

DOWNTOWN CHARITON

CHARITON, IOWA



MARKET-BASED STRATEGIC PLANNING 2023



CHARITON CHAMBER
MAIN STREET

Chariton Area Chamber/Main
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INTRODUCTION

The economic landscape of traditional downtown and neighborhood commercial districts continues to change. Expanding retail competition, evolving technologies, and changing lifestyle trends continue to affect business opportunities and the way of life in our traditional downtown business districts .

The Main Street Iowa Market Study and Strategies service engages the market itself – community members, area residents, business persons and other stakeholders – to gain an understanding of local and regional market conditions and trends impacting the district’s position in the market and opportunities for the future. Insights and directions derived through the process serve to ground the community’s vision in the realities of the marketplace and provide a basis for projects and activities that align with, and are carried out as part of, a well-coordinated and congruent transformation strategy

This document summarizes key strategies for Downtown Chariton economic development and enhancement initiatives based on an extensive review of background information and current market data; input provided via consumer and business surveys; and direction and leadership provided by Chariton Main Street leaders, volunteers and community members.

Chariton, Iowa is a Main Street Iowa Community.



The Market-Based Strategic Planning process was completed with technical assistance and support provided by Main Street Iowa.

The mission of the Main Street Iowa Program is to improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa's communities by assisting selected communities to capitalize on the unique identity, assets and character of their historic commercial district.

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Limitations and Disclaimers

Retail market studies and analyses, their components (such as retail sales gap analyses and surveys interpretation) and derivative business development plans provide important guidance on how a commercial area should, theoretically, be able to perform and on the sales levels businesses should be able to achieve. However, a number of factors affect the actual performance of businesses and commercial areas, including the skills of the business operator, level of business capitalization, the quality of the physical environment, changes in overall economic conditions, the effectiveness of business and district marketing programs, and many other factors. The information in this document is intended to provide a foundation of information for making district enhancement and business development decisions, but it does not and cannot ensure business success.

As is true of all demographic, economic and market studies, our analysis’ reliability is limited to the reliability and quality of the data available. Our research assumes that all data made available by and procured from federal, state, county, city, primary and third party sources is accurate and reliable.

Because market conditions change rapidly and sometimes without warning, the information and opinions expressed here represent a snapshot in time and cannot predict or gauge future changes or results.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Welcome to Chariton

We are Chariton, Iowa and we have a story to tell. People have been calling this place home for at least 175 years, and the connection that we have to the land that surrounds us is something that we cherish. Located in the rolling hills of south central Iowa, we're known for our redbud trees. Whether you are on Iowa's first Rail-to-Trail or surrounded by color during spring in Red Haw State Park, we are truly blessed by nature. We are home to one of the Midwest's greatest brands, Hy-Vee. And with that, we see the culture of quality, dependability, and service that is instilled in who we are today.

In Chariton, we are a family. We love our Chargers, and our pride and belief in our kids is palpable. We love being connected. With a little over 4,000 people, we are small but strong. We are a little bit stubborn. Don't try to tell us we aren't. We are. We love making memories with handcrafted candies or walks on our historic square. We are all the best of small-town life. But most of all, we love being in this together. Here in Chariton, we treat locals special and we make everyone feel like a local.

Downtown Chariton is a public space everyone calls their own. The historic Lucas County Courthouse is still in active use today surrounded by the traditional small town square. The Square in Chariton is the hub of the community with businesses such as Piper's Grocery and Homemade Candies, the Iron Horse Restaurant, Connecticut Yankee Pedaler, and public resources such as Chariton City Hall, and the Post Office all located within an easy walk of the courthouse steps. The surrounding areas in Chariton include active historic churches, numerous housing options, and abundant natural resources for outdoor activities.

Chariton's people are the driving force behind the community's Main Street designation and progress being made to improve downtown. In 2012, Chariton was designated as a Main Street Iowa community with the purpose of community-driven economic revitalization centered around the historic downtown.

The spark lit by the Chariton Area Chamber/Main Street organization has helped to implement several projects, big and small, aimed at improving the community and to encouraged the growth of our downtown businesses. Initiatives such as Alive After 5, the Chariton Farmer's Market and Dazzle Fest have collectively resulted in enhanced levels of community pride and engagement with the downtown district. Collaborative efforts are driving positive changes and progress to build a thriving downtown in the heart of Chariton.



