

Allan Hooper

Allan Hooper is the principal of Downtown Strategies LLC, advising on asset-based and anchor-based strategies for small to mid-sized cities. In 2013, Allan retooled the concept of anchor-based development, formerly the province of large metropolitan areas, to make it applicable to the realities and limitations of small and mid-sized cities. He researched, designed, implemented and eventually managed the Jackson (Michigan) Anchor Initiative, a private sector venture based on leveraging the collective capacities of the region's larger employers and legacy businesses to accelerate downtown revitalization. This effort resulted in 150 new market rate apartments now under construction, or in the pipeline, and other strategic downtown improvements. The community benefitted from increased investment in the downtown. The anchors benefitted with a more vibrant urban "place" to attract and retain young talented workers.

Prior to the anchor role, Allan had a 30-year career in economic development with Consumers Energy, a Fortune 500 electric and natural gas utility. As its economic development director, he transformed the department's mission to that of a laboratory for new "workable" economic and community development concepts specifically targeted to address the challenges of the many small and mid-sized Michigan cities the company served.

Allan created and managed the Michigan Small Town and Rural Development Conference from 2005 through 2014. For these conferences, promising concepts being used nationally for small town development were brought to Michigan where hundreds of local community officials were introduced to these new, practical and "doable" strategies.

Allan is a graduate of Penn State University with a bachelor of political science and masters of urban and regional planning.