

# On Main Street



## More Than Just A Granting Program

**MYTH:** Main Street Middlesex is a granting program for businesses and organizations in the downtowns of Middlesex County. Main Street Middlesex is a revitalization program for the downtowns of Middlesex County. This exciting initiative provides historic commercial downtown areas organizational support and activities that promote designated "Main Street" districts in the County.

### Main Street Middlesex is designed to:

- create vibrant, active commercial districts
- involve business owners in the growth and improvement of their business districts
- bring together partners who can help further the goals and visions of the designated downtowns
- promote the downtowns to customers — from both the neighborhood and outside of town as a great place to shop and live
- enhance the appearance and image of our historic downtowns
- capitalize on the county's inherent strengths — historic architecture, character, culture and charm.

### Main Street Middlesex provides:

- **Organizational Assistance** to help our downtowns achieve their goals, and will provide training and technical assistance to community leaders, local officials, and business and property owners.
- **Promotional Strategies** guidance for developing retail promotion, special events, and image building programs.
- **Design and Planning assistance** and referral for architectural treatments and building conservation and guidelines for protecting the character and integrity of the district. Also, solutions for the reuse of under utilized or vacant buildings. Help with grant writing and packaging of financial resources.
- **Economic Restructuring guidance** to understand local markets and strategies for growth, business retention and recruitment, and how to stabilize and improve the quality and value of downtown real estate.

### How Main Street Works?

Main Street methodology addresses four key areas of concern, combines activities in these areas to develop a strategy for redeveloping downtown and forms our committee structure.

**1.) ORGANIZATION:** The Main Street approach to downtown revitalization requires the effort of the entire community. The merchants, property owners, local government officials, and civic leaders must agree to support common goals for revitalization and join together in partnership. A strong working organization committee is necessary to act as an advocate for downtowns and to coordinate the various efforts of individuals and groups to ensure that all are working together effectively.

**2.) PROMOTION:** The promotion of downtown as a unified commercial area — in the same way that a major shopping mall is promoted — will help attract

customers and strengthen Main Street's role as a viable business center. The Promotion Committee develops and coordinates aggressive promotion and marketing campaigns that include a program of special events and business promotions. The Promotion Committee will work with downtown to improve both its self-image and the image it projects to potential customers and investors.

**3.) DESIGN:** Good design is essential to all aspects of downtown revitalization. The Main Street design philosophy is not a "purist" preservation approach, but one that seeks to utilize and enhance those elements of quality design that remain in each building. Good design must be extended to include promotional literature, store window and merchandise displays, public building improvements, and street amenities. The Design Committee will work with downtowns to improve their physical appearance through workshops,

newsletter articles and recognition of excellence.

**4.) ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING:** This committee seeks to change the ways in which downtown "works" by restoring many of the elements that Main Street has lost over the past few decades. While many small downtowns may not regain their dominance as primary retail centers, careful economic and market analysis usually confirms that they can maintain economic strength by diversifying the present mix of retail uses and by attracting new retail and non-retail functions, including office, recreation services, and residential uses. Retail and business retention and recruitment, development of effective merchandising, encouraging reuse of upper stories and better utilization of existing and potential recreational assets are all aspects of economic restructuring.

## Main Street Middlesex and CFDC Welcomes New Staff this Month.

**Kathy Hodgins and Kim Gallant have joined the team to support downtown revitalization in Middlesex.**

Kathy started April 30 as the new Special Events and Communication Liaison. She will be working with local Main Street Committees to identify, plan and host special events to reinforce the unique identity of each of our downtowns, and to bring more traffic to the designated downtown areas. She will also be helping identify training and development needs and arranging the appropriate training for Main Street Committee members, merchants and property owners in designated downtowns. Kathy will also be handling communication and media relations for Main Street Middlesex and CFDC. She will be working most closely with Main Street's Promotion and Organization Committees.



