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Downtown Wheeling Featured in Brookings Institution Research Series

WHEELING, W.Va. – Dec. 1, 2020 – Downtown Wheeling has been featured in a new, national-level research series on revitalizing rural downtowns by the Brookings Institution. Wheeling was one of three Main Street communities selected for the study. Researchers from the Brookings Institution worked with Wheeling Heritage staff, as well as local business owners, residents and other key stakeholder in the community to better understand how downtown revitalization can support rural recovery and resilience.

The overall report had several conclusions:

- Main Street organizations are a key driver of "equitable economic recovery" for rural areas
- Rural small businesses need local solutions to survive
- Rural resilience relies on a "flexible, accessible and healthy built environment"
- Rural Main Street organizations need to bridge social divides before achieving economic revival

As COVID-19 tests the resilience of rural economies, this series argues that our attention should be focused on investing in proven strategies to strengthen increasingly diverse rural areas. Using research from Wheeling, the briefs highlight key strategies for rural recovery, as well as the policy and capacity-building supports needed to implement and grow these strategies amid the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

The report, [Building resilient rural places: Strategies from local leaders to strengthen rural assets, diversity, and dynamism](#), uses on-the-ground data collected in Wheeling, WV; Laramie, WY; and Emporia, KS to highlight effective solutions for rural economic and community development and the local efforts underway to implement them. The report was produced by the Brookings Bass Center for Transformative Placemaking, developed in collaboration with the National Main Street Center.

About Wheeling Heritage:

[Wheeling Heritage](#) is a catalyst for the revitalization of Wheeling. Through historic preservation, community development, and the arts, we help to tell Wheeling's story and shape its future. We seek to improve the quality of life in Wheeling by preserving and investing in our city, collaborating with others, and engaging the citizens of Wheeling in our work.