

**WESTERN ERIE CANAL ALLIANCE  
REGIONAL MAIN STREET COORDINATING  
PROGRAM  
PROGRAM DESIGN AND ASSESSMENT  
AUGUST 21-23, 2007**



*Erie Canal, Lockport, New York*

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## **§I. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY**

On August 1, 2007, at the request of the Western Erie Canal Alliance (WECA), the Landmark Society of New York, acting as WECA's financial agent, contracted with the National Trust Main Street Center (NTMSC) for a wide range of technical assistance services to be delivered over the next two years. The services would develop a program design for a Regional Main Street Coordinating Program for the Western Erie Canal Corridor, lead WECA's board through the hiring process for a regional coordinating staff person, provide Main Street training to coordinating staff, assist in the application and selection process for designating three local communities as Main Street programs, and deliver direct services to those three communities as they begin their Main Street revitalization efforts.

On August 21-23, 2007, National Trust Main Street Center (NTMSC) staff visited Rochester and the WECA offices to conduct an assessment of WECA's organizational capacity to establish a Regional Main Street Coordinating Program, to design a structure for the coordinating program, and to provide an action plan for facilitating the coordinating program's work over the next two years.

NTMSC Program Officers Kathy La Plante and Teresa Lynch facilitated the visit and conducted the review. Both team members are well versed in Main Street coordinating program operations and the needs of local programs, each having managed statewide Main Street programs and served as directors of local Main Street programs.

The objectives of the visit were to:

- Identify and establish an effective organizational foundation for the coordinating program;
- Engage the collaborative support of a broad range of state and regional agencies and partner organizations, business owners, and key individuals on behalf of the program;
- Establish a work plan and budget for the program's first two years of activity;
- Establish measurable goals for the program; and
- Assist in the selection and hiring process for a regional coordinator for the program.

The assessment team was asked to provide recommendations on how to best maximize WECA's resources and efforts over the coordinating program's first two years of activity in order to ensure the longevity of the program and favorably impact the development of the Main Street organizations in the three selected communities. The team was also asked to make recommendations on coordinating program services, staffing, operational procedures, benchmarks, resources, and partners.

Before the visit, the assessment team reviewed background information provided by WECA staff. From those materials and in meetings during the visit, the assessment team reviewed:

- WECA's present organizational structure, operational procedures, current activities and level of services to corridor communities, public relations activities, budget, and revenue sources;
- Relationship between WECA and the Landmark Society;
- Partner organizations and agencies that might support a Main Street regional coordinating program;
- Plans for hiring and training coordinating program staff; and
- Status of coordinating program budget.

The three-day visit consisted of work-planning sessions; meetings; and interviews with WECA Board members, representatives of partner organizations and agencies, and other individuals who have a stake in the establishment of a Main Street regional coordinating program. The visit also included driving and walking tours of six of the potential applicant communities along the Western Erie Canal Corridor. Meetings with principals in those communities also occurred. The team also presented preliminary findings and recommendations to WECA staff and members of the WECA board during a wrap-up session at the conclusion of the visit.

This report chronicles the results of the assessment and provides recommendations for meeting the above objectives by including a work plan that will move WECA's Regional Main Street Coordinating Program from inception to the implementation stage.

## **§II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A constructive and collaborative review process works only when individuals are willing to give their time and share their candid thoughts. The WECA review team received excellent cooperation and participation by many individuals involved with the WECA program. We wish to acknowledge the following individuals who shared their time and opinions about the startup of a WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. Some of the individuals are listed more than once because they contributed in several ways – wearing different hats.

### **WECA Board of Directors**

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Martin Busch  
Peg Churchill  
Michael Heftka  
Fred Heinle  
Clark King  
Tim Tielman  
Kal Wysokowski

### **Economic Development Representatives**

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Peg Churchill  
Gabrielle Barone  
Fred Heinle

### **Partner Agencies and Organizations**

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David Zorn  
Jayme Breschard  
Christine Worth  
Jan Pisanczyn  
Peter Wiles  
Hannah Blake  
Kevin Millington

### **Preservation Specialists**

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Cynthia Howk  
Peter Siegrist  
Joanne Arany  
Tim Tielman

The team would like to strongly acknowledge and thank WECA Executive Director Pamela Pollack who provided a wealth of information on the Western Erie Canal Corridor and background materials on the WECA for review and study before the team arrived, and then coordinated all of the meetings, interviews, and tours that occurred during the three-day visit. The assessment could not have run as smoothly as it did without her efforts.

### **§III. PROGRAM ASSESSMENT OBSERVATIONS**

#### **History of Western Erie Canal Alliance**

The formation of the Western Erie Canal Alliance directly resulted from recommendations made in The Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Management Plan. Five counties make up the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor – Erie, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wayne. Because of its distinctive identity, this five-county region along the Western Erie Canal was designated a New York State Heritage Corridor in 1999.

The Management Plan, which was completed in May 2004 after a four-year process of study, recommends detailed programs that address needs identified through an extensive and inclusive grassroots planning process. The plan details projects and programs to realize the economic potential of the Western Erie Canal region. It specifically contains programs to facilitate downtown economic development, encourage preservation and use of historic architecture, and maintain the region's subtle character, which is so vital to a sense of place. Four targeted studies resulted from the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Planning Commission: The Town Center Revitalization Study, The Commercial Redevelopment Study, the Planning Analysis of Canal Communities, and the Marketing Study.

The Western Erie Canal Alliance was incorporated in March 2006 as a nonprofit organization for the purposes of:

- Fostering economic revitalization of communities located within the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor counties of Erie, Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, and Wayne;
- Enhancing the quality of life within the heritage corridor;
- Encouraging and enabling the preservation of heritage corridor resources;
- Providing further education about the corridor's natural and cultural heritage resources; and
- Increasing awareness of the history, resources, and attractions of the heritage corridor among its residents.

Six of the original members of the Western Erie Canal Heritage Corridor Planning Commission currently serve on WECA's Board of Directors, which has a total of 12 members.

#### **Start-up of Regional Main Street Coordinating Program**

In 2006, in pursuance of several of the objectives listed above, the Landmark Society of Western New York (LS) secured funding from the New York State Quality Community Program to help establish a Main Street revitalization program for the heritage corridor. In August, 2007, The Landmark Society of Western New York contracted with the National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide consulting services to the Western

Erie Canal Alliance (WECA) through its National Trust Main Street Center (NTMSC) to help WECA establish a Regional Main Street Coordinating Program.

