



ON TRAC SUMMARY

Central City ON TRAC Program



ON TRAC ASSESSMENT REPORT

In July 2018, the ON TRAC Assessment Team visited Central City in Huntington, WV as a part of a 3-day event. The goal of assessment is to build on the community vision with market-based transformation strategies that revitalize downtown districts and enhance community-led economic development. The Assessment Days included stakeholder meetings, a walking tour of the district, a community picnic, and training for community volunteers. This packet is a summary of the consultant recommendations from the final ON TRAC Assessment Report, available to download upon request.



ON TRAC ASSESSMENT TEAM

Economic Vitality



Todd Barman, Principal for Barman Development Strategies, LLC, has worked more than 23 years in the development field and has more than 19 years firsthand Main Street experience including seven years as a National Main Street Center Program Officer. His areas of expertise include capacity building and evaluation of local Main Street programs and statewide/regional Main Street coordinating programs, organizational and community planning, entrepreneurship, targeted market research, and historic commercial district market position. Mr. Barman has firsthand experience with commercial market research, commercial appraisal, environmental assessment and remediation, municipal codes and permitting, commercial financing, general contracting, and relationship building.

Design



Mike Gioulis has been active in Historic Preservation in West Virginia since 1977. He served as Historical Architect for the West Virginia Department of Culture and History and as Assistant Director of the Historic Preservation Unit. While in service to the West Virginia Main Street Office, Mike has completed over 800 individual design projects, as well as workshops, resource team visits, and technical assistance responses. Resource teams involve intensive site visits in a charrette environment reviewing community resources and developing strategies for revitalization. He has participated in over 30 teams. Also, Michael has written a Maintenance Manual for downtown property owners. He has completed some successful tax certification applications and has participated in individual rehabilitation and restoration projects including the restoration of 20 building facades in downtown Matewan, WV.

Organization



Mary Helmer brings a wealth of knowledge to Main Street Alabama, specializing in the areas of community and business development strategies, relationship building, and training and leadership development. Before her position with Main Street Alabama, Helmer spent ten years as a local Main Street Director in Emporia, KS. This experience forged a lifelong interest in downtown revitalization and community development. Following her tenure as Emporia's Main Street Director, Helmer moved into the position of Kansas Main Street State Coordinator in 2007 and served in that capacity for five years. Before accepting her current position with Main Street Alabama in 2013, Helmer developed a leveraged funding package and managed the public relations on a project to convert a former high school into a hotel/convention center in Emporia.

Promotion



A Wheeling native, Jake Dougherty earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in public communication and political science from American University in Washington, D.C. The former communications manager for Taste of D.C. LLC and a member of AmeriCorps, he returned to head Reinvent Wheeling in 2014 and was promoted to lead Wheeling Heritage in 2016. With knowledge of community engagement and a clear vision for Wheeling Heritage, Jake has developed strong working relationships with others who support historic preservation and economic development. He is a member of the boards of Augusta Levy Learning Center, Generation WV, Wheeling-Ohio County Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Regional Economic Development Partnership and is a member of the state's Abandoned Properties Coalition.

WHAT IS THE WEST VIRGINIA ON TRAC PROGRAM?

WV Office of Community Advancement and Development - Downtown Revitalization Programs

Main Street West Virginia and West Virginia ON TRAC are downtown revitalization programs that follow the National Main Street Center's community-based approach to preservation and development. A subsidiary of The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Main Street is a successful community development model used in thousands of communities across the country.

West Virginia Development Office staff provide training, technical assistance, and ongoing support to designated West Virginia communities in implementing Transformation Strategies using the Main Street Four Point Approach.

This comprehensive method uses local and regional market data and meaningful community engagement to assist communities in getting started with revitalization and then grows with them over time.

ON TRAC is a West Virginia created a program for pre-Main Street communities to learn the basics of the Main Street Approach. A community must participate in ON TRAC for at least two years before being eligible for Main Street certification. ON TRAC helps communities build capacity for long-term economic development and community engagement programs.

NIKKI MARTIN- WEST VIRGINIA MAIN STREET AMERICA AND ON TRAC COORDINATOR



Nikki Martin serves as the program coordinator for Main Street America and ON TRAC program in West Virginia. The Downtown Revitalization Programs are part of the Community Advancement and Development office, which is an agency of the West Virginia Division of Commerce. As the program coordinator, Nikki works with more than 26 West Virginia Communities to grow their Main Street America and ON TRAC Programs.

Nikki's role is to serve as a point of contact and mentor to the designated ON TRAC Community Liaison. Nikki will support the development of a work plan document that will break down the recommendations of the consultants into a step-by-step plan. The work plan will include goals, activities, and benchmarks to measure success. Nikki and a team of evaluators will use the work plan document to determine if the community has made progress and grown the program to meet the Main Street America requirements.

LAUREN KEMP- ON TRAC COMMUNITY LIAISON



Lauren Kemp is your contact person for the Central City ON TRAC Program. Lauren works for Unlimited Future, Inc., a local not for profit microenterprise development organization that is currently serving as the fiscal sponsor for the ON TRAC program. Lauren also represents the River to Rail Initiative to America's Best Community Committee and secures funding and resources for the West Huntington revitalization projects.

