

Downtown Strategic Vision

Strictly Private & Confidential

South Milwaukee, WI

LETTER TO OUR PARTNER

Dear Patrick,

Through our *Downtown Strategic Visioning* process, we assessed the five pillars of Downtown South Milwaukee: **Market Analysis, Policy & Administration, Design, Tourism & Promotion, and Economic Vitality**, to provide a true roadmap to revitalization.

For Downtown South Milwaukee, we identified and created a tailored strategy to enhance, revitalize, and mobilize your community's efforts. When properly fueled, your Downtown can be a powerful economic, tourism, and quality of life engine and our team of professionals was honored to help you define this potential and empower this community to achieve it.

Downtown Strategies' Strategic Visioning process operates on **three key tenets**: utilizing asset-based methodology based on the community's existing strengths and potentials, holistically evaluating the community's Downtown, and creating implementable strategies for continued success.

The holistic approach utilized in our process included varying degrees of emphasis on the five pillars:



- **Market Analysis** to uncover and define the **economic potential** in your Downtown area



- **Policy & Administration** to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality by creating a strong foundation for a **sustainable revitalization effort**



- **Design** to support a **community's transformation** by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart,



- **Tourism and Promotion** to position your downtown as the center of the community and **hub of economic activity**,



- **Economic Vitality** to assist new and existing businesses, **catalyze property development**, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.

Downtown Strategies exists to assist communities in taking the next, or first, step in their Downtown's journey.



Jenn Gregory, President
Downtown Strategies
Retail Strategies

We appreciate the opportunity to partner with you and your team, and we look forward to continuing a strong and productive relationship as you all embark on this revitalization journey.



SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Your Team



Jenn Gregory

President

Downtown Strategies

Jenn is the president of Downtown Strategies, where her focus is on community development for our client communities. Through her Downtown Strategic Visioning Workshop process, Jenn advises communities on market analysis, tourism, economic vitality, and design updates for downtown areas. She also directly assists small businesses in client communities with elevating their digital presence, enhancing their omni-channel marketing strategies, and understanding market challenges in a post-COVID world.

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Jeremy Murdock

Community Development Specialist

Downtown Strategies

As community development specialist, Jeremy will assist Jenn and our clients with writing strategic plans, hosting community workshops, writing content, and managing implementation clients.

Prior to joining our team, Jeremy was a Research Associate III with the John C. Stennis Institute of Government and Community Development at Mississippi State University. He was heavily involved in ground-level community development issues, especially those related to design, planning, and revitalization.

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Elliott Cook

Director of Real Estate

Downtown Strategies

As Director of Real Estate, Elliott specializes in retail recruitment and focuses on the identification of companies to fill the product and service gaps within each city's trade area.

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Laura Marinos

Director of Client Services

Downtown Strategies

As the Director of Client Services, Laura specializes and assists in market research, market development plans, project coordination, client communication, event management, and team operations.

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PREFACE

South Milwaukee was laid out in 1891 by the South Milwaukee company within the Town of Oak Creek, with the purpose of serving as a rival industrial suburb of the City of Milwaukee, and was named from its location south of Milwaukee. South Milwaukee was incorporated as a village in 1892. South Milwaukee has a rich immigrant history, as immigrants from England and Germany made up a large portion of the population in the early 1900s.

South Milwaukee was the headquarters of Bucyrus International, formerly Bucyrus-Erie, which is known for constructing large shovels and dragline excavators, including Big Muskie, the world's largest mobile earth-moving machine. Bucyrus shovels were used in the construction of the Panama Canal.

In November 2012 Caterpillar Mining bought Bucyrus International for \$8.6 billion and made a goal to become a "one-stop shop" for mining companies worldwide.

Within South Milwaukee's borders is Grant Park, part of the Milwaukee County Park System. Grant Park features the Oak Leaf Bike trail, tennis courts, a swimming beach, an 18-hole golf course and the Seven Bridges Hiking Trail along the shore of Lake Michigan.

Today, Downtown South Milwaukee continues to serve as the gathering place for community members as it did decades ago. With a vibrant farmer's market, construction underway on a community park, and an eclectic mix of retailers and restaurants, and services providers, Downtown South Milwaukee is seeing a resurgence of investment and focus.

Downtown Strategies is honored to partner with the City of South Milwaukee to uncover implementable, transformational solutions for the historic downtown area that will build on the strides made and chart the future for the next 5 years.



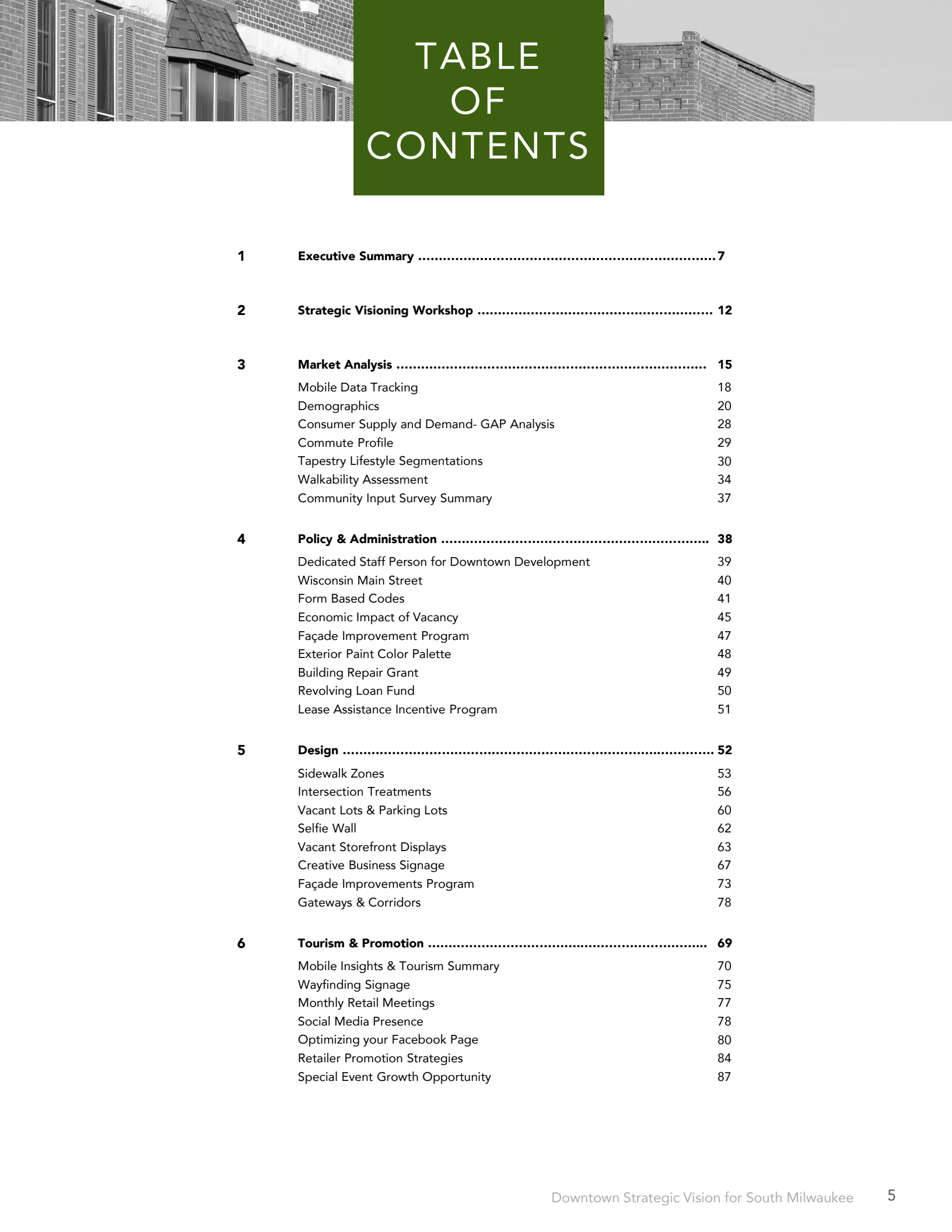


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downtown strategies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



1. Use the economic impact model accompanying your strategic plan to determine the impact of vacant buildings in Downtown South Milwaukee. Utilize these figures as the governing body considers amending or adopting new policies and incentives as it relates to vacancy.
2. The City of South Milwaukee with assistance from the Bucyrus Foundation has established a Façade Grant Program. Consider adopting the paint palette in this plan and require grant recipients to utilize a combination of approved paint colors when repainting or painting their facades.
3. Establish a group text with all downtown retail business owners. Host monthly (or quarterly) meetings with retailers to discuss upcoming and past events, promotions, or other relevant topics.
4. Establish a presence on social media for City of South Milwaukee and/or Downtown South Milwaukee. Using the template provided, create a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or annual content calendar to pre-plan social media posts and ensure topical and timely information is shared frequently enough to be maximally effective for your brand and efforts. Begin with Facebook and expand to other platforms as engagement rises.
5. Any business recruitment strategy, effort, or incentive should prioritize the top retail categories identified through the Gap Analysis. Utilize the Property Inventory to understand who owns what buildings, which are available, and what uses may be ideal for each vacancy.
6. Evaluate the city's real estate assets, particularly at 1208 Milwaukee Avenue, and create an RFP outlining the vision and intended outcomes for the redevelopment of the property. Consider using the asset as an incentive for the chosen developer that has the best track record of revitalization and is well-capitalized enough to see the project to fruition.
7. Identify partners such as Small Business Development Center, regional power company, state economic development agency, local higher education institutions, or other agencies to develop a program for entrepreneurs and business startups.
8. Host monthly meet-up events for existing and potential entrepreneurs.
9. Incorporate retail promotion strategies into Downtown South Milwaukee's program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings. Work with retailers to understand the benefits to capitalizing on existing events and staying open during those events.
10. Hold merchant training and workshops to encourage Downtown business owners to increase their level of operations, modernize their reliance on technology, and implement new and savvy ways to reach customers of all generations.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



1. Create a full-time Downtown Development Manager position for social media management, community event planning & retail promotion, business recruitment, and implementation of this Downtown Strategic Plan.
2. Once a full-time staff person is appointed as Main Street Director, apply for accreditation as a Wisconsin Main Street Community.
3. Add a Building Repair Grant to South Milwaukee's suite of incentives to assist with properties becoming retail-ready.
4. Establish a Revolving Loan Fund, with support from the Bucyrus Foundation, to assist property owners, entrepreneurs, and existing business owners with access to needed capital for new business ventures or revitalization.
5. Create and promote a Lease Assistance Incentive Program to support entrepreneurs and property owners. Couple this with technical assistance for start-ups to ensure success and retention.
6. Create a custom Business Recruitment packet that can be distributed to targeted retailers, restaurants, and other businesses, as well as existing property owners with renovation opportunities.
7. While some directional signage exists in the South Milwaukee community, it is recommended to add signs within the downtown, including those on the pedestrian level, pointing residents and visitors to public parking, Farmer's Market, and other points of interest.
8. Ensure that all sidewalks with adequate width in the downtown area accommodate the 3 zones. The city should continue to add appropriate streetscape elements to the Furnishing Zone.
9. Utilize short-term repair strategies to mitigate the negative impact of vacant lots and parking lots along major corridors in the downtown area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



10. Several beautiful murals have been installed in and around Downtown South Milwaukee. Continue that path, and incorporate an interactive mural with a unique hashtag to encourage social media promotion of your visitors.
11. Use vacant storefronts to display art, creative displays, or promotional material that tell the story of downtown. Work with property owners to implement short-term improvement strategies in vacant storefronts.
12. Encourage business owners to install signage that reflects their unique identity and enhances the character of the downtown area. Three-dimensional, custom shaped, hand-painted, and individually lettered signs should be encouraged. Facade grants can be utilized for this purpose.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY FINDINGS



1. Incorporate Form Based Codes into city's zoning code for Downtown South Milwaukee or throughout entire city limits. This should include provisions for appropriate signage for commercial spaces, depending in what transect district the building is located.
2. Incrementally upgrade major intersections in the downtown with long-term treatments over time. Utilize crosswalks and intersections as an opportunity to incorporate color and public art into the downtown space.
3. Enhance the success of Downtown South Milwaukee's Farmer's Market by hosting a Farm to Table dinner Downtown. Engage existing restaurants to participate in the dinner, and recruit pop-up vendors to activate sidewalk space or vacant storefronts that are tenantable for the period before the dinner begins.
4. Work with property owners to encourage development of entrepreneur ready shell space in ground floor of vacant properties, utilizing incentives from the City of South Milwaukee to accompany this effort, such as the Building Repair Grant.
5. Encourage property owners to utilize demising walls to create small footprint retail/start-up spaces. This low-cost strategy can be used to modify a large vacant building, add flexibility to an existing space, or add retail space to an existing office building while generating revenue for the property owner. The Building Repair Grant is an appropriate incentive for this strategy as well.



2

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STRATEGIC VISIONING WORKSHOP

Through our Downtown Strategic Visioning Workshop, we assess the five pillars of your downtown's mix: Market Analysis, Design, Tourism & Promotion, Economic Vitality, and Policy & Administration to provide a true road map to revitalization.

SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Strategic Visioning Workshop

July 20, 2022

2:00 PM	Downtown Strategies team meets with internal South Milwaukee Team
3:00 PM	Walking tour of Downtown study area with internal South Milwaukee Team
5:30 PM	Downtown South Milwaukee Stakeholder Input Session
7:00 PM	Meeting debrief with internal South Milwaukee Team
7:30 PM	Meeting Adjourns

Stakeholder Input Session

Welcome & Introductions

- Retail Strategies & Downtown Strategies
- 5 Pillars of Successful Revitalization
- Roles & Responsibilities
- Timeline

Market Analysis Preview

- Walkability Assessment
- Demographic & Gap Analysis Overview
- Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary Example

Downtown Stakeholder Input Session

- What makes you unique?
- What would you do with a magic wand?
- What are the biggest hurdles to success?
- Imitation is the biggest sign of flattery...