THE DOWNTOWN CHARITON MARKET

Downtown Chariton Drive Time Market

Demographic Fast Facts ESRI 2022



POPULATION

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2022

4,181

Population	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2022 Estimate	3,628	4,181	7,415
Growth (2022-27)	-0.18%	-0.17%	-0.10%



DAYTIME POP

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2022

5,604

Daytime Population	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
Total Daytime Pop	3,063	5,604	7,623
Workers	1,453	3,747	4,344



HOUSEHOLDS

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2022

1,862

Households	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2022 Estimate	1,621	1,862	3,138
Growth (2022-27)	-0.12%	-0.10%	-0.05%



MEDIAN HH INCOME

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2022

\$53,427

Median HH Income	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2022 Estimate	\$52,544	\$53,427	\$58,197
Growth (2022-27)	0.54%	0.89%	2.02%



HOUSING UNITS

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2022

2,139

Housing Units	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2022 Estimate	1,878	2,139	3,566
- Owner Occupy	59.5%	61.0%	68.0%
- Renter Occupy	26.8%	26.0%	20.0%
- Vacant	13.7%	12.9%	12.0%
Median Home Value	\$81,644	\$86,317	\$108,278

Top Esri Tapestry Segment Groups

Downtown Chariton Drive Time Areas | Esri 2022

Esri's Community Tapestry is a geodemographic segmentation system that integrates consumer traits with residential characteristics to identify markets and classify U.S. neighborhoods. Tapestry Segmentation combines the "who" of lifestyle demography with the "where" of local geography to create 67 distinct market segments.

Small Town Sincerity [49% of households-10 min.]

- ▶ Includes young families and senior households that are bound by community ties.
- ▶ The lifestyle is down-to-earth and semirural.
- ▶ This is an older market, with half the householders aged 55 or older and predominantly single-person households.
- ▶ Income from wages and salaries, Social Security or retirement, increased by Supplemental Security income.
- ▶ 67% have a high school diploma or some college.
- ▶ Connected, but not to the latest or greatest gadgets.
- ▶ Price conscious consumers that shop accordingly.

Heartland Communities [28% of 10 min.]

- ▶ Budget savvy consumers
- ▶ The rural economy of this market provides employment in the manufacturing, construction, utilities, healthcare and agriculture industries.
- ▶ They embrace a slower pace of life but actively participate in outdoor activities and community events.
- ▶ These older householders are primarily homeowners, and many have paid off their mortgages.
- ▶ Most have high-speed internet access at home or on their cell phones.
- ▶ Their children have moved away but they have no plans to leave their homes.

Prairie Living [21% of 10 Minute Households]

- ▶ The most rural market, located mainly in the Midwest, with a predominance of self-employed farmers.
- ▶ Dominated by married-couple families that own single family dwellings and many vehicles.
- ▶ When they find time to relax, they favor outdoor activities.
- ▶ More than half have completed some college education or hold a degree.
- ▶ Wage and salary income for 72% of households plus self-employment income for 23%.
- ▶ Faith and religion are important to these residents.
- ▶ Tend to buy things when they need them rather than when they want them or to be trendy.
- ▶ Somewhat resistant to new technology.

THE DOWNTOWN CHARITON MARKET

Retail Market Power CLARITAS 2023

An understanding of area supply and demand for retail and food and drink establishments, infused with local insights on market forces influencing performance and opportunities in the marketplace, can yield a meaningful assessment of a retail market's performance and possibilities for growth.

Data sources from Claritas' Retail Market Power (RMP) 2023 Retail Stores Opportunity Gap serve as a good starting point for assessing and tracking overall sales volumes and retail performance. The report helps identify market strengths, retail clusters, and possibilities for complimentary business types, products and uses. It may also help in detecting gaps in the business mix and possible repositioning, expansion, and recruitment opportunities.

Potential Opportunities



Sales gap factors provide an at-a-glance means of assessing the relative strength of various retail categories within a defined geography. The factor is a measure of the relationship between supply and demand that ranges from +100 (with negative value factors might offer an initial indication of gaps in the business mix and potential targets for expansion or recruitment).

