



# MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET

ASSOCIATION



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2023-2028**

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*The MMSA Strategic Plan is funded in part by the Mississippi Legislature through the Mississippi Development Authority.*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the members of the Board of Directors, Investors, Main Street Directors, Key Partners, and staff for your thoughtful input and commitment to the future of the Mississippi Main Street Association. Your opinions and concerns, shared through work sessions and surveys, in this effort has proven invaluable. The Board of Directors is comprised of diverse stakeholders who embraced the process and expressed their views in a respectful and productive way. We are grateful for their knowledge and dedication. The result is a strategic plan that will drive important decision making in the near and distant future.



## **MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Executive Committee**

Michelle Jones – President | The Cottage Industry – Starkville, MS  
Marlo Dorsey – Vice-President | Visit Hattiesburg – Hattiesburg, MS  
Chris Hinton – Treasurer | Entergy – Jackson, MS  
Chris Chain – President | Renovations of Mississippi – Columbus, MS

### **At-Large Members**

Jim Rosenblatt | Mississippi College – Jackson, MS  
Brent Fairley | Hancock Whitney Bank – Gulfport, MS  
Carolyn McAdams | City of Greenwood – Greenwood, MS  
Regina Charboneau | Regina’s Kitchen – Natchez, MS  
Brad Reeves | Reeves, Gentry, & Vitart – Jackson, MS  
Tomeka Durr-Wiley | Mississippi Power – Gulfport, MS  
Chance McDavid | MSU Stennis Institute – Starkville, MS  
Mandy Hegwood | Neel-Schaffer – Laurel, MS  
Kelle Barfield | Delta Warren Properties – Vicksburg, MS

### **Directors’ Representatives**

District 1: Cynthia Sutton | Ocean Springs Main Street – Ocean Springs, MS  
District 2: Jamie Sowell | Senatobia Main Street – Senatobia, MS  
District 3: Lori Tucker | Booneville Main Street – Booneville, MS

### **Permanent Members**

Meredith Massey | Miss. Dept. of Archives and History – Jackson, MS  
Leah Kemp | Carl Small Town Center – Mississippi State, MS  
Tim Climer | Mississippi Development Authority – Jackson, MS

### **Emeritus Members**

Steve Kelly | Retired – Madison, MS  
Ken P’Pool | Retired – Clinton, MS

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Mississippi's Main Streets and downtown districts are the heart of our communities throughout the state. Our historic downtowns are where you find the stories of commerce, architecture, and the people who have committed to keeping their hometowns alive.

The staff and board of directors of the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA) are here to serve and assist our members so that our Main Street communities will thrive. In a post-pandemic world, we have found innovative ways to assist Mississippi's 48 designated Main Street communities. In 2022, the Mississippi Legislature put its trust in our organization and appropriated funds to MMSA and our local Main Street programs for "boots on the ground" projects that will make a meaningful impact in our communities.

One of the successful programs of MMSA is the Downtown Roadmap—a planning tool that engages community members and brings private and public leaders together to work toward a common vision and develop a plan for the downtown in which everyone has a role to play in achieving the organization's goals.

With positive organizational changes over the past few years, the MMSA board believed it was time to create our own "roadmap" for the next five years. We engaged with our local directors, stakeholders, staff, and board members to develop a strategic plan that will empower us to all work together to strengthen our organization and benefit our member communities.

Mississippi Main Street's strategic plan builds on our history while looking to our future and determining how best to serve our communities and our state as a whole. The plan outlines our core beliefs and gives us the flexibility to respond and adapt to an ever-changing world. This plan will allow MMSA to help our communities strengthen and expand local businesses, create new jobs, and generate additional tax revenues for our communities. It also allows MMSA to promote our downtowns as tourist destinations, bringing new capital investment across the state.

On behalf of the MMSA board and staff, I want to express thanks to all our members and partners for helping us develop this strategic plan. We each have a role to play in its implementation, and we look forward to continuing the good work in our communities throughout the state.

