



The Main Street Approach advocates “community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community.”

This is not new to Faribault. Going back to the 1970’s the Four Point Approach is evident in the work being done by the downtown business groups. In 1982 the City of Faribault developed the Heritage Preservation Commission and the ordinances that designated the Preservation District. From that the annual Heritage Days Celebration also emerged. Throughout this time City staff has been successful in getting Small Cities Development grants to assist building owners with the restoration of many downtown buildings.

A private member-driven Downtown Association operated for the betterment of the downtown area through 1999. In its long history it served the community very well. Most recent Executive directors include Jean Mahler, Warren Wadsworth and Marcia Morris-Beck. A study conducted by the Downtown Association in 1999 prompted the leadership of that group to ask the Chamber of Commerce to take over the management of the Downtown Committee. This eliminated duplication of effort and also eliminated the need for separate dues investments to be paid by downtown businesses. The Downtown Committee was staffed by the Chamber. In the first years (2000 – 2004) the committee simply followed the agenda of the former organization concentrating on promotions and activities downtown.

In late 2004 the City and the Chamber commissioned a study of Economic Development issues in Faribault including the downtown commercial district. The DSU report (*conducted by the firm; Dahlgren, Shardlow and Uban*) provided research and recommendations on the downtown area which lead to the reorganization of the newly named **Downtown Action Committee** (DAC) under the Four Point approach of the Main Street Program.

The DSU report validated concerns long expressed by Downtown business people that parking was a problem. This lead to a Mayor’s task force on Downtown, to study parking and other infrastructure needs in the downtown commercial corridor. Other issues emerged from this study as well, including worn facades, lighting, trash containers, street and sidewalk issues and more. This was the impetus for the recent street and infrastructure improvements in the downtown district.

From 2005 to 2010, the Downtown Action Committee was the voice of downtown and the conduit for communication with city officials during the extensive development of plans and ultimate construction phase of the downtown improvements. The DAC was also the advocate for downtown in the development of increased parking and creative solutions to parking challenges.

In addition the DAC assisted downtown businesses in many downtown promotions, conducted a First Impressions exchange, participated in a community assistantship from the University of Minnesota, launched a special service district task force and hosted scores of downtown informational and educational meetings. In partnership with the city, the DAC conducted a door to door information drop and attempted to complete an inventory of space in the downtown district. In the spring of 2010 we made a successful application and become one of Minnesota's first designated Main Street Communities under the newly opened MN Main Street program.

In our first years as a designated Main Street organization the chamber staff continued to assist volunteers in accomplishing the goals established by the committees. In 2011, upon confirmation of financial support from the Faribault EDA (Economic Development Authority) the Main Street Board appointed a search committee to hire the first Main Street Coordinator. In January of 2012 Royal Ross was selected and began serving in the part time capacity as our coordinator since that time. At the end of 2013 after two year of tremendous progress, Royal decided to step down from his position and in the spring of 2014 Jill Mackey is taking the reins as the new Main Street Coordinator.

Why Main Street?

The comprehensive and proven strategies of the Main Street program lead to great confidence and ultimately better results for our downtown. The program provides structure and training along with networking and guidance on numerous downtown concerns. The ultimate goal is a thriving downtown with increasing property values, lease rates, occupancy rates, private investment, customer traffic and spending. These are surely goals we all can agree on.

The Main Street program is a comprehensive commercial revitalization strategy that helps communities preserve some of their historic buildings and develop strategies for continuous improvement in the vitality of the downtown. The Main Street Four Point Approach™, is tailored to local needs and opportunities:

- **Design:** Enhancing the physical appearance of the commercial district by rehabilitating historic buildings, encouraging compatible infill, and developing sensitive design management systems.
- **Organization:** Building the organization itself through volunteer recruitment, community fundraising and building consensus and cooperation among internal committees and individuals who have a role in the process.
- **Promotion:** Marketing the traditional commercial district's assets to customers, potential investors, new businesses, local citizens, and visitors.
- **Economic Restructuring:** Strengthening the district's existing economic base while finding ways to expand it to meet new opportunities.

How does Faribault Main Street operate?

Main Street is a volunteer program, with committees and a board that determine the goals and strategies. The Coordinator is managed by the Main Street Board. Funding comes from the Faribault EDA (\$15,000.00) The Chamber matches that with in-kind services and an additional \$8,000.00 contribution. Downtown businesses participate through sponsorships, and participation fees. The community supports the program through donations to flower basket and holiday decoration, and through participating in promotions and activities downtown.

Downtown property owners, business owners and employees, as well as interested community members are welcome to serve on one of four committees.

- **Board Chair** – Bruce Burkhartzmeyer – Burkhartzmeyer Shoes
- **Design:** Chair – Peggy Keilen – Faribo Air Conditioning and Heating
- **Organization:** Chair – Janna Viscomi – Bernie’s Grill, Vintage Ballroom and Suites, Finally a Gift Store
- **Promotion:** Chair – Travis Temke – Boston’s the Gourmet Pizza
- **Economic Restructuring:** Chair -- Larry Harn – G & H Property Management, LMH Appraisals.

The board is made up of the chair of each of the four committees, a city representative, a chamber representative and several at large appointments.

Why should the Chamber support Main Street?

The Chamber’s mission is to support the growth and prosperity of the business community. There are well over a hundred businesses within the Main Street district. Supporting the work of the Main Street program makes perfect sense for the Chamber and the Chamber board has repeatedly endorsed that support. A prosperous and inviting downtown district helps the entire community succeed. As with many chamber initiatives, membership is not required to be involved in the Main Street Program. Those who see the big picture of business prosperity for downtown as part of the overall community’s success will likely choose to be chamber members.

Why should the City and the EDA support Main Street?

Nearly every department of the City is involved in the downtown. Code enforcement, law enforcement, engineering, planning and zoning and community development staff have been participants and presenters regarding downtown projects. The library and community center are right in the downtown area. City Hall is within the downtown district. Downtown Faribault is the heart of our community. City ordinances govern the outcome of many strategies that could be employed to improve the downtown. Knowing that the Main Street Approach provided by our local organization has the support of the City Council, the EDA and the Heritage Preservation Commission is essential for long term success.