What's Next?

Following evaluation of Market Analysis, Stakeholder Feedback, and Recon from our Boots on the Ground Tour, your Strategic Visioning deliverable will be compiled and submitted within 4-6 weeks.





SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Stakeholder Input Session

What we heard

- South Milwaukee boasts certain assets, such as Grant Park, Lakefront park with a beach, 18-hole golf course & hiking trails winding through woods & ravines that the community is proud of; however, many feel that visitors don't know the park exists. A desire for better signage to tourist attractions, as well as the downtown was mentioned numerous times.
- The Farmer's Market is a key point of pride for community members. There's interest in building on that success with other activities downtown.
- New businesses have opened and there is a commitment from long-time residents to improve the area. There is a sense that entrepreneurs exist and want to open new concepts; however, many buildings are in disrepair, property owners seem disinterested, and leasing structures put all risk on the new tenant.
- There is a frustration amongst the community regarding building vacancy and lack of attention and investment in aging infrastructure.
- There is tremendous community support for revitalizing Downtown South Milwaukee. The Stakeholder Input Session was very well-attended, and stakeholders seemed committed to the future. A plan is lacking, so this exercise seems perfectly timed.
- While the City has been a leader in downtown revitalization, recruiting a base of volunteers for event promotion and downtown activities will be key. There is a community desire for design standards or improvements, more vitality in the evenings, and exciting new businesses to open in the Downtown area.





MARKET ANALYSIS

3

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We begin by assessing your consumers from multiple geographies. Using our advanced analytics and proprietary tools, we uncover and define the economic potential in your Downtown area based on a custom trade area derived from mobile data tracking.



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MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

Memberships, Subscriptions & Customized Reports

Crittenden Research



Downtown Strategies is proud to be a member of Main Street America and the International Downtown Association.



A PROUD MEMBER OF



Research Partners & Geographic Information Systems





MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

Where does all this information come from?

Here are a few of the demographic data sources used:





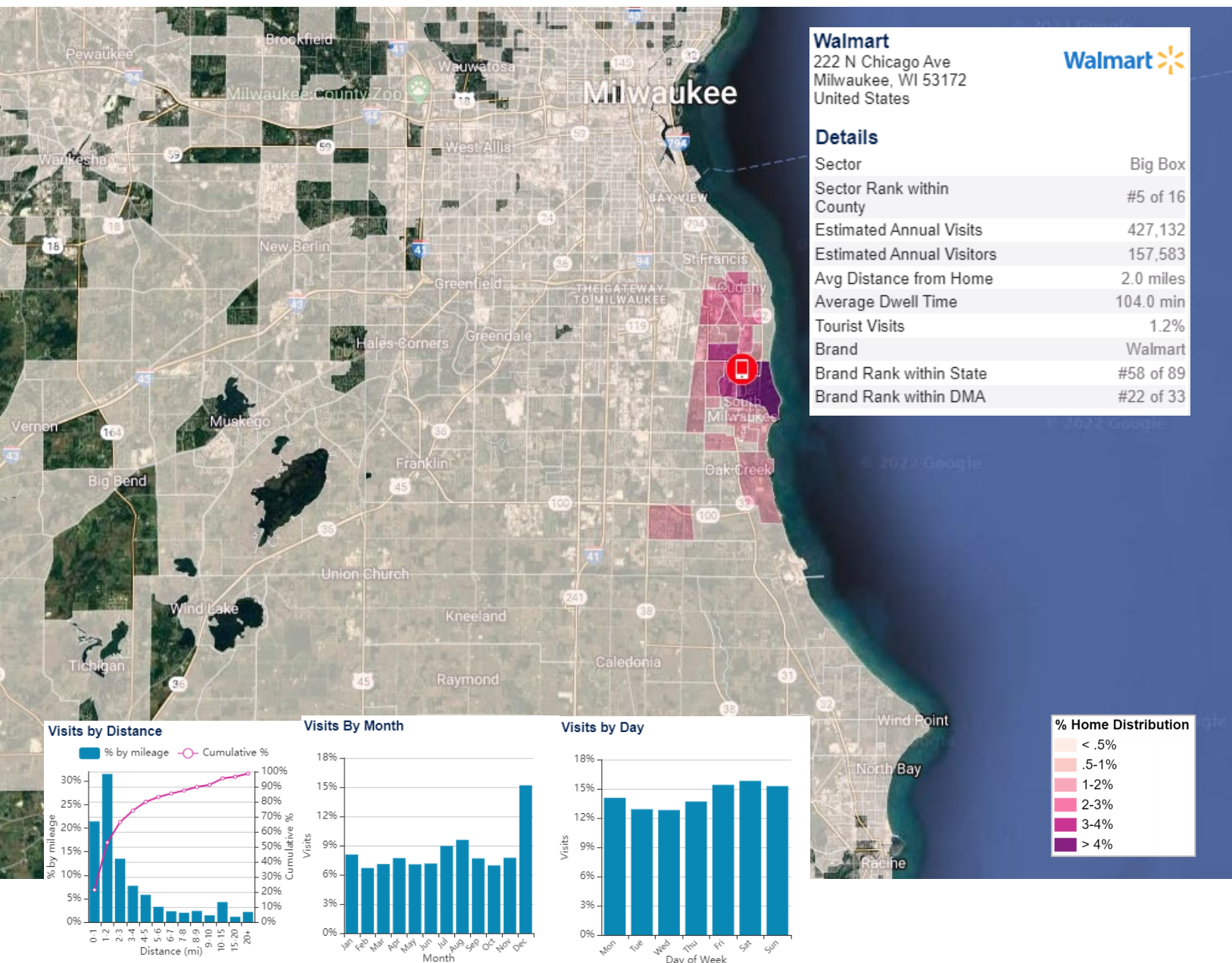
MARKET ANALYSIS

Mobile Data Tracking

Mobile data tracking uses **data collected from mobile phone users** who have agreed within their apps and phone settings to enable location information. This technology includes mobile phone data with **latitude and longitude points** that are accurate to approximately 20 feet. Data inputs are updated as quickly as every 24-hours.

The data shown **includes shoppers who visited the defined location** during a 1-year time period. This tool allows us to identify where consumers are actually coming from to shop in your market (Custom Trade Area) using actual data. This information is used to optimize your trade area, analyze business locations, compare frequency of visitors, and more **accurately predict business success**.

This data is intended to support the trade area but does not solely define the trade area.

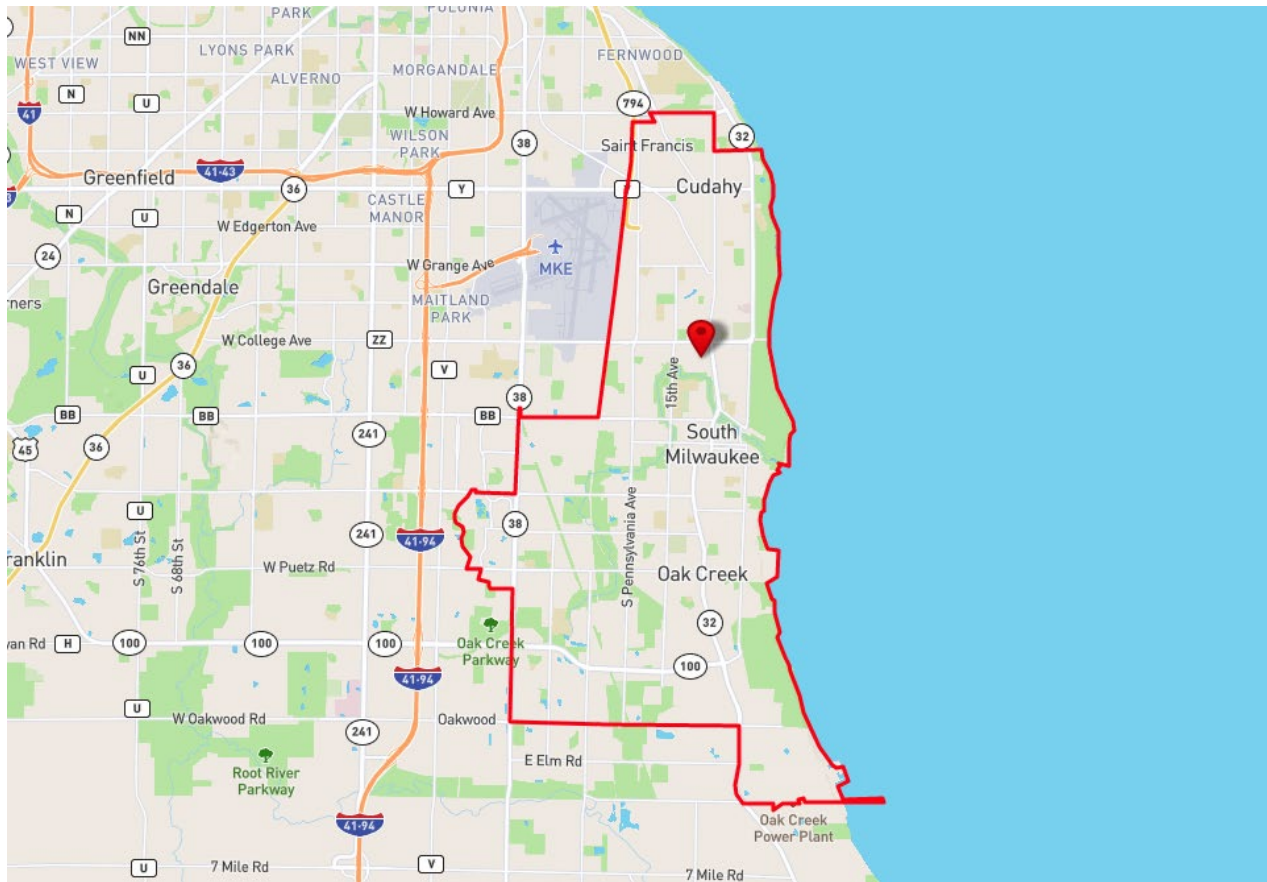




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CUSTOM TRADE AREA



South Milwaukee, WI Custom Trade Area

Population – 66,421

Each retailer has a specific set of site selection criteria they use to determine if they will have a profitable store. Municipal boundaries, radius rings and drive time areas are a start.

A customized trade area is the next step to analyzing a market. A trade area defines a core customer base of consumers highly likely to shop and eat in the market at least once a month.

Your trade area has been created by combining a series of drive times, mobile data analysis, geographic boundaries and proximity to neighboring shopping destinations.

Each retailer will analyze their own trade area based on their existing stores, their competition and site selection criteria.

***The following demographics reflect the Custom Trade Area (CTA) and not geographic community boundaries.**



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

POPULATION



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66,421

2021 estimated
population

1.4%

projected growth
rate 21-26



40

male avg. age



42

female avg. age

67,372

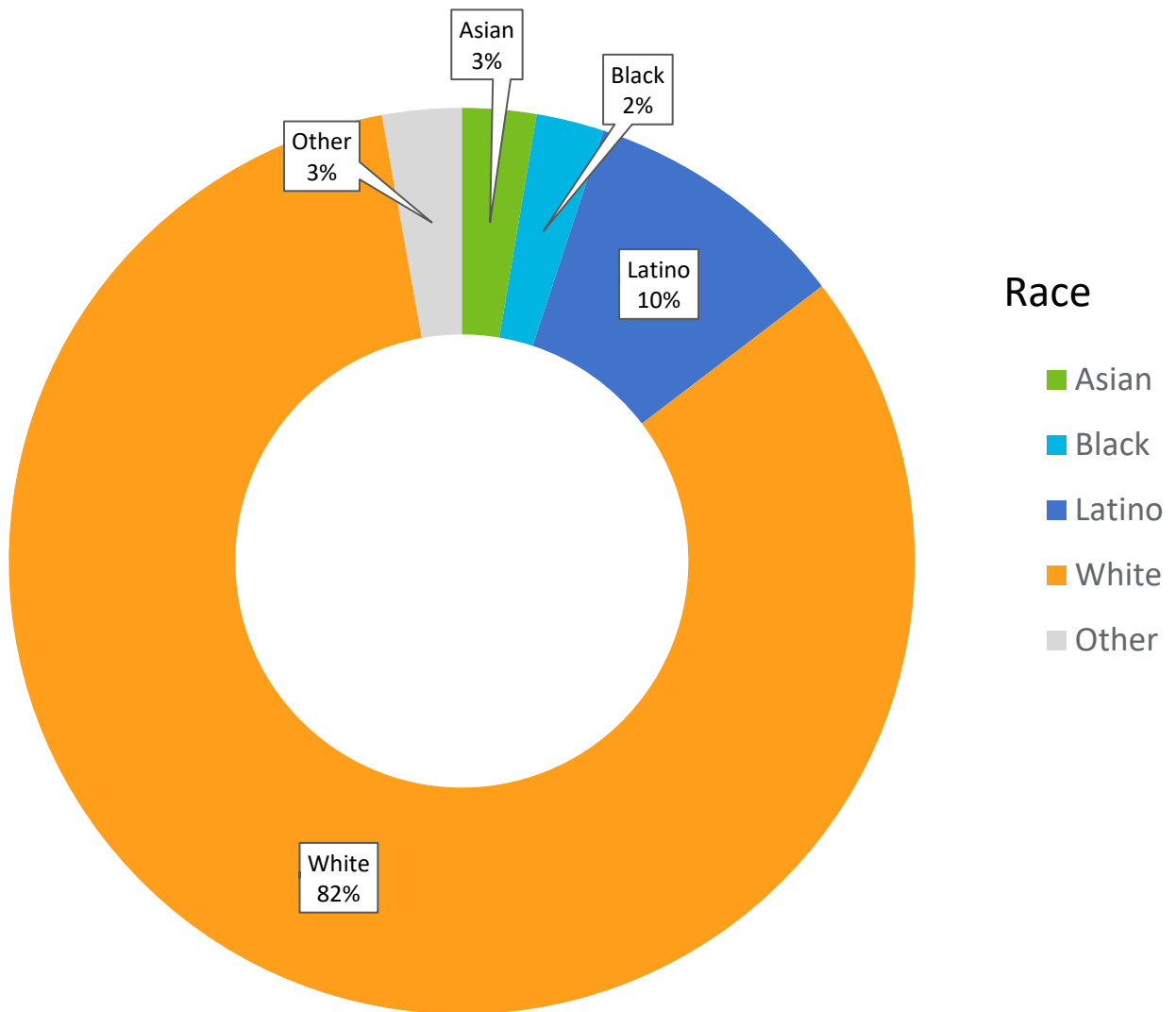
Projected 2026
population



MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION BY RACE



Total	Asian	Black	Latino	White	Other
66,421	3%	2%	10%	83%	3%
	1,757	1,605	6,354	54,828	1,877