## **MICHELLE WEAVER JONES**

President, Mississippi Main Street Association

# THE MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET TEAM



## **THOMAS GREGORY**

Executive Director

Thomas is the Executive Director for the Mississippi Main Street Association, where he serves as state coordinator and leads the organization's administrative, advocacy, and development efforts. An AICP certified community planner, Thomas received both a BBA and an MBA from Mississippi State University and a Master of City and Regional Planning from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



## **JEANNIE ZIEREN**

Director of Communication and Marketing

Jeannie is the Director of Communication and Marketing for the Mississippi Main Street Association. Her work includes public and media relations, conference and event planning, and marketing and communication services. A Main Street America Revitalization Professional, Jeannie received a BA from Mississippi State University and a Master's in Journalism from the University of Mississippi.



## **JENNIFER LAY**

Director of Community Development

Jennifer is the Director of Community Development for the Mississippi Main Street Association, where she serves as the liaison for MMSA's network of local Main Street programs. Jennifer also administers the organization's program assessment and national accreditation programs. A former local Main Street Director, Jennifer is a Tourism Marketing Professional and attended Mississippi State University.



## **LINDSEY HARRIS**

Director of Grants and Special Projects

Lindsey is the Director of Grants and Special Projects for the Mississippi Main Street Association, where she provides leadership and coordination for the development, writing, administration, and management of grants and community projects for MMSA and its member communities. Lindsey received a BA from the University of Mississippi.



## **BETH RANEY**

Office Manager

Beth is the Office Manager for the Mississippi Main Street Association, where she oversees the organization's state headquarters at the GM&O Depot building in downtown Jackson. Beth is responsible for office administration, record keeping, staff support, and bookkeeping services. She received her BBA from the University of North Florida.

# ABOUT MAIN STREET



The Mississippi Main Street Association was created in 1984 to help communities preserve their unique heritage while building a vibrant commercial district. This has been achieved through the innovative Main Street Approach™. The Main Street Approach is a time-tested framework for community-driven, comprehensive revitalization.

Every community and commercial district is different, with its own unique assets and sense of place. The Main Street Approach offers community-based revitalization initiatives with a practical, adaptable framework for downtown transformation that is easily tailored to local conditions. The Main Street Approach helps communities get started with revitalization and grows with them over time.

The Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies. A Transformation Strategy articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district's economy. A program's work on Transformation Strategies is further organized around the Four Points: Organization, Design, Promotion, and Economic Vitality.

In response to the growth over the years, MMSA has expanded its resources and services to meet the needs and demands of its many member programs. Education, community services, partner collaboration, advocacy, and sustainable program growth are top priorities for member programs. Currently, MMSA has 48 Designated Main Street Communities, three Network Communities, and 15 Associate Members.

Since MMSA began tracking its economic reinvestment statistics in 2005, it has helped generate more than 6,450 net new businesses, 1,470 business expansions, 40,000 net new jobs, and 4,600 new downtown residential units, while leveraging more than 595,000 volunteer hours and nearly \$6 billion in public and private investment in Mississippi's Main Street districts.