DOWNTOWN CHARITON | CHARITON, IA | DRIVE TIME MARKET SALES SURPLUS AND LEAKAGE ESTIMATES | (\$MM)

Total Retail Trade (NAICS 44 – 45)	5 Minutes	10 Minutes	20 Minutes
- Est. Sales (Supply)	\$84.1M	\$92.4M	\$106.4M
- Potential Sales (Demand)	\$69.8M	\$79.6M	\$109.2M
- Est. Surplus/(Leakage)	\$14.3M	\$12.8M	(\$2.9M)
<hr/>			
Total Food and Drink (NAICS 722)	5 Minutes	10 Minutes	20 Minutes
- Est. Sales (Supply)	\$4.1M	\$4.2M	\$4.3M
- Potential Sales (Demand)	\$8.2M	\$9.4M	\$12.9M
- Est. Surplus/(Leakage)	(\$4.1M)	(\$5.2M)	(\$8.6M)
<hr/>			
Total Retail, Food and Drink (NAICS 44 – 45, 722)	5 Minutes	10 Minutes	20 Minutes
- Est. Sales (Supply)	\$88.2M	\$96.5M	\$110.7M
- Potential Sales (Demand)	\$78.1M	\$89.0M	\$122.2M
- Est. Surplus/(Leakage)	\$10.1M	\$7.5M	(\$11.5M)

Estimates shown in millions and rounded to nearest one hundred thousand dollars.



SUPPLY > DEMAND = SALES SURPLUS

A surplus could signal the area is attractive to retailers and offer opportunities for complementary or niche establishments that capitalize on existing strengths, clusters and consumer patterns.

SUPPLY < DEMAND = SALES LEAKAGE

Areas showing leakage may help to attract new establishments or reveal changes that could be made to an existing business' menu or product mix to fill gaps and increase market share.



SALES GAP FACTORS | DOWNTOWN CHARITON DRIVE TIMES

Category—Factor	5 Minutes	10 Minutes	20 Minutes
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	(19.8)	(22.3)	(18.5)
Furniture / Home Furnishings Stores	(100.0)	(100.0)	(99.5)
Electronics and Appliance Stores	33.0	27.3	12.1
Building Materials, Garden & Supply	17.4	12.2	5.1
Food and Beverage Stores	(4.2)	(7.5)	(15.3)
Health and Personal Care Stores	16.6	13.5	(0.4)
Gasoline Stations	62.5	65.0	58.0
Clothing and Clothing Accessories	7.6	2.1	(13.3)
Sporting Goods, Hobby, Book, Music	53.6	49.3	37.8
General Merchandise Stores	(10.1)	(15.2)	(26.8)
Miscellaneous Store Retailers	(28.3)	(34.1)	(46.5)
Nonstore Retailers	(4.5)	(9.3)	(19.5)
Food Services and Drinking Places	(33.7)	(38.7)	(49.9)

Source: Claritas Market Power® 2023 | Retail Stores Gap | Calculations by DPN

Note: The complete Downtown Chariton Market Snapshot and source Esri & Claritas reports are available as supplemental documents to this report.

CHARITON SURVEY OVERVIEW

Downtown Appeal and Uses

Overall visit rates cited by consumer survey participants reflect the broader attraction of downtown created by a diverse mix of business types, uses and activities—and reinforce a position catering, primarily, to the everyday needs of Chariton area residents.

84% Visited Chariton for **Dining** within the past year.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 1
Q: For which of the following activities or purposes have you visited Chariton within the past year?

Top Consumer Survey Responses	Percent
Dining	84.4%
Shopping	77.3%
Work	73.7%
Banking/Financial Services	72.4%
Festivals/Special Events	54.7%
Recreation	48.7%
Office Visit	46.9%
School	41.9%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

58% Visit Chariton to do **errands or for office and service-related purposes** on a daily or weekly basis.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Consumer patterns depicting the multi-purpose nature and appeal of the downtown are reinforced by data showing more than 58% visit the downtown area on a daily or weekly basis to do errands or for office and service-related purposes; 52% for eating, drinking and/or entertainment; and 63% to shop.