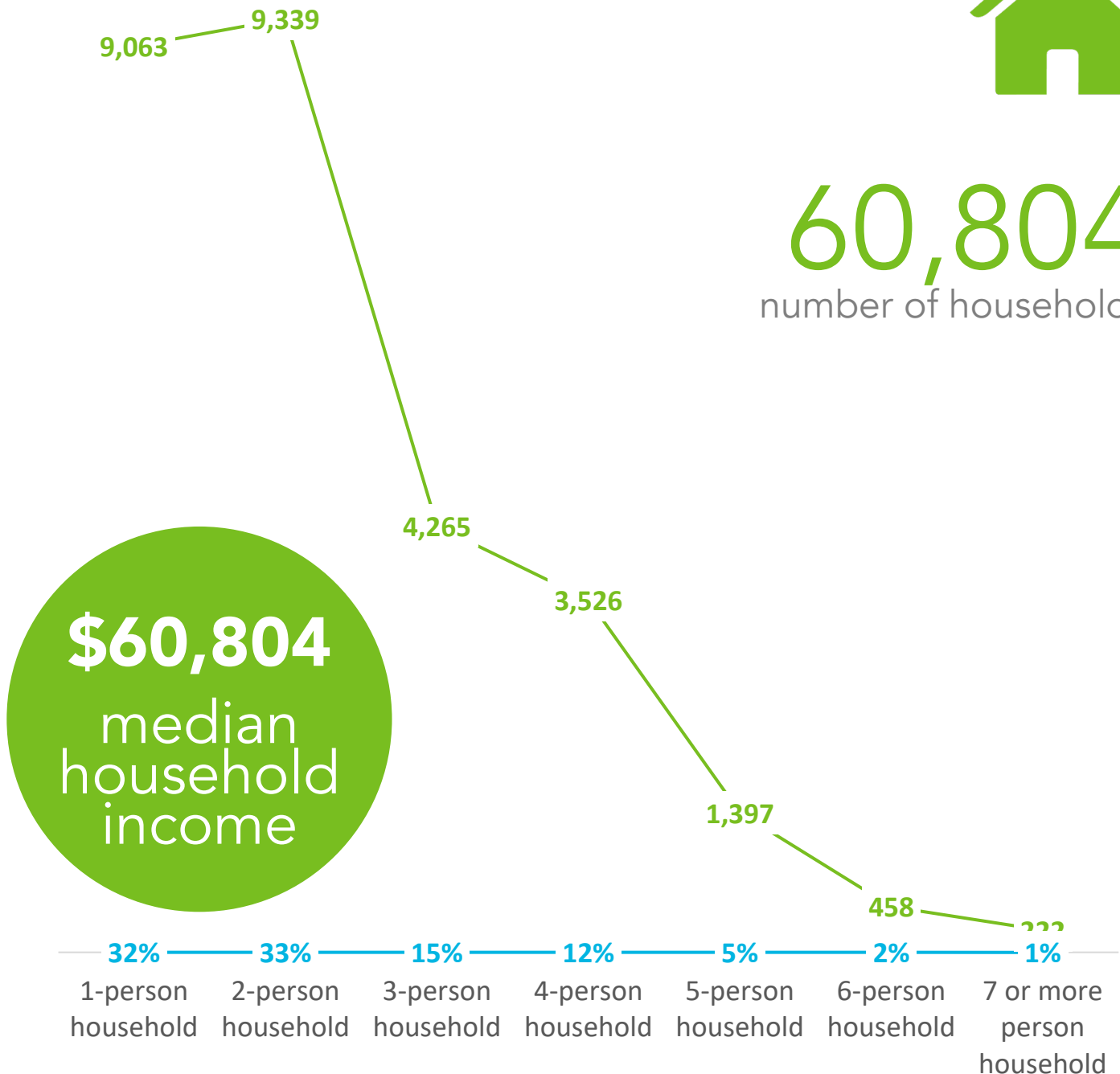


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CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE



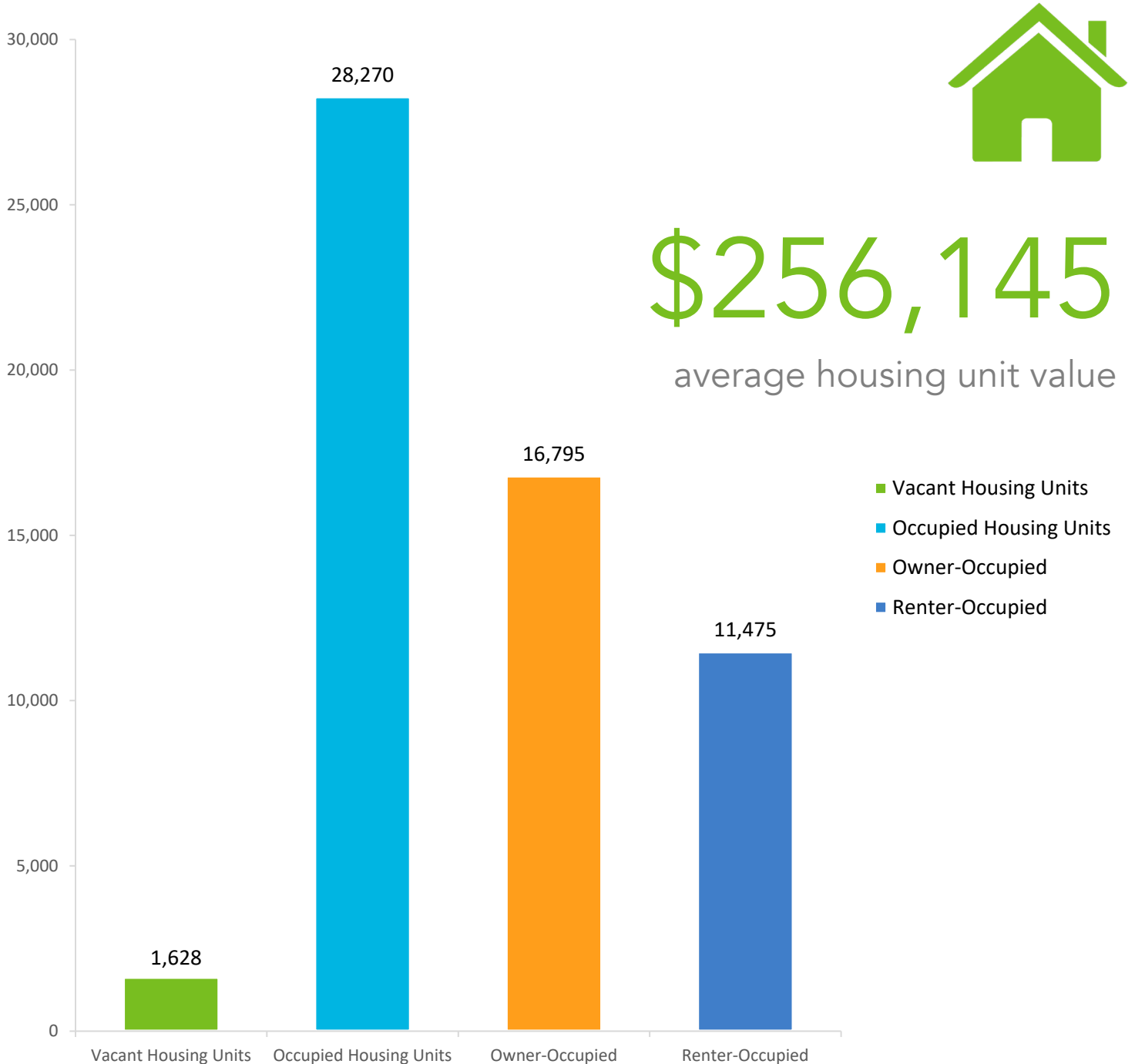
60,804
number of households





Our Research

2020 ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE





MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE

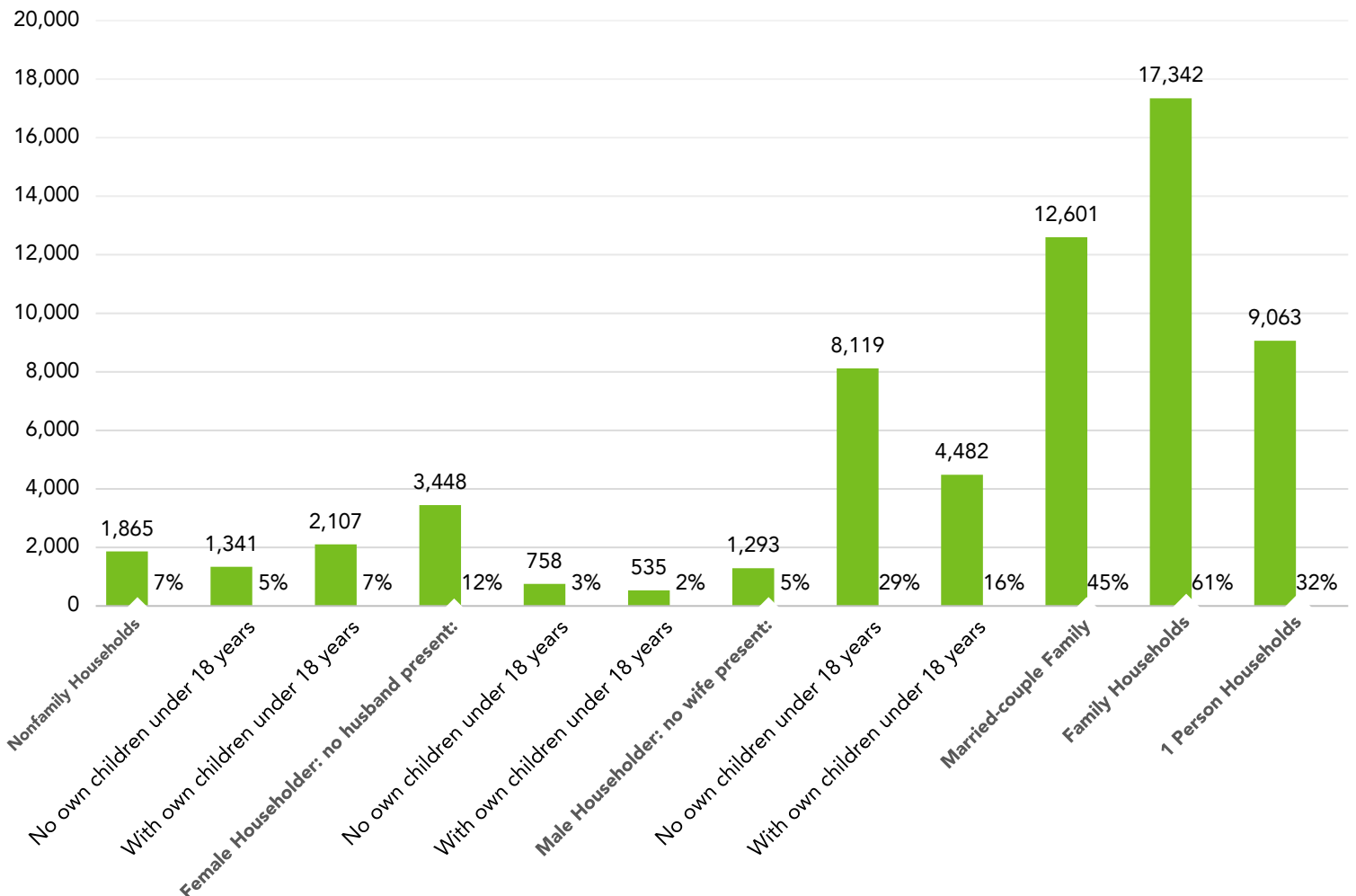


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2.34

people per household





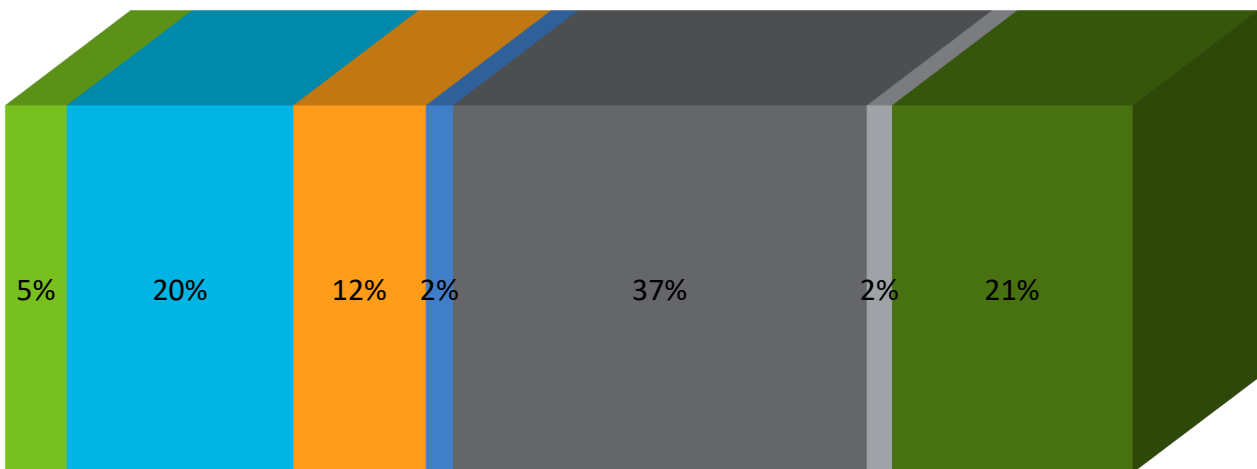
MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

