



2025 NC MAIN STREET CONFERENCE

March 11-13, 2025 | Mooresville, NC
Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street



**Main Street:
Creating Livable, Lovable
Communities**

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2025 NC Main Street Conference

MARCH 11 - 13 , 2025 | MOORESVILLE, NC

The North Carolina Main Street Conference is an annual three-day conference, held within the downtown of a beautiful rural community of NC. The venue changes each year, as do the speakers, sponsors, vendors, tours, and sessions. The conference is open to anyone interested in learning about downtown economic development.

Attendees gain knowledge from networking with other downtown enthusiasts, and attending sessions facilitated by a handpicked lineup of notable speakers.

#NCMainSt2025



Main Street: Creating Livable, Lovable Communities

What makes a community *livable*? When critical needs are met, such as food security, availability of affordable housing, opportunities for education and healthcare, good jobs and economic growth in a community, and the infrastructure and connectivity to easily access services and resources? What makes a community *lovable*? When innovative and inclusive quality-of-life amenities are available, such as arts and cultural experiences, community engagement opportunities, and access to recreation to live a healthy lifestyle?

Main Street: Creating Livable, Lovable Communities, the theme of this year's conference, explores the downtown elements that are essential in creating great towns and cities, and how North Carolina communities are implementing economic development strategies that are bringing these livable, lovable elements to fruition. Rehabilitated buildings and compatible new construction provide the built environment for quality retail businesses and services, dining and drinking establishments, government and professional offices, and unique residential and lodging options. Public and private gathering places that encourage downtown visitors to walk, bike, dine, play, celebrate, and visit with friends and family, are equally important in creating livable places that we love. Public art, downtown foliage, and colorful streetscape furnishings and banners add to a downtown district's vibrancy.

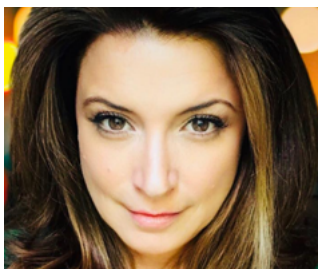
The 2025 conference celebrates 45 years of the Main Street program in North Carolina and the United States. Local Main Street programs and their public and private sector partners are creatively leveraging strategic economic development planning, tools, and resources, resulting in investment, business growth, and job creation.

The North Carolina Main Street Conference is the country's largest statewide downtown revitalization conference. Attendees include downtown economic development professionals, elected officials and local government staff, rural leaders, volunteers, business and property owners, consultants, vendors, and sponsors interested in trends, initiatives, and success stories they can use to maximize downtown and community revitalization at home.

This premier event will be held in downtown Mooresville, North Carolina. Designated as a North Carolina Main Street community in 1988, the Town of Mooresville and its Main Street management partner, the Mooresville Downtown Commission, utilize the Main Street framework to create, and promote opportunities, advance a downtown strategic economic development plan, guide redevelopment, facilitate partnerships, and attract residents and visitors to the downtown core. Downtown Mooresville is the heart of a happening community with a mix of vibrant retailers, cool bars, delicious dining, coffee shops, stylish places to live, extraordinary events, public art, and heaps of Southern Charm. Since the program's inception, downtown Mooresville has leveraged more than \$117 million in public and private investment, resulting in a net gain of 141 new businesses and nearly 600 new jobs.

Join us for inspiring keynote and plenary addresses, and innovative strategies presented in carefully curated breakout and toolkit sessions. Experience the Mooresville story through a collection of tours that highlight local assets. Bring a group of community leaders, Main Street board members, city and town staff, elected officials, and volunteers to get the most out of the conference experience. The North Carolina Main Street downtown revitalization conference is second to none in the Southeast and, perhaps, in the nation.





Katherine Loflin

The City Doctor

The Science of Loving Where You Live

TUESDAY | 4:30 PM - 5:15 PM

Dr. Katherine Loflin, known as "The City Doctor," is a pioneer in the field of place science, exploring the emotional connections people form with cities and the profound impacts on local economic development and personal well-being. Her work has been credited with enhancing the quality of life for millions globally.

Through her company, The City Doctor Productions, Dr. Loflin creates innovative tours, productions, and events that bring local history to life, fostering rapid and unique connections between people and place. These initiatives have garnered national and statewide accolades, reflecting their popularity and impact. Her extensive background in the entertainment industry includes roles as an award-winning Executive Producer for ABC, playwright, live theater producer and director, professional actress, and event producer.

Currently, Dr. Loflin holds multiple leadership roles in historic preservation and community engagement and is also the author of the forthcoming book *The Hidden History of Cary*.



Jeff Siegler

Revitalize or Die

Civic Pride & Civic Apathy

WEDNESDAY | 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM

Jeff Siegler is an author, speaker, elected official, and consultant concerned with the powerful role "place" plays in our lives. He is the founder of the civic pride consulting firm, Revitalize, or Die and co-founder of the organization Proud Places. After obtaining his Master's in Urban Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University, Jeff went to work on Main Street. First as a downtown manager, and later as the Ohio Main Street State Coordinator. His first book, *Your City is Sick*, was published in September of 2023. Jeff and his two children call Pittsburgh home.

