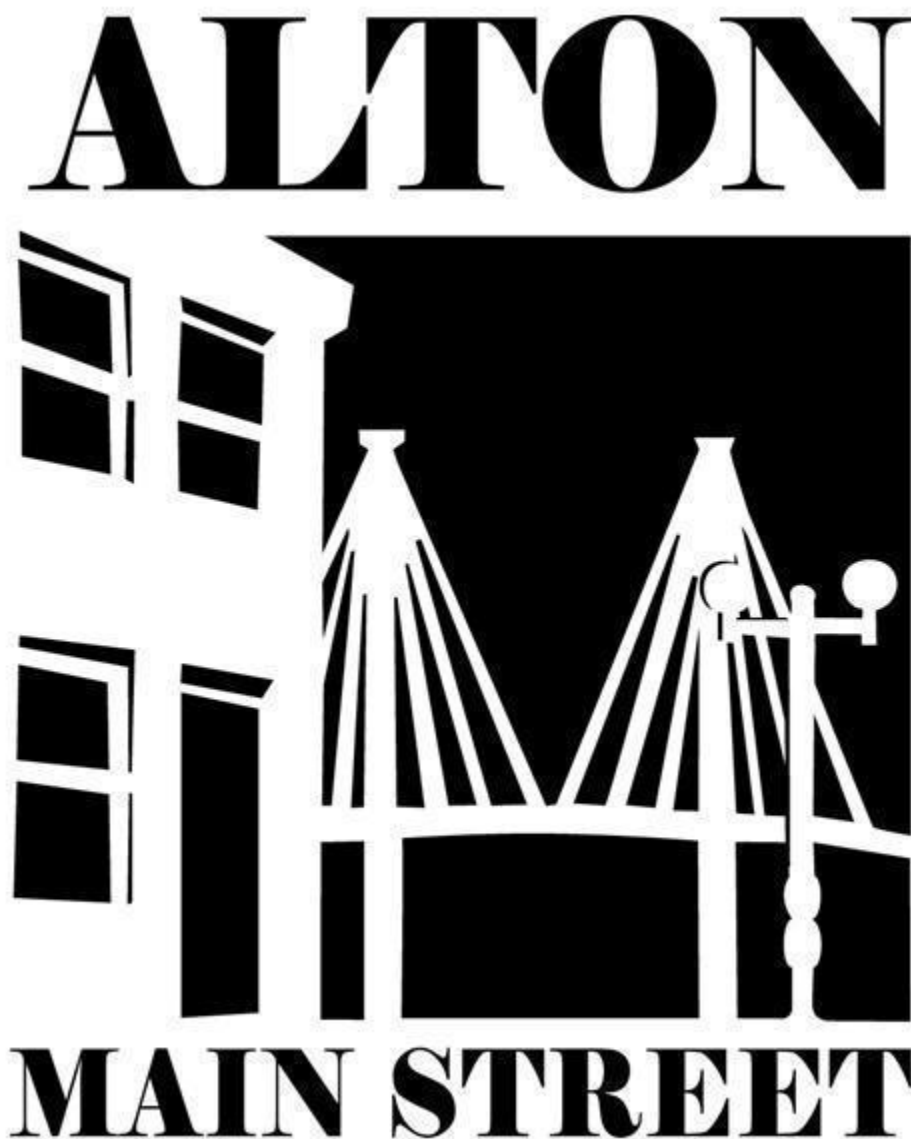


# **Alton Main Street requests community input to shape the future of Downtown**

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*Needs Assessment Survey will gauge sought after businesses and prioritize quality of life issues*

**ALTON** - Alton Main Street is announcing the launch of a Needs Assessment Survey to gauge which businesses and quality of life improvements are sought after in the downtown district. A link to the survey can be found on the home page of [www.DowntownAlton.com](http://www.DowntownAlton.com).

The organization's Economic Development committee will use the data in order to proactively target businesses that the community has requested. The ultimate goal is to reduce instances of Alton residents leaving town to make purchases or find experiences, which drains Alton's sales tax base. Feedback from the survey will clearly demonstrate to investors and prospective businesses which products and services are desired but can not be found locally. "This survey is very important, because as Downtown Alton continues to blossom it is crucial to make sure that we focus on smart growth that meets the needs of our community," said Sara McGibany, Executive Director of Alton Main Street.

"Data from the responses will be used to attract developers, fill vacant real estate, and craft a strategy to incubate start-up businesses who would benefit from support services," said Scott Yanta, a real estate agent with Paul Lauschke & Associates and member of the Alton Main Street Board of Directors, who serves as Chairman of the Economic Development Committee. "We are very pleased with the response thus far, collecting over 250 responses in the first week through promotion on social media alone."

The survey also inquires which quality of life improvements are most important to your family or business, how respondents would like to be involved with Downtown Alton's resurgence, as well as primary sources of local news which will assist Alton Main Street with community organizing. The survey is a way for Alton citizens and Downtown residents to have a tangible role in how their neighborhood evolves.

The survey will be available online through August 1<sup>st</sup>, and the results will be announced at Alton Main Street's quarterly information exchange called "What's Up Downtown" to be held at Jacoby Arts Center on Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. Paper copies of the survey are available at the Alton Farmers' & Artisans' Market. As an added incentive, everyone who fills out the survey before August 1<sup>st</sup> will be entered into a drawing for a \$50 gift certificate to any business that is a dues paying partner of Alton Main Street.

Downtown Alton is fertile ground for small business, where the "Shop Local" movement has taken hold. For many communities similar to Alton, fostering small

business growth has been the key to transitioning from a formerly manufacturing-based economy. Alton Main Street and its partners are available to help small businesses and entrepreneurs navigate any obstacles they may face. For full details of the organization's special events, networking activities, investment opportunities, beautification projects and more, please visit [www.DowntownAlton.com](http://www.DowntownAlton.com) or [www.facebook.com/AltonMainStreet](https://www.facebook.com/AltonMainStreet).