

Indiana Main Street Council Meeting

December 12, 2024, 2:00-4:00 pm ET

Indiana State Library (315 W Ohio St, Indianapolis, IN 46202); -Room 425

Attendees:

Dean Vonderheide
Amy Haacker
Eva North
Marsh Davis
J.P. Hall

Meagan Heber
Brian Sheehan
Tenille Zartman
Jon Myers

Non-Member Attendees:

Anne Valentine, Staff (Chief of Staff for the LT. Governor)
Duke Bennett, Staff
Andrea Kern, Staff
Abby Huff, Staff
Abby Chapman, Staff
Shelby Farthing, Staff
Kathy LaPlante, Vice President of Coordinating Programs, Main Street America
Jonathan Stone, Program Officer of Revitalization Services, Main Street America

Call to Order – Council Chair –

Meeting called to order by Anne Valentine, Lt. Governor Chief of Staff

Introduction of Jonathan Stone and Kathy LaPlante from Indiana Main Street by Andrea Kern

Indiana Main Street 2025-2030 Strategic Plan Draft— Kathy LaPlante, Jonathan Stone

Where are Indiana's Main Streets? This is the question presented for our 2025-2030 Indiana Main Street Strategic Plan.

Objective: 1) Further define and position Indiana Main Streets 2) Identify best practices and respond to stakeholders 3) Establish goals and intended impact 4) Anticipate necessary resources and expertise 5) Look ahead to get us to 2030.

Process Summary: Started in Spring 2024 with 40 interviews and 2 in-person workshops. We then formed a steering committee, sent out stakeholder surveys, and are currently at the IMS Council meeting. Draft report will be submitted to Council in January 2025. We will then receive a council report containing written feedback to create a final report presentation in April 2025.

Program Strengths: Indiana Main Street is a valued program and partner we have great reach across the whole state of Indiana. We provide key collaborations such as our grants and

training. IMS has a geographically diverse network. Long history with many high performing local programs such as turning 40 in 2025 and Madison Main Street as an original Main Street community. IMS has great grant making resources, skilled staff and leadership, training and networking opportunities.

Vision for OCRA/IMS Impact: 1) Consistent, streamlined, and accessible funding programs. 2) Refined and expanded technical assistance and training (being reactive to change). 3) Champion of rural and small communities 4) Enhanced IMS brand awareness and advocacy (branding at all levels). 5) Fosters local economic development (we are not just party people we are into moving the economic needle) we want to show how our communities are able to stand on their own. 6) Stable IMS program/long-term trust

High level actionable insights: 1) Staff roles, responsibilities, and training need to be evaluated to support strategic plan goals 2) Emerging communities need support relative to housing, adaptive reuse, and entrepreneurship support 3) Peer coordinating programs offer design services. 4) Entry-level tracks (what might be some new tracks or moving them up from the ODAN level).

Discussion:

What would you like to know more about? What are some of the shifts in NMS: Seeing a shift from 4 point to strategic work to communities needing complete work in all 4 points. Main Streets need to plan for resiliency such as disaster preparedness. This has been found to be a major need for many communities after tornados, hurricanes, floods and more natural disasters. We are looking at communities to see what draws people (arts, travel, music, entertainment) then we find measurable outcomes to get people to move, live, and work in these communities because of these draws. We need to show to our elected officials the economic development potential of Main Street to the communities.

What shifts your perspective about the role of IMS? Storytelling is not a priority in our IMS communities, and we need to talk about our economic development to get officials working with the Main Streets and supporting our long-term goals.

Evaluating New/Expanded Program Areas: 1) Housing & Property Owner Support: Housing was identified through interviews, surveys, and workshops. 2) Property support and fostering upper story housing identified as a weakness in surveys. Examples: Pro-forma creation, support and capital stacking, sample city policy development, target housing & adaptive reuse grant. 3) Entrepreneurship: 3rd lowest strongly agree in survey. Survey calls for sustainable community centered growth. Examples: Training on entrepreneurial ecosystems, training on business displacement, work with partners to develop comprehensive set of resources, targeted business startup. 4) Design Services: Service provided by numerous peer coordinating programs. Cited as a tool to kick-start projects for grant funding or to inspire property owners. Examples: Contracted or internal architectural services, 1:1 property owner support and coaching, Expands upon or deepens academic partnerships (Ball State) 5) Capacity Building & Organizational Development: Survey states organizations identify fundraising, telling story of impact and nurturing people as weakness. Workshop showed the need. Examples: Responsive training & coaching 1:1 support, Board

training, capacity building grants (TCOMS), early-stage structured programs for ODAN, toolkits invest in standardization.

Discussion:

What stood out? Housing & Entrepreneurship how do we get more people living downtown to support those businesses. Increasing the number of people living downtown will increase your businesses in downtown. Is the local main street able to support the property and housing support? Entrepreneurship- we need more than entertainment and retail. Need co-working spaces or more business types. Ball State is currently used, maybe investigating IU Columbus school of design or Rose Hulman to expand our partnerships. Need for board training is crucial. IU school of philanthropy is great in training. Legal training is also needed for these boards, especially with philanthropic activities, many can do things and not have any knowledge that they could compromise their charitable status. Educating the general public about why do you want to live downtown?

What are you Most Doubtful About? Capacity: IMS does not have enough staff, and local Main Streets have a huge turnover.

Which of the 4 focuses do you think will be most impactful? 1) Housing, however, it will also be the most challenging. 2) Design services is very helpful. 3) Housing & property is of high importance to rural Indiana. However, after much discussion it seems that housing and property is the 2nd most impactful. Where design services might be 1st. There is still a need that IMS needs to provide these communities with the capacity to deal with change.

How you approach expanding or deepening IMS core capacities? OCRA might not have the staff or funding to achieve these items. State level policies changes, especially tax credits are a constraint to achieving these goals.

Questions:

Most valuable information provided today was the coaching and templates for startups. So how do we get ODAN's to start moving up the ladder? Currently, there has been discussion about the ODAN program in our office, and how we can best support them with limited capacity and resources.

State Coordinator Report—Andrea Kern

Year in Review: Just through Q3, 109 new small businesses opened in 2024. Including \$17 million in private investments. We did 21 trainings with 268 attendees at virtual workshops. We welcomed legendary speakers this year including Judy O'Bannon and Mary Means. We attended 4 Community Exchanges over the state and had 189 attendees. We added 9 new communities to our list of Main Streets. We have worked hard and are ready to expand the Main Street Ready Program. We won the Great American Main Street Award this year which was a great honor, and our first win in 25 years.

On some sad news we are very saddened to see Abby Chapman leave OCRA this month. But we wish her all the best.

2025 will be the year of the 40th GALA. Thank you, Marsh, for providing Indiana Landmarks for us to host this event in October 2025. We will be sending out more information in the coming months but please share the logo and word about the 40th anniversary celebration.

Open Forum – All

Adjourn

Suggested Upcoming Meeting Dates

April 24, 2025 – 10 am - 12 pm

November 20, 2025 - TBD