About Main Street America™

Main Street America™ has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 40 years. Today it is a network of more than 1,600 neighborhoods and communities, rural and urban, who share both a commitment to place and to building stronger communities through preservation-based economic development. Main Street America™ is a program of the nonprofit National Main Street Center, a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



**NORTH CAROLINA
MAIN STREET**

Main Street America™ is a movement.

Main Street America™ has been helping revitalize older and historic commercial districts for more than 35 years. It is the leading voice for preservation-based economic development and community revitalization across the country. Made up of small towns, mid-sized communities, and urban commercial districts, Main Street America™ represents the broad diversity that makes this country so unique. Working together, the programs that make up the Main Street America™ network help to breathe new life into the places people call home.

Main Street America™ is a mark of distinction.

It is a seal, recognizing that participating programs, organizations, and communities are part of a national movement with a proven track record for celebrating community character, preserving local history, and generating impressive economic returns. Since 1980, over 2,000 communities have been part of Main Street, bringing renewed energy and activity to America's downtowns and commercial districts, securing \$61 billion in new investment creating more than 525,000 net new jobs and rehabilitating 251,000 buildings.

Main Street America™ is a time-tested strategy.

Main Street America™ communities are encouraged to make use of a time-tested approach, known as the Main Street Approach. The Main Street Approach is rooted in a commitment to broad-based community engagement, a holistic understanding of the factors that impact the quality of life in a community, and strategic focus on the core principles of downtown and neighborhood revitalization: Economic Vitality, Design, Promotion, and Organization.



Jon Schallert

President, The Schallert Group

Building Strong Destination Businesses: Leveraging the Power of the Main to Main Trail

WEDNESDAY | 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Jon Schallert is the only business consultant teaching businesses and communities how to reinvent themselves into Consumer Destinations. When Jon is not speaking around the country, he conducts his 2½ day Destination Business BootCamp in Colorado and oversees his online training network, DestinationUniversity.com. Prior to starting his company, Jon spent ten years with greeting card giant Hallmark Cards.



Tuesday, March 11, 2025

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 7:30 AM - 5:30 PM | Registration Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM | Shop & Explore Downtown Mooresville |
| 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM | Downtown Toolkit Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM | Tradeshow / Break Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM | Downtown Toolkit Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM | Tradeshow / Lunch on Your Own Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM | Breakout Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 2:45 PM - 3:15 PM | Tradeshow / Break Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 3:15 PM - 3:45 PM | Opening Remarks: Liz Parham Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 3:45 PM - 4:15 PM | Special Announcements Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 4:15 PM - 4:30 PM | Break Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 4:30 PM - 5:15 PM | Keynote Speaker: Katherine Loflin <i>The Science of Loving Where You Live</i> Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 5:15 PM - 6:45 PM | Welcome Reception Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 6:45 PM | Dinner on Your Own Downtown Mooresville |

Wednesday, March 12, 2025

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|----------------------------|--|
| 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM | Registration Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 PM | Tradeshow Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 8:30 AM - 9:00 AM | Welcome: Liz Parham Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 9:00 AM - 9:30 AM | Plenary Speaker: Jon Schallert <i>Building Strong Destination Businesses: Leveraging the Power of the Main to Main Trail</i> Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 9:30 AM - 10:15 AM | Keynote Speaker: Jeff Siegler <i>Civic Pride & Civic Apathy</i> Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 10:15 AM - 10:45 AM | Tradeshow Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM | Breakout Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM | Tradeshow / Lunch On Your Own Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street / Downtown Mooresville |
| 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM | Breakout Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 3:15 PM - 3:45 PM | Tradeshow Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 3:45 PM - 5:00 PM | Downtown Mooresville Tours Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 5:00 PM - 5:30 PM | Cocktails Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 5:30 PM - 6:30 PM | Awards Ceremony Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 6:30 PM | Dinner on Your Own Downtown Mooresville |

NC Main Street Awards Ceremony

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM | CHARLES MACK CITIZEN CENTER | 215 NORTH MAIN STREET

The NC Main Street Awards ceremony recognizes the top projects in the state.

No Ticket Required

Thursday, March 13, 2025

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|----------------------------|---|
| 8:00 AM - 9:15 AM | Downtown Mooresville Tours Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 9:15 AM - 9:30 AM | Break Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM | Breakout Sessions <i>Locations Available at Registration</i> |
| 10:15 AM - 11:00 AM | Champion Registration Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM | Coffee with the Champions Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 11:15 AM - 12:45 PM | Champions Ceremony Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |
| 12:45 PM - 1:00 PM | Closing Remarks: Liz Parham Charles Mack Citizen Center 215 North Main Street |

Coffee with the Champions

10:30 AM - 11:15 AM | CHARLES MACK CITIZEN CENTER | 215 NORTH MAIN STREET

No Ticket Required

NC Main Street Champions Recognition Ceremony

11:15 AM - 12:45 AM | CHARLES MACK CITIZEN CENTER | 215 NORTH MAIN STREET

The NC Main Street Champions ceremony recognizes citizens and groups that have made a significant impact in their community's downtown revitalization efforts.

