not seen in other community development programs. The Main Street revitalization approach instills community pride in each and every Main Street project. Expansion of the Rural Main Street program for very small towns has the potential to build and strengthen the economies in very small communities while saving the character that makes those communities so unique.

Communities are bound to change and the commercial districts within them must be able to respond to those changes over time. The challenge is to find a happy medium of change that protects and preserves the downtown, and with it, those things that define us culturally. The Rural Main Street program can help very small communities respond to change in a positive way, and make change appeal to both those who appreciate preservation of the downtown and those who are just looking for a place to shop. The Rural Main Street program successfully achieves both.
APPENDIX A. APPLICATIONS AND LETTERS
Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects

Iowa State University

(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project: Evaluation of the Rural Main Street program in Iowa

2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree to renew approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Donovan G. Olson 11/15/96
Typed Name of Principal Investigator
Community & Regional Planning 126 Design 294-8959
Department Campus Address Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of other investigators

Date Relationship to Principal Investigator

NA

NA

4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)

☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☑ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

5. Project (check all that apply)

☐ Research ☑ Thesis or dissertation ☐ Class project ☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)

# Adults, non-students # ISU student # minors under 14 other (explain)
# minors 14 - 17

7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See Instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

See Attached.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:

☐ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)
☐ Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)
☐ Not applicable to this project.
9. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods to be used to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

The cover letter informs the subject that names and data used in this survey will be kept at the aggregate level.

10. What risks or discomfort will be part of the study? Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects' dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 10.)

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts as a result of this study.

11. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

☐ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
☐ B. Samples (Blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
☐ C. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
☐ D. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
☐ E. Deception of subjects
☐ F. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or ☐ Subjects 14 - 17 years of age
☐ G. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, prisons, etc.)
☐ H. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (Attach letters of approval)

If you checked any of the items in 11, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

Items A - D Describe the procedures and note the safety precautions being taken.

Item E Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.

Item F For subjects under the age of 14, indicate how informed consent from parents or legally authorized representatives as well as from subjects will be obtained.

Items G & H Specify the agency or institution that must approve the project. If subjects in any outside agency or institution are involved, approval must be obtained prior to beginning the research, and the letter of approval should be filed.

Item H: This project has been approved by the State Coordinator of the Main Street Iowa program (see attached letter of approval).
Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. □ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place it will be conducted
   d) if applicable, location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. □ Consent form (if applicable)

14. □ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. □ Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First Contact
   11/25/96
   __________/_________/______
   Month/Day/Year

   Last Contact
   12/13/96
   __________/_________/______
   Month/Day/Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   __________/_________/______
   Month/Day/Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer  Date  Department or Administrative Unit
    ______________________  __________/_________/______  ______

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

    □ Project Approved  □ Project Not Approved  □ No Action Required

    Patricia M. Keith  11/15/96
    Name of Committee Chairperson  Date  Signature of Committee Chairperson
7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects:

A) Problem to be examined, method to be used:

The objective of this project is to evaluate Main Street Iowa’s success in applying Main Street small city (population 5,000 to 50,000) downtown revitalization techniques to very small towns (population under 5,000) in Iowa.

The method of gathering data is to question the Program Managers (or, alternatively, other knowledgeable persons affiliated with Main Street) of each active Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in Iowa.

B) Method for selecting subjects:

The objective of this survey is to collect data about the local Main Street program. The subject selected to complete a questionnaire is the Program Manager (or, alternatively, other knowledgeable persons affiliated with Main Street) of the local Main Street program. This subject has a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the downtown revitalization activities of his/her community.

Each local program will receive a questionnaire including instructions and a cover letter. The subject is asked to answer all survey questions about his/her local Main Street program. The subject is then instructed to mail the questionnaire in an enclosed envelope.

Data-gathering instruments:
(See enclosed survey)

The questionnaire has been reviewed by my Major Professor, the Department Chair, and the Main Street Iowa State Coordinator.
November 14, 1996

Thom Guzman, Coordinator
Main Street Iowa
Iowa Department of Economic Development
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

Dear Thom:

Enclosed is a copy of the survey instrument I plan to use as part of my research project. Please review and note any comments or concerns. I plan to submit this survey to the Human Subjects Review Committee at Iowa State University for their approval by 9:00 a.m. Tuesday November 19, 1996.