Table 2
Q: How often do you visit Chariton ...

Frequency—Daily or Weekly	Percent
To do errands or for office and service-related purposes?	58.8%
For eating, drinking and/or entertainment?	52.9%
To shop?	63.0%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Big Data

Proposed strategies, directions and actions outlined in this document are rooted in current market information and community input via:

- ▶ Advance reconnaissance and the Main Street Iowa Partners Visit conducted in July 2023
- ▶ A consumer survey with a total sample of 389 participants
- ▶ A Chariton business survey completed by 45 respondents
- ▶ MSO team members, partners and community members participating in a series of market study work sessions



97% Of consumer survey participants made at least one online purchase, or left Chariton to make a purchase, within the past year.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 3
Q: What type(s) of products have you purchased online or left Chariton to purchase within the past year?

Products—Top 10 Shown	Count	Percent
Women's Clothing	268	70.2%
Gifts	249	65.2%
Electronics	247	64.7%
Men's Clothing	226	59.2%
Home Furnishings	226	59.2%
Beauty Supplies	207	54.2%
Children's Clothing	177	46.3%
Hobbies and Crafts	166	43.5%
Books	147	38.5%
Sporting Goods	142	37.2%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey. Most frequent responses shown.

CHARITON SURVEY OVERVIEW

Marketing and Communications Channels

Consumer preferences for social media and online applications, along with the adaptation of online channels by downtown businesses, appear to demonstrate the importance of, and potential benefits for, a strong online business presence.

89% Of those surveyed regularly use **Facebook**.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 4
Q: Which of the following social media networks or online applications do you regularly use?

Top Consumer Survey Responses	
Facebook	89.7%
Snapchat	45.6%
YouTube	35.1%
Instagram	34.3%
Tik Tok	32.2%
Pinterest	28.4%
Etsy	13.4%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey. Most frequent responses shown.

53% Of businesses surveyed identified Social Media as one of the most effective sources for promoting their business
Source: 2023 Chariton Business Survey.

Table 5
Q: Of the following media, direct marketing and advertising resources, which two (2) are most effective for promoting your business?

Top Business Survey Responses	
Social Media	53.3%
Internet Website	37.8%
Newspaper	22.2%
Email Marketing and/or News Feeds	16.1%

Table 6
Q: Would you consider participating in a collaborative marketing campaign for Downtown Chariton?

Responses	
Yes	84.4%

Source: 2023 Chariton Business Survey.

Retail Gaps and Potential Opportunities

45% Of all consumer survey responses cited the Women's Clothing category as the type of new business or attraction that might make them visit Chariton more often.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 7
Opportunities?
Q: Which of the following retail establishments would make you visit Chariton more often?

Top Responses—Categorized	
Women's Clothing	45.2%
Butcher/Meat Shop	39.6%
General Variety Store	30.3%
Shoe Store	28.9%
Children's Clothing	28.7%
Arts, Crafts and Hobbies	25.5%
Home Furnishings	25.3%
Appliances/Furniture	25.0%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey. Most frequent responses shown.

46% Would visit Chariton more often if a Family-friendly restaurant were available in the community.
Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 8
Q: What type of eating, drinking or entertainment establishment would make you visit Chariton more often?

Top Consumer Survey Responses	Percent
Family-friendly Restaurant	46.7%
Brick Oven Pizzeria	44.1%
Bowling Alley	40.5%
Steakhouse	39.4%
Casual Dining Eatery	34.9%
Italian Restaurant	32.4%
Bakery	32.4%
Outdoor Dining Space	29.5%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

CHARITON SURVEY OVERVIEW

Anchors and Traffic Generators

Consumers surveyed cited numerous local establishments as the downtown business or place frequented most often. The wide range of business types mentioned cater primarily to the daily needs of consumers and provides solid support for a locally-driven market position.

33% Named the grocery store as the Chariton business or place visited most frequently.

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.