No Ticket Required



**NC DEPARTMENT
of COMMERCE**
RURAL ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT



The annual NC Main Street Conference is one of the many educational offerings provided by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, a section within the North Carolina Department of Commerce - Rural Economic Development Division.

Tuesday, March 11

7:30 AM - 5:30 PM

Registration

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Shop & Explore

Downtown Mooresville

9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

Downtown Toolkit Sessions

1 | Don't Be a Nonprofit Offender ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

Most Main Street organizations are either run by a nonprofit organization, or they are a public-private program that has a nonprofit arm. Do you know IRS regulations on what you can and can't do with a 501(c) 3, 4, and 6 organization? What about the state requirements for your non-profit status? This session will expose the top misconceptions that Main Street organizations often miss, including marketing downtown businesses, charitable solicitation license, and more. Don't put your nonprofit status and organization in jeopardy. Learn the laws, avoid the fines, and run your nonprofit like a business!

David Heinen, Vice President for Public Policy and Advocacy,
NC Center for Nonprofits

Ivan Canada, President & CEO, NC Center for Nonprofits

2 | Be the Worst Kept Secret! ORGANIZATION PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Does it sometimes feel like your livable, lovable downtown and your hard-working revitalization efforts are invisible? Telling your story is an important role of any downtown organization, and one that all too often takes a backseat to more immediate activities. This session will offer ideas to help Main Street organizations and community leaders learn how to "toot their own horn", shout from the rafters, pat themselves on the back, and take advantage of opportunities for high visibility.

Jenn Goldman, President & Lead Consultant, Jennifer E. Goldman



3 | Is Your Project Ready? ORGANIZATION ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

Successful development, management, and execution of a community economic development project requires time and thoughtful planning. What is the project's primary purpose? Is it rooted in an economic development strategy? Does it have a well-defined scope? Will the local government or organization have the financial resources and human capacity to bring the project to fruition? Is the timing right to implement the project? Whether it is a large-scale construction activity or a small-scale improvement, the effort spent on project development is crucial to yield results. The NC Rural Planning Program team will lead participants through a process to help them ensure that future projects are ready to move forward!

Grace Lawrence, Community Economic Development Planner,
Sandhills Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Region
Jeff Emory, Community Economic Development Planner,
Southwest Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning
Phil Boggan, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC)
Community Economic Development Planner, Northwest Region

4 | Funding Diversity: Meeting Business Owners Where They Are ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

Not all downtown business owners are created equal! This session will characterize different economic realities that people face and provide attendees with the resources to help Main Street businesses be prosperous. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) are an important part of the entrepreneurial ecosystem that can provide alternative lending and technical assistance resources to local businesses and organizations. Learn how to advance economic development, build financial inclusion, and diversify the ownership of your downtown district.

Jasper Jones, Relationship Manager, NC Rural Center
Christine Laucher, Strategic Partnership Manager, Southwestern
Regional Manager, Mountain BizWorks

5 | We Are the Champions ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

"We are the champions, my friends. And we'll keep on fighting 'til the end. We are the champions!" Downtown Economic Development is dependent on public and private sector champions that leverage positive change. Livable and lovable communities don't just happen. They take hard work and commitment to community. Some of North Carolina's most impressive Main Street Champions will share 10 traits for economic vibrancy in downtown.

Sada Troutman, Downtown Development Director, Downtown
Salisbury, Inc.

Tonyan Schoefield, Owner, House of T Grace Wellness Studio &
Fit for a Queen

Doug McGrath, Vice President, Government Services, Bekins
Moving & Storage

Miles Atkins, Executive Director Iredell Health Foundation

Steve Bush, Steve Bush/Owner, Marion Hot Wheelz Skating Rink

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Downtown Toolkit Sessions

6 | Economic Acceleration Thru Transformation

ORGANIZATION

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

Have you noticed that some communities seem to generate economic activity faster than others? The key is having a strategic economic development plan and an implementation team that serves as a blueprint for development. It just takes one good asset-based economic development strategy to get a small community moving in the right direction. The NC Main Street & Rural Planning staff will guide attendees through the process and present case studies of North Carolina communities that are generating big ideas and big impact in small towns.

Sherry Adams, NC Main Street Program Manager, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Bruce Naegelen, Community Economic Development Planner, North Central Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

7 | Carolina on My Mind

ORGANIZATION

PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Creating a compelling story and brand for a community is essential in attracting investment, fostering economic growth, and building a strong sense of identity. When it comes to promoting a downtown area, downtown organizations and their leadership need to understand what sets the community apart from others and how to effectively communicate that distinction to potential investors, developers, visitors, and residents. This session will teach attendees how to employ creative techniques to craft their story, promote the downtown, engage the community, and enhance the brand.