Once you have reviewed this survey and find it to be satisfactory, please send or fax a letter of approval to:

   Dr. Riad Mahayni, Chair
   Department of Community and Regional Planning
   Iowa State University
   126 College of Design
   Ames, Iowa 50011
   FAX: (515) 294-4015

Thank you for your cooperation!

Donovan Olson
November 14, 1996

Dr. Riad Mahayni, Chair  
Department of Community and Regional Planning  
Iowa State University  
126 College of Design  
Ames, Iowa 50011

Dear Dr. Mahayni:

I have reviewed the Local Main Street Program Survey developed by Donovan Olson, graduate student in Community and Regional Planning and have suggested a couple of changes with him. Information collected should prove to be beneficial and enlightening. I hope the end product is useful to Mr. Olson in his research. The information collected could be useful to Main Street Iowa in our continuing efforts to improve the delivery of services to participating communities. Good luck with the project. We eagerly await the results of the research.

Sincerely,

Thom Guzman  
State Coordinator  
Main Street Iowa  
Iowa Department of Economic Development

cc: Donovan Olson
APPENDIX B: COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE
IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

November 22, 1996

«First Name» «Last Name»
«Program Name»
«Street Address»
«City», «State» «Postal Code»

Re: Local Main Street program study

Dear «First Name»:

The following is a questionnaire sent to all active Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in Iowa. The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data concerning the organization, employment, commitment, activity level, and cooperation of the local Main Street programs. Data aggregated from this questionnaire will be used to evaluate the success of the Rural Main Street program in Iowa.

As «Position» of «Program Name», you are undoubtedly knowledgeable about your local Main Street program and other organizations in your community. Because of your position within the program, you have been selected to participate in this study. Please take a few minutes to look over the survey before responding. It will take approximately 15-20 minutes of your time to review the information, fill out the questionnaire, and mail using the enclosed envelope. Your responses will be kept confidential, all data will be kept at the aggregate level. Your name, or your organization's name will not be used in a manner in which you or your organization could be identified. Your participation in this survey is voluntary.

This questionnaire is being conducted as part of a graduate thesis by Donovan Olson under the auspices of the Department of Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University, and has been approved by Main Street Iowa. Donovan Olson currently serves as Program Manager of Ogden Rural Main Street program in Ogden, Iowa.

Please return this questionnaire in the envelope provided by December 6, 1996. Your participation and prompt reply are very important to the success of this evaluation. The findings of this evaluation will be available upon completion from Main Street Iowa, Iowa Department of Economic Development in Des Moines, Iowa.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Donovan Olson
LOCAL MAIN STREET PROGRAM
SURVEY

The following is a survey of all active Main Street and Rural Main Street programs in Iowa. The purpose of this survey is to collect data concerning the organization, employment, commitment, activity level, and cooperation of local Main Street programs. Data aggregated from this survey will be used to evaluate the success of the Rural Main Street program in Iowa.

This survey is being conducted by Donovan Olson, graduate student in Community and Regional Planning at Iowa State University. Donovan Olson currently serves as Program Manager of Ogden Rural Main Street program in Ogden, Iowa.

Survey Instructions:

- It is important that the Main Street Program Manager complete this survey
- Participation in this survey is voluntary
- Fill out all requested information on the following 4 pages
- Feel free to write additional comments in the space provided
- Mail the survey by December 6, 1996 in the envelope provided
- A copy of the completed study will be given to Main Street Iowa, Iowa Department of Economic Development, Des Moines, Iowa, and will be available to interested Main Street communities
- All responses will be confidential, all data will be kept at the aggregate level
- It will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and mail this survey
- If you have any questions about this survey, contact:

  Address:
  Donovan Olson
  Iowa State University
  Dept. of Community and Regional Planning
  126 Design
  Ames, Iowa 50011-3095

  Telephone: (leave a message)
  ISU: (515) 294-8984, Fax (515) 294-4015
  Work (515) 275-2902, Fax (515) 275-2678
  Home: (515) 432-8163