Please contact me if you would like more information or to volunteer!

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WHAT IS MAIN STREET AMERICA?

Main Street is a Movement. Main Street America has been helping to revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, Main Street America represents the broad diversity that makes this country so unique.

Learn more at www.mainstreet.org

The Main Street® Approach for Revitalization

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The Main Street Approach® - Refreshed

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Community vision + Market understanding:

Establish a community vision for the Main Street district that acknowledges market realities and provides a foundation for future (re)development.

Key tools: local surveys, market data

Transformation Strategies

Select a strategy aligned with the community vision and local market to guide programming, planning and investment in the downtown district.

Key tools: focused strategy, implementable goals

Implementation and Measurement

Identify programming, partners and capital needed to implement transformation strategy; define measures of success to track impact over time.

Key tools: project work plans, data collection and tracking

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES: GROW CENTRAL CITY'S FOOD-BASED ECONOMY

Central City's Food-Based Economy has a foundation of food businesses, like Central City Meat Market, The Wild Ramp, and Central City Café. To grow Central City's Food-Based economy, it is recommended that the community work along the food chain from seed to plate. The creation of community gardens teaches children and families about growing food, which contributes to the overall community health and builds connections between the business district and neighborhood residents. The development of a community cookbook increases the connections between food, community, and economy. It can also be used as a marketing piece about the district's history and culture that residents and visitors can purchase as a keepsake.

Restaurants and Food Trucks serving locally grown food create a destination factor for foodie and experience-based tourists. Food trucks and small retail spaces help new entrepreneurs get started with flexible space and lower overhead costs.

Long-term expansions of the food-based economy include the creation of a shared commercial kitchen for food processing and re-establishment of a brewery in the district, which builds on the history of the Fesenmeier brewery, 1899-1971.

Economic Vitality	Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist food entrepreneurs with access to space (to produce and to sell) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revisit potential for a neighborhood commercial kitchen (smaller scale), could partner with neighborhood churches Support food truck entrepreneurs (potential shared seating area) Develop spec spaces for small restaurants (potential shared seating area) Explore brewpub feasibility Support resident efforts to grow, sell, and swap fruits, vegetables, and other food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop neighborhood garden plots on suitable vacant Landbank lots Develop neighborhood High Tunnel(s) on Landbank lot(s) Develop food truck locations
Promotion	Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop event around West Huntington neighborhood cookbook (e.g., contributors cooking their recipes at Wild Ramp during Stink Fest) Design and launch a food brand campaign (with professional help) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where Food is Central, Where Art is Central, Where Antiques are Central, Where you are Central Leverage Wild Ramp and Central City Farmers Market anchors and existing food entrepreneurs (e.g., meat market) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighborhood leadership development program (e.g., around food) Sponsor West Huntington neighborhood cookbook as an engagement strategy Develop food partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys & Girls Club (e.g., gardening project) Landbank (e.g., neighborhood gardens) USDA, ARC



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES: STRENGTHEN CENTRAL CITY'S ART ECONOMY

Central City's Art-Based Economy has a foundation in the history of work and handmade artisans that created furniture, glassware, and many other products during the height of the industrial period. The Antique District brand builds on this history and has been an anchor destination for decades. To expand Central City's Art Based Economy, it is recommended that the community explore more handmade art forms including traditional and modern crafts that build on Appalachian Heritage and promote art-based entrepreneurship.

The establishment of an art market in the form of an evening pop-up serves to create new space for art and transform the perception of safety in Central City. The concept of a Boxcar Bazaar would be more permanent small retail that draws on the history of the railroad and brings new life to empty lots. Art and Craft Makers businesses are complementary to Antiques, which are historical, nostalgic and collectible; these businesses will help to bring new customers to the district. Again small retail spaces will enable start-up entrepreneurs to launch a business in a supportive environment.

Public art can also serve as a way to engage community residents in the West Huntington Neighborhood to create murals that tell the story of Central City and West Huntington.

Economic Vitality	Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist art entrepreneurs with access to space (to produce and to sell) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the feasibility of an Art market space (e.g., on train cars) • Art pop-ups, ghost/revolving galleries • Use of small homes in the neighborhood for artist live/work space • Vacant property tax • Connect art entrepreneurs with Huntington Business Services Advocate (Sharon Pell) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design Art Market space(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Complement Central City Farmers Market ○ Pods or freight cars • Design crosswalk art • Develop a mural program (protect unpainted brick) • Design assistance for Historic Fire Station building • Artists in small bungalow/residential houses • Pop-ups for artist spaces or galleries (test the concept)
Promotion	Organization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host Night Market art event(s) • Create a new outdoor venue—"Abbott Outdoor Theater." • Promote the mural-making process, host mural painting event (neighborhood engagement) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighborhood leadership development program (e.g., around art) • Develop art partners (e.g., Mayors Council on the Arts, Heritage Farm Artisan Guild, Artisans in Coalfield Development's Rediscover Appalachia enterprise, Huntington Museum of Art) • Partner with Visual Arts Center on Central City Artist in Residence



