**Main Street and Quality of Placemaking Assessment Tool**

There are three main purposes for this Main Street Placemaking Assessment Tool.

1. To help communities and Main Street organizations understand the scope of what might be involved in enhancing their Main Street to become a more social and economic generator in their community through Placemaking.
2. To help communities think about Placemaking in the context of larger efforts of strategic planning for their community and region. Placemaking is a vital part of strategic planning for economic development.
3. To help communities and Main Street organizations determine their capacity to be more effective in Placemaking at the present time and determine what to do to become more effective in the future.

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| **Main Street Placemaking Principles, Characteristics, Indicators and Rating System** | | | | | |
| 1. ***Community Plans***   Community organizations and community plans and ordinances set the stage for effective Main Street placemaking development. Comprehensive Plans articulate land use and zoning, identify key retail districts, hierarchy of street network, and set up short- and long-term strategies for economic success. Downtown Development Plans (DDP) establish boundaries for the development area and identifies improvements, open space, considers pedestrian networks and linkage to adjacent neighborhoods, and parking strategies. Comprehensive Plans and DDP are translated into zoning ordinance and other codes reflecting the goals of both. It identifies Main Street as a mix-use district with build-to-lines, open store fronts, outdoor dining, ground floor signage standards, increased density, pedestrian friendly elements, flexible parking requirements, incentives for mix-use development, live/work units, and infill development, sign ordinances, building ordinances that support sidewalk seating for restaurants, and high standards for type and quality of building materials for public buildings. | | | | | |
| **Indicators** | | | **Rating System** | | |
| **Characteristics**  **and Source** | **Indicator** | | **Not Present Highly Present** | **Comments about Quality** | |
| 1. **Comprehensive Plan**   ***Municipal Website*** | Identifies Main Street District as a mix-use district focused on economic development | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Identifies Main Street District as a development or redevelopment priority | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Includes goals, objectives and strategies for the creation of public open space on Main Street District | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Includes goals, objectives and strategies for a comprehensive multi-modal transportation system that includes Main Street District access, circulation and parking | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Downtown Development Plan**   ***Municipal Website*** | Establishes a boundaries for the development area and identifies improvements, repairs, and alterations including estimates and timelines | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| An open space plan | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Coordinate redevelopment strategies and capital improvements | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |
| Identify and coordinate a parking strategy | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Zoning and Building Ordinances**   ***Municipal Website*** | Allows mix-use districts and prioritizes the Main Street District | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Establishes build-to lines, open store frons, outdoor dining, ground floor sign standards, increased density and pedestrian friendly elements | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Promotes flexible zoning that promotes infill development | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Allows for flexible parking requirements | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Provides incentives for affordable housing, mixed-use development, infill and live/work units in Main Street Districts and key centers, nodes and/or corridors | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Ordinances that permits decorative banners for advertising festivals and/or activities/events | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Building codes that enable sidewalk seating for restaurants | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| ***B. Organization***  *A formalized**organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the Main Street District. By getting everyone working towards the same goal, the Main Street program can provide effective, ongoing management and advocacy for the downtown business district. Through volunteer recruitment and collaboration with partners representing a broad cross section of the community, the program incorporates a wide range of perspectives into the effort. A governing board of directors and standing committees make up the fundamental organizational structure of volunteer-driven revitalization programs. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director. This structure not only divides the workload and clearly delineates responsibilities, but also builds consensus and cooperation among the various stakeholders.* | | | | | |
| **Indicators** | | | **Rating System** | | |
| **Characteristics**  **And Source** | **Indicator** | | **Not Present Highly Present** | **Comments about Quality** | |
| 1. **Program Director**   ***Website*** | Leadership, advocacy, and management | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Officers and Board**   ***Website*** | Representation, broad cross-section of property and business owners, residence, economic deve. and municipal board members | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Partnerships**   ***Website*** | Partners that work with the organization to help accomplish its goals | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Committees**   ***Website*** | List of volunteers and committees | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Strategic Plan**   ***Website*** | Articulated vision, mission, short- and long-term goals, operational and tactical strategies | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Activities/Projects/Programs**   ***Website*** | Types and number of programs supporting the district success including business development, management, maintenance, seasonal events | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Office Location**   ***Website*** | Organization is easy to find and accessible | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **C.  *Promotion***  *To create a positive image that will rekindle community pride and improve consumer and investor confidence in your commercial district. Advertising, retail promotions, special events, and marketing campaigns help sell the image and promise of Main Street to the community and surrounding region. Promotions communicate your commercial district’s unique characteristics, business establishments, and activities to shoppers, investors, potential business and property owners, and visitors.* | | | | | |
| **Indicators** | | | **Rating System** | | |
| **Characteristics**  **and sources** | **Indicator and Sources** | | **Not Present Highly Present** | **Comments about Quality** | |
