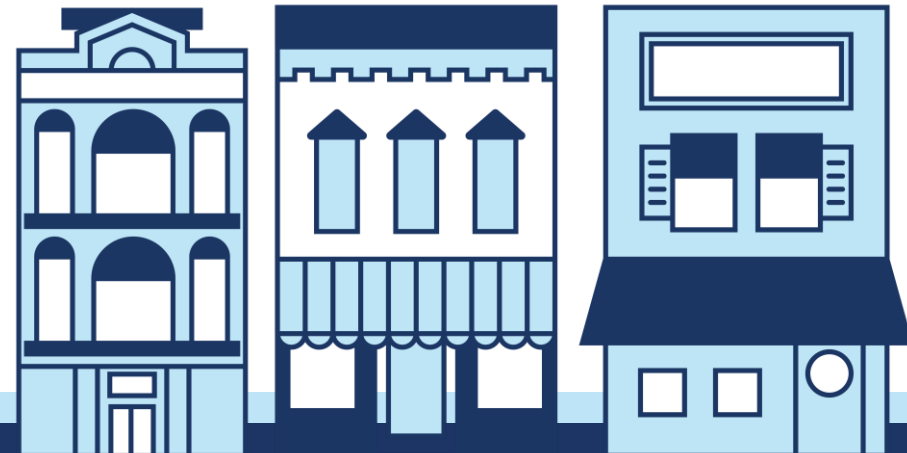


# OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN STREET HANDBOOK & RESOURCES

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***SEMCOG***

Karolynn Faulkner



# MAIN STREETS AND DOWNTOWNS

**GREAT PLACES** – Pillar of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for Southeast Michigan

Share in the chat or unmute:

*What do you appreciate about your community's downtown or main street?*



# NEW SEMCOG RESOURCES



## MAIN STREET CHECKLIST



View the full handbook

This tool is designed to help evaluate the strengths and needs of a main street district. It can be applied to traditional main streets or used in planning efforts to create a main street environment. Use this checklist for a quick overview of main street characteristics and needs. For detailed guidance, resources, implementation ideas, visuals, and local examples, check out the Main Street Handbook.

### PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY

#### SPEED AND CROSSINGS

- Posted speed limits are between 25 and 30 MPH.
- Traffic calming measures have been implemented to keep prevailing speeds below 30 mph.
- Crosswalks are spaced at least every 400 feet – or more frequently if needed – to support safe and convenient walking between destinations.
- If needed, medians and pedestrian refuge islands are present to facilitate safe crossing.

#### SIDEWALKS AND BUFFERS

- There are wide sidewalks in the core area. In certain sections, they are at least 10-25 feet wide.
- There is a buffer such as a row of trees or parked cars, between pedestrians on the sidewalk and automotive traffic.

### LAND USE AND ZONING

#### PUBLIC GATHERING SPACE

- There is at least one public space or plaza directly adjacent to the district and visible from the sidewalk. This space is highly visible to both pedestrians and motorists and centrally located.

#### SPACING AND MIX OF BUSINESSES

- A variety of businesses are located nearby, creating a vibrant mix of uses. Storefronts are frequent and closely spaced along the street.