Table 9
Most Frequent Business or Places (Top 10)

1. Hy-Vee Grocery Store	6. Dollar General
2. Bomgaar's	7. Grand Brew
3. Casey's	8. Cindy Lou's Quilt Shop
4. Piper's Candy Store	9. Casa de Oro
5. Iron Horse	10. Connecticut Yankee Peddler

Notably, while Hy-Vee and Bomgaar's are not technically located within the designated downtown Main Street area, the results demonstrate their value in attracting—and holding—consumers in the local marketplace. Moreover, the results provide direction for strategies and activities that:

- ▶ Capitalize on existing anchor businesses and activity generators, including complementary business opportunities;
- ▶ Heighten awareness for the local nature of the business mix and the full range of products, services and experiences offered in Chariton; and
- ▶ Incorporate design features and enhancements to better define and promote the downtown district as a special place.



55% Of all consumer survey responses cited improving streets, sidewalks, and green spaces as the highest priority items to begin work on in Chariton.

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 10
Opportunities?
Q: What level of priority would you place on possible Chariton enhancement efforts?

Top Responses—Categorized	
Improve streets, sidewalks, green space	55.8%
Create incentives for business	52.2%
Improve or create more housing	33.8%
Stage more festivals or special events	29.9%
Preserve the historic character	26.5%

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey.

Table 11
Opportunities?
Q: What is the first thing you would do to improve Chariton?

Top Responses—Categorized	
City infrastructure improvements—streets, sidewalks, etc.	
More restaurant options	
Clean up blighted residential properties	
Bike paths, trails, improve walkability	
Business recruitment—more shopping options on the square	
More housing options—upper story housing options	
Entertainment options for youth—bowling alley, arcade	
More accessible recreation activities	

Source: 2023 Chariton Consumer Survey. Most frequent responses shown.

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

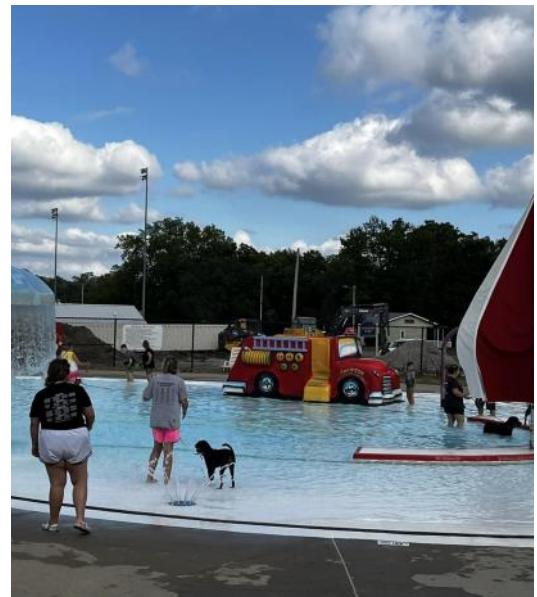
The Main Street Approach to Revitalization

Main Street Iowa works with member communities and organizations to adapt a time-tested and proven approach to revitalization developed and promoted by Main Street America™, a program of the National Main Street Center. The approach provides a framework for communities to rebuild, preserve, and reinvigorate their historic and older downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.



The Main Street Approach® consists of three essential and tightly integrated tools:

1. **Community Vision** that is informed by broad and inclusive community input *and* market understanding.
2. **Transformation Strategies** that incrementally create positive changes in the district's economy. These are implemented through simultaneous activity in four broad areas of work that, together, constitute the "Four Points." In brief:
 - ◆ **Design** encompasses improving all the physical and visual aspects of the district.
 - ◆ **Organization** involves cultivating partnerships and resources for the district.
 - ◆ **Promotion** is about marketing the district.
 - ◆ **Economic Vitality** focuses on capital, incentives and other economic and financial tools for business and property development.



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

Downtown Chariton Transformation Strategies

This document summarizes market information and community insights to provide direction for potential projects, actions, and initiatives that support and align with the community’s vision for Downtown Chariton and the pursuit of the following Transformation Strategy:



1. **Building Improvement & Design**
2. **Business Development & Support**



Transformation Strategies Explained

A *Transformation Strategy* articulates a focused, deliberate path to revitalizing or strengthening a downtown or commercial district’s economy. Grounded by both an understanding of the underlying drivers of the local and regional economy, as well as community feedback and engagement, a Transformation Strategy should describe a market position that the commercial district can successfully fulfill.

