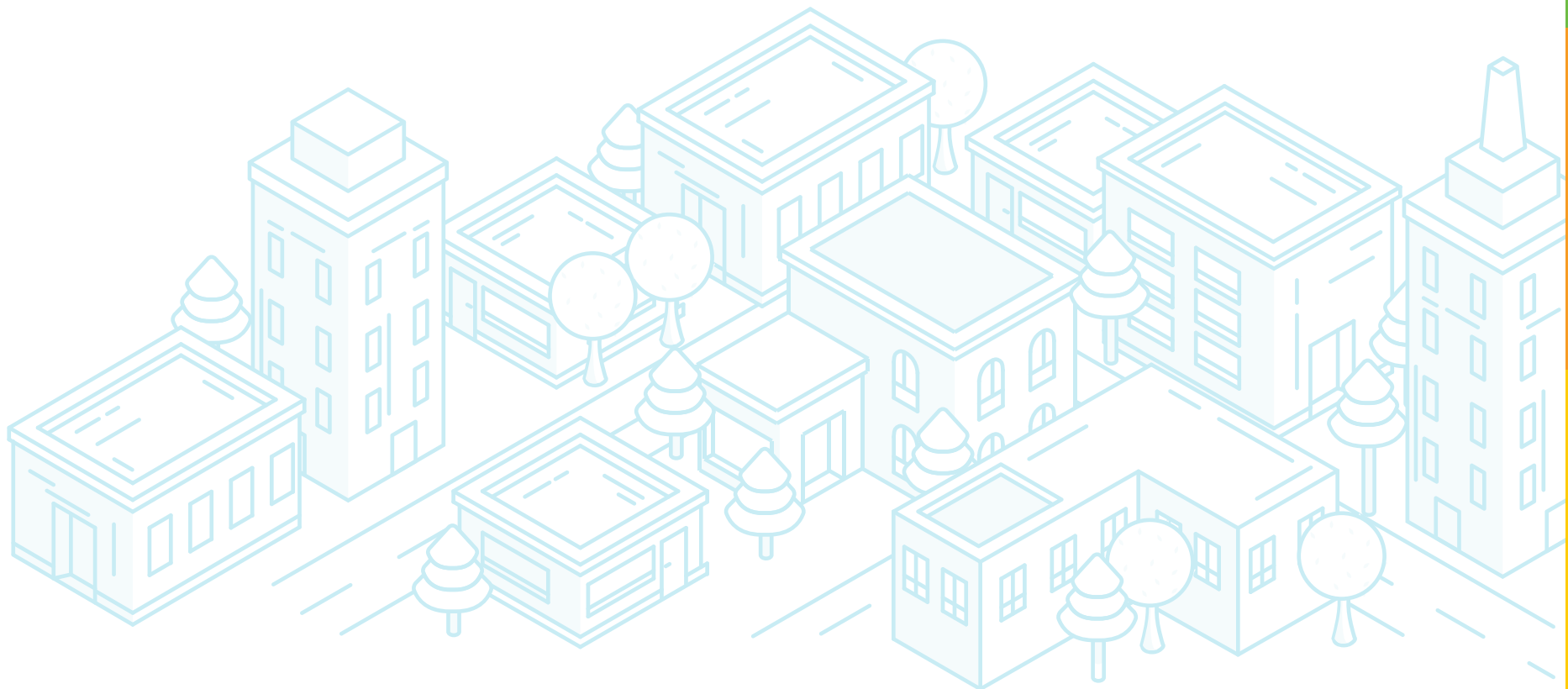




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MAIN STREET IOWA

2022 EDITION

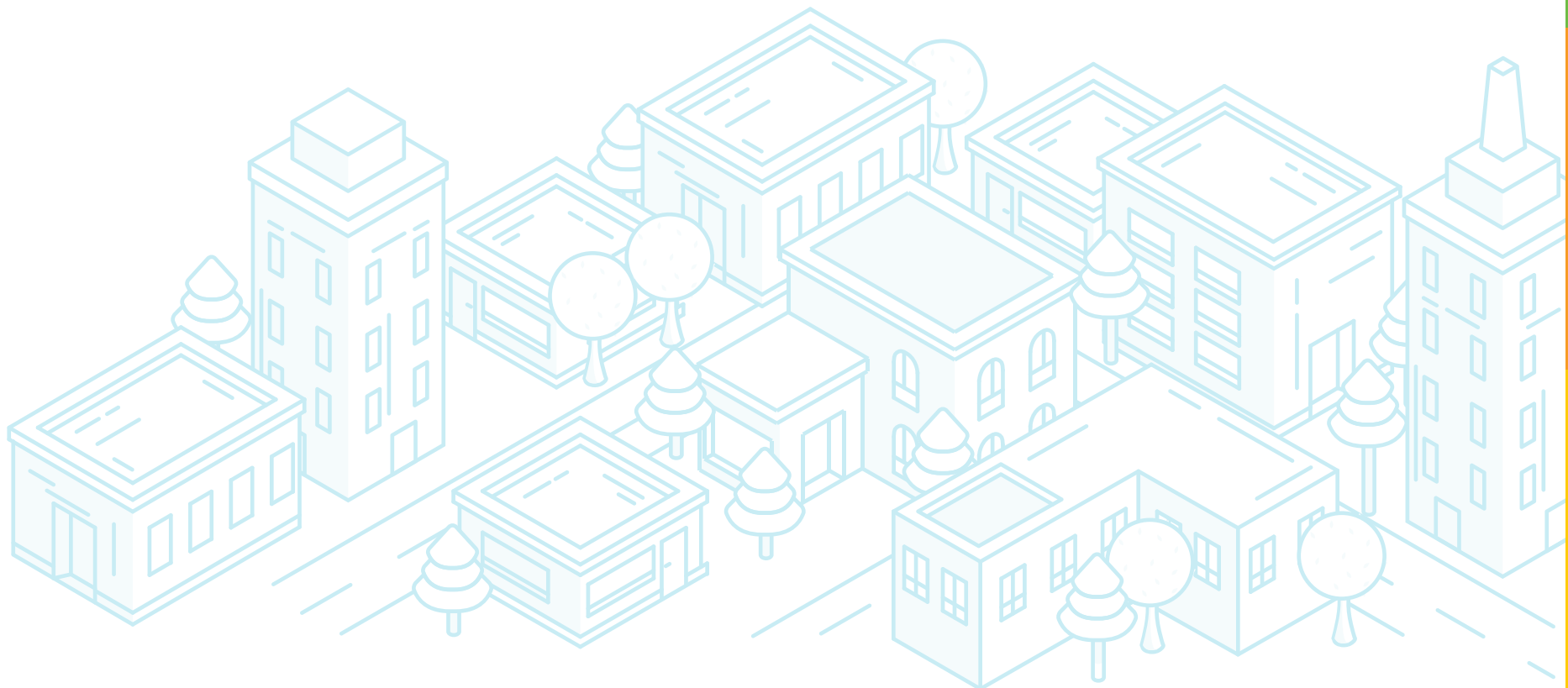


Street Grid is a new comprehensive resource library and tool kit for communities interested in harnessing the power of their unique character and using it to drive economic development.