| **9. Website** | Credibility, simple, easily navigable, consistency, expresses an expectation consistent with the place | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Branding**   ***Website, windshield or walking survey*** | A way to create an image or sense of place through using symbols and materials; should be simple, changeable, continuous, meaningful, and memorable | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| 1. **Marketing and Advertisement**   ***Website*** | Main Street as a product for the marketplace; who knows their potential customers are and the type of goods and services; colors, logo and other design elements help to align the image of the product with the interests of the target audience; marketing defines the brand and attracts the market share desired; and advertising to make the products and services known to the marketplace | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **13. Culture and Arts**  ***Website*** | Support the community through offering culture and arts (space, schedule, variety, and seasonal and educational) | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **D.  *Economic Development`***  *Economic development strengthens the community’s existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base. Retaining and expanding successful businesses to provide a balanced commercial mix, sharpening the competitiveness and merchandising skills of business owners, and attracting new businesses that the market can support. Converting unused or underused commercial space into economically productive property also helps boost the profitability of the district. The goal is to build a commercial district that responds to the needs of today’s consumers.* | | | | | |
| **Indicators** | | | **Rating System** | | |
| **Characteristics and Sources** | **Indicator** | | **Not Present Highly Present** | **Comments about Quality** | |
| **14. Land Use (location and density)**  ***Website, windshield survey*** | Residential located in the Main Street District | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Main Street versus side street organizations | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Retail type and location (corners, mid-block, side streets and/or allies) | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Office on first floor versus second floor | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Vacant buildings – first floor | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Vacant buildings – second floor | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **15. Business Types and Variety**  ***Website, windshield survey*** | Retail: types and diversity of retail is aligned with market/audience and there is synergy among all of the types | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Services: types and locations | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Office: first floor versus second floor | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| Types incongruent with the zoning or intended users/market | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **16. Business Practices**  ***Website, windshield survey*** | The businesses are designed, operated, and maintained; hours of operation; participation in events and advertising | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **17. Business Appearance**  ***Website, windshield survey*** | Ability for a business to maintain, differentiate, and showcase their services or products; signage, façade, vibrant window display, clean and inviting | | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  | |
| **D.  *Design***  *Main Streets are the nexus of neighborhood* and community life, with high pedestrian volumes, frequent parking turnover, key transit routes, and bicyclists all vying for limited space. *Streets are the most fundamental public spaces in our communities. Streets as Public Spaces is premised on the idea that streets should not simply move people from point A to Point B, but must add value to the community along the way. Great streets build communities as well as provide ways of connecting other great places. Designs for Main Streets should establish a sense of visual continuity while still expressing the unique qualities of the area.* | | | | | |
| **Indicators** | | | **Rating System** | | |
| **Characteristics**  **and Sources** | | **Indicator** | **Not Present Highly Present** | **Comments about Quality** | |
| 1. **Safe and Efficient**   ***Windshield or walking survey*** | | Connectivity: network of streets and sidewalks are interconnected within and extend beyond to adjacent neighborhoods, districts and destinations; provide a sense of arrival; hierarchy of primary and secondary streets; supported by traffic signals and directional and district signage | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Clearly delineated and ample areas for vehicles, pedestrians and bikes; conflicts are minimize | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| A system of on-street and off-street parking is evenly distributed throughout the district; parking is easy to access and clearly delineated through signage; clear connections are provided between the parking and destinations | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Measures are taken to add additional safety for pedestrians including intersection bump outs and traffic calming devices | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| **19. Pedestrian Oriented**  ***Windshield or walking survey*** | | Sidewalk: is clear, wide, and continuous (uninterrupted); material easy to walk on; level | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Street to sidewalk: ADA accessible with a warning strip; on street parking is used to protect pedestrian | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Design scale: engaging and continuous window displays; appropriate benches, planters, signage, and other amenities; trees; canopies | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| **20. Sociability**  ***Windshield or walking survey*** | | Social environment: spaces and places are provided for people to gather and socialize; spaces are provided to support the creative arts and entertainment (creative placemaking) | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Third spaces: incorporate places and spaces to promote social interaction among pedestrians both formally and informally; the designs of street corners, expanded areas along the side walk and/or temporary use of the street can support social interaction of all kinds. | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Programming: socializing is supported by programming including art, markets, vendors, and performances and celebrations of all kinds | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| **21. Sustainability**  ***Windshield or walking survey*** | | Stormwater management system: incorporate pervious paving, rain gardens, green space, bio-retention areas with trees and shrubs to decrease heat island affect and reduce storm water quantity and improve water quality. | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Vegetation: use locally grown, native, and bio diverse trees, shrubs, annuals and perennials; consider the ecology and habitat of the area when selecting and organizing plants | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Materials: select locally sourced materials; select materials based on life cycle assessment (material extraction, manufacturing, delivery and transport, use, maintenance, repair, disposal, and recycling) | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| **22. Historic Preservation and Adaptive Reuse**  ***Windshield or walking survey*** | | Organization: establishes standards, regulations, and programs for historic preservation including façade program, historic designation, and partnership through Main Street America, National and Nebraska Main Street Association, | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| Adaptive re-use: preserving and reusing buildings to promote sense of place and support new businesses and economic development | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |
| **23. Unique Identity and Sense of Place**  ***Website, windshield or walking survey*** | | The function and form of design should reflect the places history and culture; a unique design that evokes a specific sense of place. The unique identity is reflected in logos, promotion and advertisement, type of retail and merchandise, selection and placement of site furnishings, and events and celebrations. | **0 1 2 3 4 5** |  |  |