DAYTIME POPULATION

54,893 daytime population

- Children at home
- Retired/Disable persons
- Homemakers
- Work at Home
- Employed
- Unemployed
- Student Populations

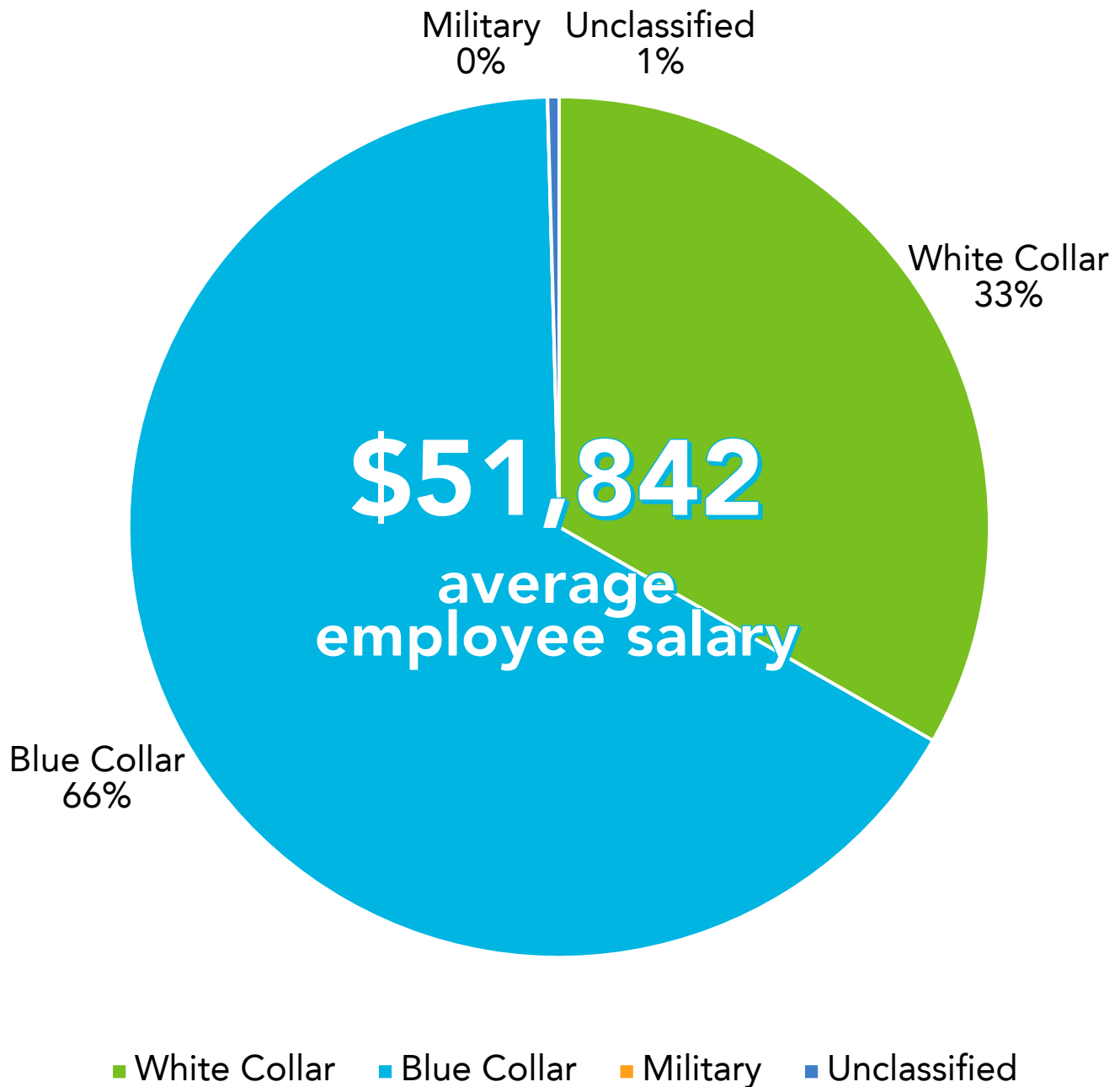




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Our Research

EMPLOYMENT TYPE

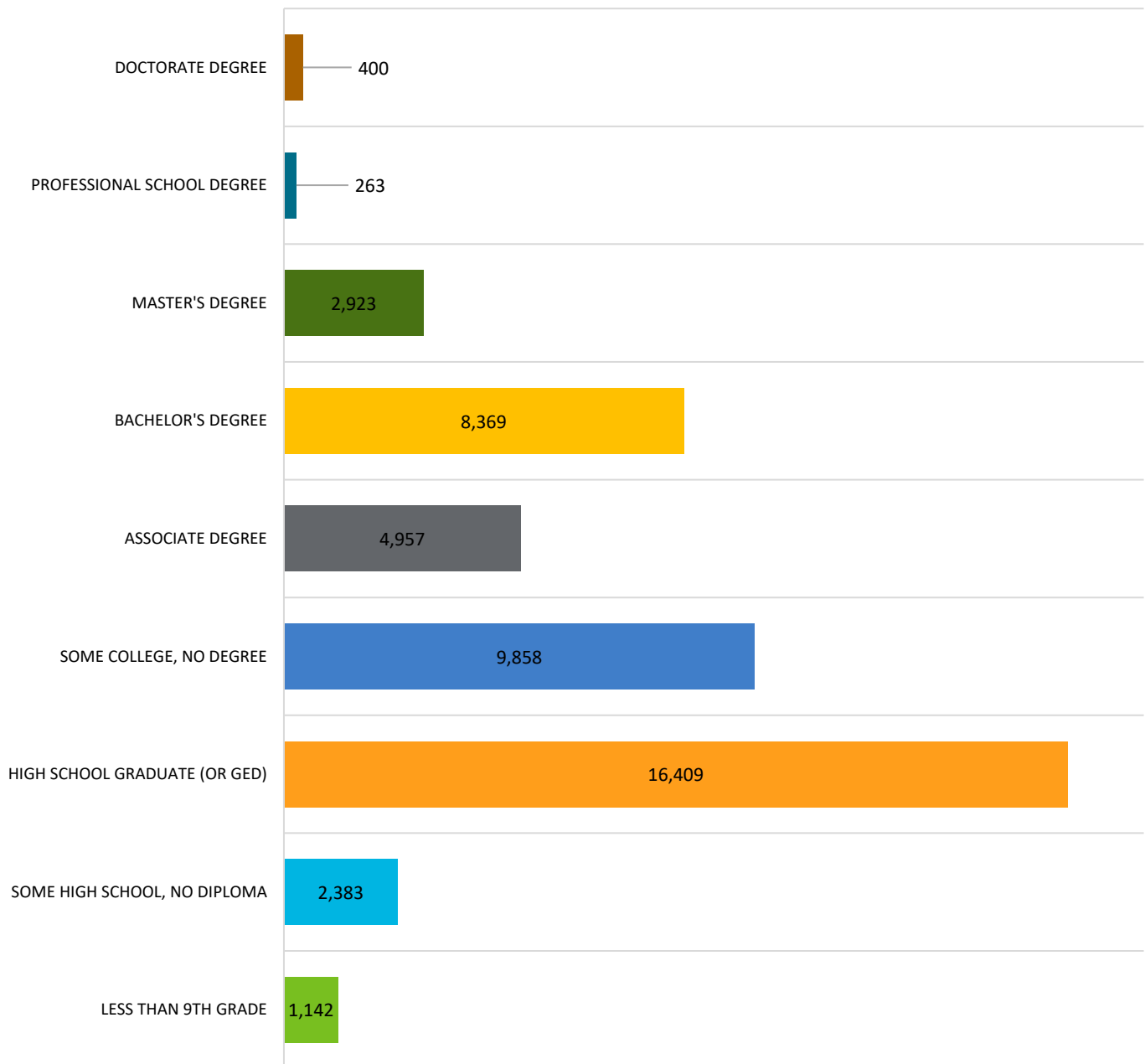




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION AGE 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

