

DRAFT

Main Street Mall Task Force

What started out as a conversation of cars vs. no cars on the Main Street Mall has shed light on the larger issue of the general health of the Mall. The Main Street Mall is in need of a comprehensive approach to revitalization. While some stakeholders have identified qualities that they like about the mall, the fact remains that it is currently not contributing to its full potential. Not as a pedestrian mall, not as a transportation mall, not as a retail mall. The question is: what will it take to make Main Street a more viable, vibrant spine through the core of Downtown. What are the practical strategies that we could recommend to improve the health of the Mall?

In order to best organize this effort the task force developed and divided into focus groups to analyze the four following focus areas:

- 1. Mobility, Access & Parking**
- 2. Public Realm, Infrastructure & Maintenance**
- 3. Business Development**
- 4. Clean & Green**

I. Mobility, Access & Parking:

This focus group was charged with the responsibility for developing recommendations addressing access to and movement on and around the Main Street Mall.

Goal: To Improve access, movement and circulation on and around the Main Street Mall.

Objective 1: Improve access and circulation for multiple modes of transportation.

Objective 2: Increase the walkability through an improved public realm.

Objective 3: Increase the efficiency, reliability, and usage of the Main Street Trolley.

Objective 4: Improve the availability and access to parking near the Main Street Mall.

Mobility, Access & Parking Recommendations:

The following recommendations for improved mobility and access are provided for consideration and review by the task force in order to address the goals and objectives:

1. Though the return of vehicular traffic to the Main Street Mall might have positive effects, **defer the reintroduction of cars at this time, and instead invest additional dollars in public realm enhancements.** A major investment in redesigning the Mall configuration to accommodate cars – on a test or permanent basis – is impractical at this time for several reasons not the least of which relates to the financial feasibility in the current economic environment; however the proposition of reintroducing cars should be closely monitored and reviewed periodically in the future.
2. Increase access to the Main Street Mall by **improving traffic flow on key east-west cross streets**, clearly communicating traffic laws, and increasing transportation alternatives.

3. Increase the **utilization, comfort and efficiency of the trolley system** by improving the reliability and consistency of the trolley schedule. Determine the feasibility of adding air conditioning to the trolleys and consider implementing a **no-fare-zone** for the Main Street route.
4. **Improve access to parking** adjacent to the Main Street Mall by increasing the turn-over of existing on-street parking spaces and adding additional on-street metered parking in the area of the Mall.

II. Public Realm, Infrastructure & Maintenance:

The objective of this focus area is to establish the future vision and needs for Main Street’s public realm and infrastructure, which would be presented to the city in a succinct document.

Goal: Highest quality pedestrian experience reflected in the design, implementation and operation of the Mall’s public realm.

Objective 1: Improve the quality of public realm infrastructure along the Mall

Objective 2: Ensure consistency in the appearance of design elements along the Mall

Goal : Increased collaboration and resources for a desirable, sustainable, and well-maintained public realm and infrastructure.

Objective 1: Increase investment in the public realm infrastructure of the Mall.

Objective 2: Increase collaboration among government organizations in maintaining the public realm.

Public Realm, Infrastructure & Maintenance Recommendations:

This focus group worked to create a public realm and infrastructure plan consisting of a capital improvements package and an ongoing maintenance package made up of the following recommendations for consideration by the full task force:

1. Create a **public realm and infrastructure capital improvements plan** that addresses lighting, tree grates, landscaping, trash disposal, outdoor furnishings, signage, and streetscape improvements.
2. Create a working partnership for implementing an ongoing, regularly scheduled **maintenance plan** that addresses paving/hardscape, drainage, trolley infrastructure, utility poles and planters; establish the funding to support the plan.

III. Business Development:

The objective of this focus area is to develop recommendations that will improve the business climate on the Main Street Mall.

Goal: Improve the economic health and business activity on the Main Street Mall.

Objective 1: Increase occupancy rates with business recruitment and retention through Main Street programs and incentives

Objective 2: Improve regulation and enforcement of private property code violations and anti-neglect

Objective 3: Ensure a high quality design of building facades and outdoor uses on the Mall.

Objective 4: Increase marketing and promotion of local products and services from Downtown businesses

Business Development Recommendations:

Initiatives that will help facilitate business recruitment and retention and improve business development are provided below for consideration and review by the task force:

1. Increase business recruitment and retention through **focused Main Street development programs and incentives.**
2. Strengthen CBID anti-neglect regulation and the process of enforcement of private property **code violations.**
3. **Develop and regulate guidelines** for Main Street development and the use of the Mall.
4. Expand **outdoor programming and free activities** on the mall to create an attraction for traffic in targeted zones of the mall.
5. Encourage **collaborative marketing** and promotion among Downtown businesses.

IV. Clean & Safe:

The objective of this focus area is to develop recommendations that will improve the cleanliness and the perceived safety of the Main Street Mall.

Goal: Improve the sense of safety, security, and cleanliness of the Mall.

Objective 1: Increase the sense of safety on the Mall for residents, workers, and visitors.

Objective 2: Ensure high standards for operation and maintenance of the Mall's public environment.

Clean & Safe Recommendations:

The following recommendations for improving the cleanliness and the perceived safety are provided for consideration and review by the task force in order to address the above goals and objectives:

1. Work in concert with the **CCC Safety & Security Committee** to focus resources and initiatives on Main Street **safety initiatives and public perception.**

2. Advocate for public resources for a dedicated **Memphis Police Department foot patrol** for the Main Street Mall.
3. Work in concert with the **CCC Clean & Green Committee** to **improve the cleanliness** of Main Street.
4. Advocate for Main Street as a primary **focus of public-private resources and initiatives**. Work with existing community social service providers in advocating for funding for outreach worker positions.

Task Force Conclusions:

From the findings of the Main Street Mall Task Force one thing became clear; an improved, collaborative effort is necessary to raise the priority of the Main Street Mall. This civic space demands increased attention and public investment of resources in order to represent the “main street” for the community.

We recommend the execution of a formalized proclamation by the City of Memphis, Shelby County, the Center City Commission and Downtown Stakeholders to increase the civic importance of the Main Street Mall. This increased civic importance should raise the priority of the Main Street Mall in terms of public resource allocation and targeted initiatives.

We also recommend the creation of a joint public-private Main Street Mall Oversight Committee to shepherd the implementation of the recommendations and the interrelated issues that are hindering the revitalization of the Main Street Mall as a thriving, successful street.