



SMALL TOWN PRESERVATION CHALLENGES:
A STATEWIDE MAIN STREET PERSPECTIVE

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DISCLAIMER(S)

-This is a statewide perspective from working with more than a hundred communities through historic preservation efforts, in populations that range from 524 (Brooks) to more than 447,841 (City of Atlanta)

-I have only lived in one small, rural town of 899 (Young Harris) and live presently in a city of 447,841 (Atlanta)

-My perspective is from a statewide perspective through my professional work with the Georgia Main Street Program at the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and previously for eight years with the Georgia Historic Preservation Division

-I love all of our Georgia cities, both big and small and all have amazing and dedicated historic preservationists working for the betterment of our Georgia downtowns

ORGANIZATION

Organization establishes consensus and cooperation by building partnerships among the various groups that have a stake in the commercial district.

Small City/Town/Community Challenges

-Smaller cities/towns/communities sometimes struggle to maintain partnerships because of changing aging demographic of historical societies and mobility of historic preservation non-profits and professionals

-High burnout rate of a few community members overextending and over committing to multiple organizations involving multiple partnered organizations

-Sometimes a lack of local government involvement and support for local historical societies and historic preservation non-profits, promoting needed training, education and general outreach support

-More support of historic preservation efforts through local main street program, or through the historic preservation commission efforts

PROMOTION

Promotion takes many forms, but the goal is to create a positive image that will renew community pride and tell your Main Street story to the surrounding region.

Small City/Town/Community Challenges

-A lack of awareness, communication and cooperation from stakeholders related to heritage tourism, often not extended by local governments and CBV organizations

-Problems arise when there is a lack of effort to anchor heritage tourism product to authentic history of the community or not include partnerships with other organizations that could promote success

-Lack of local government support in sponsoring festivals, events with volunteer recruitment and sponsorship activities, acknowledging that in smaller, more rural cities/towns/communities you may have to work smarter and harder to succeed with promotion

-Keeping connected to the proper trainings, support and general statewide efforts for long term local, regional and state goals for heritage tourism and the main street effort

ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING

Through economic restructuring, we can show you how to strengthen your community's existing economic assets while diversifying its economic base.

Small City/Town/Community Challenges

- Lack of communication between city/county governments with coordinating efforts to attract more business, larger business and more diverse business
- Need for more support to programs that encourage economic growth like CDBG, DRLF, façade grant programs, etc., that encourage economic growth, finding ways to make training more available and important for local government and business owners
- Focus on intermittent, immediate projects (like booming film industry) versus looking for long term, sustained investment
- Effects of economic downturn hurt smaller cities/towns/ and communities the hardest and they are still recovering

DESIGN

Design means getting Main Street into top physical shape and creating a safe, preserving a place's historic character, inviting environment for shoppers, workers, and visitors.

Small City/Town/Community Challenges

- Design/Historic Preservation Trainings are less frequent and sometimes not as close to smaller cities/towns/communities
- Smaller cities/towns/communities have not always had a large history of applying for and gaining access to larger, federal grants
- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentive projects are often more prolific in larger cities/towns/communities and local government could be more supportive of these alternatives to demolition
- Often in smaller cities/towns/communities one, or more citizens owns a core of downtown, historic buildings and has specific ideas about their current and future use