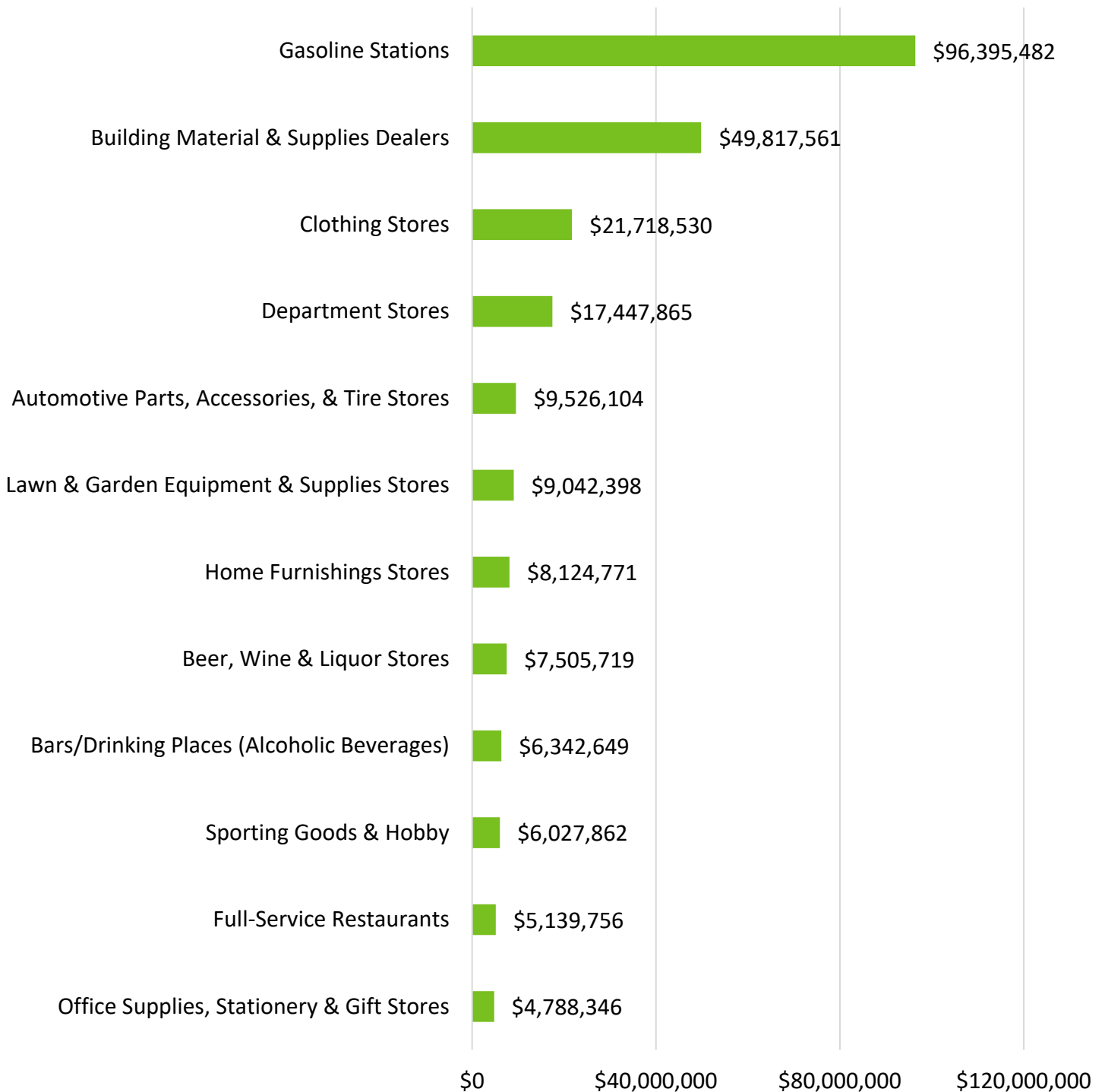




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

OPPORTUNITY GAP & RETAIL PROSPECTS

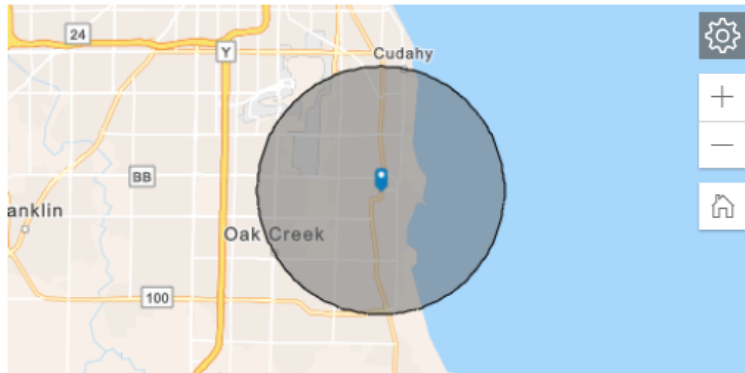




MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

COMMUTE PROFILE: 3 MILES



WORKERS



24,245

ACS Workers Age 16+



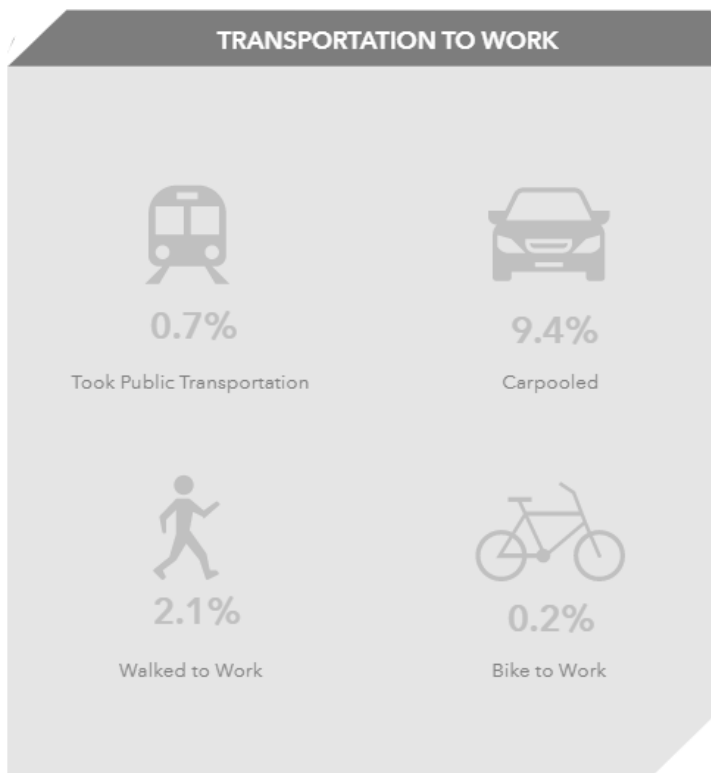
81.7%

Drove Alone to Work

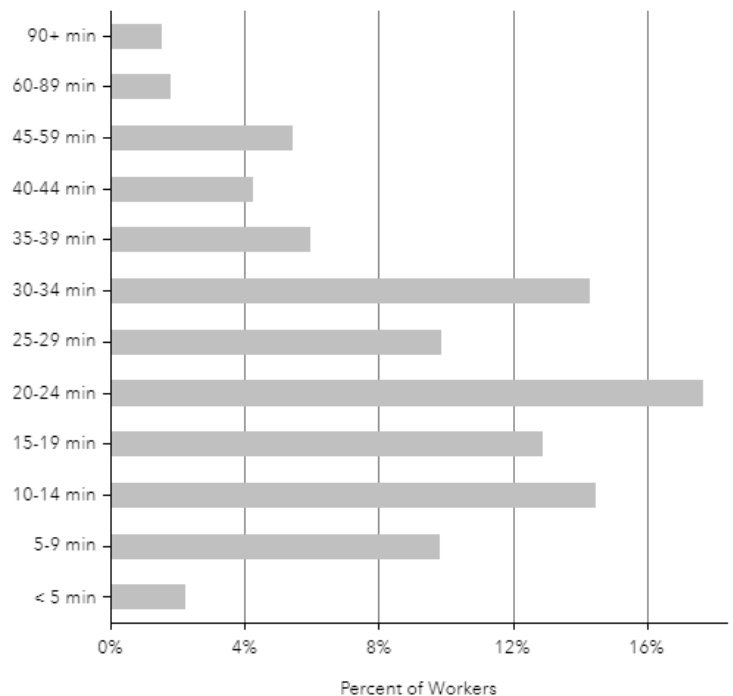


1,327

2020 Workers 16+ Worked at Home (ACS 5-Yr)



TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



This infographic contains data provided by American Community Survey (ACS). The vintage of the data is 2016-2020.

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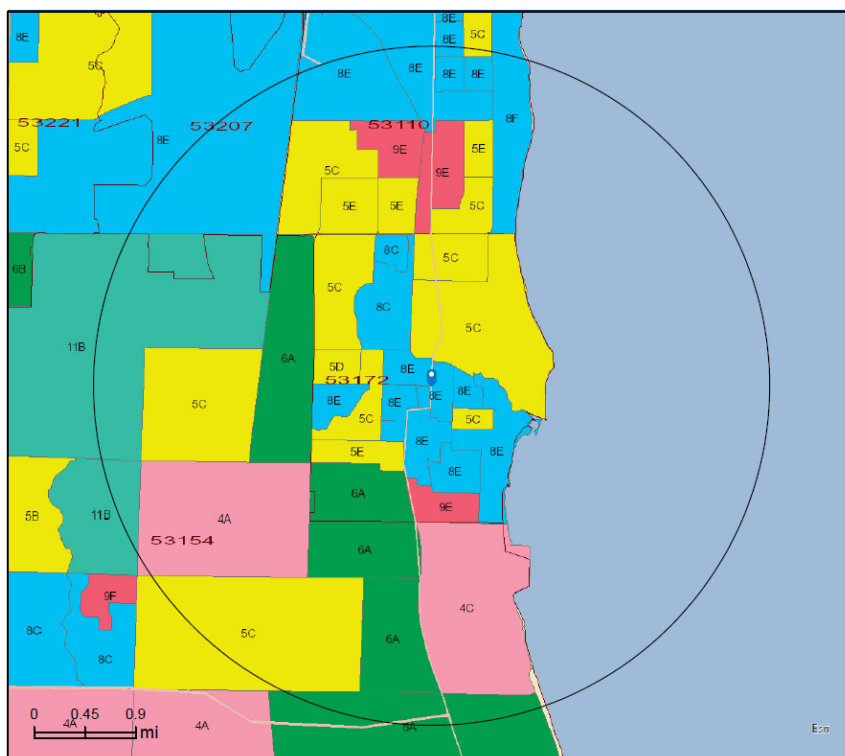


MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

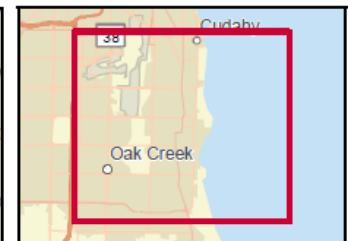
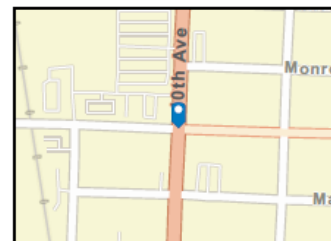
Tapestry Segmentation classifies neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based not only on demographics but also socioeconomic characteristics. It describes US neighborhoods in easy-to-visualize terms, ranging from Soccer Moms to Heartland Communities.

Tapestry gives you insights to help you identify your best customers, optimal sites, and underserved markets by understanding customers' lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time.



Tapestry LifeMode

- | | |
|---|---|
| ■ L1: Affluent Estates | ■ L8: Middle Ground |
| ■ L2: Upscale Avenues | ■ L9: Senior Styles |
| ■ L3: Uptown Individuals | ■ L10: Rustic Outposts |
| ■ L4: Family Landscapes | ■ L11: Midtown Singles |
| ■ L5: GenXurban | ■ L12: Hometown |
| ■ L6: Cozy Country | ■ L13: Next Wave |
| ■ L7: Ethnic Enclaves | ■ L14: Scholars and Patriots |



Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile

2007-2009 WI-32
2007-2009 WI-32, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53172
Ring: 3 mile radius

Prepared by Esri
Latitude: 42.91072
Longitude: -87.86072

Top Twenty Tapestry Segments

Rank	Tapestry Segment	2022 Households		2022 U.S. Households		Index
		Percent	Cumulative Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent	
1	Front Porches (8E)	25.6%	25.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1613
2	Parks and Rec (5C)	25.4%	51.0%	2.0%	3.6%	1,292
3	Green Acres (6A)	16.2%	67.2%	3.3%	6.8%	498
4	Midlife Constants (5E)	9.3%	76.5%	2.4%	9.2%	384
5	Retirement Communities (9E)	8.9%	85.4%	1.2%	10.4%	751
Subtotal		85.4%		10.5%		



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

Front Porches

8E

Households: 1,960,300

Average Household Size: 2.57

Median Age: 34.9

Median Household Income: \$43,700

WHO ARE WE?

Front Porches blends household types, with more young families with children or single households than average. This group is also more diverse than the US. More than half of householders are renters, and many of the homes are older town homes or duplexes. Friends and family are central to *Front Porches* residents and help to influence household buying decisions. Households tend to own just one vehicle but used only when needed. Income and net worth of these residents are well below the US average.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Nearly one in five homes is a duplex, triplex, or quad; half are older single-family dwellings.
- Just over half the homes are occupied by renters.
- Older, established neighborhoods; three quarters of all homes were built before 1980.
- Single-parent families or singles living alone make up almost half of the households.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Composed of a blue-collar work force with a strong labor force participation rate, but unemployment is slightly high at 7.1%.
- Price is more important than brand names or style to these consumers.
- With limited incomes, these are not adventurous shoppers.
- They would rather cook a meal at home than dine out.
- They seek adventure and strive to have fun.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Go online for gaming, watching movies, employment searches, and posting pics on social media.
- Prefer cellphones over landlines, and use their mobile devices for entertainment such as streaming movies and music.
- Drink energy and sports drinks.
- Participate in leisure activities including sports, playing board games and video games.
- Watch Comedy Central, Nickelodeon, and PBS Kids Sprout.

r 100.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: GenXurban

Parks and Rec

5C

Households: 2,449,600

Average Household Size: 2.51

Median Age: 40.9

Median Household Income: \$60,000

WHO ARE WE?

These practical suburbanites have achieved the dream of home ownership. They have purchased homes that are within their means. Their homes are older, and town homes and duplexes are not uncommon. Many of these families are two-income married couples approaching retirement age; they are comfortable in their jobs and their homes, budget wisely, but do not plan on retiring anytime soon or moving. Neighborhoods are well established, as are the amenities and programs that supported their now independent children through school and college. The appeal of these kid-friendly neighborhoods is now attracting a new generation of young couples.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Homes are primarily owner occupied, single-family residences built prior to 1970; town homes and duplexes are scattered through the neighborhoods.
- Both median home value and average rent are close to the national level.
- Households by type mirror the US distribution; married couples, more without children, dominate. Average household size is slightly lower at 2.51, but this market is also a bit older.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- More than half of the population is college educated.
- Older residents draw Social Security and retirement income.
- The work force is diverse: professionals in health care, retail trade, and education, or skilled workers in manufacturing and construction.
- This is a financially shrewd market; consumers are careful to research their big-ticket purchases.
- When planning trips, they search for discounted airline fares and hotels and choose to vacation within the US.
- These practical residents tend to use their cell phones for calls and texting only.

MARKET PROFILE

(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Cost and practicality come first when purchasing a vehicle; *Parks and Rec* residents are more likely to buy SUVs or trucks over compact or subcompact vehicles.
- Budget-conscious consumers stock up on staples at warehouse clubs.
- Pass time at home watching documentaries on Animal Planet, Discovery, or History channels. For an outing, they choose to dine out at family-style restaurants and attend movies. Between trips to the casinos, they gamble on lottery tickets and practice their blackjack and poker skills online.
- Convenience is important in the kitchen; they regularly use frozen or packaged main course meals. Ground coffee is preferred over coffee beans.
- Residents here take advantage of local parks and recreational activities. Their exercise routine is a balance of home-based exercise; a session at their local community gym; or a quick jog, swim, or run.

ed by 100.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

Green Acres

6A

Households: 3,923,400

Average Household Size: 2.70

Median Age: 43.9

Median Household Income: \$76,800

WHO ARE WE?

The *Green Acres* lifestyle features country living and self-reliance. They are avid do-it-yourselfers, maintaining and remodeling their homes, with all the necessary power tools to accomplish the jobs. Gardening, especially growing vegetables, is also a priority, again with the right tools, tillers, tractors, and riding mowers. Outdoor living also features a variety of sports: hunting and fishing, motorcycling, hiking and camping, and even golf. Self-described conservatives, residents of *Green Acres* remain pessimistic about the near future yet are heavily invested in it.

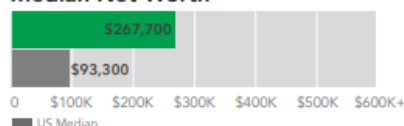
INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Rural enclaves in metropolitan areas, primarily (not exclusively) older homes with acreage; new housing growth in the past 15 years.
- Single-family, owner-occupied housing, with a median value of \$235,500.
- An older market, primarily married couples, most with no children.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Unemployment is low at 3.8% (Index 70); labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and increasingly, from retirement.
- They are cautious consumers with a focus on quality and durability.
- Comfortable with technology, more as a tool than a trend: banking or paying bills online is convenient; but the Internet is not viewed as entertainment.
- Economic outlook is professed as pessimistic, but consumers are comfortable with debt, primarily as home and auto loans, and investments.