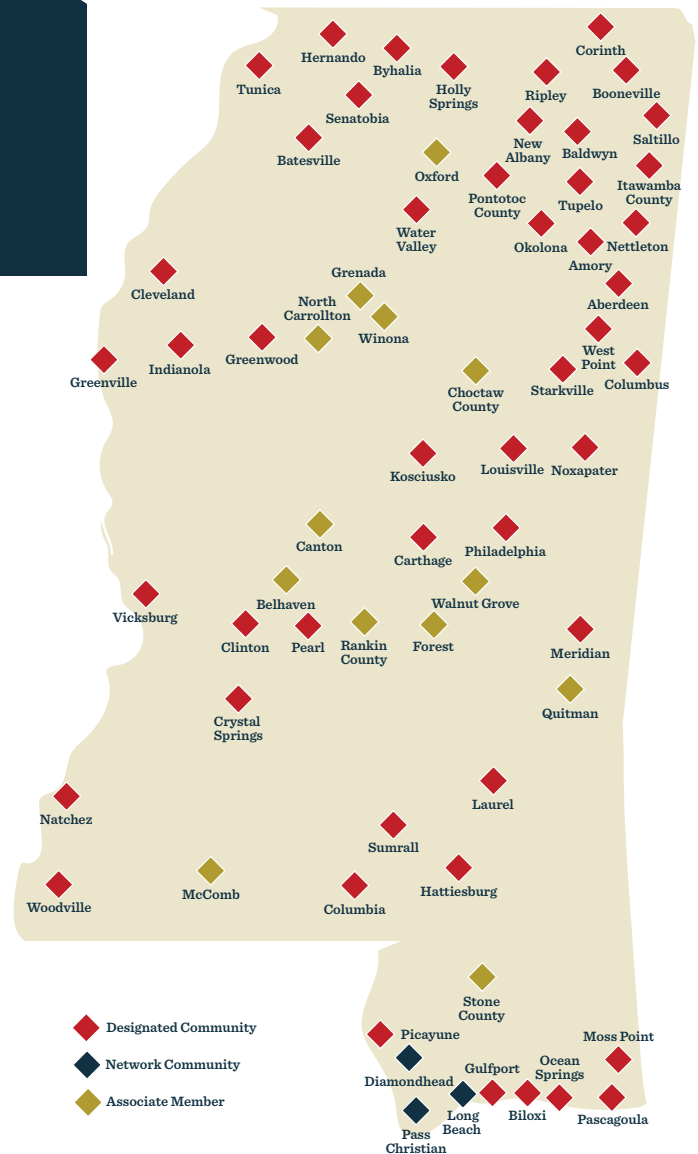


# MAIN STREET COMMUNITIES

Main Street communities as of July 1, 2022

## DESIGNATED COMMUNITIES

Aberdeen Main Street  
 Amory Main Street, Inc.  
 Baldwin Main Street Chamber  
 Batesville Main Street Association  
 Biloxi Main Street  
 Booneville Main Street Association  
 Byhalia Area Chamber Main Street  
 Team Cleveland Main Street  
 Main Street Clinton  
 Main Street Columbia  
 Main Street Columbus  
 Main Street Corinth  
 Main Street Crystal Springs  
 Main Street Greenville  
 Main Street Greenwood, Inc.  
 Gulfport Main Street  
 Historic Hattiesburg Downtown Association  
 Hernando Main Street Chamber  
 Holly Springs Main Street Chamber  
 Indianola Chamber Main Street  
 Itawamba Main Street  
 Kosciusko Main Street  
 Laurel Main Street  
 The Main Street Chamber of Leake County  
 Louisville/Noxapater Main Street  
 Meridian Main Street  
 Moss Point Main Street  
 Downtown Natchez Alliance  
 Nettleton Main Street  
 New Albany Main Street Association  
 Ocean Springs Main Street  
 Okolona Main Street Chamber  
 Main Street Pascagoula  
 Main Street Pearl  
 Philadelphia Main Street  
 Picayune Main Street  
 Pontotoc County Main Street Association  
 Ripley Main Street Association  
 Safford Main Street  
 Senatobia Main Street Chamber  
 Starkville Main Street  
 Sumrall Main Street  
 Tunica Main Street  
 Downtown Tupelo Main Street Association  
 Vicksburg Main Street  
 Water Valley Main Street  
 West Point Main Street  
 Woodville Main Street



## NETWORK COMMUNITIES

Diamondhead Main Street  
 Long Beach Community Development Association  
 Pass Christian Main Street

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Grenada Community Foundation  
 Forest Downtown Development Association  
 Greater Belhaven Neighborhood Association  
 Canton Tourism  
 Choctaw County Chamber of Commerce  
 Greenwood - Leflore County Chamber  
 McComb Main Street Association, Inc.  
 North Carrollton  
 Oxford-Lafayette County Chamber of Commerce  
 City of Quitman  
 Rankin First  
 Stone County Economic Development Partnership  
 Town of Walnut Grove  
 Winona/Montgomery County Economic Development Partnership

# STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

The Mississippi Main Street Board of Directors set out to create a strategic plan to guide their efforts in the coming years. The process, described below, was designed to be inclusive and garner significant stakeholder engagement.