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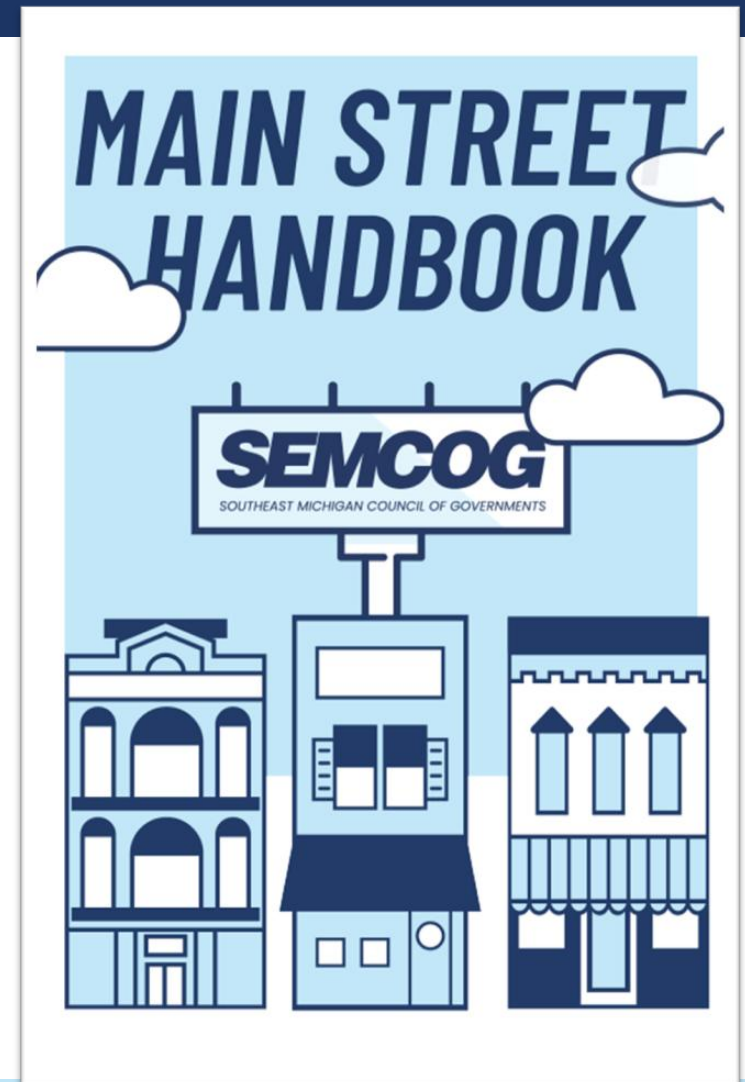
- Housing is incorporated within the district and is located on the second floor and above, or on nearby supporting streets within walking distance of main street.

#### PARKING LOCATION

- Parking is available through on-street parking spaces or in lots located behind main street.

## New SEMCOG Resources


- Main Street Checklist
- Main Street Handbook



# NEW SEMCOG RESOURCES

## *Main Street Handbook and Main Street Checklist*

- Designed to support local communities in revitalizing, enhancing, or establishing a main street district.
- Focused on SEMCOG-specific resources and technical assistance

 **CHECKLIST**  
**THERE IS A BUFFER BETWEEN PEDESTRIANS ON THE SIDEWALK AND AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC, SUCH AS A ROW OF TREES OR PARKED CARS.**



The parked cars act as a safety buffer for pedestrians.



The planter box is used to separate the automobile traffic from the main street pedestrian zone.

# NEW SEMCOG RESOURCES

## Six topic areas:

- ❖ Pedestrian Experience and Safety
- ❖ Land Use and Zoning
- ❖ Mobility and Access
- ❖ Green Space and Environment
- ❖ Image and Character
- ❖ Business Support and Innovation

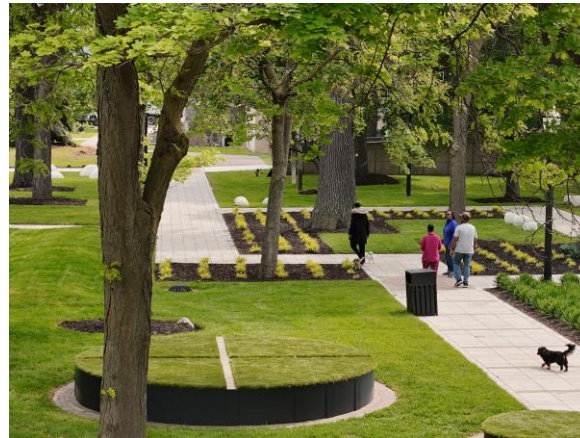


Land Use and Zoning



Image and Character

# MAIN STREET CHECKLIST AND HANDBOOK



# MAIN STREET CHECKLIST AND HANDBOOK

- Each section provides best practices, case studies, implementation how-to, and topic-specific resources.
- Topics are not generalized (ex: *pedestrian safety, parks, green infrastructure*) but specific to the main street or downtown context.