A Memorandum of Agreement between WECA and LS spells out the responsibilities of both organizations in establishing and implementing a Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. The memorandum states that the established regional coordinating program will focus its services on canal communities with traditional downtowns in the counties of Wayne, Orleans, and Niagara. The Regional Main Street Coordinating Program would provide economic revitalization assistance to Main Streets in those three counties; this assistance would include technical services, outreach, education, and capacity building.

In the initial stages of WECA's Regional Main Street Coordinating Program, the effort would provide education on the Main Street approach and intensive revitalization planning for three canal communities, which will be selected through a competitive application process. Eleven canal communities will be eligible to apply. The three communities selected for intensive revitalization assistance will receive training, site visits, analysis, and written recommendations through the services provided by the National Trust Main Street Center.

The Landmark Society is the fiscal agent for facilitation of the Quality Communities grant and for the contract for services to be delivered through the National Trust Main Street Center. The Western Erie Canal Alliance will be responsible for oversight and all management of the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. WECA will negotiate consultant contracts; advertise for, interview, and hire the regional program coordinator; review status reports; and act as an advisor for the program.

As this report is being written, WECA has interviewed candidates and is poised to hire a regional program coordinator. Once hired, the regional program coordinator will report to the board of directors of the Western Erie Canal Alliance and be directly supervised by a committee of the board, or an individual that the committee designates. The coordinator will have primary responsibility for project implementation and oversight on a day-to-day basis and will keep the WECA board informed of progress.

## **Issues and Areas of Concern**

In meetings with the WECA board and staff, the team discussed the issues that WECA wanted the review team to address in this report. The following represent the team's observations from meetings, interviews, and tours. Recommendations on ways to address these issues are contained in Section IV.

### **Staffing**

The Main Street coordinator's role is crucial to building a successful program. It is important to note that the coordinator serves as the resource, facilitator, and guide for the overall program. The coordinator does not tell communities what to do or do it for them. In working with local programs, with staff, and with partner agencies, the coordinator should strive to enable and empower people, groups, and organizations to acquire

knowledge and skills, assume responsibility, and develop and implement ideas for building better communities through the Main Street approach.

Professional Main Street coordinators may possess many types of expertise. Skill sets may be as varied as nonprofit management, fund raising, marketing, historic preservation, planning, economic development, architecture, or public administration. Advertising for this position – at any time that it may be vacant – should be aimed at a wide audience, using statewide publications and job listings on planning, preservation, and nonprofit websites. Applicants should be self-starters with good people and communication skills. In many cases, the services provided to communities will take place during early morning hours or during the evening when volunteers are available; thus, the coordinator must be willing to work non-traditional hours. The NTMSC provided the WECA with sample interview questions in August.

Coordinating program staff will be responsible for developing a long-term sustainable program that will provide ongoing training and technical assistance to designated Main Street communities. In addition to developing criteria for the community selection process and providing Main Street Four Point Approach™ training for local staff and volunteers, the regional program coordinator must also administer the regional program by:

- Monitoring budgets;
- Securing new funding for program operation, with the advisory board;
- Hiring consultants to provide additional training and technical assistance for communities;
- Developing strong partnerships throughout the region and the state; and
- Working with the advisory board to set policies and procedures for the organization.

The coordinator will also manage administrative staff and contractors. He or she will be responsible for the development, conduct, execution, and documentation of all aspects of the program.

The regional program coordinator's principal objectives should be to establish and maintain a consistent, high-quality program that will result in the transfer of the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to participating communities throughout the Western Erie Canal region, and increase the potential for the success of all downtown revitalization activities.

### **Staff Training**

Following the hiring and placement of a regional program coordinator, the NTMSC will return to Rochester to provide training for the coordinator as well as for any other program administrative staff and any interested WECA board members. This session will just be the beginning of the training necessary to fully educate the regional program staff on the methodology of the Main Street approach and the roles and responsibilities of

Main Street coordinating program staff. The budget as presently constructed for the coordinating program over the next two years will need to be increased to provide continuing training for the coordinating staff.

Recommendations for training opportunities and a budget for same are included in Section IV of this report.

### **Benefits and Services to Local Programs**

The National Main Street program has been in existence for more than 25 years and has a track record of success nationwide. When a community participates in a revitalization effort, its downtown will experience renewed vitality and enhanced economic performance. Benefits of initiating a local Main Street program include:

- Protecting and strengthening the existing tax base;
- Increasing sales and returning revenues to the community;
- Creating a positive community image;
- Creating visually appealing and functional downtown buildings;
- Encouraging attractive new businesses;
- Developing new housing opportunities in historic buildings;
- Creating new jobs;
- Increasing investment in downtown; and
- Preserving historic resources.

Coordinating programs can provide a broad range of services to designated Main Street programs. The extent of services depends on the program's budget. WECA's current contract with the NTMSC will cover services for the organization for two years: one year in the start-up phase and one year of providing services to communities.

In its first year, each Main Street program will need certain basic services. Several of the trainings can be held in a central location so that all Main Street communities can attend. The majority of these services, however, are most effectively conducted in each community to assure the highest level of participation. Typical first-year services include:

- Reconnaissance visits – the initial visit to each community to assist with organizational start-up. Guidance is given on board terms, nonprofit status, the setup of the accounting system, collection of pledges, review of the Memorandum of Understanding with the coordinating program, etc.
- Assistance in hiring a local executive director or program manager.
- Board and staff roles and responsibilities training – typically a three-hour session.
- New program manager/executive director orientation – for managers only – includes information on how to work with the coordinating program, how to work with the local board of directors, how to train volunteers, and how to track economic statistics, as well as professional development for the manager.

- Main Street 101 training – a 16-hour course, with four hours of training in each of the four points. Every community should send its entire board to this training, along with as many volunteers as possible.
- Vision and mission statement development – an important process that will guide project selection for the work plan.
- Work plan development – identifies the specific projects on which each committee and the board will work during the coming year, with detailed tasks, budgets, timelines, project responsibilities, and expected outcomes.
- Quarterly manager/volunteer workshops – cover more specific aspects of the Main Street approach but can also be used to introduce local Main Street programs to regional or statewide resources they might be able to access for grants or other technical assistance. Agencies such as the state tourism office, heritage tourism entities, and the state planning office can provide valuable assistance.
- Year-end program assessment – an annual review of the work plan to identify successes as well as continuing and new projects for the coming year. Usually, during this visit, the coordinating program will determine whether the local program meets National Main Street accreditation standards, which should be the standard the program asks/requires all communities to achieve.