Leniece Lane, Owner, Small Town Soul, LLC



8 | Rethinking Social Media: How to Cultivate Civic Pride and Downtown Investments Through Your Social Media Strategy

ORGANIZATION

PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Social media is often used to promote events, but consequentially, our feeds resemble infomercials or generic ads—quickly scrolled past with little connection to the downtown brand. Event promotions are important, but social media can—and should—take a balanced approach. In this session, we'll explore how Main Street programs can grow beyond event posts to craft an intentional social media strategy that aligns with your community's vision and goals. When done strategically, social media enables you to engage with the community, respond to issues or concerns, and influence consumer behavior in ways that drive both foot traffic and investment. This session will teach attendees how to use social media to magnify all four points of Main Street, and get more PEP (People, Engagement, and Purchases) downtown.

Lizzie Morrison, Community Economic Development Planner, Piedmont Triad Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center
Samantha Darlington, Community Economic Development Planner, Southeast Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

9 | Thinking About Main Street?

ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

Is downtown revitalization a top priority for your community? If the answer is yes, then the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center's Downtown Associate Community program may be a good fit for your town or city. North Carolina municipalities with an identifiable traditional downtown business district and a population under 50,000, that are not already designated as an active Main Street or Small Town Main Street community, have the opportunity to apply for the Center's Downtown Associate Community (DAC) program. Selected communities will receive two years of downtown revitalization services and may have the opportunity to move up to Main Street designation upon completion of the DAC program. This information session will provide attendees with the benefits and requirements of the program and outline the application process.

Charles Halsall, Jr. Main Street Program Specialist, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Amy Suggs, Main Street Program Specialist, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center



10 | Tap Into Federal Programs for Downtown

ECONOMIC VITALITY DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

Revitalizing downtown areas presents both exciting opportunities and significant challenges. For local governments, Main Street organizations, and community leaders, navigating the complex landscape of federal funding can be a game-changer in making downtown development projects a reality. In this session, we will explore a variety of federal funding opportunities and resources that are available for downtown revitalization, including the US Economic Development Administration (EDA), the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Community Development Block Grant program (CDBG).

Lisa Rueh, Main Street Grants Administrator, Moderator

Lauren Coombs, Community Revitalization Strategist, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Valerie Fegans, Director of Community Development Block Grant Program, NC Commerce Rural Economic Development Division

Hillary Sherman, NC Economic Development Representative, U.S. Economic Development Administration

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM

Tradeshow / Lunch on Your Own

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

1:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Breakout Sessions

1 | Affordable Housing on Main Street

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

As communities across the country grapple with the need for affordable housing, a key question emerges: What does affordable housing look like on Main Street? This session will provide a comprehensive overview of how affordable housing is financed, the distinctions between "naturally affordable" housing and subsidized, income-restricted units, and the challenges and opportunities in developing housing in downtown districts. Drawing on real-world examples from Main Street communities, we will explore successful models, share lessons learned, and discuss strategies for creating vibrant communities.

Sarah Odio, Associate Director, Development Finance Initiative



2 | Size Doesn't Matter: Transforming Small and Overlooked Spaces into Memorable Downtown Features

DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

In any downtown, some of the most overlooked spaces—whether it's a narrow alleyway, an empty lot, or a hidden building niche—often hold the greatest potential for transformation. This session explores creative ways to breathe life into these underutilized or forgotten corners of our downtown districts, turning them into unique and vibrant features that enrich the streetscape and engage the community. From overgrown sidewalks and vacant lots to dark alleyways and median strips, this session will showcase innovative examples, demonstrating how even the most modest spaces can become memorable features of downtown.

Ray Gibbs, Principal, Gibbs Urban Advisors. PLLC

3 | Building Visitor Itineraries that Start and End in Downtown

PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Creating an attractive and vibrant Main Street is no small feat—it requires careful planning, development, and ongoing effort. However, visitors often come with an interest in exploring more than just the downtown area. How can you entice them to experience not only your Main Street but also the wider region; while ensuring they return to downtown for dining, accommodations, and entertainment? This session will provide a practical guide to crafting visitor itineraries that balance exploration of your community and beyond with a return to the heart of your downtown. The session will include best practices for creating itineraries, including setting your theme, your stops and transitions as well as ways to make them useful for visitors.

Simon Jones, Founder, NatureScapes

Carol Kline, Professor and the Director of the Hospitality and Tourism Management Program, Appalachian State University

4 | Tips to Equip, Empower and Retain Volunteers ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

Volunteers are the lifeblood of a downtown revitalization organization but keeping them engaged and committed can be a challenge. In this practical, hands-on session, you'll learn effective strategies to equip, empower, and retain your volunteers. Topics covered will include volunteer onboarding, goal setting, communication strategies, recognition and appreciation techniques, and creating a strong volunteer culture. Designed for nonprofit leaders, Main Street program directors, and anyone responsible for managing volunteers, this session will provide actionable insights on how to recruit, train, and support volunteers while fostering a positive and rewarding experience.