An effective Transformation Strategy serves a particular customer segment, responds to an underserved market demand, or creates a differentiated destination.

Simply stated, a *Transformation Strategy* is a comprehensive strategy that guides the direction of the revitalization initiative and, over time, transforms the district. Each Transformation Strategy has several important characteristics:

- ▶ It is **rooted in the community’s vision** for the district.
- ▶ It is **based on a solid analysis and understanding** of the district’s economy and its best economic opportunities.
- ▶ It is **comprehensive**, in that it is implemented through a broad range of activities that span the four broad areas of work represented by the Four Points.
- ▶ It is **measurable**, making it possible to track progress.
- ▶ It **provides guidance for program activities for a two- to five-year period**, after which the revitalization program should examine progress and make adjustments, as needed.

In general, a revitalization organization should work with one or two Transformation Strategies at a time. In some exceptional circumstances, it might consider tackling three Transformation Strategies—but more than three would be challenging.



TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

Downtown Chariton Transformation Strategy

Building Improvement & Design

This strategy will work to support the improvement of existing buildings and public spaces in Downtown Chariton with a focus on building renovation, improved use of space, additional upper-story housing projects to create an overall welcoming appeal.



Main Street Strategy- Building Improvement & Design



Working to support the improvement of existing buildings and public spaces in downtown Chariton. Focusing on building renovation, improved use of space, upper-story housing, and overall welcoming appeal.

Potential Audiences

- Building Owners & Managers
- Residents & Potential Residents
- Developers
- Lucas County Economic Development
- City of Chariton/Lucas County Supervisors

ACTION STRATEGY

	Goal	Actions	Get Creative	Measure Efforts
ECONOMIC VITALITY	Identify building needs and cooperative owners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit building owners for rehab projects • Maintain building inventories and improvement needs • Explore available façade grant programs • Develop a co-working space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track & share the current vacancy rate and cost per square foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list and update at least every 6 months of "top 5" building projects
DESIGN	Develop comprehensive downtown design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the City/County to develop a design for the interior square, including public art • Further develop outside meeting places on the square - pocket parks, public art, vacant lot • Utilize MSI Design Assistance & the Downtown Design Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use design apps to show potential before/after projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with at least 2 Design Reviews with the help of MSI
PROMOTION	Promote building rehab successes and create awareness of the possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop events and promotions to focus on specific building projects • Develop events and promotions to highlight potential projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host open houses throughout project phases • Host walking tours of the Main Street District to highlight ongoing projects and needs • Share follow-ups on previous projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with hosting at least 2 open houses • Share at least 2 project stories/ideas/successes • Host at least 2 walking tours
ORGANIZATION	Identify and disseminate financial and technical support sources for buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate relationships with building owners • Identify private funding sources and available state/federal programs • Share information and resources frequently with building owners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infiltrate coffee groups to share accurate information • Host quarterly meetings with County and City to enhance relationships & communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit an annual Challenge Grant application

TRANSFORMATION STRATEGIES

Downtown Chariton
Transformation Strategy

Business Development & Support

This strategy will support the growth and development of existing and new businesses in downtown Chariton, with a strong focus on business retention and succession, activating vacant spaces and enhancing small business education opportunities.



Main Street Strategy- Business Development & Support



Working to support the growth and development of existing and new businesses in downtown Chariton. Focusing on business retention and succession, activating vacant spaces, and business education.

Potential Audiences

- Business Owners
- Building Owners
- Entrepreneurs/At-Home Businesses
- Lucas County Economic Development
- SBDC/IHCC
- City of Chariton/Lucas County Supervisors

