

Main Street Matters

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SEGUIN

By Kyle Kramm, Seguin Main Street Manager

(Editor's Note: Seguin was one of Texas' original Main Street communities when the state program was launched in 1981—the same year the model was being rolled out nationwide. Seguin originally participated from 1981-1986, and then returned to the network in 1997. The program has been Nationally Accredited each year. During those 25 years of active Main Street participation utilizing the Main Street Four Point Approach™ to carry out its work, Seguin—population of approximately 28,000—has reported about \$60 million in reinvestment into downtown, and the creation of 305 jobs and 68 small businesses. Seguin Main Street had the opportunity to continue refining its work in

entrepreneurship development through a national pilot project launched in 2017. We asked Kyle Kramm, the Seguin program manager, to share Seguin Main Street's work in this area as a case study in this month's edition of Main Street Matters.)

Building a Healthy Entrepreneurial Ecosystem – A Case Study from Seguin Main Street

A healthy environment for entrepreneurs is an integral part to a thriving downtown. Seguin Main Street is taking proactive steps to address gaps in our entrepreneurship ecosystem by being one of two pilot communities nationwide in the National Main Street Center's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Assessment and grant.

(Cont. on page 2)



In October of 2000, a statue of Juan N. Seguin was erected in the public square south of the Guadalupe County seat courthouse in downtown Seguin.

The National Main Street Center launched a call for communities to apply for the assessment and grant during the summer of 2017. The selection criteria was based on transformation strategies, the diversity of the community, and existing programming offered to small businesses and entrepreneurs. The goal of the program is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of entrepreneurial ecosystems and what role Main Streets play in the ecosystem.

“By most definitions, entrepreneurial ecosystems refer to the strategic alignment of a variety of public and private efforts to provide necessary financial, social, and human capital to foster entrepreneurship in innovative and creative ways,” said National Main Street Center’s entrepreneurial ecosystem’s publication. “Frequently overlooked in these definitions is **the value of place and the physical environment as central factors in creating and growing successful enterprises**. By emphasizing the creation and support of great places and spaces for people to live and work, commercial districts can attract new businesses and new ideas, thus contributing directly to the development of the local entrepreneurial ecosystem.”

The assessment reviewed 10 areas that make up a healthy environment for entrepreneurs:

1. Government Policy
2. Local & Global Markets

3. Human Capital & Workforce
4. Education & Training
5. Universities as Catalyst
6. Physical Environment/Place
7. Regulatory Framework & Infrastructure
8. Funding & Finance
9. Culture
10. Mentors, Advisors & Support Systems

Matt Wagner, Vice President of Revitalization Programs with the National Main Street Center, led a full day workshop in Seguin. Wagner led focus groups with the Seguin Main Street Advisory Board, downtown Seguin entrepreneurs, and small business service providers. The discussions centered around the 10 areas of an entrepreneurship ecosystem and how Seguin met each of the areas.

The downtown businesses spoke on why they chose to be in downtown Seguin and some of the challenges with getting started and keeping the momentum going. Many discussed deciding to start their business after seeing others succeed in downtown Seguin. Most found the Main Street Program and the city to be excellent partners in helping get their business started, but highlighted a need for additional infrastructure improvements in downtown. Other concerns discussed were access to capital and the difficulties of finding lending to start a business in downtown and purchase a building. A need to network between the downtown businesses to build



Matt Wagner, Vice President of Revitalization Programs with the National Main Street Center, recently led a full-day workshop in Seguin with discussions centered around an entrepreneurship ecosystem.

informal mentorships was also a common discussion item.

“It was a real learning experience hearing from my downtown businesses in a group setting like that,” said Kyle Kramm, Main Street and CVB Director. “I have conversations with them so many times on an individual basis, but to hear them discuss and feed off of each other and find common concerns was very beneficial to me.”