NEXT STEPS

Economic Vitality

1. Inventory Assets for Economic Development
 - a. Heritage Asset
 - i. Built History: Inventory buildings and built landscapes with economic value due to quality materials and craftsmanship (embodied talents), character and stronger ties to cultural history (places of special significance)
 1. Inventory with an eye toward use/reuse (e.g., condition, future potential, enriching brand communication at the point of sale and enriching experience)
 2. Inventory buildings worthy of national, state and local recognition
 - ii. Cultural History: Inventory noteworthy local legends (including legendary people), ethnicity, folklore, and ghost stories
 1. Inventory traditional talents or made products (i.e., art, food, furniture, or anything else that is made locally).
 2. Inventory events or festivals that have become an important part of the local culture/the local story
 - b. Human Asset
 - i. Entrepreneurs: Working definition of an entrepreneur- Business owners who are never satisfied and forever working on their business
 1. Inventory creative individuals, organizations, or businesses. Include noteworthy artists, craftspersons, musicians, dancers, actors, singers, writers, poets, carvers, quilt makers, furniture makers, instrument makers, etc.
 - ii. Engaged Public: Inventory civically active people, organizations and businesses
 - c. Recommended Reading: *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight
2. Strengthen and leverage niches and clusters of businesses
 - a. Competitive businesses sell the same type of products and services
 - i. Antique niche
 - ii. Leverage by marketing the ability to comparison shop
 - b. Complementary businesses sell related products and services
 - i. Home furnishings and accessories niche (antiques as home furnishings/accessories)
 - ii. Leverage by marketing the ability to power shop
 - c. Compatible businesses share customers
 - i. Visitor-serving niche: Leverage by marketing to a shared customer
 1. Huntington residents
 2. Interstate-64 and US-52 travelers

How to create a Market-Driven District:

- a. Inventory Assets; Built, Cultural, entrepreneurial, public engagement
- b. Define a target market to go after to expand customer base
- c. Use numbers (e.g. demographics, psychographics, consumer expenditures) plus a little gut intuition to inform decision making

Design

3. Food-Based Ideas
 - a. Community Garden(s), High Tunnels, Food trucks, Food/community kitchen, Brew pub, Restaurant(s) that use local produce
4. Art-Based Ideas
 - a. Crosswalks
 - b. Banners
 - c. Long-term banners. See Charleston East End Main Street's concept of artist auction, etc.
 - d. Streetscape
 - e. Benches
 - f. Murals - shift to art theme in addition to the nostalgic theme
 - g. Use pods or rail freight cars for crafts market



- h. Artists in small bungalow/residential buildings
- 5. Public art
 - a. In gazebo park; On streets; In gateways; Integrate into events
- 6. Use pop-ups to test the concept for galleries/work space, etc.
 - a. Do this in vacant lots in the district, such as the Theater Site.
 - b. Do this in found spaces, such as triangles at intersections, viaduct near Railroad Park.
 - c. Do this in existing vacant buildings on 14th street
 - d. Do in existing retail spaces as an adjunct to existing retail (antiques/ collectibles)
 - e. Build new spaces
 - i. Concentrate these near center at The Wild Ramp or corners
- 7. Pedestrian friendly concepts: Traffic calming, Areas of refuge, Islands, Crosswalks, Interesting sights along paths, Safe and secure, Well Lit. Public amenities, seating, trash, etc., Directions/signage
- 8. Wayfinding: Gateways, Directional, Arrival, Parking, Replace all dissimilar signs, Make a clear distinction between public (Central City) and private (neighborhood/West Huntington residential), Crosswalks (art-friendly, see also “pedestrian friendly concepts”)
- 9. Zoning: Inventory zoning areas and make changes to allow various uses but maintain the neighborhood feeling, Research Form-based Zoning

Promotions

- 10. Develop Unified Brand - one name
 - a. Continue current Antiques promotion and ads, while building off this strong foundation and identity to add more vibrancy to the district and reach new audiences
- 11. Change Neighborhood Perception
 - a. Recommendation: Receive community-branding consultation.
 - b. Recommendation: Produce an “E-Zine” that showcases progress and happenings in the district. Collaborate with artists to produce a fresh, vibrant newsletter that demonstrates the positive direction.
- 12. Engage neighborhood residents in the life of the district
 - a. Community Cookbook and Potluck Dinners
- 13. Attract people from Huntington, the Tri-State, and the region
- 14. Build foundations for identified businesses and investor interest
- 15. Ring the cash registers of current businesses



Organization

- 16. Form a Local Action Committee with 9-11 people that reflects the partner organization, those living in the West Huntington District, and individuals that reflect the transformation strategy.
- 17. Inventory organizations and organizational structures to determine if they can host the Local Action Committee under the 501C-3 status
- 18. “Friend of Central City or West Huntington” to host membership based fundraising and volunteers
- 19. Promote ON TRAC program benefits and ways to support
- 20. Create a financial management system that represents Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
- 21. Create a comprehensive fundraising plan