Melissa Metcalf Le Roy, President, OnFire Nonprofit Consulting

5 | The Most Creative Uses of a Downtown Building: Revitalizing Downtown ECONOMIC VITALITY

DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

Small town downtowns often face the challenge of vacant storefronts, underutilized buildings, and a lack of economic vibrancy. To revitalize these areas, innovative and creative solutions are needed to repurpose these spaces in a way that serves the community and attract new businesses. This session will feature presentations and case studies showcasing the creative business owners and developers who have successfully turned vacant downtown buildings and empty spaces into thriving centers of activity. From retail shops and food and beverage establishments to community hubs and service providers, these examples will highlight the diverse ways these buildings have been transformed to fuel economic growth and enhance community life.

Mike Dougherty, Downtown Development Specialist, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Joy Almond, Main Street Program Specialist, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

2:45 PM - 3:15 PM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

3:15 PM - 3:45 PM

Opening Remarks: Liz Parham

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street



3:45 PM - 4:15 PM

Special Announcements

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

4:15 PM - 4:30 PM

Break

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

4:30 PM - 5:15 PM

Keynote Speaker: Katherine Loflin The Science of Loving Where You Live

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

The Science of Loving Where You Live will explore the factors that make downtowns not just livable, but lovable. Drawing from her pioneering research that earned national and international acclaim, Dr. Katherine Loflin will delve into how place attachment—the emotional bond between people and their environment—can be grown by optimizing three community qualities to foster local economic growth and resident thriving. She will provide examples from her latest work in heritage tourism.

Katherine Loflin, The City Doctor

5:15 PM - 6:45 PM

Welcome Reception

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

6:45 PM

Dinner on Your Own

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

Wednesday, March 12

7:30 AM - 5:00 PM

Registration

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

8:30 AM - 9:00 AM

Welcome: Liz Parham

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

9:00 AM - 9:30 AM

Plenary Speaker: Jon Schallert

Building Strong Destination Businesses: Leveraging the Power of the Main to Main Trail

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

In today's competitive market, creating a distinctive, memorable business experience is key to attracting customers and ensuring long-term success. This session will showcase how businesses are transforming themselves into must-visit destinations through the guidance of Jon Schallert's 10-Step Destination Creation Training course. In FY 2024-25, Jon worked with over 500 small businesses across North Carolina, helping them achieve the coveted Certified NC Destination status. These businesses, along with their community partners, are now harnessing the power of the Main to Main Trail—a NC Main Street Program initiative designed to promote regional economic growth and tourism. By becoming key attractions in their communities, these businesses are not only boosting their own success but also contributing to the revitalization of their local economies. We'll introduce you to some of the Certified NC Destination businesses and the Main Street Directors who have been instrumental in guiding these businesses toward their destination success.

Jon Schallert, President, The Schallert Group



9:30 AM - 10:15 AM

Keynoter Speaker: Jeff Siegler

Civic Pride & Civic Apathy

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

Communities across the country have been devastated by apathy, and unless we take drastic action, the problem will continue to worsen. Apathy destroys everything it touches, and it can't be fixed by planning or money alone. The lack of care and concern among residents won't change if we stay on the same path. We need a fresh approach to restore people's connection to their town. Only by fostering a sense of civic pride can we combat apathy. This means bringing people together, restoring beauty, fostering affection, and giving meaning to people's relationship with their community. A small-scale, simple, and incremental approach can help replace apathy with pride. The key is to start working—there is no silver bullet, and no one is coming to fix it for us. Every resident, every day, must do their part to make the community just a little bit better. When everyone participates, we can create something truly special: a community we can all be proud of.

Jeff Siegler, Revitalize, or Die

10:15 AM - 10:45 AM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

10:45 AM - 12:00 PM

Break-Out Sessions

6 | Fabulous Findings: Finessing Downtown's Future with Market Data

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

Whether you're a market data aficionado or someone who thinks numbers are a snoozefest, this session is your "go to" for learning how market data fuels actionable insights for downtowns. Using cutting-edge data sources, we'll uncover emerging trends and show you how to transform complex analytics into bite-sized, digestible insights that reveal "Aha!" moments, as you learn how to use the numbers and turn data into a dynamic storytelling tool that reveals the hidden potential of your downtown. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting to explore the world of market studies, this session will help you level up your data game and see the power of analytics in a whole new light.

Tripp Muldrow, Principal, Arnett Muldrow & Associates, Ltd.

7 | The Importance and the Art of Third Places: Gathering Spaces within the Downtown Context DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

In today's fast-paced world, people typically divide their time between two main environments: home (First Place) and work (Second Place). However, it is in the Third Places—public spaces outside of home and work—where the true magic of community and connection happens. These gathering spaces are vital anchors of culture, art, socialization, and entertainment, fostering meaningful relationships and contributing to the unique identity of a place. This session will explore the concept of Third Places, focusing on their critical role within the downtown context. Third Places provide the foundation for a thriving, inclusive public life. We will delve into the elements that make these spaces successful: their design, accessibility, programming, and the intangible “secret sauce” that reflects the character and needs of the local community.