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MAIN STREET IOWA

STEP 1 - The Basics





Main Street in a Box

The Basics



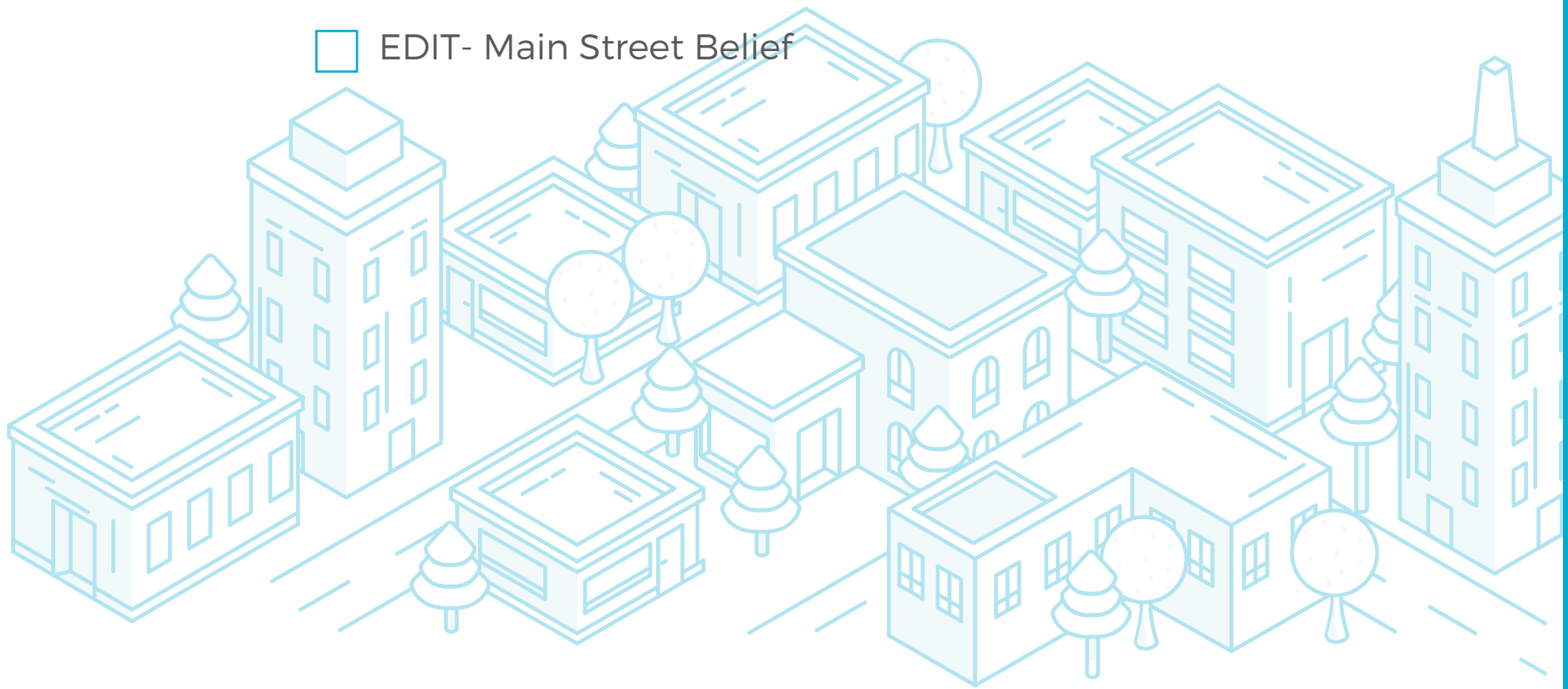


How to use Street Grid™

The Basics

This guide along with our Street Grid Resource Library is here to help you walk through setting up a Main Street Organization. The basic will get you started with a basic understanding of what main street is and how it works.

- READ- Getting to Know Main Street- Learn the Basics
- READ- 8 Principles of Character Based Economic Development
- READ- Four Points for Progress
- EDIT- Mission Statement
- EDIT- Vision Statement
- EDIT- Main Street Belief





Getting to Know Main Street

Main Street is not a project, or a grant, but a process based upon an implementation strategy for locally initiated goals and objectives. Participating communities receive various forms of assistance, all of which directly or indirectly help the local organization and manager develop their community's assets, as well as identify and strengthen their weaknesses. Being a Main Street community means implementing a comprehensive economic revitalization effort which is based upon:

ORGANIZATION: Building partnerships to create a consistent economic development and revitalization strategy. Diverse groups – merchants, bankers, property owners, educators, public officials, the chamber of commerce, and civic groups – must work together to improve the community.

PROMOTION: Re-establishing the community's image as a compelling place for shoppers, investors, and visitors. This means not only improving sales but also sparking community excitement and involvement. Promotions can range from street festivals to retail merchandising, from community education to aggressive public relations.

