



Information For & About CMSC Members

The following information is meant to be helpful for CMSC member communities in preparing presentations and reports in support of their downtown management function.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Christine Schilke, Communications Director, at 860.280.2356 or Christine@ctmainstreet.org

About the CT Main Street Network

- **You're part of a powerful network that reaches corner-to-corner across the state.**
 - The statewide [CT Main Street Network](#) includes 75 member communities comprised of 12 Professionally Managed Downtowns, 28 General Members and 2 Regional Members representing 35 communities.
- **Collectively, our network impacts nearly 2 million Connecticut residents.**
 - Together the 75 member communities in the CMSC network represent 1.9 million Connecticut residents.
- **You have direct access to experts in a broad range of downtown revitalization and management fields.**
 - Our [Professional Affiliate Member Program](#) was introduced in 2016, connecting industry experts to the Main Street organizations and municipalities in the Connecticut Main Street Network. Currently we have 18 Professional Affiliate Members, and growing.

How CMSC Helps Its Members

- **We help you learn to be better.** We offer a variety of *Training & Education*, from our members-only BRIDGE Series to our Downtown Revitalization Institute (DRI) workshops, CMSC offers a wide variety of educational opportunities throughout the year. Look for our new webinar series on the building blocks of Main Street revitalization, coming soon.
- **With us, you're never alone.** We provide both peer and professional *Networking Opportunities*. Held around the state, CMSC offers our members and professional affiliates the opportunity to visit with and learn from each other. Networking opportunities include our CMSC/CEDAS Networking Events and new Professional Affiliate Open Houses.
- **CMSC gets you and your community noticed.** CMSC has greatly raised its public profile over the last four years, and with it, visibility for our members and their downtowns.
 - *Traditional media:* CMSC, its members and programs have been featured in nearly every major newspaper in the state including: the *Hartford Courant*, *Middletown Press*, *New Britain Herald*, *New London Day*, *CTMirror*, the *Republican-American* and more, as well as on TV and radio.



- *Social media*: CMSC's digital presence is strong and growing - since 2012, CMSC has increased its Twitter followers over 900%, while Facebook "likes" are up over 400% in the same timeframe. CMSC's e-newsletter, *Downtown Update*, is distributed to over 3,000+ contacts per month. All of this collectively means a far-wider audience for downtown issues and our members.
- **We give voice to your concerns.** We champion causes that keep our downtowns strong. These include lobbying for Community Investment Act funds and expanded Tax Increment Financing legislation, as well as penning op-eds that showcase our values to thousands of readers. We'll be focusing on eliminating or raising the cap on Historic Tax Credits during the next legislative session.
- **We're respected as problem solvers and doers.** We enjoy close working relationships with many state agencies, including being contracted by the Connecticut Housing Finance Authority on the Come Home to Downtown program, being the statewide administrator of the State Historic Preservation Office's Preservation of Place grant, and formerly advising on the Department of Economic and Community Development's Main Street Investment Fund.

Info About CT & Its Residents

The following information has implications not only for our downtowns, but for statewide policies over the coming years and decades.

- **Connecticut is old and getting older.**
 - We're the 7th oldest state in the nation, based on median age, and Nutmeggers are living longer - Connecticut has the 3rd highest life expectancy in the nation, at 80.8 years. [Read the report here.](#)
 - Between 2010 and 2040, Connecticut's population of people age 65 and older is projected to [grow by 57%](#).
- **We desperately need more young people. And babies.**
 - CT's population of people age 20 to 64 is projected to grow by [less than 2%](#) during 2010-2040.
 - Most CT municipalities are projected to see [significant declines in their 5-19 year-old population](#) from 2015-2025.
 - And by the way, multifamily housing DOES NOT automatically mean schools will be overrun. In fact, it's mostly large, multi-bedroom single family homes that bring more children. [Learn more here.](#)
- **It's really hard in CT for young people. Even though they're better educated, they're making less. And they have a lot of student debt.**
 - In 2013, [28% of people aged 18-34 had bachelor's degrees or higher](#), compared to their 24% of their counterparts in 1990.
 - [In 2013, this group earned \\$40,849 vs \\$46,569 for their 1990 peers.](#)



- Young people in CT average almost [\\$30,000 in student debt](#).
- **Most of our housing is single family homes.**
 - 114 CT cities and towns have housing stock comprised of [at least 70% detached single-family homes](#).
- **Yet we're worried about being able to afford housing in the places we want to live.**
 - [50% of adults \(18-49\) are worried about the cost of housing](#) in the community they want to live in.
- **And where we want to live is fun, walkable and entertaining. In fact, it's the most important factor to us.**
 - Quality of life, with features like transportation, affordability, parks and entertainment, is [the most important factor for CT adults](#) when choosing where to live.
 - While 47% of CT adults currently live in a car-dependent suburb where you have to drive to most things, only 8% want to live in a there in the future. [48% want to someday live in an area within walking distance of shops and restaurants](#).
 - [CT's urban areas tend to be younger](#), with a lower median age.

Info About Downtown

So what's the answer for creating great places that will attract young adults, support older people, and can provide a wealth of interesting, walkable places to live? Downtown of course! Oh, and did we mention that Main Streets are money makers?

- **Just about everyone wants a walkable, lively area to go to, whether that's located in an urban, suburban or rural environment.**
 - A 2014 national APA Study of millennials and baby boomers found that [56% of millennials and 46% of baby boomers](#) would prefer to live someday in a walkable community, whether that's in an urban, suburban or rural location.
- **Compact, mixed-use areas like a downtown generate more money, and have a greater return on investment than big-box development.**
 - In Raleigh, NC, a compact mixed-use development had an ROI of [over \\$100,000 per acre](#), compared to just over \$2,800 per acre for a big box development.
 - In Asheville, NC, the [downtown produced \\$365,000 of property taxes per acre](#) versus \$6,500 for a big-box development. It also showed over 70 jobs per acre in the downtown, compared to just 6 for the big-box retailer.
- **Money spent downtown, stays downtown.**
 - Many studies have shown that [money spent in local shops provides a positive economic effect on the local economy](#), compared to larger, chain stores.
 - And people who live downtown, spend downtown. A study of Main Street Iowa by economist Donovan Rypkema calculated that [every new unit of downtown housing spent \\$20,000-\\$39,000 in the downtown](#) annually.



Other Useful Info

The following information is meant to help our main street organizations make good business decisions when it comes to fundraising and the use of technology.

- **Don't expect to fundraise the same way with one generation as another.**
 - Older people give more than younger people, but [each generation has their own preference for digital giving](#).
 - Donors that are 40-59 are most likely to give online.
 - Millennials are inspired to give by social media.
 - Gen X and Baby Boomers prefer email.
 - The next generation, Generation Z, will likely want an app for that.
- **If you want to raise money, gain volunteers, have people come to your events, shop in your stores, or live in your downtown, you MUST have an online presence – preferably several.**
 - Internet users have an average of 5.5 social media accounts. They're regularly active on 2.8 of those accounts.
 - 18% of all online donations come from people on mobile devices.
 - Short is key no matter what medium, with donors preferring brief videos, articles, and emails. [Learn more here](#).
- **Timing is everything**
 - 29% of online giving occurs in December.
 - 11% of online giving occurs in the last three days of the year. [Read about it here](#).
- **You absolutely must use pictures and graphics.**
 - Facebook says posts with graphics get 3.2 times more engagement such as likes, comments and clicks.
 - HubSpot has found that visual content is 40 times more likely to be shared online.