*L. to R. - Marty Peterson, Program Coordinator, Kathy Hodgins, Special Events and Communication Liaison, Kim Gallant, Community Development Coordinator and Cara Finn, General Manager*

Kim is coming back to CFDC and Main Street on May 7 as the Community Development Coordinator. She had previously worked with CFDC on the Heritage Signs for Middlesex County, and is very excited to be back on the team in this new role. Her primary function will be analyzing information to determine the

viability of business expansion, preparing information encouraging business retention and administer the "Available Opportunities" database. Kim will be working most closely with the Design and Economic Restructuring Committees.

Marty, Kathy and Kim can be reached at 519-641-7190. They look forward to meeting you and helping revitalize our member communities' downtowns!

## Main Street Middlesex Supports Façade Improvement Projects

In February 2007 Main Street Middlesex announced that it was seeking applications for façade improvements from business and property owners within the established Main Street Middlesex designated areas. Applications were to be completed and submitted by March 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.

Applicants were asked to include a quote for the project, photos of the existing buildings and adjacent buildings and/or any other materials that would help in scoring the proposal. Two projects had complete applications and were selected to receive funding this year.

Mallick Williams Holdings Limited will receive financial assistance towards replacing the windows, replacing a commercial door with a custom wood door, repainting the outside of the building with historical colours and removing the sign band at 26 Front Street West Strathroy.



Miles Needham Property Management will receive financial assistance for the replacement of 4 windows on the upper floor and 1 picture window on the main floor at 169 Parkhill King Street, Parkhill.

Main Street Middlesex would like to congratulate the recipients and will feature before and after photos in an upcoming issue when the work is complete.

## Vision Workshops Held In Middlesex County's Downtowns

Throughout the month of February, consultant Eric Sloat, owner of Knowledge Share visited the designated downtowns of the Main Street Middlesex Program to work with them to define a vision that will guide its character, growth and physical development.

As Eric visited each downtown he discovered a lot about the uniqueness, the history, the people, geography and the businesses of each of the downtowns in Middlesex County. A Vision Statement for each downtown was drafted using this information and forwarded back to the downtown group to modify and refine.

Information gathered through the discussions will also be the marketing tool for the downtowns as introductions in the Downtown Profiles that are being developed by Main Street Middlesex.

### Summary Comments

The towns covered in this assignment varied little in their stated values of being friendly, family oriented, multi-generational, caring communities. Without exception all towns placed great importance in their history and heritage and wished to protect them in perpetuity. Their wishes for future growth were also similar – the desire to attract more young/family residents and more clean industry and commerce. Niche retail, including

boutiques, art/artisan/ antique stores, cafes/bistros and unique restaurants dominate the list of desired features that make towns more attractive to residents and visitors alike. The following are not in any specific order or priority:

- The towns presented a range of unique events and attractions, for both residents and area visitors. Some overlap between towns is inevitable.
- A greater range of leisure activities and many attractions currently appear to be in the general area rather than in-town.
- Uniqueness and beauty of the towns' locations and settings varied significantly as well as the evolution of the towns' layouts. Dorchester for example is fortunate to straddle both banks of a river in addition to having three defined "downtowns".
- All of the towns attribute their existence to a river or a railway with



six towns laying claim to both river and railway as their bedrock.

- Strikingly, not a single town is famous or recognized (nationally or provincially) for a specific attraction that is able to draw visitors from far and wide - year-round. This also prevents the enticement of additional commerce to set up shop in town and piggy-back on, or add to, such an attraction.
- Opportunities exists for towns to jointly organize, host or cross promote specific events, functions or attractions. The exception may be Ontario in Bloom.

## Let Your Mouse Search Our Downtowns For You!

Coming soon to your computer will be a web site dedicated to the products, services and events in our designated downtowns. This web site will provide a listing of businesses located in each downtown, events that are happening and an opportunity for businesses and/or organization to advertise special sales or provide coupons online. Watch for more details in the coming soon!

## Main Street Middlesex Wants You!

Do you want to preserve the past? Do you want to create the future? Do you want to have an impact on your community? Than Main Street Middlesex wants you!