ACTION STRATEGY

	Goal	Actions	Get Creative	Measure Efforts
ECONOMIC VIABILITY	Maintain and recruit retail/service businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with specific businesses on succession plans • Work with building owners to recruit retail/service businesses • Connect businesses with available resources including business planning services, bookkeeping, and low-interest loans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask each business if they have a business succession plan • Create a robust business resource page on the website • Work to limit the number of churches in downtown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help at least 1 business create a succession plan • Provide at least 6 businesses with a consultation of available resources
DESIGN	Develop a downtown design that supports Main Street businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct business signage audit/improvement plan • Review business accessibility, addressing parking use for business owners, employees, tenants, and consumers. • Work with building owners on signs/awnings • Work with business owners on visual merchandising support/education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite secret shoppers to visit downtown and score businesses' storefronts/signage, and evaluate public access areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See at least 1 new sign/awning installed on a business that had one removed • At least 4 businesses participate in visual merchandising education
PROMOTION	Promote and recruit Main Street District businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop events on the square that support not disrupt businesses • Educate and work with businesses on social media • Promote current businesses with thoughtful tools and sharing success stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create collaborative retail promotions (incl. pop-ups) with business owners as the lead • Host hybrid virtual/in-person social media workshops & work sessions • Create a "Welcome to Downtown" video 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage at least 5 businesses in collaborative promotions • 5 people attend social media workshops
ORGANIZATION	Cultivate relationships with businesses, the City & County for financial/technical resources and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create business support/education packets • Encourage the City to submit an annual Catalyst Grant application • Communicate & coordinate with City/County on events in the district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infiltrate coffee groups to share accurate information • Host quarterly meetings with County and City to enhance relationships & communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share education packets with all new businesses and contributing businesses

NEXT STEPS

Transformation Strategy Activities

Activities proposed in this document serve as a good starting point and guide for moving forward. Still other ideas and activities are likely to grow out of this study's findings and those already contained in the Main Street Chariton work plans and other city planning documents. To that end, the ultimate selection and implementation of activities must also consider the organization's capacity to take on new projects, with an understanding that implementation—and change—will occur over a period of time.

Supporting and Sustaining Activities

The ability to move forward on the ideas and opportunities advanced as part of this study, along with those already in motion or contained in other planning documents, will also hinge on a strong organizational foundation and supporting activities that, while not explicitly spelled out within the context of any market study, are absolutely essential to the success of Main Street Chariton and the community's downtown revitalization efforts.

Main Street Chariton's role as partnership builder, resource locator and publicity machine will become even more important in the months and years ahead. In some cases this role may require the organization to locate or develop entirely new sources of funding to execute a new project, or to find a new volunteer source to ensure that a new festival or event is adequately staffed. In other cases, it might require the organization to re-assess priorities and existing budget allocations as priorities may shift based on the findings of this study, and as new opportunities emerge and conditions change in the future.

Looking Ahead

The completion of this market study is not an end, but rather another milestone in the evolution of the community's downtown enhancement initiative. While the process has served to help identify today's priorities, challenges, and emerging opportunities, it can not, and does not pretend to, anticipate next year's challenges or exciting and unanticipated opportunities on the horizon.

The diligent efforts undertaken by Chariton Chamber/Main Street staff and volunteers to help gather the input, to study the data, and to guide the development of market-driven actions have prepared the organization and the community well by providing a framework and sound basis for future planning and decision making—processes—and activities that align with the community's vision for Downtown Chariton.



Examples: Supporting and Sustaining Activities

The First Year:

- ▶ Share this report with the Chariton Area Chamber/Main Street Board of Directors. The Board should vote to adopt these strategies and include them in their Program of Work for the next 2-5 years.
- ▶ Discuss activities and ideas generated related to the transformational strategies with all committees and community partners
- ▶ Share Market Study & Strategy outcomes with your elected officials, both city and county.
- ▶ Share Business Survey results with local businesses. Identify opportunities for current business expansions.
- ▶ Develop a public relations campaign to share Consumer Survey results with the public. Include press releases, social media campaigns, monthly newsletter stories, etc. to highlight and inform residents.
- ▶ Review current activities and events and work to better align them with your chosen strategies.

Year 2 and beyond:

- ▶ Submit a Challenge Grant project.
- ▶ Apply for the Open 4 Business program.
- ▶ Submit annual Community Catalyst Grant application.
- ▶ Work with the City & County to develop a design for the interior of the square.
- ▶ Create a business succession training and format to assist local businesses.
- ▶ Create a "Welcome to Downtown" video.
- ▶ Continue to educate building owners about the resources available through local and state programs to assist with building rehabilitation projects.