**Answers the question – How can we apply “this” in a Main Street Downtown context?**



## CHECKLIST

THE MUNICIPALITY HAS A FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE IMPLEMENTATION FOR THE DISTRICT. THIS INCLUDES CONSIDERING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES TO MANAGE STORMWATER.



## Green Space and Environment

Sidewalk green infrastructure bioretention in Allen Park, Michigan that captures and infiltrates stormwater from surrounding impervious surfaces. It also creates a traffic calming effect and serves as a buffer for pedestrians.

# SEMCOG WEBSITE



SOUTHEAST MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Search

MENU

The following tools and resources are available to create, enhance, and market quality places across the region:



## Experience Southeast Michigan

SEMCOG's Experience Southeast Michigan video series provides a glimpse of the countless shopping, dining, cultural, entertainment, and...



## SEMCOG Main Street Handbook

The Main Street Handbook is designed to support local communities in revitalizing, enhancing, and/or establishing a main street district.



## SEMCOG Main Street Checklist

This tool is designed to help evaluate the strengths and needs of a main street district. It can be applied to traditional main streets or used in planning efforts to create a main street environment. Use this checklist for a quick overview of main street characteristics and needs. For detailed guidance, resources, implementation ideas, visuals, and local examples, check out the Main Street Handbook.

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# EXISTING AND NEW MAIN STREETS



**Madison Heights** – A downtown in transformation. New streetscape & new zoning ordinance (2025/2024).

- ❖ Handbook & checklist is not just for existing, historic downtowns.
- ❖ Use in planning new main streets and in revitalization.

# Section 1: PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY



## PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY

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CHECKLIST



QR CODE LEADS TO FULL HANDBOOK



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CHECKLIST



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# Pedestrian Experience and Safety



## Implementation

- **Identify Road Ownership** – Use [SEMCOG's Road Jurisdiction Map](#) to determine if a road is owned by a local, county, or state agency. This will help identify necessary partners for approving changes to the right-of-way.
- **Engage Stakeholders** – Convene community members and relevant agencies to set priorities—such as improving pedestrian safety or calming traffic. For non-local roads, expect multiple planning iterations to balance goals with regional transportation standards. If needed, SEMCOG can assist with introductions to the appropriate authority.
- **Assess Safety and Traffic Speeds** – [Contact SEMCOG for assistance](#). Existing data on prevailing speeds may be available, or guidance can be provided for conducting speed studies.
- **Conduct a Walking Audit** – Evaluate the pedestrian experience firsthand by using a walking audit toolkit.
- **Update Planning Documents** – Incorporate desired changes into official plans such as the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), Master Plan, or Downtown Plan.
- **Prepare for Grant Opportunities** – Develop a clear plan for road and streetscape improvements to strengthen future grant applications.
- **Plan for Reconstruction** – Anticipate road reconstruction projects and plan several years in advance to support coordinated infrastructure efforts and cost-effective implementation. Coordinate early with utilities and property owners.

## Resources

- [SEMCOG's Multimodal tool](#) – Test complete street designs in different land use contexts, including Main Street. Add/edit amenities like sidewalks and planting strips.
- [Planning Assistance Program](#) – SEMCOG's grant for local projects advancing regional plans. Past awardees include downtown streetscape plans.
- [Transportation Alternatives Program](#) – Competitive SEMCOG grant funding bikeways, walkways, and stormwater projects.
- [Navigating Main Streets as Places](#) – Handbook by Main Street America and Project for Public Spaces on transportation and streetscape design in Main Street districts.
- [AARP Walk Audit Tool Kit](#) – Free resource to assess and report street, intersection, or neighborhood walkability and safety.
- [MDOT Road Diet Checklist](#) – Form for evaluating potential road diets of MDOT trunklines. Local roads can use the [FHWA guidebook Road Diet Informational Guide](#).
- [MDOT User Guide for Pedestrian Crossings](#) – This guide assists in determining the type of crossing needed in an area, based on characteristics.
- [USDOT Guide for Improving Pedestrian Safety at Uncontrolled Crossing Locations](#) – Publication addressing safety issues at uncontrolled crossings.