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Purchasing choices reflect *Green Acres*' residents country life, including a variety of vehicles from trucks and SUVs to ATVs and motorcycles, preferably late model.
- Homeowners favor DIY home improvement projects and gardening.
- Media of choice are provided by satellite service, radio, and television, also with an emphasis on country and home and garden.
- *Green Acres* residents pursue physical fitness vigorously, from working out on home exercise equipment to playing a variety of sports.
- Residents are active in their communities and a variety of social organizations, from charitable to veterans' clubs.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: GenXurban

Midlife Constants

5E

Households: 3,068,400

Average Household Size: 2.31

Median Age: 47.0

Median Household Income: \$53,200

WHO ARE WE?

Midlife Constants residents are seniors, at or approaching retirement, with below average labor force participation and above average net worth. Although located in predominantly metropolitan areas, they live outside the central cities, in smaller communities. Their lifestyle is more country than urban. They are generous, but not spendthrifts.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Older homes (most built before 1980) found in the suburban periphery of smaller metropolitan markets.
- Primarily married couples, with a growing share of singles.
- Settled neighborhoods with slow rates of change and residents that have lived in the same house for years.
- Single-family homes, less than half still mortgaged, with a median home value of \$154,100 (Index 74).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 63% have a high school diploma or some college.
- Unemployment is lower in this market at 4.7% (Index 86), but so is the labor force participation rate (Index 91).
- Almost 42% of households are receiving Social Security (Index 141); 27% also receive retirement income (Index 149).
- Traditional, not trendy; opt for convenience and comfort, not cutting-edge. Technology has its uses, but the bells and whistles are a bother.
- Attentive to price, but not at the expense of quality, they prefer to buy American and natural products.
- Radio and newspapers are the media of choice (after television).

MARKET PROFILE (Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Prefer practical vehicles like SUVs and trucks (domestic, of course).
- Sociable, church-going residents belonging to fraternal orders, veterans' clubs and charitable organizations and do volunteer work and fund-raising.
- Contribute to arts/cultural, educational, health, and social services organizations.
- DIY homebodies that spend on home improvement and gardening.
- Media preferences: country or movie channels.
- Leisure activities include movies at home, reading, fishing, and golf.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Senior Styles

Retirement Communities

9E

Households: 1,501,100**Average Household Size:** 1.88**Median Age:** 53.9**Median Household Income:** \$40,800

WHO ARE WE?

Retirement Communities neighborhoods are evenly distributed across the country. They combine single-family homes and independent living with apartments, assisted living, and continuous care nursing facilities. Over half of the housing units are in multiunit structures, and the majority of residents have a lease. This group enjoys watching cable TV and stays up-to-date with newspapers and magazines. Residents take pride in fiscal responsibility and keep a close eye on their finances. Although income and net worth are below national averages, residents enjoy going to the movies, fishing, and taking vacations. While some residents enjoy cooking, many would rather dine out.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Much of the housing was built in the 1970s and 1980s—a mix of single-family homes and large multiunit structures that function at various levels of senior care.
- Small household size; many residents have outlived their partners and live alone.
- Over half of the homes are renter occupied.
- Average rent is slightly below the US average.
- Nearly one in five households has no vehicle.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Brand loyal, this segment will spend a little more for their favorite brands, but most likely they will have a coupon.
- Frugal, they pay close attention to finances.
- They prefer reading magazines over interacting with computers.
- They are health conscious and prefer name-brand drugs.

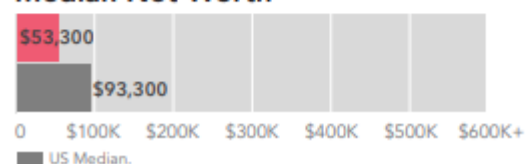
INCOME AND NET WORTH

Net worth measures total household assets (homes, vehicles, investments, etc.) less any debts, secured (e.g., mortgages) or unsecured (credit cards). Household income and net worth are estimated by Esri.

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



MARKET PROFILE

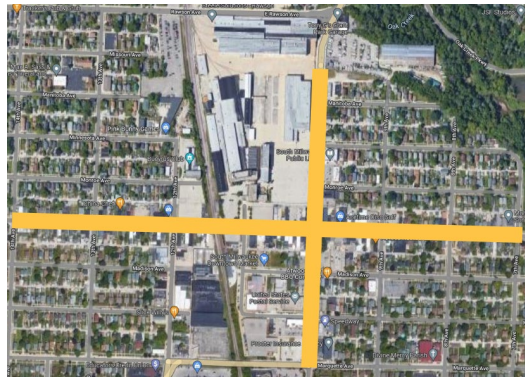
(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by MRI-Simmons.)

- Enjoy hard-cover books, book clubs, crossword puzzles, and Sudoku.
- Contribute to political organizations and other groups.
- Entertainment preferences: playing cards and reading books.
- Prefer watching cable TV, including premium channels like HBO and Cinemax.
- Like to travel—including visits to foreign countries.
- Shop at diverse, large retail chains like Sears, Family Dollar, Target, and Walmart for convenience.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Walkability Assessment

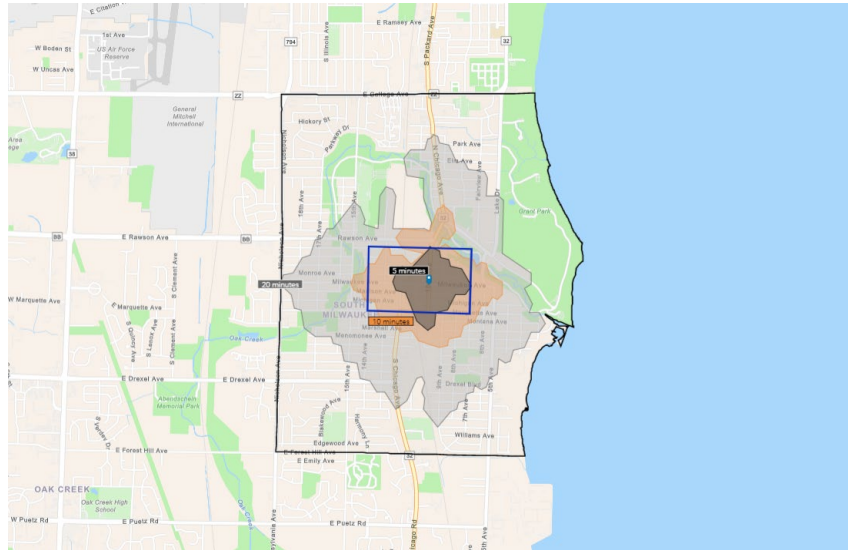


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What's your Community's Walk Score?

A community's walk score is determined by analyzing 3 factors: **walkable distance** between boundaries, presence of a **comprehensive network of pathways** designed for pedestrians and cyclists, and variety of restaurants, retailers, and service providers **necessary for regular life**.

This assessment shows your Downtown with boundaries notating a **5, 10, and 20-minute walk**. A walk time from one Downtown boundary to the next that exceeds 20 minutes is not considered walkable.



KEY FACTS

10,008

Population

39.8

Median Age

2.3

Average Household Size

INCOME



\$59,570

Median Household Income



\$33,319

Per Capita Income



\$91,039

Median Net Worth

BUSINESSES



252

Total Businesses



3,121

Total Employees

EMPLOYMENT



57%

White Collar



32%

Blue Collar



11%

Services

3.5%

Unemployment Rate

EDUCATION

8%

No High School Diploma



37%
High School Graduate



31%
Some College



24%
Bachelor's/Grad/
Prof Degree

HOUSING STATS



\$211,916

Median Home Value



\$757

Median Contract Rent



73%

Owner Households with a Mortgage

90-100	Walker's Paradise Daily errands do not require a car
70-89	Very Walkable Most errands can be accomplished on foot
50-69	Somewhat Walkable Some errands can be accomplished on foot
25-49	Car-Dependent Most errands require a car
0-24	Car-Dependent Almost all errands require a car

The following demographics represent the **population of residents** within a **20-minute walk time** of the Downtown Study Area.

Keep these figures in mind when imagining the possible economic impacts of developing your Downtown into a walkable destination.



MARKET ANALYSIS

Downtown Community Input Survey Summary



OPEN				
Downtown South Milwaukee Community Input Survey		422	100%	9 mins
Created: 05/18/2022 Modified: 07/19/2022		Responses	Completion rate	Typical time spent
				Options

Key Takeaways

- A large number of community members completed the survey, which continues to support the indication that there is large community interest and support in improving Downtown South Milwaukee.
- Over 90% of respondents reported that they would spend more time in Downtown South Milwaukee if more desirable businesses were present.
- Open-ended answers trended towards an unmet demand for restaurants, breweries and coffee shops.
- There also was not a substantial desire for downtown living opportunities, with many reporting that they prefer a yard or land rather than a multi-family unit.
- 55% of respondents reported that the condition and appearance of buildings downtown was very important to them – the highest-ranking factor in the survey.
- 62% of respondents reported that they prefer to receive information via Social Media; supporting the notion that an increased social media presence for the City and/or Downtown is critical.
- In open-ended responses, gratitude was expressed for the improvements that have been made and for the ability for the public to express their input via this survey.

Full Survey Results: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-K_2FcU371yTtTXDi3qkpdO3A_3D_3D/



4

downtown strategies

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Policy & Administration involves creating a strong foundation for a sustainable revitalization effort, including cultivating partnerships, community involvement, and resources for the district.



Dedicated Staff Person & Funding for Downtown Development



Recommendation

Create a full-time **Downtown Development Manager** position for social media management, community event planning & retail promotion, business recruitment, and implementation of this Downtown Strategic Plan.

Downtown Development Manager

The Downtown Development Manager is responsible for development, planning, implementation, and oversight of designated community events, programs, and organizational priorities.

This position works closely with responsible volunteer chairs and committee members to ensure that all events and programs are delivered on time, within budget, and at the desired level of quality. This individual cultivates positive long-term relationships with all program stakeholders, especially committee members and Downtown stakeholders and seeks to consistently improve program execution and revenues.

As a social media manager, this position will develop a revolving content calendar for social media channels, original content supporting the community brand, and suggest creative and strategic ways to attract more visitors and relocations to the community.

Ultimately, this individual should lead and coordinate downtown efforts related to the downtown improvement which could include incentive programs, policies, development, business development, event planning, communication, and other efforts.

This position could be housed within the city government, Chamber, or a newly formed organization.



Wisconsin Main Street

Downtowns and historic commercial districts play an important role in their communities and in Wisconsin's overall economy, functioning not only as prominent employment and business centers, but oftentimes as the cultural and civic heart of the community.

Two programs exist to assist Wisconsin communities with revitalization efforts: Main Street and Connect Communities. These programs help local leaders leverage the unique assets of their downtowns and commercial districts, providing access to resources and networking opportunities to support local initiatives.

Resources provided by the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) to foster vibrant commercial centers include:

- Regional workshops on pertinent topics
- Annual conference programming
- Regular webinars and discussion calls
- Online resource toolkit and best practice guide
- Regional networking events
- Staff and board orientation training

Part of the Main Street America national network, Wisconsin Main Street accepts applications for membership in April of each year. A participating community must have an organization or group that focuses on downtown/historic commercial district issues, be able to commit to participation in education and training opportunities and fulfill annual reporting requirements. Communities will be required to sign a participation agreement with WEDC and may have to pay annual dues.

Main Street America's 4-Point Approach will dictate committee structure, in which this plan can be incorporated.



Recommendation

Once a full-time staff person is appointed as Main Street Director, apply for accreditation as a Wisconsin Main Street Community.



Form Based Codes



Recommendation

Incorporate Form Based Codes into city's zoning code for Downtown South Milwaukee or throughout entire city limits. This should include provisions for appropriate signage for commercial spaces, depending in what transect district the building is located.

A **form-based code** is a land development regulation that fosters predictable built results and a high-quality public realm by using physical form (rather than separation of uses) as the organizing principle for the code. A **form-based code** is a regulation, not a mere guideline, adopted into city, town, or county law. A form-based code offers a powerful alternative to conventional zoning regulation.

Form-based codes address the **relationship between building facades and the public realm, the form and mass of buildings in relation to one another, and the scale and types of streets and blocks**. The regulations and standards in form-based codes are presented in both words and clearly drawn diagrams and other visuals. They are keyed to a regulating plan that designates the appropriate form and scale (and therefore, character) of development, rather than only distinctions in land-use types.

This approach contrasts with conventional zoning's focus on the micromanagement and segregation of land uses, and the control of development intensity through abstract and uncoordinated parameters (e.g., FAR, dwellings per acre, setbacks, parking ratios, traffic LOS), to the neglect of an integrated built form. Not to be confused with design guidelines or general statements of policy, form-based codes are regulatory, not advisory. They are drafted to implement a community plan. They try to achieve a community vision based on time-tested forms of urbanism.

Ultimately, a form-based code is a tool; the quality of development outcomes depends on the quality and objectives of the community plan that a code implements.