As Main Street programs mature, more specialized services will be required, based on the specific needs of each community. A typical schedule of second-year services includes:

- Quarterly workshops – cover specific Main Street approach topics, such as fund raising, market analysis, design guidelines, image-building campaigns, etc.
- Resource team visits – intensive three-to-four-day visits to each community by a team of experts who assess the community and the program and offer both short- and long-term recommendations.
- Design assistance – most coordinating programs hire a staff architect or contract with an architectural firm or individual preservation design specialist to provide design assistance to property and business owners within designated Main Street districts. These services may include site visits, façade renderings, or rehab cost estimates, depending on individual needs. The design drawings frequently spur rehab work when assistance is readily available. The number of projects for which communities can request assistance is often limited (two to three annually). The design specialist who represents the coordinating program also provides direct on-site trainings and workshops for the managers and boards of locally designated Main Street programs.
- Market analysis – an in-depth analysis of the district’s economy to identify a position statement and assist in business development for the Main Street district.
- Technical assistance visits – one or two-day site visits on a specific topic agreed upon by the local program and the coordinating program. For example, a community may have a 90 percent vacancy rate in the upper stories of its

downtown buildings. A technical assistance visit might bring in an economist or developer who can work with the program to develop this underutilized space. Other communities might request assistance from a retail merchandising specialist or help with a major streetscape project to develop strategies to minimize business disruptions.

- Services that may need to be repeated in the second year for new staff and/or new volunteers include an abbreviated version of Main Street 101 training, board roles and responsibilities, and program manager/executive director orientation.
- Program assessments should be conducted annually, with accreditation determined no later than February of each year, when the NTMSC collects that data.

Typical third-year services include:

- Continuation of technical assistance visits that deal with specific topics;
- Design assistance;
- Strategic planning services;
- Quarterly volunteer and executive director workshops;
- Board and committee training as needed; and
- Annual program assessments.

Each coordinating program offers similar services, as noted above, although some programs provide more frequent and advanced trainings and technical assistance as their human and financial resources grow.

### **Community Application and Selection Process**

The NTMSC will help develop the WECA Main Street regional program application and will provide guidance for conducting the application workshop. NTMSC staff will also be on site to participate in this all-day workshop, which provides an introduction to the Main Street Four Point Approach™ and guides attendees through the application process question by question. The NTMSC will also participate in the community selection process.

The application process is critical in determining a community's understanding of the Main Street approach, the support for downtown revitalization within the community, and the community's preparedness to implement a Main Street program. The process also helps the community identify and develop the partnerships needed to sustain a long-term downtown revitalization program. Involving other organizations and stakeholders early in the process of setting up a Main Street program ensures greater success in the future. In order for a community to apply, it must send at least three representatives to the all-day application workshop. The application will **only** be provided at the workshop.

The application gathers current demographic data about the community, as well as establishing a baseline of the downtown's employment, business strength, rents, vacancy rates, etc. This information is important in measuring the district's economic gains over

the life of the Main Street program. Tracking annual statistics is one of the most important ways to convince civic leaders, corporate partners, and residents of the value of their investment of money and time in the program.

The application process is intended to be a community-building exercise; it should not be completed by one individual. Pledges and letters of support should be solicited from members of the community. Public-speaking engagements to educate the community about the goals of the Main Street program are necessary during the application process. Communities that attend the application workshop will need at least three to four months to complete the application and secure the necessary financial pledges. It is common practice for coordinating programs to require applicant communities to raise funds for *at least* the first three years of the program. This allows the local Main Street program to focus on setting up an organization and completing visible projects downtown, instead of spending too much time raising funds.

The WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program advisory board will have the opportunity to establish the guidelines and criteria for community selection. Through an application scoring process and oral presentations, the communities most ready to implement a program will be selected. The selection committee can be made up of representatives from several partner organizations, as well as advisory board members – as long as they don't have a conflict of interest, namely representing a community that has submitted an application.

Successful applications must be committed to the following principles:

- Establishment of a volunteer board of directors;
- Procurement of stable, local funding for a sustained downtown revitalization program;
- Development of a strong public/private partnership;
- Commitment to hire a Main Street executive director;
- Establishment of a well-defined commercial district;
- Commitment to historic preservation;
- Development of downtown housing initiatives;
- Willingness to work and succeed over time; and
- Tracking of economic statistics for the district.

### **Marketing and Image Development**

Once the coordinator is in place, the regional Main Street program will need to market the services and opportunities available to Western Erie Canal Corridor communities. The immediate goal will be to develop materials to inform and capture the interest of the 11 Canal Corridor communities eligible to apply for Main Street designation. These materials will educate the communities about the purposes of the Main Street coordinating program and the application process.

The startup of the program is also a perfect time to establish an aggressive image campaign that showcases WECA's work plan in a highly visible and positive light, explains the program's future plans, and touts the successes of Main Street programs across the nation.

There has been much confusion about the Main Street program in New York State, stemming from the claims of various state agencies and organizations that they are offering "Main Street" services. Therefore, it will be necessary for WECA to use its Main Street marketing and image development plans to differentiate the regional coordinating program from a variety of state-funded projects and grant programs that have used the "Main Street" name in their title. Marketing materials will need to emphasize the link between the National Trust Main Street Center and the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program.

The review team has made recommendations about a marketing and image development plan for the regional coordinating program in Section IV.

### **Partnerships**

The new Western Erie Canal Main Street Program has already proven it knows the value of partnerships. Representatives from many partnering groups participated in the interviews conducted by the assessment team and offered ideas about ways they could participate in the establishment of a regional program. Partner organizations may be able to offer guidance, technical services, marketing assistance, and discounted services and benefits. A few may also be able to provide financial resources. Some of the partner agencies include:

- Genesee Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council;
- The Community Preservation Corporation;
- Landmark Society of Western New York;
- County tourism offices;
- County economic development/planning offices;
- Small Business Development Center – can provide business assistance to downtown business owners;
- Canal New York Marketing & Business Alliance – can be a good resource for professionals such as architects, developers, recreationalists, and cooperative marketing ventures;
- Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor – may be able to provide assistance with Resource Team Visits, grants, and training workshops; has a \$200,000 grant fund and another \$25,000 for special projects that would be available to the local programs;
- Canal Society of New York State;
- Canalway Trails Association of New York;

- New York State Canal Corporation;
- Parks & Trails New York;
- The New York Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources – has a new grant fund for operational support;
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has provided funding for farmer’s markets in the past; and
- The New York Department of Transportation – can provide transportation enhancement money.

There are probably other organizations that will be identified as potential partners, such as conservation organizations, civic clubs, trade associations, etc.