Each of the six topic areas ends with an [Implementation Page](#) & [Resources Page](#).

# Section 1: PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND SAFETY

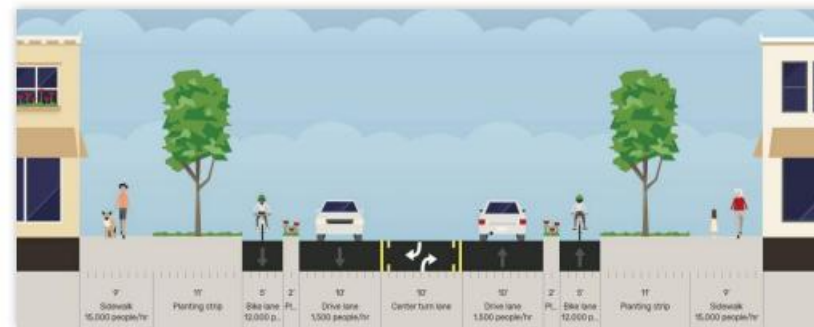
## Build Your Project: Streetmix

### Existing



Using Streetmix, model the existing geometry of your roadway.

### Proposed



Using Streetmix, model the geometry you would like to see along the roadway.

SEMCOG's Multimodal Tool can be applied to existing or planned Main Streets.

# Section 2: LAND USE AND ZONING

## LAND USE AND ZONING

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### **HOUSING**

- Housing is incorporated within the district and is located on the second floor and above, or on nearby supporting streets within walking distance of main street.

### **PARKING LOCATION**

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CHECKLIST



QR CODE LEADS TO FULL HANDBOOK



## 2- LAND USE AND ZONING









20<sup>th</sup> HARVEST MOON CELEBRATION  
SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2025  
SPONSORED BY  
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FARMINGTON PAVILION

## 2- LAND USE AND ZONING



# Section 2: LAND USE AND ZONING



## Implementation:

- **Assess Public Spaces:** Conduct a review of existing public spaces, including downtown parks and plazas, to evaluate their usability and accessibility. If no such space currently exists, consider applying for a planning grant through organizations such as SEMCOG, the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), or other relevant nonprofit or governmental entities. Convene local stakeholders to identify potential locations and determine desired uses for new public spaces.
- **Integrate Changes into Planning Documents:** Incorporate proposed changes related to public spaces and zoning into official local planning documents, including the Master Plan, Land Use Plan, Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), and Parks & Recreation Plan, as applicable.
- **Conduct a Needs Assessment:** Perform a local needs assessment to identify opportunities for repurposing vacant or underutilized spaces. Potential uses may include outdoor seating areas, public gathering spaces, or rear-lot public parking to support main street businesses.
- **Stay Informed on Funding Opportunities:** Subscribe to websites and mailing lists that provide updates on placemaking and public space grant opportunities. Refer to the resource list below for recommended subscriptions.

# Section 2: LAND USE AND ZONING



## Resources:

- [Planning Assistance Program](#) – SEMCOG’s planning grant for local projects that move regional plans and priorities forward. Past awardees and awardee projects can be viewed online. Grant opportunities are also shared through SEMCOG’s [Regional Update](#) newsletter.
- [Placemaking: What If We Built Cities Around Places?](#) – A free handbook published by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS), offering practical tools for shaping the public realm. It includes 11 key principles for transforming public spaces. PPS also shares funding opportunities via its electronic newsletter.
- [AARP Livable Communities](#) – A collection of resources for local leaders, including how-to guides and grant programs aimed at making communities more livable. Topics include parks, public spaces, housing, and walkability.
- [Main Street America](#) – The Main Street America website features grant and funding opportunities from Main Street America and its partner organizations, including placemaking-related funding.

# CONCLUSION

## SEMCOG's Main Street Checklist and Handbook

- Connection to SEMCOG resources and technical assistance
- Use for existing and planned main streets
- Short, quick changes as well as longer-term, visionary projects



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THANK YOU!

Questions?

