

Revival Routes: Survey Finds America's Historic Main Streets Locals Most Want to See Revived [2026]

To identify the Main Streets Americans most want to see revived, MarketBeat surveyed 3,012 respondents about the places they believe still deserve a comeback.

SIOUX FALLS, SD, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As chain stores, bypasses, and sprawling retail corridors continue to reshape America, many once-beloved downtowns have quietly faded into the background, even though locals still feel deeply attached to them.



Survey Reveals the Historic Main Streets People Most Want Revived [2026]

Across the country, these historic Main Streets and old commercial districts often carry the bones of something special and increasingly hard to find: brick storefronts, railroad-era buildings, faded signs, old theaters, civic squares, waterfront blocks, and walkable character that newer developments struggle to recreate. Some have seen flashes of newfound investment, while others remain full of untapped potential, waiting for the right mix of restoration, small business energy, and local pride to bring them back to life.

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Historic Main Streets are more than sentimental landmarks; they are a reflection of how people feel about the future of their communities.”

Matt Paulson, founder of MarketBeat.

To identify the historic Main Streets and downtown districts Americans most want to see revived, [MarketBeat](#), a financial media company, surveyed 3,012 respondents about the places they believe still deserve a comeback. The result is a ranking of corridors that continue to inspire

nostalgia, civic pride, and hope for a more vibrant future.

The top 10 were as follows:

#1. Central Avenue, Dunkirk, New York

Set close to the Lake Erie shoreline, downtown Dunkirk still feels tied to its railroad, lake shipping, and industrial roots. Central Avenue remains lined with older storefronts, classic civic buildings, and reminders of the era when the city served as a major transportation and manufacturing center for western New York. The nearby waterfront adds a sense of atmosphere and potential to the district.

#2. 11th Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania

Historic storefronts, railroad-era architecture, and broad downtown corridors still give Altoona the feel of a classic Pennsylvania rail city built around movement and industry. The city expanded rapidly alongside the Pennsylvania Railroad, which helped shape much of the commercial district that remains today. While a wave of new property restorations and seasonal street markets is actively introducing fresh energy to the corridor, walking along 11th Avenue reveals the scale of a downtown designed to serve a far busier and more densely active city.

#3. Historic Route 66 District, Gallup, New Mexico

Neon signs, old motels, trading posts, and weathered storefronts give downtown Gallup one of the most recognizable Route 66 atmospheres in the Southwest. The city developed as an important railroad and trading hub in western New Mexico, particularly because of its connection to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway. While new state centennial grants are actively restoring the corridor's iconic vintage neon, the historic corridor feels filled with the kind of roadside Americana and cultural character many people believe deserves renewed life and preservation.

#4. Historic Downtown & Weber Avenue, Stockton, California

Historic downtown Stockton carries the feel of an old inland port city, with brick warehouses, civic buildings, and faded commercial blocks clustered near the waterfront. The city's Bob Hope Theatre, originally opened in 1930 as the Fox California Theatre, remains one of the district's most recognizable landmarks. While much of the region's growth shifted outward over the decades, locals often talk about downtown Stockton as a place with untapped cultural and commercial potential.

#5. Main Street, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

Steep hillsides, historic stone buildings, and old commercial blocks give downtown Johnstown a dramatic atmosphere, reflecting a city shaped by industry, railroads, and resilience. Main Street grew during the steelmaking years that once made Johnstown one of western Pennsylvania's important manufacturing centers, and traces of that era still define much of the downtown today. The city is also forever tied to the Johnstown Flood, which remains one of the most significant events in Pennsylvania history.

#6. Main Street, Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Historic warehouses, railroad-era buildings, and broad commercial corridors reflect the scale of

the ambitions that once shaped downtown Rocky Mount. The city expanded rapidly because of rail connections and tobacco commerce, helping turn it into one of eastern North Carolina's important business centers during the early 20th century. While parts of downtown have seen encouraging signs of momentum, many locals feel the district's comeback story is far from complete.

#7. Elm Street, Lumberton, North Carolina

Elm Street carries the atmosphere of a traditional small-city Southern downtown, where older storefronts and civic buildings remain closely tied to local identity and community life. Lumberton grew into a transportation and agricultural center along the Lumber River, with railroads supporting much of the city's historic commercial development. A newly unveiled 2040 downtown master plan and fresh retail developments are signaling an upcoming wave of growth.

#8. Main Street, Union, South Carolina

Walking through downtown Union reveals the scale and confidence of an old textile-era county seat, where historic brick buildings and traditional storefronts remain closely tied to local identity.

#9. Lafayette Street, Marianna, Florida

Lafayette Street still reflects the historic heart of one of North Florida's older inland communities, lined with brick commercial buildings and courthouse-era architecture. Marianna was heavily damaged during Hurricane Michael, which left a lasting impact on parts of the downtown district. Despite that, as the city actively deploys federal grants to execute its Downtown Resiliency Plan, the historic corridor is starting to show the first real glimpses of the grand comeback yet to come.

#10. Historic Downtown, Lake Wales, Florida

Downtown Lake Wales has the wide streets, vintage storefronts, and small-city optimism of a place built during Florida's early land-boom years. The city grew rapidly in the 1920s around the citrus industry and tourism tied to nearby Bok Tower Gardens. Even now, the downtown retains enough charm and architectural character that locals are captivated by its early-stage transformation, as massive "City in a Garden" streetscape overhauls begin to sprout.

<https://www.marketbeat.com/originals/survey-reveals-the-historic-main-streets-people-most-want-revived/>

The results suggest that Americans are not simply nostalgic for old buildings; they want historic downtowns to become useful, social, and active again.

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