**Main Street Advisory Board**

In meetings with members of the WECA’s board of directors and executive director, the assessment team members were questioned about the advisability of appointing a separate Main Street board to assume oversight of the newly established regional coordinating program. If a separate board were to be recommended, WECA board members wanted some guidance about the structure of such a board, its administrative functions, and its roles and responsibilities. Because the WECA board is heavily involved in Western Erie Canal Corridor matters that go beyond the scope of a Regional Main Street Coordinating Program, the board wanted to be sure that WECA board members are not overtaxed with additional responsibilities.

The assessment team members have considered these concerns and have made recommendations about the setup of a Main Street Advisory Board in Section IV.

**Coordinating Program Budget**

The assessment team not only reviewed the budget projections for the first two years of the program’s operation, but also looked forward to the budgetary needs for the third year of program operation.

As presently defined, the coordinating program’s budget for the first *two years* of operation shows revenue and expenditures totaling \$240,000. This amount covers:

- Salary for a program coordinator;
- Contract with the NTMSC for technical assistance services;
- Coordinator’s in-state travel expenses; and
- Miscellaneous office expenses.

Much of the overhead for space, equipment use, and additional materials and office expenditures that might be needed during the two years will be covered by other WECA operating funds.

The assessment team evaluated WECA's projected operating budget and compared it with good coordinating program practices and other Main Street coordinating program budgets. Its review of the projects, activities, and services to be delivered by the WECA Main Street coordinating program leads the assessment team to believe that the two-year projected budget of \$240,000 will fall short due to programmatic costs not originally anticipated by WECA. Those additional expenses will come in the areas of staff training and travel; marketing and image development; and specialist services – particularly in the area of design.

The assessment team has estimated that the shortfall for the first two years will be \$37,050. A full explanation of the assessment team's projected operating costs for the first two years of WECA's Regional Main Street Coordinating Program and recommendations for additional funding sources can be found in Section IV.

The assessment team has also made recommendations in Section IV for a budget and projected revenue sources for the third year of the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program's operations.

## **§IV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Staffing and Staff Training**

#### **Staffing**

The volume of work that will be assigned to the regional program coordinator will require a full-time position with administrative support. The program coordinator cannot have another job or other responsibilities beyond implementing the Main Street program.

During the NTMSC visit, the assessment team spoke with the WECA board about the opportunity to hire an employee versus an independent contractor. While there are advantages to both scenarios, the board should seek legal advice before making a decision. The NTMSC prepared a memo on this issue; see Appendix A.

The advisory board chair should be charged with oversight of the regional program coordinator, although day-to-day oversight may be provided by another agency. Annual performance reviews should be conducted by the advisory board chair and at least one other individual who has a keen understanding of the coordinator's work. These performance reviews should be completed before the coordinator's date of hire.

Once the program has grown to include eight to 10 communities, hiring an additional staff person should be considered. The guidelines for "Main Street Coordinating Program Designation," which have been adopted by the coordinating programs themselves, indicate that a coordinating program should have one non-administrative staff person for every five communities. A copy of the coordinating program designation is included as Appendix B of this report.

#### **Staff Training**

It is not enough just to hire staff; it is equally important to ensure that the staff is adequately trained to deliver services and that there is an adequate training and travel budget. Some of the opportunities recommended by the assessment team for staff and board training include.

- Attending Main Street basic training sessions: in adjacent states, sponsored by state Main Street coordinating programs; annually in Washington, D.C. – through the National Trust Main Street Center; and at the annual National Main Streets Conference (in Philadelphia in 2008 and in Chicago in 2009);
- Attending advanced training sessions in the Main Street four points at Main Street conferences in adjacent states and at the annual National Main Streets Conference;
- Attending the semiannual national Main Street coordinator meetings (in Philadelphia—Spring 2008; in Tulsa, Oklahoma—Fall 2008; in Chicago—Spring 2009);
- Accompanying all specialists on visits to local WECA Main Street communities;

- Attending specialists’ sessions at WECA coordinating program workshops and conferences;
- Consistently communicating and interacting with the NTMSC program officer;
- Shadowing an experienced state, city-wide, or county-wide Main Street program coordinator; and
- Consistently networking with other Main Street program coordinators.

The coordinator should also strive to develop – and request the board to fund – professional development skills in areas that include but are not limited to:

- Time management;
- Facilitation training;
- Communication skills;
- Conflict resolution and negotiation;
- Public speaking;
- Media relations;
- Strategic planning;
- Interviewing techniques;
- Budgeting;
- Staff management; and
- Active listening.

### **Benefits and Services to Local Programs**

Providing high-quality training and technical assistance to designated Main Street programs is critical to their success. As noted in the list of services in Section II, under “Benefits and Services to Local Programs,” page 9, the basic services that should be offered to new communities in their first year are:

- Reconnaissance visits;
- Assistance in hiring local executive directors;
- Board roles and responsibilities training;
- New executive director orientation;
- Main Street 101 training;
- Mission and vision statement development;
- Work plan development;
- Quarterly workshops; and
- Year-end program assessments.

Develop the annual training calendar as far in advance as possible to ensure that local volunteers can plan to attend. Offer “graduation certificates to staff and volunteers who attend all four components of the Main Street 101 training. Keep attendance lists for each training; be sure to capture all contact information, including e-mail addresses. Set minimum attendance requirements. For example, the minimum number of attendees for a work plan development session should be 25. This ensures that the local program understands the importance of true community involvement.

Each state, city, county, or regional coordinating program will vary in the number of technical services provided to communities and the delivery of those services. For additional information about the services provided by other coordinating programs, feel free to call any of the Main Street program coordinators or to discuss the issue with your NTMSC program officer. Valuable information is also shared at the semiannual Main Street coordinating program meetings held each spring and fall.

### **Community Application and Selection Process**

After your program coordinator’s orientation, the NTMSC will work with the WECA staff and the Main Street Advisory Board to develop a Letter of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding that the regional coordinating program should have each selected community sign.

The application workshop should be held in the spring of 2008. Communities that want to apply must send *at least* three representatives to the all-day application workshop. Give communities 30 days after the workshop to submit a Letter of Intent to Apply. This is a non-binding letter, but it will indicate how many applications might be submitted.

Form a selection committee of no more than 10 people; it should be made up of advisory board members and representatives from partner organizations. Anyone working or living in an applicant community should not serve on the selection committee. Committee members must be willing to attend a pre-application meeting, read each application, provide written scores and comments, and attend the oral presentations made by each community.

The coordinating committee should not accept more than three programs in its first year. Services that communities need in their initial years can be quite intensive; thus stretching the organization’s resources should be avoided.

The NTMSC provides criteria for National Main Street Accreditation, and the team recommends that the WECA Regional Coordinating Main Street Program use those as the standards for designated Main Street communities along the Western Erie Canal. The criteria are provided as Appendix C of this report.