Dan Lambert, RLA, ASLA, Director, Landscape Architecture, McAdams

8 | Imagine the Impact: Gaining Local Government Support for Downtown Revitalization ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

Can you imagine the incredible impact you could have on your downtown district if your city is fully behind your revitalization efforts? In this inspiring panel discussion, hear from North Carolina city and town managers who have successfully gained local government support for their downtown initiatives. They'll share practical tips, proven strategies, and real-world examples that demonstrate how to engage municipal leaders and ensure their commitment to revitalizing your community's core. Whether you're just starting out or looking for fresh ideas, you'll leave this session with the tools you need to build stronger partnerships with local government and create lasting change in your downtown area.

Charles Halsall, Jr. Main Street Program Specialist, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, Moderator

Jonathan Franklin, Town Manager, Town of Pittsboro

Corey Gooden, Town Manager, Town of Edenton



9 | Hit the Trail from Downtown: Enhancing Outdoor Recreation with Vibrant Downtown Amenities ECONOMIC VITALITY PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

North Carolina is renowned for its outdoor recreation, from scenic mountain trails to lush greenway systems. But once adventurers finish their time on the trail, where do they go next? The answer: downtown! This panel discussion will explore how communities can create downtown environments that serve as welcoming, convenient hubs for outdoor enthusiasts. Join experts in tourism, downtown revitalization, and outdoor recreation as they share valuable insights on integrating trail systems with vibrant downtown districts. Attendees will learn how to develop amenities such as bike rentals, rest stops, local dining options, outdoor gear shops, and more—all designed to enhance the outdoor experience and encourage visitors to return year after year.

Amy Allison, Director, NC Outdoor Economy Office, NC Department of Commerce

Amanda Baker, Manager, Partner Marketing, Visit NC

Laura Gaylord, Main Street & Community Manager, Town of Elkin

10 | When Disaster Hits: Lessons in Preparedness and Recovery ECONOMIC VITALITY DESIGN

ORGANIZATION PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Disasters can strike without warning, but how well we prepare—and how quickly we respond—can make all the difference in saving lives and rebuilding economies. When Hurricane Helene devastated Western North Carolina, the town of Boone found itself facing the dual challenge of ensuring immediate health and safety while planning for long-term economic recovery. In this session, local leaders from Boone will share their first-hand experiences and strategies for navigating disaster recovery. Learn how public and private sector partners collaborated to prioritize health and safety, communicate effectively with both residents and visitors, and provide critical support to local businesses.

Lane Moody, Downtown Development Coordinator, Town of Boone

David Jackson, President/CEO Boone Area Chamber of Commerce

Kendra Sink, General Manager, Mast General Store



12:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

2:00 PM – 3:15 PM

Breakout Sessions

11 | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems: A Place-Based, Collaborative Framework ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

An entrepreneurial ecosystem is a connected network of resources and stakeholders that support and foster the creation, growth, and success of new businesses and entrepreneurial ventures in a community. In this session, attendees will learn a framework, based in Place, that helps local businesses grow and thrive. Main Street America will share insights on how to work with business owners, local groups, organizations, and community leaders, to implement practical ideas and a step-by-step approach to create an environment where new and existing businesses can prosper.

Tasha Sams, Senior Manager of Education, Main Street America
Gustavo Ustariz, Senior Manager for Entrepreneur & Small Business Support, Main Street America

Joi Cuartero Austin, Senior Program Officer, Economic Vitality, Main Street America

12 | Generational Design Concepts: Creating Healthier, More Inclusive Outdoor Spaces DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

There is an increasing understanding that spaces designed for children serve a broader demographic, promoting health, wellness, and connection to the outdoors for all ages. Research linking children's health and well-being to their immediate outdoor environments has sparked a paradigm shift in the design of public spaces. This session will explore how landscapes that prioritize children's outdoor play can also benefit people of all generations, creating spaces that are sustainable, inclusive, and supportive of physical, social, and emotional well-being. Drawing on research from health, education, and initiatives like the Children and Nature Network and Cities Connecting Children to Nature, this presentation will examine the evolving role of landscape architecture in fostering environments that nurture both child development and community well-being.

Shweta Nanekar, Parks Planning Practice Lead, McAdams

13 | The Write Stuff 2.0: The Words We Write about the Places We Love PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

Why do you love where you live? Let us write the ways! In today's world, the way we write about the places we love — whether on social media, websites, or advertisements — plays a pivotal role in shaping how others see our communities. In this dynamic, hands-on workshop, we'll explore how to craft compelling narratives that capture the heart of your hometown or favorite neighborhood. Bring a notebook, smartphone, or tablet, and get ready to leave this session feeling inspired and empowered as both a writer and a passionate community advocate.