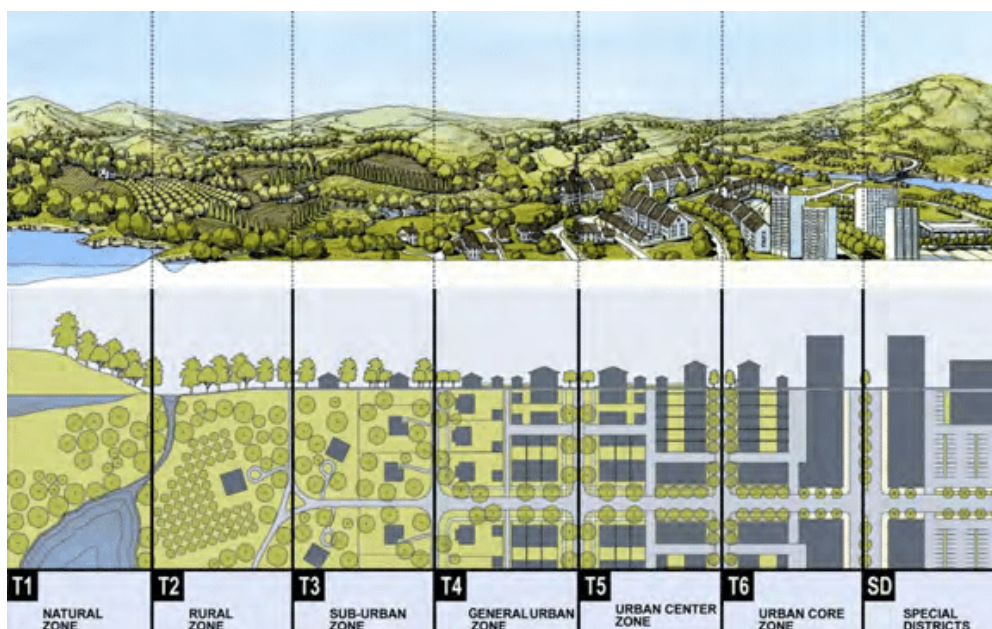


Form Based Codes

Principles of Form Based Codes

Form-based codes support the creation of people-focused streets because they:

- Encourage signage that is pedestrian-oriented and human-scale.
- Control the shape and density of new buildings and other development.
- Control car and bicycle parking requirements to make preservation projects and transit-oriented development more feasible.
- Govern building setback, rear, and side-lot requirements, which often dictate the continuity and rhythm of a Main Street's facades.
- Set requirements for minimum lot coverage and floor area ratios (F.A.R.)
- Permit a variety of uses on upper floors, like housing and small-scale manufacturing.
- Incentivize active uses on the ground floor, which prevent retail gaps and supports retail concentration in key district areas.





POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Form Based Codes

Time-tested Development Pattern

For centuries downtowns followed a similar template that can be found in cities such as Pompeii, Italy; Paris, France; New York City; and even small towns across America. Basically, any city that was built before World War II (WWII) followed this same pattern.

Buildings were located directly adjacent to the street. Streets were laid out in a connected grid or network. Downtown neighborhoods contained a mix of uses where people lived, worked, shopped, dined, and socialized in the same area. The overall size of neighborhoods were contained to an area based on a reasonable walking distance for people to reach all of their daily needs. This typically occurred within a ¼-mile to ½-mile radius. Residents lived above their businesses or in nearby residential neighborhoods. Key civic buildings, religious facilities, and landmarks were placed in prominent locations that allowed them to serve as focal points. Common greens, parks, plazas, and markets allowed people to gather and socialize.



Pompeii, Italy



Paris, France



New York City, New York



Albemarle, North Carolina



POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

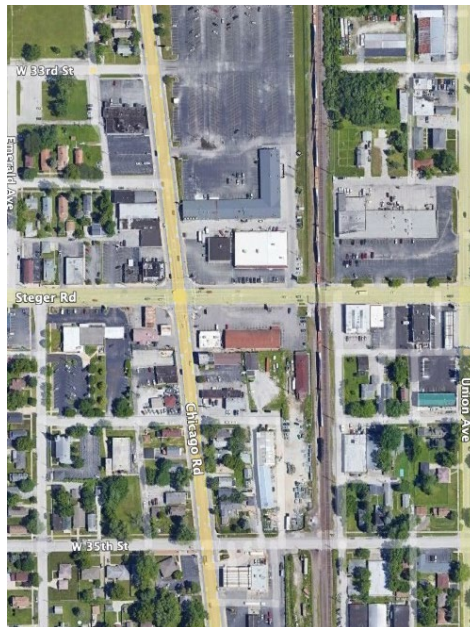
Form Based Codes

After WWII, like many American cities, commercial development began to relocate along major highways and downtown areas began taking steps to compete with the new automobile-centered lifestyle. Unfortunately, in many cases that transition involved the demolition of historic buildings and addition of parking lots and shopping centers. The result is that once urban, walkable downtown areas are now dominated by parking lots, wide roadways, and fast-moving automobile traffic.

Studying historic aerial images illustrate the shift that took place in many downtowns. Figure-ground illustrations show building footprints in black and are a useful tool used by urban planners to demonstrate the impact the auto-centric development pattern has had on downtowns.



1938 Historic Aerial Image



2018 Google Earth Aerial Image

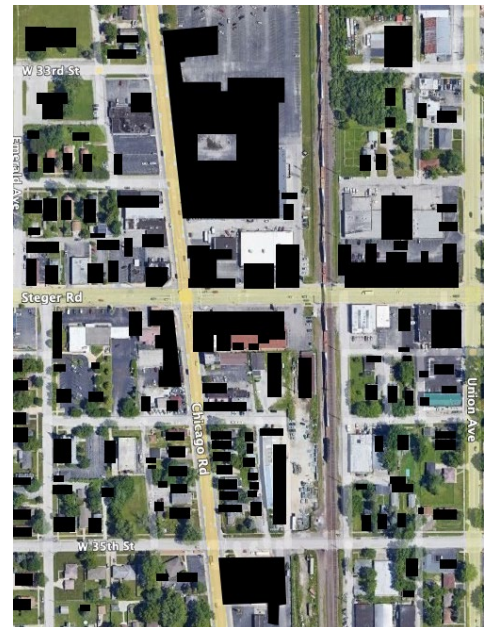


Figure-Ground Illustration

Post-WWII development has damaged the fabric of downtowns across the country. Sometimes this occurs on a few parcels, and other times entire blocks were redeveloped. Strategies can be taken to begin stitching the fabric back together, but the only way to truly repair the integrity of the downtown is through proper building form and development. Updating the city's zoning, codes, and ordinances ensures that development follows the correct pattern moving forward.

In order to reverse the current trajectory and return to a walkable, urban downtown, the city should implement policies such as Form-Based Codes to guide future development in the district.

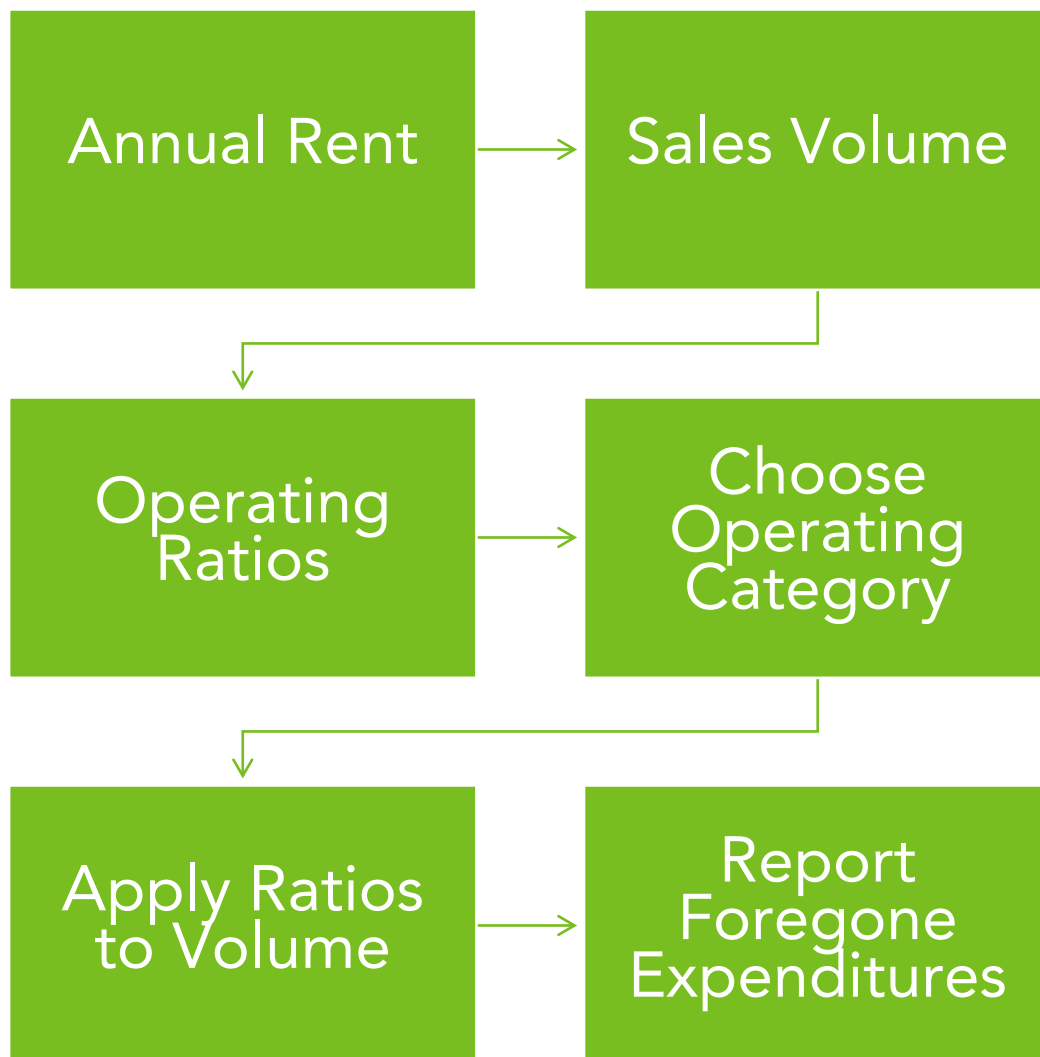


A suburban-style strip mall was built in the center of a traditional downtown in this small, rural community. Form-Based Codes would have ensured the development was built in a manner that complemented the surrounding context.



Economic Impact of Vacancy

The following process is utilized to determine the economic impact of a vacant building in a Downtown or small business ecosystem. Vacancy presents challenges for the vacant property owner, the city, adjacent property owners, current or potential tenants, downtown revitalization efforts, and others.



Source: Donovan Rypkema



Economic Impact of Vacancy



Recommendation

Use the economic impact model accompanying your strategic plan to determine the impact of vacant buildings in Downtown South Milwaukee. Utilize these figures as the governing body considers amending or adopting new policies as it relates to vacancy.

Economic Impact Model

RESTAURANT/DELI

How big is your empty building (s.f.)?	2,000
Based on your market, what should be the monthly rent?	\$2,500.00
Rent per Square Foot per Year	\$15.00
Sales not made	\$500,000
Rent not collected	\$30,000
Dessert purchases from local bakery not made	\$24,795
Wages not paid	\$132,603
Legal, Accounting and Professional Services not used	\$2,493
Insurance premiums not paid	\$4,726
Advertising not purchased	\$3,151
Business fees and licenses not secured	\$362
Interest and bank charges not paid	\$1,575
Office supplies not bought	\$630
Motor vehicle expenses not incurred	\$3,870
Telephone & internet services not used	\$2,363
Utilities not paid	\$4,726
Sales tax not collected	\$34,932

RETAILER

How big is your empty building (s.f.)?	1,500
Based on your market, what should be the monthly rent?	\$1,875.00
Rent per Square Foot per Year	\$15.00
Sales not made	\$292,137
Rent not collected	\$22,500
Supplies not purchased	\$2,688
Wages not paid	\$40,215
Legal, Accounting and Professional Services not used	\$2,016
Insurance premiums not paid	\$672
Advertising and postage not purchased	\$5,880
Maintenance not performed	\$672
Interest and bank charges not paid	\$2,915
Telephone & internet services not used	\$1,653
Utilities not paid	\$2,016
Sales tax not collected	\$20,450

Source: Donovan Rypkema



Façade Improvement Program



Recommendation

The City of South Milwaukee with assistance from the Bucyrus Foundation has established a Façade Grant Program. Consider adopting the paint palette on the following page and require grant recipients to utilize a combination of approved paint colors when repainting or painting their facades. This assists in a coordinated aesthetic for the district moving forward. These colors are historically and contextually appropriate for the district and its region.

The revitalization of a neglected commercial district or residential neighborhood often begins with improvements to a single building or storefront.

Even simple changes such as the removal of non-historic materials, repairs, or a new paint job that calls attention to the building's original architectural details signal positive change and often stimulate similar improvements in neighboring buildings.

While this process sometimes begins spontaneously through the work of individual property or business owners, it can be accelerated when a community creates a façade improvement program. As a result, such programs are frequently among the implementing actions of comprehensive plans, downtown revitalization strategies, and historic preservation plans.

Façade improvement programs are incentive programs created to encourage property owners and businesses to improve the exterior appearance of their buildings and storefronts. They focus on either commercial or residential properties in historic or non-historic areas and provide financial incentives such as a matching grant or loan, a tax incentive, and design assistance.

Although it may seem to be a minor aspect of an improvement program, design assistance enables and helps ensure that building modifications comply with any historic district guidelines or other design guidelines developed specifically to enhance buildings in the target area.



POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

Exterior Building Paint Palette



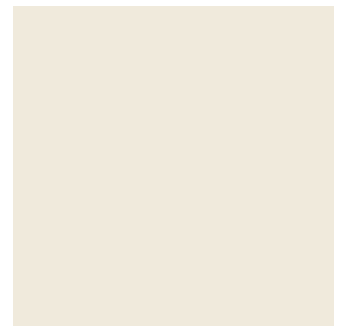
Bunglehouse Blue
SW 0048



Black Magic
SW 6991



Lanyard
SW 7680



Dover White
SW 6385



Cajun Red
SW 0008



Urbane Bronze
SW 7048



Dutch Tile Blue
SW 0031



Gallery Green
SW 0015



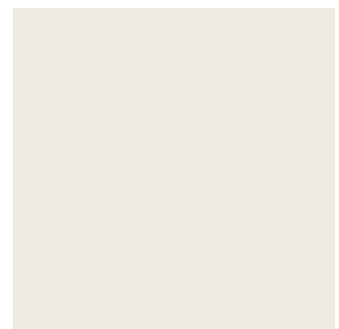
Cut the Mustard
SW 6384



Light French Gray
SW 0055



Salty Dog
SW 9177



Alabaster
SW 7008



Building Repair Grant

In addition to incentivizing the exterior or façade of historic downtown buildings, cities should consider also incentivizing building repair or revitalization to assist property owners with bringing their properties up to code or to become “retail ready.”