### **Marketing and Image Development**

The assessment team recommends the following steps to help the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program project a positive image through effective marketing:

- Develop a simple brochure that describes the program’s purpose, its history, the services it offers, benefits to communities, and the process by which communities are designated as Main Street programs.
- Establish a way to communicate with legislators, the governor’s office, state and regional public agencies, and other organizations. Tell the story of the program and explain how it is working to expand economic development opportunities in the Western Erie Canal Corridor. This can be done through periodic program updates e-mailed to these groups and individuals.
- To ensure that a connection is drawn between the official Main Street® program developed by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program, use the following tag line (in whole or in part) in texts, press releases, on brochures, and in electronic communications:
  - “The Western Erie Canal Main Street Coordinating Program is officially affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s National Main Street Center and follows the Main Street Four Point Approach™ for commercial revitalization.”
- Create a “Designated Western Erie Canal Main Street Community” road sign program.
- Develop an online statistical reporting system that makes it easy for designated communities to report their progress on a monthly or quarterly basis. Use these statistics as the basis for quality annual reports. Include Main Street community “return on investment” statistics that show state and local government supporters the great deal they are getting with this program.
- Be sure that the regional staff makes a concerted, systematic effort to call and visit designated Main Street communities regularly. Notify local media of these visits.
- Prepare press releases and other communications to inform partner organizations, supporting agencies, and local media:
  - Whenever National Trust Main Street Center representatives are on-site to provide trainings or other services;
  - When a “Main Street” specialist is working directly with a designated community; and
  - When the regional coordinating program is sponsoring a seminar that provides training to Western Erie Canal Corridor communities.
- Create high-profile Main Street events such as:
  - An annual Main Street awards program that recognizes the best Main Street projects;
  - An annual Main Street conference/meeting that offers Main Street educational sessions to all Western Erie Canal Corridor communities (perhaps held in conjunction with the annual awards program); include Partner Programs in the sponsorship of this forum;

- An event during Historic Preservation Week; and/or
- Downtown Western Erie Canal Corridor Day.
- Publish at least one quality publication each year. Ideas include:
  - Newsletters (quarterly);
  - Posters;
  - Brochures;
  - Main Street Road Trip brochure featuring Main Streets (designated or not) within the Western Erie Canal Corridor (possibly a partnership with Tourism); and/or
  - Calendars.
- Cultivate relationships with media throughout the state and region. Be available for interviews, provide story ideas, and invite media representatives to all coordinating program public events.
- Remember that the local Main Street programs will depend on the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program to publicize their activities and successes to regional, state, and national media. So take advantage of every opportunity to tout the good works of local Main Street programs.

## **Partnerships**

Many of the partner organizations have already been identified; it's now a matter of solidifying the assistance, expertise, and/or resources each has available and when they will be accessible. Ideally, each organization will offer reciprocal membership to the WECA coordinating program.

The regional coordinator should set up one-on-one meetings with the entities listed in Section III, under "Partnerships," page 13-14. It is recommended that the WECA Main Street Program develop Memorandums of Understanding with each entity as a means of formalizing its efforts and creating a record for the organization. Executive directors and staff can change at any of these partner agencies, so documenting the agreements will help ensure that the regional program continues to benefit even if the primary staff person at the organization is no longer involved.

Keep track of the value of any services provided to the WECA Main Street Program by its partners. Recognize them as financial contributors to the program, even if they only contribute in-kind services.

Include all partner organizations on any newsletter mailings or e-news lists. Invite them to attend trainings, when appropriate, along with the Main Street communities. Recognize and thank them publicly for their support. Take a partner to lunch to keep the organization abreast of new programs and projects and to strengthen their commitment to supporting Main Street.

Be mindful of partnerships that can be expanded to benefit local Main Street programs. To help local programs make better connections, the regional program can offer an

information session with several partner organizations as one of the quarterly executive director/volunteer workshops. Each partner would bring information about the resources it has to offer.

## **Main Street Advisory Board**

The assessment team recommends that a separate Main Street advisory board be created to provide oversight for the newly established WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. Based on its observations, the assessment team would like to offer the following recommendations about the purposes of such a board, the member composition of the board, and the roles and responsibilities of the board.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Main Street Advisory Board is to support the Western Erie Canal Alliance by helping to set policies and priorities, raise funds, participate in the selection process for new Main Street communities, promote the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program, and provide oversight and support for the Main Street regional coordinator position.

### **Membership**

- The board will consist of 12 individuals, including a chair and vice chair. Members and officers will initially be appointed by a nominating committee of the Western Erie Canal Alliance board. The WECA board will also initially appoint ex-officio positions to the Main Street Advisory Board. Suggestions for the composition of both advisory board members and ex officio members are listed below.
- Advisory board members will serve three-year terms and may be reappointed twice. Initial members should be appointed for staggered terms. The board's chair can serve in that position for up to two years.
- After the WECA board makes initial appointments of advisory board and ex officio members, it will be the responsibility of the Main Street advisory board to replenish its ranks as the need occurs.
- Selection criteria for board membership include passion and commitment to downtown commercial revitalization and a willingness to work.
- Recommendations for the initial composition of the advisory board follow:
  - Three members from the WECA Board;
  - Two local government officials from towns within the area served by the Western Erie Canal Alliance;
  - Two small business representatives from the Western Erie Canal Corridor (these could be actual "Main Street" small business owners or individuals with small business expertise or experience);
  - Three individuals who offer special expertise (e.g. architects, economic development specialists, planners, preservationists, marketing specialists, attorneys); and

- Two corporate representatives from the Western Erie Canal Corridor.

Representatives from partner organizations should serve in an ex officio\* capacity. See Section III, “Partnerships,” page 13-14, for a list of suggested partnership organizations.

\*Ex officio members will not be voting members of the Main Street Advisory Board. But they should be invited to all board meetings and kept abreast through minutes and other means of the Regional Main Street Coordinating Program’s activities and progress. The list suggested in this report is based on the team’s observations; however, there may be partners not listed here that should have a seat at the table; and some of the partners listed on pages 13-14 may not need to be ex officio members.

### **Meetings**

- Meeting agendas should be prepared by the program director and chair of advisory board.
- Meetings should be held monthly (except for the month of December). Make an effort to occasionally rotate the meeting location to one of the selected Main Street communities.