Thank you for your cooperation!
Name of person filling out survey: ____________________________
Your title or position: ____________________________
Community: ____________________________
Are you Main Street or Rural Main Street?: ____________________________
Main Street Name: ____________________________
Business Address: ____________________________ Telephone: ____________________________
                      ____________________________
                      ____________________________
Year of Main Street Designation: ____________________________
Were/ Are you a self-initiated community? Yes No ____________________________ What year?: ____________________________

PART I. Please answer the following organization questions:

Q-1. Does your community have a local economic development organization? Yes No
    Name: ____________________________
    Year established: ____________________________

Q-2. Does the development organization perform Main Street economic restructuring? Yes No N/A

Q-3. Does your community have a Chamber of Commerce or other similar organization? Yes No
    Name: ____________________________
    Year established: ____________________________

Q-4. Does the Chamber or similar organization perform Main Street promotion activities? Yes No N/A

Q-5. Does your community have a local historic preservation organization? Yes No
    Name: ____________________________
    Year established: ____________________________

Q-6. Is the historic preservation organization a Certified Local Government (CLG)? Yes No N/A
    a. Created by a (circle one): a) Resolution b) Ordinance c) Don't Know

Q-7. Was Main Street Involved in creating the CLG? Yes No N/A
Q-8. *Does your preservation organization work/collaborate with your design committee?*  
Yes No N/A

Q-9. *Does your community have a Tourism organization?*
Name: ________________________________________________________________ ...
Year established: ______________________________

Comments: _________________________________________________________________________________________________

**EMPLOYMENT**

**PART II.** Please fill out the following employment information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Current Manager</th>
<th>Prior Manager</th>
<th>Prior Manager</th>
<th>Prior Manager</th>
<th>Prior Manager</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q-10.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-11.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q-12.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q-13.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q-14.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: __________________________________________________________________________________

**COMMITMENT**

**PART III.** Please fill out the appropriate commitment information:

*How many volunteers are on the (write a number):*  

2
Q-15. Board of Directors?
Q-16. Design Committee?
Q-17. Promotion Committee?
Q-18. Economic Restructuring Committee?
Q-19. Organization Committee?
Q-20. Historic Preservation Commission?
Q-21. Do any of the above share volunteers?
Q-22. Please list organizations that share volunteers:

Comments:

PART V. Please rate the activity level of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate each by marking &quot;x&quot; in appropriate box</th>
<th>Highly active**</th>
<th>Active***</th>
<th>Not active***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q-23. Design Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-24. Promotion Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-25. Economic Restructuring Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-26. Organization Committee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-27. Historic Preservation Commission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Holds regular meetings; fulfills Main Street or other requirements; creates projects and work plans and follows them; conducts on activities, workshops and events; conducts research

** Holds regular meetings; fulfills Main Street or other requirements; conducts few activities

*** Holds irregular or no meetings; barely or does not fulfill Main Street or other requirements; conducts no activities

Comments:
PART IV. Please rate the cooperation of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rate the cooperation level among the following organizations by marking an &quot;x&quot; in the appropriate box</th>
<th>Very cooperative *</th>
<th>Adequately cooperative **</th>
<th>Not cooperative ***</th>
<th>Not Applicable ****</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q-28. Main Street and city government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q-29. Main Street and Historic Preservation organ.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Q-30. Main Street and Chamber of Commerce</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Q-31. Main Street and development organization</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Communicates regularly, often works together on revitalization/development issues, shares volunteers
- ** Communicates periodically, works together when needed on revitalization/development issues, does not share volunteers
- *** Does not communicate, does not work together on revitalization/development issues, does not share volunteers
- **** Does not apply

Comments: ____________________________________________
____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

PART VI. Please mark one of the following:

Q-32. Would you be interested in seeing the results of this study? Yes No

Thank you for your participation!

PLEASE PUT THIS SURVEY IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED AND MAIL BY DECEMBER 6, 1996
REFERENCES


Evans, Rojean. Personal interview by Donovan Gene Olson, 25 September 1996.


Guzman, Thom. Personal interview by Donovan Gene Olson, 1 September 1996.

Main Street Iowa. **Main Street Messenger.** Des Moines, IA: Main Street Iowa, 1989.


Redman, Stephanie, ed. **Main Street Iowa Five Year Report.** Des Moines, Iowa: Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1991.


Seaton, Jane. Personal interview with Donovan Olson, 1 October 1996.