The small business service providers included economic development staff, representatives from Texas Lutheran University, small business counselors from UTSA Small Business Development Center, chamber staff, and attorneys specializing in small business. The service providers discussed several voids in the market, including: a need to grow the manpower of small business counselors in Seguin, increase awareness of services provided by service providers, establish an incubator, maker space and/or co-working space to allow entrepreneurs to test their ideas, and improve funding sources for small businesses.

“While we are all aware of each other, often the service providers operate in silos—focusing on the work that they are doing,” said Kramm. “By participating in the focus group with the other service providers, we all got an update on new projects and concerns, which was very beneficial.”

The assessment ended with discussion of some possible ideas and projects for Seguin Main Street to either lead the charge or build partnerships to establish. Ideas included a “Shark Tank” style event or business plan competition, developing a pop-up space, creating a community real estate investment group, developing an informal networking event, and developing a rent subsidy program.

To help implement these ideas, the assessment also included a \$2,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee.

The Seguin Main Street Advisory Board knew that they would not be able to accomplish all of the ideas and projects that came out of the assessment, but they decided to work on three of them. They include



The latest bustling businesses around downtown Seguin are The Warehouse (top image) and Tome (bottom image). The Warehouse is a bar that opened in May of 2017, and Tome is a women's clothing boutique that opened in February of 2018.

hosting a business plan competition, launching a formal business retention program, and a quarterly downtown business social.

The business plan competition is anticipated to be launched this summer as a way to grow the pipeline of new businesses looking to enter downtown Seguin. Prospective businesses and existing businesses looking to expand will be encouraged to meet with our local UTSA Small Business Development Center to develop a business plan.

Seguin Main Street staff routinely meets with businesses on an individual basis to check in and discuss downtown items, but has never had a formal system with a standard survey questionnaire and tracking responses. Enacting a formal business retention program will allow for Main Street staff and board to track trends, see overarching issues affecting businesses, and connect businesses to resources.

Lastly, Seguin Main Street has launched a downtown quarterly breakfast social called “Bacon, Eggs and Business.” The first social was held March 29 and included a presentation from the UTSA Small Business

Development Center, an update on downtown happenings, and time for networking between the downtown businesses. The next social will be held June 28 from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

These three items will be the first areas for Seguin Main Street to work on. The organization also plans to address several of bigger ideas and issues addressed in the assessment.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE MONTH OF MAY

FIRST LADY’S TOUR TO PEARSALL AND TEMPLE

First Lady of Texas Cecilia Abbott joins the Texas Historical Commission in Pearsall and Temple May 1 to welcome these communities into the Texas Main Street network. In Temple, there will be an outdoor ceremony and reception at City Hall, 2 N. Main, beginning at 10:30 a.m. The Pearsall event begins at 2:30 with an outdoor ceremony at E. San Marcos and S. Oak streets. A reception in the Masonic Lodge next door immediately follows. The annual First Lady’s Main Street Tour has been a tradition of Texas Main Street since 1981. It is sponsored by the Independent Bankers Association of Texas.

2018 IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES TOURS

Over 20 cities across Texas will once again invite potential investors, downtown developers, entrepreneurs, as well as the less experienced, but community-minded individual looking to be part of downtown’s transformation, to imagine the possibilities in May 2018. This is nearly double the number of cities that participated last year in the now annual Preservation Month event. The concentrated statewide effort creates synergy and excitement for Texas’ historic downtowns and the website provides the perfect matchmaking platform. Selected properties featured on each city’s DowntownTX.org page will be open and accessible to the public, and tour attendees can obtain additional information on downtown development and business resources at a central gathering point. View the tour cities and dates [here](#).



In March 2018, Bacon, Eggs & Business, a downtown quarterly breakfast, was launched. The first social included a presentation from the UTSA Small Business Development Center.

SENIOR-FRIENDLY RETAIL

By Kimberly Klein, Office Manager, and Marie Oehlerking-Read, Project Design Assistant, Texas Main Street Program

Creating an accessible shopping experience for all ages and all abilities is an important consideration for a small business. Now more than ever, retailers must consider how accessible their space is for senior adults. As the Baby Boomer generation ages, roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population will be over the age of 65 by 2029, according to projections by the U.S. Census Bureau. Small business owners must think about how to accommodate this changing demographic.