DESIGN: Enhancing the visual quality and image of the community. Attention must be paid to all elements of the business district – not just buildings and storefronts, but also public improvements, rear entries, signs, landscaping, window displays, etc.

ECONOMIC VITALITY: Strengthening the existing economic assets of the business district by supporting our business community while diversifying its economic base. Activities include recruiting new businesses to provide a balanced retail mix, converting vacant buildings into housing, offices, entertainment or cultural facilities, and sharpening the competitiveness of Main Street's traditional merchants.





8 Principles of Character-based Economic Development

1. Main Street is a comprehensive approach to downtown revitalization. It must address all the areas in which action must take place. Design improvements alone will not bring about meaningful change; effective marketing, a strong organizational base, and solid economic development strategies are all necessary to reverse the cycle of decay from which many downtowns suffer.

2. Main Street relies on quality. The quality inherent in downtown commercial architecture and in the services downtown businesses offer their customers make the downtown unique in the marketplace and give it many marketing advantages.

3. Main Street is making meaningful, long-term revitalization possible through public/private partnerships. Neither public nor private sectors can bring about change in downtown alone. Combining the talents and resources of both sectors brings all the skills necessary for revitalization to occur together in a unified program.

4. Main Street involves changing attitudes. Changing attitudes – demonstrating that positive change is taking place downtown -- is central to the success of a downtown revitalization program.

5. Main Street focuses on existing assets. Each community is unique, and each downtown has special characteristics that set it apart from all other downtowns in the country. Main Street has many assets to promote and market.

6. Main Street is a self-help program. Through the grass-roots effort of the volunteers, the will to succeed and the desire to work hard to bring about change is evident and crucial to downtown development.

7. Main Street's approach is incremental in nature. The Central Business District did not lose its economic strength overnight, it happened over a period of years. Main Street relies on a series of small improvements that change public attitude about the downtown. Gradually, the small changes will build into larger ones as resources and the organization gain strength.

8. Main Street is implementation-oriented. By identifying and prioritizing the major issues the downtown must confront, Main Street can develop programs of work that break down the large issues into smaller tasks. Then, through the volunteer committees, Main Street will have the capability of achieving the quantifiable tasks the "Program of Work" maps out.





Four Points for Progress- Getting Main Street off the Ground

Board of Directors

- Train the Board
- Establish the program with appropriate legal and financial accounting structures
- Hire staff
- Raise initial funds for local operation
- Establish the board and committees
- Establish a vision statement

Economic Vitality

- Analyze existing market data
- Gather baseline statistics about jobs, income, businesses, and sales
- Collect new data on customer perceptions through surveys
- Define the district trade area & primary customers
- Survey 100% of district business operators to determine their needs
- Provide educational seminars for business operators
- Create new financial incentives for building rehab/development
- Market existing technical & financial resources to business operators

Organization

- Establish a website
- Develop printed informational pieces about the program
- Recruit 30-50 committee & project volunteers
- Design & publish a newsletter
- Hold educational events about the program

Promotion

- Develop a promotional calendar
- Produce a quality special event
- Produce quality retail/business promotions
- Produce an image-enhancing event
- Involve at least 50% of businesses in promotional activities
- Target specific markets to attract through promotions

Design

- Hold a clean-up event in the downtown district
- Coordinate design assistance with property owners
- Facilitate design improvements such as paint/awnings
- Inventory the buildings in the district
- Evaluate condition of public amenities and streetscape
- Educate property owners about appropriate maintenance practices
- Develop a plan for design improvements
- Being to develop design guidelines





Our Mission

Main Street is grassroots economic development. We believe in the unique character of our place, the power of our people to preserve it, and the effectiveness of our four point approach of Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Vitality to keep our downtown vital.

Our Vision

We are dedicated to creating a vibrant downtown where friends gather, businesses thrive, memories are made, and communities grow stronger. This is the place to go to feel connected.

Our Belief

We believe Main Streets are for everyone. At the core of our approach to revitalization is a commitment to creating places of shared prosperity, equal access to opportunity, and inclusive engagement.

