



# Main Street Principles

The National Main Street Center's experience in helping communities bring their downtowns back to life has shown time and again that the Main Street Four Point Approach succeeds only when combined with the following eight principles:

## **Comprehensive**

A single project cannot revitalize a downtown or commercial neighborhood. An ongoing series of initiatives is vital to build community support and create lasting progress.

## **Incremental**

Small projects make a big difference. They demonstrate that “things are happening” on Main Street and hone the skills and confidence the program will need to tackle more complex problems.

## **Self-Help**

Although the National Main Street Center can provide valuable direction and hands-on technical assistance, only local leadership can initiate long-term success by fostering and demonstrating community involvement and commitment to the revitalization effort.

## **Public/Private partnership**

Every local Main Street program needs the support and expertise of both the public and private sectors. For an effective partnership, each must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of the other.

## **Identifying and capitalizing on existing assets**

One of the National Main Street Center's key goals is to help communities recognize and make the best use of their unique offerings. Local assets provide the solid foundation for a successful Main Street initiative.

## **Quality**

From storefront design to promotional campaigns to special events, quality must be the main goal.

## **Change**

Changing community attitudes and habits is essential to bring about a commercial district renaissance. A carefully planned Main Street program will help shift public perceptions and practices to support and sustain the revitalization process.

## **Action-oriented**

Frequent, visible changes in the look and activities of the commercial district will reinforce the perception of positive change. Small, but dramatic improvements early in the process will remind the community that the revitalization effort is under way.