**Who are volunteers?** They can be anyone. Some are retired, some are working, some are young and some are young in spirit. Some are self-employed. Some share a lifetime of skills, others specific professional knowledge and others a willingness to learn and grow.

**What do they do?** Main Street has a role for every skill. Some represent their community on one of our four working committees – Organization, Promotion, Economic Restructuring and Design. Some offer their specific skills and knowledge of history, architecture, design, publishing, administration, art, business, politics, advertising, childcare, retailing – Main Street has a role for every skill.

Can us today for more information on how you can be a part of Main Street Middlesex.



**Learn More About  
Main Street Middlesex:**

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**General Manager**  
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*In Your Downtown:*

**Lucan**  
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**North Middlesex**  
Blake Bexon (519) 293-3231  
Sue Cook (519) 294-6617

**Newbury**  
Betty Gordon (519) 693-4941

**Southwest Middlesex**  
Julie Khan (519) 287-5111  
Marilyn McCallum  
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**Strathroy-Caradoc**  
Ralph Coe (519) 245-3955  
Velta Baumanis (519) 264-9271

**Thames Centre**  
Bev Shulman (519) 268-3106  
Nancy Abra (519) 461-003

*On the Web:*

[www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca](http://www.mainstreetmiddlesex.ca)

**On-Line Certification Course:**

*Details on our website (above)*

## Opportunities on Main

### Storefront Signage

A well made sign can improve your sales and beautify your downtown at the same time. Main Street Middlesex provides matching grants to a maximum of \$750.00 for Storefront Signs and awnings within a designated downtown.

### Festivals and Events Grants

Warmer weather is just around the corner. It's time to start thinking about using a Festivals and Events Grant to offset the cost of advertising or promoting an event in your downtown. Matching grants to a maximum of \$750.00 are available to a maximum of \$1,500.00 per downtown.

### Maps and Guides Grant

Did you know that a Main Street Maps and Guides Grant can be used for "wayfinding" or directional signage, in addition to printed or electronic maps and guides for your downtown? Matching grants to a maximum of \$500.00 are available to support such projects.

### Streetscape Beautification Grants

Does your downtown need new benches? banner? bike racks? other streetscape amenities? Main Street Middlesex has matching grants to a maximum of \$1,000.00 available for streetscape beautification projects within a designated downtown to a maximum of \$2,000 per downtown.

### Retail Promotion Grants

Join together with four or more stakeholders in your designated downtown to take advantage of this amazing opportunity. Increase business and save money by using this grant to offset the cost of radio, television, print or direct mail advertising. Matching grants to a maximum of \$1,000.00 are available for such projects.

### Image and Brand Development

How important IS a name? Perhaps one of the most well-known brands in the world is Nike. Whether you mention the name or not, the Nike "swoosh" is easily identifiable in virtually every country in the world. How did that happen? What does Nike mean, anyway? And does that really matter? Can your downtown create the same impact? Main Street Middlesex has a matching grant to a maximum of \$1,000.00 for the development of an image/brand for designed downtowns.

For more information visit our web site or call the office at 519.641.7190

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## Biggest Losers are the Biggest Winners

The team known as Cranky Food Deprived Coherts and the members are Cara Finn, Ramona Kronwald, Barry and Michelanne Hathaway, John Lehman and Marty Peterson from the CFDC office won the Strathroy and District Chamber of Commerce's Biggest Loser Contest, losing 6.8% of the teams total starting weight over the 8 week competition.

Congratulations to the participants, we are sure they all feel much better with a little bit of weight off.

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## We're Here To Help!

The experienced staff and volunteers involved in Main Street Middlesex understand the needs of stakeholders in historic downtown core areas and are here to support the revitalization of the downtown core areas in Middlesex County. Whenever possible, will offer services to help carry out activities which support this development...by liaising with existing stakeholders, helping to strengthen community pride, recruiting new investment, etc. For more information contact the office at 519-641-7190