Universal Design

Universal design is an approach to the design of all products and environments so that they can be used by everyone to the greatest extent possible regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. It was first introduced in 1968 in a series of guidelines entitled the Architectural Barriers Act. It was one of the first efforts to ensure access to the “built environment” and requires “access for all persons disabled or not” to facilities designed, built, altered, or leased with federal funds. These guidelines were supplemented in 1990 with the introduction of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

It’s also very important to note that universal design benefits more people than just older people and people with disabilities. It can take into account physical and behavioral factors of everyone no matter their age. At some point in everyone’s lifetime, there will be a challenge for which accommodations will need to be made.

Universal design features can be incorporated into any design using standard building materials that are simply placed or oriented differently. Here are some of the basic tips and principles that can be applied in any store:

- 1. Adjust lighting.** An aging eye tends to see more yellows. Subdued lighting with warm colors can make the shopping experience more pleasant for all ages. Spotlights and wall sconces along with overhead lighting can be used to highlight special pieces.



Using subdued lighting with warm colors in spotlights (top image), wall sconces, along with overhead lighting (bottom image [source](#)), can help showcase special pieces.

- 2. Exchange shiny floors for matte surfaces.** Shiny floors may look nice and clean, but they appear slick, which can be scary to those with unstable footing. A matte and/or textured flooring material reduces this perception.
- 3. Keep merchandise uncluttered and accessible.** Clutter or unorganized merchandise can be visually distracting and prevent senior customers from making a purchase. Place items at least 24 inches above the floor. Make sure there is enough space for a wheelchair to get through and around displays. The general rule of thumb for aisles

and doorway widths is 36 inches or more. Assemble products so they are easy to grasp.

4. **Avoid fine print on signs and price tags.** Consider using large, and easy-to-read type on signage, price tags, and directional signage. Instead of using ornate script or font, consider simpler sans-serif fonts like Helvetica, Calibri, or Arial. Also use colors of high contrast for ease of reading. This concept also applies to merchandise. Some stores, like CVS Pharmacy, have installed [magnifiers](#) to read fine print on medicine bottles.
5. **Greet your customers.** Make sure your door has a chime or bell to let your staff know a customer has entered the store. People like to be acknowledged and know there is someone to assist them. The older the customer is, the more likely they are to want that personal interaction with the store staff.
6. **Incorporate accessible seating.** Make sure your store has seating for customers while in the store. This is very important for the aging population, especially for those using a walker or cane for assistance. Providing places to rest makes customers feel welcome.
7. **Consider the five senses.** It's very important to create a total experience for your customers. In addition to light, consider the sound, touch, and smell of your retail spaces. For sound, play appropriate music. Music that is too loud can be distracting and alarming for some people. For touch, make sure items are easy to grasp. Lastly, too many odors or aromas or ones that are too strong—such as perfumes or candles—can dissuade people from lingering in your store. Your shop should smell inviting without overpowering the customer.

8. **Tidy up your space inside and out.** Research shows that it takes 8 seconds to attract a potential customer, so first impressions inside and outside of your store are important to attract customers of any age or disability. Keep windows clean. Make sure that planters are kept up and lively. Have a good eye-popping display in your main windows to attract attention. Make sure windows are clean and tidy.

Slight modifications to an existing space can make the shopping experience easier for senior adults or those with disabilities. From entering your business, accessing public restrooms, shopping in the space, and leaving, your entire store should be accessible to all.

Main Street Refresh

As part of the national Main Street Four Point Refresh process that has been ongoing since 2015, the new Main Street Approach is centered around Transformation Strategies that help strengthen a downtown, and the way the work of Main Street programs is carried out. As part of this process, the national center has also developed a set of “ready-to-use” Catalyst Strategies focusing on specific customer segments. They are broken into two broad types, Customer-Based Strategies and Industry, Product, or Service-Based Strategies. One of the Customer-Based Strategies is Elder-Friendly/Aging-in-Place, so there are more resources available to Main Street communities looking more deeply into addressing these population segments.