### **Expectations of Board Members**

- Attend at least six of the 11 meetings each year;
- Serve on at least one committee;
- Work with the program coordinator to set policies and procedures for the regional coordinating program;
- Promote the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program at public events, and at the request of the program coordinator;
- When appropriate and feasible, assist with fund raising and advocacy for the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program
- Participate in the selection process for new Main Street communities;
- Participate in the hiring process for a new Main Street program coordinator; and
- Assist the program coordinator to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance and services to local Main Street communities

### **Other considerations**

- Advisory board members serve as volunteers with no compensation.
- As requested, reasonable expenses related to coordinating program activities will be reimbursed.
- E-mail is the accepted form of correspondence.
- Board members will excuse themselves from participating in the development of recommendations that may affect their own community or organization.

### **Advisory Board Committees**

- The board establishes ad hoc committees as needed, including nominating, development, conference, and selection committees.

- Committees are chaired by board members. Except for the selection committee, committee members may include non-board members.
- All committees are activity driven and terminate if inactive for six months or more.
- Committee members excuse themselves from participating in development recommendations that may affect their own community or organization.

**Budget and Funding Sources (first two years)**

The assessment team makes the following budget recommendations for the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. This two-year budget is meant to cover the period from August 1, 2007 to September 30, 2009:

**Budget – first two years**

Coordinator’s salary (includes benefits)	\$107,000
National Trust Main Street Center services contract (includes coordinator training, application development, application workshop, selection process, start-up consultations, basic training and manager orientation, resource team visits, work plan workshops)	\$ 99,000
NTMSC contract travel	\$ 24,300
Coordinator travel expenses (in-state, service delivery)	\$ 6,000
Coordinator and board out-of-state training (travel included) (Includes sending two to Philadelphia for National Main Streets Conference and Spring Coordinators Meeting – March 30-April 2, 2008 – \$2,500; sending director to Fall 2008 Coordinator’s meeting in Tulsa, Okla. – \$2,000; sending two to Chicago for Spring 2009 National Main Streets Conference and Coordinators Meeting – \$2,500; covering attendance for director and board members at in-state conferences/workshops – \$1,000)	\$ 8,000
Office supplies	\$ 2,000
Marketing/image development program (e.g. quarterly newsletters, website, brochures, promotional materials, highway signs to identify communities)	\$ 5,000
Board of Advisors meeting and community trainings	\$ 1,000
Memberships/dues (includes NTMSC Coordinator’s package for two years at \$2,000 per year; and one year of providing Main Street Network Membership privileges to each of the three selected Communities at \$250 each)	\$ 4,750

Design services	\$20,000
(includes a contract with a professional preservation design consultant to provide free on-site design assistance services, workshops; and trainings for local program staff and committees; other Western Erie Canal Corridor communities may participate in workshops)	
Total recommended two-year budget	\$277,050
Originally budgeted by WECA board for coordinating program	<u>\$240,000</u>
Anticipated shortfall	<b>\$ 37,050</b>

**Additional Funding Sources (first two years)**

The following are recommendations for potential funding sources to cover the shortfall:

- National Trust “Partners in the Field” program – specifically for design assistance;
- State (governor’s budget);
- Local government (county contributions); and
- The Community Preservation Corporation (CPC) – WECA regional coordinating program would market availability of CPC rehab loan funds in Canal communities, guide property and business owners through the process, and receive a fee for services from CPC.

**Budget and Funding Sources (third year)**

The assessment team makes the following budget recommendations for the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program during its third year of operation. This one-year budget is meant to cover the period between October 1, 2009 and September 30, 2010:

**Budget – third year (includes second year of services to communities)**

Coordinator’s salary (includes increase in salary/benefits)	\$ 60,000
Staff in-state travel expenses for service delivery	\$ 3,000
Staff and board training and travel (in-state and out of state)	\$ 5,000
Office supplies, postage	\$ 1,000
Expanded marketing/image development program	\$ 10,000
Board meetings and community trainings	\$ 1,000
Memberships/dues	\$ 2,750
Annual (WECA Main Street Coordinating) event	\$ 5,000
Quarterly local manager/board trainings (one-day managers only; one-day training with NTMSC specialist, includes travel)	\$ 8,000

Specialist service visits to communities (through NTMSC – two-day visit to each community, includes travel)	\$ 18,000
Business development/market analysis services (through NTMSC – training for three communities, includes travel)	\$ 6,000
WECA Main Street tune up/program administration (NTMSC two-day visit to work with coordinating program staff and WECA advisory board members)	\$ 5,000
Local program year-end assessments (NTMSC – five days on site, includes travel)	\$ 10,000
Design services contract (expanded)	<u>\$ 30,000</u>
Total recommended budget for third year of operation	<b>\$164,750</b>

**Funding Sources (third year of operation)**

The following are recommendations for potential funding sources to cover programmatic expenses during the coordinating program’s third year of operation:

- National Trust “Partners in the Field” – specifically for design assistance;
- State (governor’s budget);
- Local government (county contributions);
- The Community Preservation Corporation – the WECA coordinating program would market availability of loan funds for rehabilitations in Canal communities, guide property and business owners through the process, and receive a fee for services from CPC; and
- Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources – Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program – through “Downtown and Hamlet Revitalization” category. This grant program is probably the best opportunity for providing continuing operational funding support for the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program.

## § V. WORK PLAN AND BENCHMARKS

In order to accommodate the recommendations in this report, the team has developed a work plan that provides objectives, tasks, and timeframes for the next year of activities. However, this plan needs to be fleshed out so that responsibilities for tasks are defined, along with a budget for any items that require funding.

### **Hire the regional coordinator:**

- Develop an employment contract – by *December 2007*.
- Provide New Coordinator Orientation with the NTMSC – by *February 2008*.
- Meet with counterparts at partner agencies and begin dialogue of how the program and its partners will work together – by *March 2008*.
- Attend New Coordinator’s Orientation, Introduction to Main Street, and the National Main Streets Conference in Philadelphia – *March 28-April 2, 2008*.
- Budget and plan for continued professional development each year – by *October 2008*.

### **Regional program administrative issues:**

- Develop a presentation on Main Street to be delivered at public meetings – by *April 2008*.
- Create a process for communities to submit monthly or quarterly reinvestment statistics – by *August 2008*.
- Review terms for advisory board members to determine if any need to be replaced or reelected after the first year of service – by *October 2008*.
- Submit regional annual reinvestment statistics to the NTMSC – by *February 28, 2009*.
- Submit National Accreditation Evaluations to the NTMSC – by *February 28, 2009*.

### **Marketing and image development:**

- Produce a general informational brochure about the WECA Regional Main Street Coordinating Program. Seek samples from other states – by *April 2008*.
- Develop a marketing plan that includes ways to communicate with state officials and legislators and further strengthen relationships with media sources – by *July 2008*.
- Design and produce “Welcome to a Western Erie Canal Main Street Community” signs. Work with the D.O.T. on the design and regulations for placement at the entrance to each community – by *September 2008*.
- Develop quarterly communication tools (newsletter, e-news, etc.) to reach interested communities, partners, board members, etc. – by *August, 2008*.