## ONLINE SURVEYS

An online survey was conducted soliciting the input from key stakeholder groups:

- Local Main Street Directors
- Investors
- Mississippi Main Street Staff



## FOCUS GROUPS & INTERVIEWS

A series of virtual focus groups were conducted gathering the views and opinions of:

- Local Main Street Directors
- Investors
- Key Partners
- National Main Street Leaders
- Past Consultants
- Legislative Advocacy Partners



## STRATEGIC PLANNING RETREAT

On August 10, 2022, the Board of Directors met in a facilitated strategic planning retreat to review stakeholder input and to develop and/or refine the organization's Vision and Mission Statements, Core Values, and to establish goals for the next five years.



## STAFF WORK PLANNING SESSION

Following the Board's Strategic Planning Retreat, MMSA staff met in a facilitated session to develop specific objectives that align with the goals of the strategic plan and established responsibilities and timelines for their execution.

# STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

On August 10, 2022, a Strategic Planning session was held in Starkville, MS to gain insight from the Board of Directors on what they saw as the biggest strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) were to the Mississippi Main Street Association. Attendees provided more than fifty points of conversation and were asked to rank their top three choices in each of the four categories. These highest ranking responses (with total points in parentheses) for the SWOT are below.

## S

### STRENGTHS

What INTERNAL strengths does the organization have that are within the MMSA's control?

- Strong Leadership (39)
- Passionate Local Directors (14)
- Successful Revitalization Efforts (13)
- Trainings for Communities (11)
- Staff/Experience/Expertise (10)
- Strong Board (10)

## W

### WEAKNESSES

What INTERNAL aspects of the MMSA are holding it back from success?

- Long Term Financial Stability (37)
- Relatively Unknown or Misunderstood (23)
- Local Organizations all Different (11)

## O

### OPPORTUNITIES

What EXTERNAL factors offer potential for the MMSA to thrive?

- Tell the Organization's Story (41)
- Grow Political Allies (19)
- Creating/Refining roles of Main Street (16)
- Expanding Funding (15)
- Increasing Staff/Capacity (14)

## T

### THREATS

What EXTERNAL factors put the MMSA's success at risk?

- Political Uncertainty (30)
- Lack of Local Political Buy-in (24)
- Staff Burnout (18)
- Buildings (18)
- Outside Funding (16)

# VISION, MISSION STATEMENTS & CORE VALUES

The Board of Directors considered the aforementioned feedback and input provided by stakeholders and updated the organization’s Vision and Mission Statements and identified its Core Values. These statements articulate the guiding principles for the Mississippi Main Street Association and help establish the organization’s strategic goals.

## VISION

*In 2028, the Mississippi Main Street Association will be the leader in place-based economic and community development for the state. As such, it will be nationally recognized for implementing historic downtown and traditional commercial district preservation and revitalization. Its participating communities will be vibrant, sustainable places that are creative and inclusive, where people and businesses thrive.*

## MISSION

*The mission of the Mississippi Main Street Association is to be the catalyst for the preservation and economic revitalization of Mississippi’s historic downtowns and traditional commercial districts.*

## CORE VALUES

### COMMUNITY-FOCUSED

Making an impact serving communities is the purpose of the organization and will always be at the center of what MMSA does.

### INCLUSIVE

Improving Main Street districts for ALL. MMSA strives to help its members serve the diverse businesses and residents that make up their districts.

### INNOVATIVE

Looking for the next, best way to serve its members. MMSA constantly seeks to push the envelope to find new ways to solve the problems Main Street Districts face.

### VISIONARY

Always with an eye to the future and how Main Street districts will grow and change in the short- and long-term, MMSA leads its communities and helps them anticipate future challenges.

### EFFECTIVE

Efficient and faithful stewards of the resources made available to it, the MMSA seeks to maximize the impact it has through the services it provides to its members.

# STRATEGIC GOALS

## **GOAL #1 EDUCATION**

Educate local directors & boards to be equipped to lead their communities

## **GOAL #2 SERVICES**

Define membership levels, expectations, services & program of service

## **GOAL #3 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND MARKETING**

Develop and execute a public relations and marketing plan

## **GOAL #4 ADVOCACY**

Develop and execute a long-range advocacy plan for local, state and federal levels

## **GOAL #5 STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT**

Create a staffing and management strategy

## **GOAL #6 BOARD DEVELOPMENT**

Develop and execute ongoing Board education sessions for issues and opportunities for communities