First impressions are important, and they come from welcoming accessible spaces inside and out.



Improving sidewalk lighting is just one of the many examples on how local programs can develop an elder-friendly / aging in place strategy through the Main Street Four Point Refresh process.

Universal design goes beyond interior design, and can help downtown cater to the needs of all people. It recognizes that people have different needs as they advance in age and life. The strategy helps people continue living independently for as long as possible by providing retail goods and services, medical and social services, and a safe, accommodating environment. Special strategic planning and work plan development need to take place for local programs if they are going to target this segment in their programs. Here's a few examples:

- Improving sidewalk lighting
- Apply for grants or develop a matching grant program to make shops handicapped accessible
- Invite elder residents to serve on your committee boards
- Set up walking and exercise groups in your district
- Help businesses market to older households that may not be tech savvy or use social media
- Offer home delivery services through businesses

For additional information related to this topic, please see the following:

- Learn more about universal design here - <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/>
- Certified Main Street cities can visit the Online Resource Library for articles pertaining to accessibility and visual merchandising.

- The National Park Service Preservation Brief #18 and #32 provide in-depth articles on making historic properties accessible and rehabilitating the interiors of historic buildings.

Additional Sources:

- <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/223531>
- <https://www.npr.org/2011/05/10/135773106/in-an-aging-nation-making-stores-senior-friendly>
- <http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-10-things-to-know-about-UD/>
- <http://gdruk.com/design-retail-experience-seniors-approaches/>
- http://interiordesign-ed.com/classes/materials/IDE-New_Standards_Part_1.pdf
- <http://interiordesign-ed.com/classes/materials/IDE-AgingBathrooms.pdf>
- <https://www.npr.org/2011/05/10/135773106/in-an-aging-nation-making-stores-senior-friendly>
- <https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p25-1140.pdf>

CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS

Vickie Jackimiec, Georgetown Main Street

By definition, a volunteer is a person who gives their time and effort willingly and without pay. In short, a person who serves others. Vicki Jackimiec's passion for volunteering and readiness to always go above and beyond the call of duty is what makes her such an incredible addition to the Georgetown community. While Vicki has been an integral part of the Main Street program, she has served organizations across the city in ways that will leave a legacy for generations—and she's not done!

Vicki's transformational story began with significant weight loss in 2009 followed by a determination to reinvent herself. She is such a positive person that her optimistic attitude flows through everything that Vicki does. Her passion for Main Street and historic preservation efforts in downtown Georgetown led her to first volunteer with the Georgetown Swirl, an annual fundraising event benefiting the Main Street Façade & Sign Grant Program.

Shortly after becoming involved with the Swirl, she applied and was appointed to the Main Street Advisory Board, where she served four years as vice-chair. Vicki also served as the promotions committee chair, a Shop Small team member, the 2016 Swirl event chair, and has been faithfully serving as a team member of the Swirl event helping to tweak and improve from year to year. For the 10th Anniversary Georgetown Swirl in 2019, she will again be part of the leadership with other past (emeritus) chairs to lead the special silver anniversary event.

Not only is Vicki an amazing volunteer for the Main Street Program, but she is also very involved with The Williamson Museum, Georgetown Rotary Club, and Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. Last year, Vicki and her husband John co-chaired the museum's annual Cattleman's Ball fundraiser event. Naturally, with Vicki at the helm, they set a new record for attendees and funds raised for the organization.

She was also very involved in a spectacular inaugural event sponsored by the Rotary Club, called the "Field of Honor." There were 1,400 full-size American flags displayed in a field close to downtown for a week in November, honoring active and veteran military as well as first responders. Vicki honored her mom, a proud member of the U. S. Army, with a flag during this display. She worked to gather donations in honor or memory of family members so their names could be attached to a flag. It was a beautiful display that will now be part of an annual event for the Rotary Club.