- Produce press releases on the application workshops, other trainings, speaking engagements, etc. – *ongoing*.
- Plan regular visits to communities; meet with the local media – *ongoing*.
- Plan for a high-profile event in year two (an awards program, conference, historic preservation celebration, downtown day, etc.) – by *November 2009*.
- Submit proposals to speak at statewide conferences such as the League of Cities annual conference – by *2009*.

**Establish application process for new Main Street community designation:**

- Work with the NTMSC on a draft of application – by *February 2008*.
- Finalize the application form and design selection process – by *March 2008*.
- Get approval of application process from the advisory board and set dates for application workshops – by *April 2008*.
- Develop a Letter of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding that will be signed by each selected community; the letter should outline the criteria for being named a Main Street community and the services WECA Main Street will provide – by *April 30, 2008*.
- Hold application workshops, copy applications and provide on disc, send reminders about submitted Letter of Intent to Apply – by *May 2, 2008*.
- Make public presentations in each interested community – by *August 2008*.
- Select communities – by *September 1, 2008*
- Make a public announcement of selection of communities and invite area and statewide dignitaries – by *September 15, 2008*.
- Begin delivery of start-up services to newly designated communities – by *September 30, 2008*.

**Benefits and services to newly selected communities:**

- Set up the training schedule for new communities – by *August 2008*.
- Work with the program officer from the NTMSC on a service contract for the second year of services for the initial Main Street communities, and perhaps start-up services if new communities are added the following year – by *October 2009*.

**Get partner agencies and organizations to support WECA Main Street Program activities:**

- Include these partners on the advisory board – by *November 1, 2007*.
- Utilize partners' expertise, whenever possible, in service delivery, program development, funding expertise, etc. – *ongoing*.
- Develop a resource guide that identifies sources of money or technical assistance that partner organizations can provide – by *July 2008*.

**Identify potential additional sources of funding for the WECA Main Street Program:**

- Develop a fund-raising plan that identifies possible sources of funding and ways to solicit those funds – by *December 31, 2008*.
- Investigate the National Trust “Partners in the Field” program – specifically for design assistance. Also investigate the state (Governor’s budget), local government (county contributions), and the Community Preservation Corporation – by *October 2008*.
- For the third year of funding, investigate the Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources – Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program – through “Downtown and Hamlet Revitalization” category – by *October 2009*.

## § VI. COMMUNITY PHOTOS



Holly, New York



Albion, New York



Medina, New York



Middleport, New York



Palmyra, New York



Lyons, New York



Newark, New York



Clyde, New York



Lockport, New York



Macedon, New York



North Tonawanda, New York

## **§ VII. APPENDICES: DOCUMENT EXAMPLES**

**Appendix A:** Memorandum to WECA Board of Directors and Landmark Society: hiring a regional coordinator as a contractor

**Appendix B:** Main Street Coordinating Program Designation

**Appendix C:** National Main Street Program Accreditation Criteria

## Appendix A



August 28, 2007

To: WECA Board of Directors and Landmark Society of Western New York  
Re: Independent Contractor verses Employee Relationship for Main Street Regional Coordinator

From: Teresa Lynch, Senior Program Officer  
Kathy La Plante, Program Officer

Prior to the delivery of the full-length report from our recent assessment visit, The National Trust's Main Street Center wanted to alert the WECA Board and Landmark Society to issues regarding the intention of hiring the Regional Coordinator for the Main Street Program as a contractor rather than an employee.

Given the Landmark Society's past history when an employee filed for unemployment compensation, once funding for the position was gone, we understand the desire to proceed with a contractor relationship; however, we urge full review of this choice with legal counsel prior to signing a contract with the new Regional Coordinator. Choosing the wrong path could potentially leave the Landmark Society liable for fines and penalties should the IRS determine that, indeed, the relationship is one of an employer/employee, and not that of a client and independent contractor.

The issues of most concern are:

- Are you engaging the Regional Coordinator with the expectation that the relationship will continue indefinitely, rather than for a specific project or period of time, as this is generally considered evidence that your intent was to create an employer/employee relationship?
- If a worker provides services that are a key aspect of your regular business activity, it is more likely that you will have the right to direct and control his or her activities. This would also indicate an employer/employee relationship.
- An individual is an independent contractor if you, the person for whom the services are being performed, have the right to control or direct only the result of the work, not the means and methods of accomplishing the results. Essentially, this means if you *can* control how and when services are done, there is an employee relationship. Even if you don't enforce that right, if you do have the right to control the how and when, it would indicate that an employee relationship

- exists.
- According to guidelines, an independent contractor will not normally need to be trained. Your Regional Coordinator, if lacking a strong Main Street background, will definitely need to attend training sessions. Even an experienced Main Street Coordinator will need advanced training.
  - By definition, an independent contractor's services are available to the general public and they also generally have invested money into their company in order to perform a service. As noted, your Regional Coordinator should then be able to hire themselves out for other work, either in the Main Street field, or any other consulting role. Is this what you desire?

We recognize that WECA and the Landmark Society have resources available to help answer the questions and concerns noted above prior to proceeding with a written contract for the new Regional Coordinator. With interviews a few weeks away, we encourage you to address this issue with your legal counsel as soon as you are able.

## Appendix B

### Main Street Coordinating Program Designation

The overall purpose of the National Main Street Coordinating Program Designation is to:

- Provide national recognition and credibility for all Main Street (MS) coordinating programs.
- Establish a base level of performance for all coordinating programs.
- Raise the professionalism of coordinating programs.
- Create a vehicle for future licensing of the “Main Street” name to designated coordinating programs.
- Ensure that coordinating programs are building and supporting a growing network of local programs that are successfully and faithfully following the Main Street Approach® (MSA).
- Create excellence.