Phil Eich, Founder, Storyville

Main Street: Creating Livable, Lovable Communities



14 | The Power of Culture and Inclusive Community Engagement ORGANIZATION

Location Available at Registration

This session explores how arts, culture, and inclusivity can play a pivotal role in revitalizing downtown areas, creating vibrant, welcoming spaces that reflect and engage diverse communities. Attendees will learn practical strategies for fostering community engagement and integrating social equity into downtown revitalization plans. How can we ensure our projects prioritize accessibility, diversity, and inclusiveness while preserving local cultural identity?

Jennifer Everett, Founder, Culture Queens
Jameka Haynes, Owner, Bold Conversations Consulting

15 | Big Ideas for Big Projects: Revitalizing Historic Spaces ECONOMIC VITALITY DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

Many communities across North Carolina are grappling with the challenge of rehabilitating iconic but underutilized buildings—whether it's an old textile mill, a historic warehouse, a former downtown grocery store, or a once-glorious hotel. These structures often have great potential but require creative thinking, community support, and strategic planning to give them new life. In this session, you'll gain valuable insights and inspiration from both public and private sector partners who have successfully navigated the complexities of revitalizing big, historic projects. Through compelling case studies, learn the key strategies, lessons learned, and best practices that helped turn these ambitious visions into reality.

Josh Ross, City Manager, City of Bessemer City
Patrick Reilly, President, Rehab Development, Inc.
Josh Barnhardt, Founder/President, Iron Horse Development
Jack Thomson, Western Regional Director, Preservation North Carolina

3:15 PM – 3:45 PM

Tradeshow

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

3:45 PM – 5:00 PM

Downtown Mooresville Tours

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

1 | Love What You Do | Makers Tour

This tour will showcase Downtown Mooresville businesses that create products inside their doors while offering a fantastic selection of retail options. When you love what you do, you deliver it with a smile and small-town charm!

2 | Building with Heart | Mack on Main & Mooresville Arts Tour

Join us for a tour of a 1925 building that has served the Mooresville community as a hotel and theater. Now fully renovated, both floors are used for office space rentals, retail, and restaurant space. On our second stop we will tour the home of Mooresville Arts where classes, receptions, and lectures come to life. You will see firsthand how what once felt like a space filled with ghosts is now home to lots of art to love!

3 | Livable & Fun | Liberty Park and Mill One Tour

When you can renovate a park and connect it to your downtown core, you do it right! Join us for a tour of Liberty Park, a project that took a blank and dreary piece of property and brought life, color, and fun to the heart of Downtown Mooresville. After the park tour, we will visit a 90,000-square-foot, mixed-use development project spurred by the Liberty Park investment.

4 | Legends & Lore | NC Auto Racing Walk of Fame and Welcome Home Veterans Museum Tour

Join us for this tour to see how Mooresville honor its NASCAR legends and local veterans. Mooresville is home to many NASCAR teams and drivers and is recognized as "Race City USA." The NC Auto Racing Walk of Fame connects and celebrates the many aspects of the sport to downtown. After we stroll the streets, we will tour the Welcome Home Veterans Museum, commonly known as Richard's Coffee Shop. Once inside, you will enjoy an extensive collection of memorabilia. Before you leave, you will probably see community members hanging out at the legendary "Liar's Table."

5 | Legends & Lore | Award-Winning Ghost Signs & 124-Year-Old D E Turner & Co. Hardware Tour

Join us as we walk around downtown to tour Mooresville's award-winning ghost signs that have received national attention from the National Main Street Center, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other history enthusiasts. The restoration of these works of art resurrected a time when signage and artistry were commonplace, and they will now live on forever. We will finish our tour by visiting D E Turner & Co. Hardware. Serving the community as a combination of a living history museum and retailer for over 125 years, this is a store you will not want to miss!



6 | Livable & Lovable Spaces | Broad Street Place and Allman's Residential Unit Tour

Join us to tour a former 1920s ice cream manufacturing facility renovated into seven retail spots and eight upper-floor apartments, all with a historic cool factor! Then we will tour another renovation project, which includes additional residential living with a memorable rooftop terrace, a business expansion, and a business creation within the renovated basement's footprint.

7 | Creating Beautiful Spaces to Love | Bridgetree and Dulcet & Delish Tour

A historic tax credit project gem awaits you! Join us to tour a building built between 1908 and 1914. This Renaissance Revival-style building is home to an international data company and a local cafe where everything is made from scratch. The tour will also highlight an initiative launched by turning an underutilized pocket park beside the cafe into an outdoor space for customers and a gathering space for the community.

5:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Cocktails

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

Tickets must be purchased in advance

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

NC Main Street Awards Ceremony

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

The NC Main Street Awards ceremony recognizes the top projects in the state.

No Ticket Required

Thursday, March 13

8:00 AM – 9:15 AM

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Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

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9:15 AM – 9:30 AM

Break

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

Breakout Sessions

16 | Does Quirky Get Your Community Noticed? PROMOTION

Location Available at Registration

In the world of downtown revitalization, leveraging unique local assets is a key component of success. The Main Street program emphasizes the importance of aligning promotional activities with a community's authentic characteristics. But what happens when the "assets" are a little more... unconventional? Festivals like The Alien Festival or The Bigfoot Festival might seem quirky, but do they help a community stand out—or is it just the legends and lore driving the buzz? This session will explore how quirky, unconventional events can bring attention to your community. Are these festivals truly based on the region's authentic assets, or are they merely tapping into the folklore that surrounds them? We'll examine the balance between embracing local culture and using playful myths to spark interest and discuss the potential benefits and challenges that come with these offbeat attractions.