The Chamber of Commerce is another organization where you will often find Vicki volunteering. She is a very active Chamber Ambassador, attending most ribbon cuttings and events, and she also helps with the annual Bar-Bid-Que Fundraiser. She is the co-chair of the business networking lunch and participates with planning numerous events with the Chamber. In fact, there are not many events Vicki is not involved in!

One of the most fun things that Vicki loves to do is appear at functions as part of the two pirate mascots for Southwestern University. She and her fellow pirate, Jim Wilson (also a former member of the Main Street Advisory Board), show up for events and parades in support of the university. They have a great time volunteering in this capacity and make sure that everyone they come into contact with is having fun too.

Vicki was most recently recognized for her volunteer work and named the Volunteer of the Year by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce. While this was a Chamber award, it is an award that truly extends across the community when it is awarded to volunteers such as Vicki. Every organization that Vicki lends her time and talents to sees countless benefits due to her hard work and commitment to serve. Georgetown is a much better place because Vicki is part of it!



Vicki Jackimiec has lended her time and many talents over the year by volunteering at numerous Georgetown events, and serving on the Georgetown Main Street Advisory Board. It didn't come as a surpise when she was named Volunteer of the Year by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce in 2018.

CONGRATULATIONS



(Left) Congratulations to Linden Main Street Manager Allie Anderson, who was awarded the Main Street America™(MSA) Revitalization Professional credential at the national Main Street Now conference in March. To receive the credential, Allie worked for the past several years on a Leadership Development Certificate, a Community Transformation Certificate, and took a final exam. She was recognized by National Main Street Center CEO, Patrice Frey, in front of hundreds of attendees at the closing session of the national conference. Allie is the first Texas manager to receive this national certification and is in the second national class. Previously, Main Street managers could work with the national center on a Certified Main Street Manager (CMSM) designation. Current managers in Texas who have that designation include: Julie Glover/Denton; Donna Dow/Denison; Frieda Lasater/Decatur; and Debbie Charbonneau/Huntsville. (Right) There was a strong Texas turnout in Kansas City in March for the 2018 national Main Street Now conference. About 1,600 Main Street professionals and volunteers from across the country attended the conference. The 2019 conference will be held in Seattle.

Websites of Interest

- **Advisory Council on Historic Preservation:** www.achp.gov
- **African American Heritage Preservation Foundation:** www.aahpfdn.org
- **(The) Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation:** www.ahlp.org
- **(The) American Institute of Architects:** www.aia.org
- **American Planning Association:** www.planning.org
- **American Society of Landscape Architects:** www.asla.org
- **(The) Cultural Landscape Foundation:** www.tclf.org
- **(The) Handbook of Texas Online:** www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online
- **Keep Texas Beautiful:** www.ktb.org
- **League of Historic American Theatres:** www.lhat.org
- **National Main Street Center:** www.preservationnation.org/main-street
- **National Park Service:** www.nps.gov
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation:** www.preservationnation.org
- **Partners for Sacred Places:** www.sacredplaces.org
- **Preservation Easement Trust:** www.preservationeasement.org
- **Preservation Directory.com:** www.preservationdirectory.com
- **Preservation Texas:** www.preservationtexas.org
- **Project for Public Spaces:** www.pps.org
- **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy:** www.railstotrails.org
- **Scenic America:** www.scenic.org
- **Texas Department of Agriculture:** www.TexasAgriculture.gov
- **Texas Commission on the Arts:** www.arts.texas.gov
- **Texas Downtown Association:** www.texasdowntown.org
- **Texas Folklife Resources:** www.texasfolklife.org
- **Texas Historical Commission:** www.thc.texas.gov
- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department:** www.tpwd.texas.gov
- **Texas Rural Leadership Program:** www.trlp.org
- **Texas State Preservation Board:** www.tspb.state.tx.us
- **Urban Land Institute:** www.uli.org