

THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Office of Downtown Development



Georgia Dept. of Community Affairs



Better Hometown



Classic Main Street

History and Overview of the Georgia Main Street/Better Hometown Program

In 1980, Georgia was one of six pilot states to begin a statewide program of downtown economic development called Main Street. The Georgia Main Street Program is based on the simple but effective four-point approach originated by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street is a comprehensive revitalization process that improves all aspects of a commercial district. It successfully integrates the practical management strategy with the physical improvement of buildings and public spaces, aggressive promotion and image building, and the economic development of the area. Essential to the successful Main Street is a professional program manager to coordinate the downtown revitalization program. Currently, Georgia has 105 Better Hometown and Main Street cities that operate under the Georgia Main Street Program umbrella. Cities under 5,000 in population are designated under our small-town Main Street program known as the Better Hometown Program. Cities with a population of 5,000 to 50,000 are designated as Main Street cities.

The National Main Street 4-Point Approach to Downtown Revitalization™

Main Street™ is a philosophy, a program, and a proven comprehensive approach to downtown commercial district revitalization. This approach has been implemented in over 1,200 cities and towns in 40 states across the nation with the help of the National Main Street Center and statewide downtown revitalization programs.

By carefully integrating four points into a practical downtown management strategy, a local Main Street™ program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economic base:

Organization involves building a Main Street™ framework that is well represented by business and property owners, bankers, citizens, public officials, chambers of commerce, and other local economic development organizations. Everyone must work together to renew downtown. A strong organization provides the stability to build and maintain a long-term effort.

Promotion creates excitement downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways Main Street™ encourages customer traffic. Promotion involves marketing an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors.

Design enhances the attractiveness of the business district. Historic building rehabilitation, street and alley clean-up, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting all improve the physical image of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live. Design improvements result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to downtown.

Economic Restructuring involves analyzing current market forces to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants are examples of economic restructuring activities.

Georgia Main Street Cities (1980 – 2003)

(MS – Main Street)

(BHT – Better Hometown)

Acworth (MS - 2000)
Alamo-Glenwood (BHT - 2001)
Alma (BHT - 2001)
Americus (MS - 1983)
Ashburn (BHT - 2001)
Athens (MS - 1980)
Augusta (MS - 1994)
Bainbridge (MS - 1990)
Baxley (BHT - 2000)
Blackshear (BHT - 1997)
Blakely (BHT - 1997)
Blue Ridge (BHT - 1998)
Bremen (BHT - 1997)
Brunswick (MS - 1986)
Buchanan (BHT - 2000)
Byron (BHT - 2000)
Calhoun (MS - 1994)
Camilla (BHT - 2002)
Carrollton (MS - 1985)
Cartersville (MS - 1987)
Cedartown (MS - 1988)
College Park (MS - 1999)
Colquitt (BHT - 2000)
Commerce (MS - 1985)
Cordele (MS - 1987)
Cornelia (BHT - 2002)
Covington (MS - 1988)
Crawfordville (BHT - 1998)
Cuthbert (BHT - 2001)
Dahlonega (BHT - 2000)
Dalton (MS - 1985)
Darien (BHT - 1998)
Dawson (BHT - 1998)
Donalsonville (BHT - 2001)
Douglas (MS - 1987)
Douglasville (MS - 2000)
Dublin (MS - 1989)
Duluth (MS - 2001)
East Point (MS - 1999)
Eatonton (BHT - 1999)
Edison (BHT - 1998)
Elberton (MS - 1991)
Fayetteville (MS - 1996)
Fitzgerald (MS - 1991)
Flowery Branch (BHT - 1999)
Folkston (BHT - 1999)
Forsyth (BHT - 2000)
Fort Valley (MS - 1991)
Gainesville (MS - 1995)
Gordon (BHT - 2002)
Greensboro (BHT - 1997)
Griffin (MS - 1984)
Hahira (BHT - 2001)
Hampton (BHT - 2002)
Hapeville (MS - 2003)
Hartwell (MS - 1997)
Hawkinsville (BHT - 1999)
Hazlehurst (BHT - 2001)
Homerville (BHT - 1998)
Jefferson (BHT - 2001)
LaGrange (MS - 1994)
Lavonia (BHT - 1999)
Lincolnton (BHT - 2000)
Lyons (BHT - 1999)
Madison (MS - 1984)
Manchester (BHT - 1997)
McDonough (MS - 2001)
Metter (BHT - 1998)
Milledgeville (MS - 1988)
Millen (BHT - 2001)
Monticello (BHT - 1998)
Moultrie (MS - 1988)
Nashville (BHT - 2003)
Newnan (MS - 1986)
Oglethorpe (BHT - 2000)
Pelham (BHT - 2002)
Plains (BHT - 1999)
Reynolds (BHT - 2001)
Richland (BHT - 2000)
Rome (MS - 1981)
Royston (BHT - 2001)
Sandersville (MS - 2001)
Social Circle (BHT - 1998)
Springfield (BHT - 2000)
Statesboro (MS - 1990)
Stone Mountain (MS - 1997)
Summerville (BHT - 2000)
Suwanee (BHT - 2000)
Tallapoosa (BHT - 1999)
Thomaston (MS - 1986)
Thomasville (MS - 1981)
Tifton (MS - 1986)
Toccoa (MS - 1990)
Trenton (BHT - 1998)
Valdosta (MS - 1984)
Vidalia (MS - 1989)
Vienna (BHT - 2003)
Warrenton (BHT - 2000)
Washington (MS - 1981; BHT - 1999)
Waycross (MS - 1980)
West Point (BHT - 2001)
Winder (MS - 1986)
Woodbine (BHT - 2000)
Wrens (BHT - 2000)
Wrightsville (BHT - 1999)