## **GOAL #7 ONLINE RESOURCES**

Create and maintain an online resource for local directors/boards

## **GOAL #8 FUNDRAISING**

Create and execute a fundraising plan



# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## GOAL #1

### EDUCATION

Educate local directors & boards to be equipped to lead their communities

Time Frame: Annually

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Create a virtual Main Street 101 tailored to local directors and boards on the Main Street Four-Point Approach	MMSA Staff	December 2023
Create learning portal – online access to training videos	Director of Communication and Marketing	December 2023
Provide Ongoing Trainings a. Organization + new director on-boarding b. Periodic/Quarterly trainings c. Annual Main Street 101 training (Destination Downtown) d. Main Street for Board Members e. Annual Directors Retreat	MMSA Staff	Ongoing
Provide Trainings/Workshops for Specific Funding/Grant Opportunities	Director of Grants and Special Projects + MMSA Staff	November 2023; Ongoing

## GOAL #2

### SERVICES

Define membership levels, expectations, services, and programs of service

Time Frame: JANUARY 2023

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Define Associate to Network Pathway - Network Level Expectations + Services	Director of Community Development + MMSA Staff	December 2022
Define Network to Designation Pathway - Designated Level Expectations + Services	Director of Community Development + MMSA Staff	December 2022
Define “Deep Dive” Trainings for Experienced Local Directors	Education and Services Committee	Ongoing

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## GOAL #3

### PUBLIC RELATIONS & MARKETING

Develop and execute a public relations & marketing plan and corresponding campaign

Time Frame: JUNE 2023

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Create a MMSA Public Relations/Marketing Plan	PR and Marketing Committee	June 2023
Execute the MMSA Public Relations/Marketing Plan	Director of Communication and Marketing	Ongoing
Create & distribute MMSA/Local co-branded marketing & public relations materials	MMSA Staff + Local Directors	December 2023; Ongoing
MMSA Staff & Communities present annually at Main Street Now, MML Conferences	MMSA Staff	Ongoing

## GOAL #4

### ADVOCACY

Develop and execute a long-range advocacy plan for local, state and federal levels

Time Frame: JUNE 2023

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Create an Advocacy Plan	Advocacy Committee	Annually by December
Execute the Advocacy Plan	Executive Director + Advocacy Committee	Ongoing
Provide Advocacy Training for Local Programs	MMSA Staff	Annually in January; Ongoing

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## GOAL #5

### STAFFING AND MANAGEMENT

Create a staffing and management strategy

Time Frame: DECEMBER 2023

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Review Personnel Policies + Procedures Manual	Executive Director / Executive Committee	December 2023; Ongoing
Identify Key Staff Skills	Executive Director + MMSA Staff	December 2022
Identify Skill Gaps	Executive Director + MMSA Staff	June 2023
Identify training and professional development opportunities	Executive Director + MMSA Staff	June 2023
Perform annual employee evaluation	Executive Director / Executive Committee	Annually in February/ March
Review and update job descriptions annually	Executive Director + Board of Directors	Annually in August

## GOAL #6

### BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Develop and execute ongoing Board education sessions for issues and opportunities facing communities.

Time Frame: ONGOING

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Provide the Board with Bi-Monthly Education Session (10-15 mins) focusing on various topics that affect Main Street	Executive Committee + MMSA Staff	Ongoing

# IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

## GOAL #7

### ONLINE RESOURCES

Create and maintain an online resource for local directors and boards

Time Frame: DECEMBER 2023

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Update online database with new information, as needed	Director of Communication and Marketing + MMSA Staff	Ongoing
Improve user interface of online database	Director of Communication and Marketing + Executive Director	June 2023

## GOAL #8

### FUNDRAISING

Create and execute a fundraising plan

Time Frame: ONGOING

ACTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	TIME FRAME
Create a fundraising plan in conjunction with board	Fundraising Committee	June 2023
Execute the fundraising plan	MMSA Staff + Board of Directors	Ongoing
Identify uses for endowment fund	Fundraising Committee	December 2023
Create and maintain investor retention activities	Executive Director + Board of Directors	Ongoing



# MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION

STRATEGIC PLAN FACILITATED + CREATED BY:

**PLACE  
+MAIN**  
ADVISORS