Stephanie Saintsing-Nasset, Executive Director, NC Association of Festivals & Events

Freddie Killough, Executive Director, Marion Business Association

Theresa Mathis, Director, NC Whirligig Festival

Julie Beck, President, Mount Olive Chamber of Commerce

Deborah Malenfant, Executive Director, Elizabeth City Downtown. Inc

17 | Planning for a Main Street Project: Collaboration, Design, and Flexibility DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

Streetscape improvements and downtown planning projects require a careful balance of vision, stakeholder engagement, and long-term planning to enhance the urban environment. This session will explore the essential elements and best practices of planning and executing a successful downtown and main street streetscape transformation, with a particular focus on building partnerships with both public and private sector stakeholders, integrating a community's unique assets, and creating a flexible, adaptive design. From promoting accessibility and inclusivity to planning for seasonal events and activities, attendees will gain practical tools and strategies for creating streetscapes that reflect the community's identity while accommodating growth and change. Using case studies from communities such as Concord and Mooresville, participants will see real-world examples of how thoughtful design can transform a community space, increase accessibility, and encourage vibrancy.

Kaylee Caton, RA, AICP, Design Manager, Planning & Neighborhood Development Department, City of Concord
Paige Grochoske, Downtown Development Manager, City of Concord

David Cole, AICP, Senior Planner, Town of Mooresville

Dylan McNight, Senior Urban Designer, Bolton & Menk



18 | The 15-Minute Economy in Rural Towns: Can You Access What You Need Within 15 Minutes? ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

In rural communities, the concept of a "15-Minute Economy" is gaining traction as a way to assess how well local infrastructure and services meet residents' daily needs. This session will explore whether rural downtown areas can provide easy access to essential goods and services—such as food, healthcare, prescriptions, recreation, a library, and more—within a 15-minute radius and how that improves the quality of life in rural areas. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the critical role that access to essential services plays in the sustainability of rural downtowns, case studies from three small communities that are implementing aspects of a 15-minute economy, and tangible takeaways and practical tools for advancing these concepts in their own communities.

Connie Kincaid, Business Development Manager, Alexander County Economic Development Corporation

Sharon Smith, Community Economic Development Planner – Northeast Region, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center

Tyler Wise, Small Town Main Street Director, Town of Roseboro

Robert Davie, Town Manager, Town of Warrenton

Jenni Rogan, Director of Operations, Working Landscapes

Greg Zephir, Town Manager, Town of Troy

19 | City Parks with Big Impact: Transforming Urban Spaces for Health, Sustainability, and Community DESIGN

Location Available at Registration

City parks are not just recreational spaces—they are powerful drivers of economic, social, and environmental change. This session will provide attendees with the knowledge, strategies, and case studies they need to understand and capitalize on the potential of parks to transform urban areas and downtown businesses. Whether you're a business owner, city planner, or community leader, you'll leave this session with practical tools to help make your city greener, more sustainable, and economically vibrant.

Kim Atkins, Executive Director, Mooresville Downtown Commission

Ashley Nowell, Business Development Director, Town of Waxhaw

Dena Sabinske, Parks and Recreation Director, Town of Waxhaw

20 | Empowering Small Businesses with Knowledge: Unlocking Tools for Success

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Location Available at Registration

Small business owners are the backbone of our economy, but they don't always have access to the same resources or skill sets as larger corporations. Whether they are just starting out or looking to grow, many small business owners face barriers to success due to a lack of critical knowledge in areas like technology, finance, and marketing. This session aims to level the playing field by introducing community leaders to the tools and resources that can help transform the operations of their small businesses. With solutions from industry leaders like Google, Microsoft, and Intuit, attendees will learn how to harness technology to streamline processes, manage finances, and expand their digital presence.

Talib Graves-Mann, Executive Director, Knox St. Studios
Richard Brown, Director, Knox St. Studios

10:15 AM - 11:00 AM

Champion Registration

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

Coffee with the Champions

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

11:15 AM - 12:45 PM

NC Main Street
Champions Recognition
Ceremony

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

The NC Main Street Champions ceremony recognizes citizens and groups that have made a significant impact in their community's downtown revitalization efforts.

No Ticket Required

12:45 PM - 1:00 PM

Closing Remarks: Liz Parham

Charles Mack Citizen Center | 215 North Main Street

Liz Parham, Director, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center



Downtown Mooresville, NC



-  Main Conference Location
-  Breakout Session Locations
-  Shuttle Drop Off and Pick Up
-  Tour Meeting Locations
-  Public Parking
-  ATMs
-  Social District

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