The criteria and benchmarks/performance measures for recognition as a Designated Main Street Coordinating Program are as follows:

#### 1. Demonstrates success:

- Participating commercial district revitalization programs over time, demonstrate a high reinvestment ratio, increasing incrementally each year. Minimally:
  - ✓ Annually submits National Trust Main Street Center (NTMSC) reinvestment statistics, charting incremental cumulative increase; and
  - ✓ Annually submits cumulative economic impact statistics from participating local programs to the NTMSC.
- The majority of the local programs selected to participate are nationally accredited Main Street programs. Minimally:
  - ✓ Have 50 percent plus 1 of local programs accredited annually; and
  - ✓ Annually submits roster of nationally accredited Main Street programs to NTMSC.
- Attains a high level of positive visibility and credibility within the state, region, or city by developing a communications plan/comprehensive public relations program that includes, at a minimum, three of the following:
  - ✓ Provides media releases on activities;
  - ✓ Coordinating program website;
  - ✓ Coordinating program newsletter;
  - ✓ Main Street banquet or awards event;
  - ✓ Visibility at various statewide events such as booths, presentations, etc.;
  - ✓ Main Street days at the capitol; and
  - ✓ Main Street collateral materials such as posters, brochures, etc.
- Educates, informs, and promotes the importance of traditional commercial district revitalization to help shape policy and legislation. Minimally:
  - ✓ Helps shape or develop programs/initiatives benefit Main Street;

- ✓ Provides best practices and accurate information/education to decision makers; and
- ✓ Educates local programs on advocacy.
- Coordinating programs successfully tackle progressively more complex revitalization issues and work with their local programs to do the same. Minimally:
  - ✓ Work plan or annual report that documents or demonstrates same.
- Ensures the proper use of the Main Street name, trademark, and copyrights. Minimally:
  - ✓ Conducts annual local program accreditation;
  - ✓ Initiates “policing” of violators, including alerting NTMSC, if necessary;
  - ✓ Includes language in local Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOU) regarding trademark; and
  - ✓ Understands National Trust’s (NT) name use policy.
- Has a selection process in place to select communities that demonstrate the readiness and ability to implement the Main Street program. Minimally:
  - ✓ Has written guidelines on selection process
  - ✓ Has formal application form

**2. Effectively works with local programs:**

- Develops a positive working relationship with each local MS organization. Minimally:
  - ✓ Written contract/MOU/letter of agreement with local program that incorporates the NTMSC accreditation criteria;
  - ✓ Engages local programs in coordinating program sponsored workshops and trainings; and
  - ✓ Communicates with local programs regularly.
- Provides training for participating communities. Minimally:
  - ✓ Quarterly Main Street networking meetings/trainings.
- Provides local Main Street programs with access to resources for all components of downtown revitalization. Minimally:
  - ✓ Orientation binders for new program directors and volunteers, as appropriate; and
  - ✓ Information distribution methods (electronic, etc.) that connect needs with providers.
- Monitors the progress of each local Main Street program. Minimally:
  - ✓ Conducts annual reviews through a formal process;
  - ✓ Collects reinvestment statistics; and
  - ✓ Conducts on-site visits or technical assistance regularly at least once a year.
- Serves as a link between local programs and the NTMSC. Minimally:
  - ✓ Requires NTMSC memberships; and
  - ✓ Provides information from national level to local and vice versa.

- Does not accept more Main Street programs than it can realistically serve in a quality manner. Minimally:
    - ✓ Doesn't exceed recommended staff to local program ratio of 5 to 10 programs per full-time equivalent employee (mix of new and mature Main Street programs).
- 3. Historic preservation ethic:**
- The coordinating program is based on a strong preservation ethic and has an excellent track record in achieving the preservation of historic Main Street buildings and other relevant historic resources. Minimally:
    - ✓ Local Main Street communities save more buildings than are destroyed;
    - ✓ Coordinating program demonstrates that Main Street is historic preservation; and
    - ✓ Historic preservation training is included as a regular part of services.
  - Program is able to build strong partnerships with other preservation organizations.
    - ✓ Partners with other preservation organizations as appropriate in region – SHPO, CLGs, local organizations, state/citywide preservation organizations, smart growth groups, conservation organizations, etc.
- 4. Mission statement:**
- Communicates the organization's sense of purpose and overall direction. Minimally:
    - ✓ Must have a mission statement.
- 5. Administers a comprehensive program:**
- Performs proper program administration. Minimally:
    - ✓ Annual work plan;
    - ✓ Job descriptions for all staff; and
    - ✓ Annual coordinating program budget.
- 6. Has experienced professional staff:**
- Staff is able to effectively provide basic services to communities that build capacity to empower local Main Street leaders to successfully implement the comprehensive Main Street Four Point Approach™ (e.g. new program director orientation, board and committee member trainings, work plan assistance, local program evaluations, resource team visits, etc.). Minimally:
    - ✓ New professional staff attends Main Street 101 training during first year of employment (sponsored by NTMSC or coordinating programs); and
    - ✓ There is one full-time staff person dedicated to coordinating the Main Street program
- 7. Program of ongoing training for professional staff:**
- Attends National Main Streets Conference and coordinators meetings. Minimally:
    - ✓ Annual attendance at national coordinators meetings; and
    - ✓ Annual attendance at National Main Streets Conference.

- Regularly attends other professional development trainings. Minimally:
  - ✓ Attends one training per year.

**8. Liaison with the NTMSC:**

- Participates in NTMSC's coordination program membership package. Minimally:
  - ✓ Purchase of NTMSC coordinators package annually.
- Provides regular updates to NTMSC through coordinator reports and other means. Minimally:
  - ✓ Coordinator reports updated annually; and
  - ✓ Coordinator program survey updated annually.
- Has an ongoing relationship with the NTMSC. Minimally:
  - ✓ Regular dialogue with the NTMSC.

**9. Has adequate and stable funding to meet minimum designation requirements:**

- Effectively harnesses funding and resources, from both public and/or private sources, as applicable. Minimally:
  - ✓ Annual operating budget that details income sources and expenses (salaries, technical assistance, and operations).

## Appendix C

### 2007 SAMPLE National Main Street Program Accreditation Criteria

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*This is for FYI only - please complete the online form for ALL of your affiliated/designated programs. The following is the information we will be requesting of you for National Accreditation process online.*

**Organization Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City/Town Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **National Accreditation Evaluation:**

**Programs must meet all ten minimum standards of performance below for recognition.** See attached "Guidelines for National Program Accreditation" for details of criteria. **Must be based on performance through end of year 2007.**

- 1. Has broad-based community support for the commercial district revitalization process, with strong support from both the public and private sectors.
- 2. Has developed vision and mission statements relevant to community conditions and to the local Main Street program's organizational stage.
- 3. Has a comprehensive Main Street work plan
- 4. Possesses an historic preservation ethic
- 5. Has an active board of directors and committees
- 6. Has an adequate operating budget
- 7. Has a paid professional executive director
- 8. Conducts a program of ongoing training for staff and volunteers
- 9. Reports key statistics
- 10. Has current membership in the National Trust's National Main Street Network membership program  
*\*Note – the online form will let you know if their membership is current or not.*

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**This program:**  meets /  does not meet **the criteria for certification as a Nationally Accredited Main Street Program.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of evaluator*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*