A common barrier for entrepreneurs in American downtowns is a lack of retail-ready space. Commercial properties may be in disrepair, they may not meet city code standards, or they may not serve a specific retail use without significant alteration.

While it's common for cities to incentivize façade improvements in a downtown area, it's also advised that cities identify key barriers for entrepreneurs and address those. Building Repair Grants, sometimes also called Revitalization Grants, incentivize bringing spaces up to code and scraping the interior to what is called a “vanilla shell space.”

Typically eligible activities covered by Building Repair Grants include improvements to:

- Roof
- HVAC
- Electrical
- Plumbing
- Insulation
- Structural
- Fire Safety
- ADA related Improvements

Projects which do not directly improve the longevity of the building are ineligible. It's recommended to structure Building Repair Grants similar to Façade Improvement Grants, so that the program structure and application are similar and easy to understand.



Recommendation

Add a Building Repair Grant to South Milwaukee's suite of incentives to assist with properties becoming retail-ready.



Revolving Loan Fund

The purpose of a downtown revolving loan fund is to assist cities, counties and development authorities in their efforts to revitalize and enhance downtown areas by providing below-market rate financing to fund capital projects in core downtown areas in order to spur commercial redevelopment.

Revolving Loan Funds (RLF) serve as sources of critical financing when credit access remains limited, supporting the development and expansion of small businesses, property owners, micro-enterprises and other special initiatives. RLFs are self-replenishing pools of money that utilize interest and principal payments on past loans to issue new ones, providing access to flexible sources of capital that can be used in combination with more conventional sources. Often, a RLF will act as a bridge between the amount the borrower can obtain on the private market and the amount needed to start or sustain a business or project, issuing loans at market or otherwise competitive and attractive rates while maintaining the ability to lower overall risk for institutional lenders (if any).

Generally, candidates for revolving loans must demonstrate that they have a viable downtown development project and clearly identify the proposed uses of the loan proceeds. Once approved, funds may be used for such activities as:

- real estate acquisition
- Development
- Redevelopment
- new construction
- rehabilitation of public and private infrastructure and facilities
- purchase of equipment



Recommendation

Establish a Revolving Loan Fund, with support from the Bucyrus Foundation, to assist property owners, entrepreneurs, and existing business owners with access to needed capital for new business ventures or revitalization.



Lease Assistance Incentive for New Businesses

Incentive programs are typically developed to target needs in specific areas. In Downtown South Milwaukee, there is a need to help property owners improve the exterior and interior of these historic buildings, coupled with the need to support and incentivize new retailers, restaurants, and cultural asset providers to locate in the Downtown area. A Lease Assistance Incentive program provides this direct support in a targeted and strategic way.

Purpose of Lease Assistance Incentive

The Rent/Lease Assistance Incentive Program for New Businesses is an incentive designed to provide financial assistance in the form of a rent reimbursement to targeted businesses that are wishing to locate within a targeted area of the Downtown area. This incentive is provided to help reduce the initial monthly lease rates that the business would pay and assist them through the first few months of operation. These early months are generally the months that businesses incur the greatest costs with the least amount of income in their new location.

Creating a Niche Marketplace

Recruiting and growing a density of like businesses can also create a niche destination marketplace. For example, if a Downtown continues to draw restaurants and unique boutiques and cultural uses, it will begin to emerge as a lifestyle destination. This also contributes to promotion and recruitment efforts to encourage continued small business growth and development.



Recommendation

Create and promote a Lease Assistance Incentive Program utilizing American Rescue Plan funds or others to support entrepreneurs and property owners. Couple this with technical assistance for start-ups to ensure success and retention.

5

downtown strategies

DESIGN

Thoughtful design supports a community's transformation by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart.

Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Sidewalks in an urban environment should incorporate different zones for various streetscape elements and activities. Understanding the zones along a downtown sidewalk allows community leaders to design and create an attractive streetscape and provide a safe, comfortable, and interesting experience for pedestrians.

Downtowns are dependent on pedestrian activity and pedestrians experience the downtown along the sidewalk. Ensuring the layout of the sidewalk area is properly designed is an important step to creating an inviting environment for people.

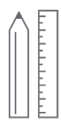
A properly designed downtown sidewalk contains three zones between the building and the street. An additional zone that greatly influences the success of a pedestrian environment is the Parking Zone. This area is between the sidewalk and the traffic lanes along the street.

The three sidewalk zones include:

1. **Frontage Zone:** Area closest to the building
2. **Pedestrian Zone:** Clear area allowing unobstructed pedestrian traffic
3. **Furnishing Zone:** Area closest to the street

** The width of each zone varies depending on the available space.*





Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Frontage Zone

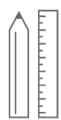
The **Frontage Zone** is closest to the building along the storefront. This area should be viewed as an outdoor extension of the adjacent business and allow the business owner to add elements and adorn their storefronts. This is a great area for potted plants, sandwich board signs, seating for outdoor dining, and merchandise displays. Occasionally public benches and seating are also located in this zone. This zone adds visual interest and activates the sidewalk.



Pedestrian Zone

The **Pedestrian Zone** is a clear walkway for pedestrians. This area should be clear of any obstructions and allow pedestrians to easily travel through the downtown area. While the width of the zone will vary, minimum standards exist in order to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A minimum width of 3 feet is standard for a basic sidewalk, however, that width will only accommodate one person walking. Pedestrian Zones in urban environments need a minimum of 5-7 feet and preferably 8-12 feet to provide a comfortable through zone in addition to the overall sidewalk width. A good rule of thumb is to accommodate at least 3 feet per person in the pedestrian zone. So, two sets of couples in a downtown area would need approximately 12 feet to comfortably pass each other.



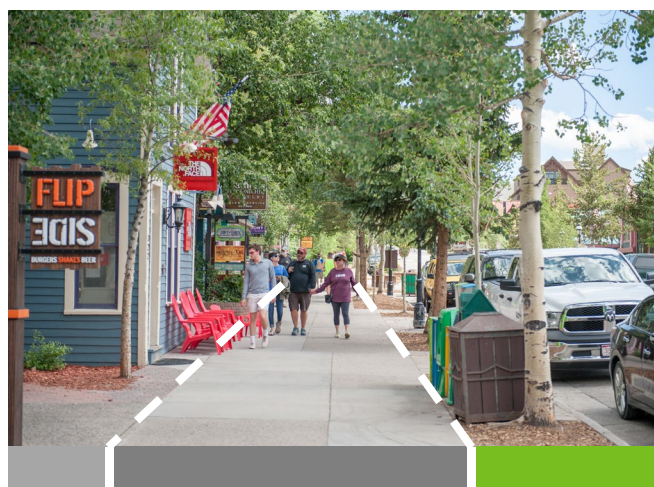


Sidewalk Zones

Creating an interesting environment for pedestrians

Furnishing Zone

The **Furnishing Zone** is adjacent to the curb where additional streetscape elements are located. These elements include items such as street trees, landscape planters, bike racks, trash and recycling receptacles, benches, and lighting. This zone is where the downtown streetscape really comes to life with multiple layers of details and amenities.



Parking Zone

This area is located between the street and the curb and provides an important buffer between the pedestrian activity along the sidewalk and the automobile traffic along the street. Pedestrians do not feel safe when walking directly adjacent to moving automobile traffic so providing a single row of on-street parking (parallel or angled) as a buffer is important.



Recommendation

Ensure that all sidewalks with adequate width in the downtown area accommodate the 3 zones. The city should continue to add appropriate streetscape elements to the Furnishing Zone. Encourage business owners at Merchant Meetings to activate the Frontage Zone with vibrancy elements in an effort to show activity throughout downtown. Façade grants can be used for these improvements.

Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Given the amount of pedestrian traffic present in a downtown area, it is important that intersections are treated as special spaces since they are where pedestrians and vehicular traffic interact.

A variety of treatments can be installed to ensure that intersections are clearly visible to automobiles, provide a safe crossing area for pedestrians, and create an attractive node for the downtown area. Intersection treatments can range from basic striping to more advanced custom paver designs. All levels of treatments are acceptable and will work to enhance the safety and sense of place of the downtown.

At a minimum, ensure that all intersections in the downtown area are properly striped with crosswalks and signage where necessary. This is important to alert pedestrians and drivers that special attention should be paid to this area.

Basic Striped Crosswalks

A basic crosswalk is completely acceptable. White street paint should be used because it is more aesthetically pleasing than yellow "caution" paint. Basic street paint can be an immediate, low-cost option, but thermoplastic road marking material will have a much longer lifespan.



Intersection Treatments

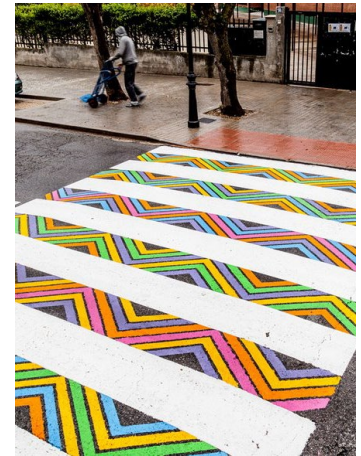
Crosswalks and Intersections

Painted and Interactive Art Crosswalks

A common trend is to use crosswalks as an opportunity to incorporate public art and creative displays into the downtown area. These can range from a mural-type project to creative 3D optical illusion treatments. Painted crosswalks can have a tremendous impact with a modest budget. The lifespan of painted crosswalks will likely be less than 5 years depending on traffic volume.



Photograph via Hattiesburg (Mississippi) Pocket Museum

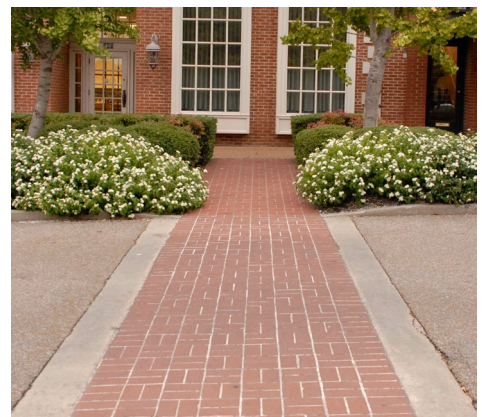


Photograph by Rafael Perez Martinez

Stamped Asphalt or Paver Crosswalks

Advancements with stamped asphalt techniques have provide a variety of cost-effective options for crosswalk and intersection treatments. While not a long-term material, this treatment can provide the look of pavers at a fraction of the cost. Be aware that the lifespan for stamped asphalt is likely less than 10 years depending on the volume of traffic.

While paver crosswalks are more costly, they are a long-term material, make a visual impact on the downtown, and create a quaint sense of place. A simple white border painted along the edges provide contrast making the pavers more visible.



Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Raised Crosswalks

In order to clearly signal to drivers that pedestrians are prioritized in the area, raised crosswalks are an appropriate alternative. These crosswalks are raised to the same level as the sidewalk creating a level crossing for pedestrians. This forces automobiles to slowly drive up and over the pedestrian crossing, causing them to slow to a safe speed, rather than pedestrians stepping down into the automobile-focused street.



Intersection Treatments

More advanced treatments expand into the entire intersection rather than simply focusing on the crosswalks. Intersection treatments range from short-term, low budget options to advanced, higher cost alternatives.

Painted Intersection

Some communities have used street paint to create bold statements throughout their downtown intersections. Similar to the painted crosswalks, the entire intersection can be used as a canvas for public art. With paint, the possibilities are endless and can range from a simple logo to a large mural. The lifespan of painted intersections will likely be less than 5 years depending on traffic volume.



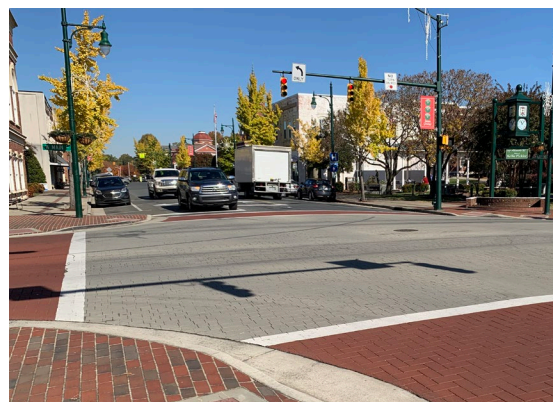


Intersection Treatments

Crosswalks and Intersections

Stamped Asphalt or Paver Intersections

Creative treatments with pavers have become more popular in recent years. Pavers mimic historic materials commonly found in downtown streets and create an appealing visual character. Paver treatments can vary from simple pavers to patterns and inlaid logos. These treatments are costly but provide visitors with a very high-quality impression of the downtown area. Pavers are a long-lasting material, but costly. Stamped asphalt can be used as an alternative but will likely have a lifespan of less than 10 years.



Recommendation

Incrementally upgrade major intersections in the downtown with long-term treatments over time. Utilize crosswalks and intersections as an opportunity to incorporate color and public art into the downtown space.



Vacant Lots & Parking Lots

Short-term Repair Strategies

Vacant lots and parking lots create gaps and represent a major challenge to creating a pedestrian-friendly, walkable environment in the downtown area. The gaps create barriers for pedestrians and make connections between businesses and areas difficult.

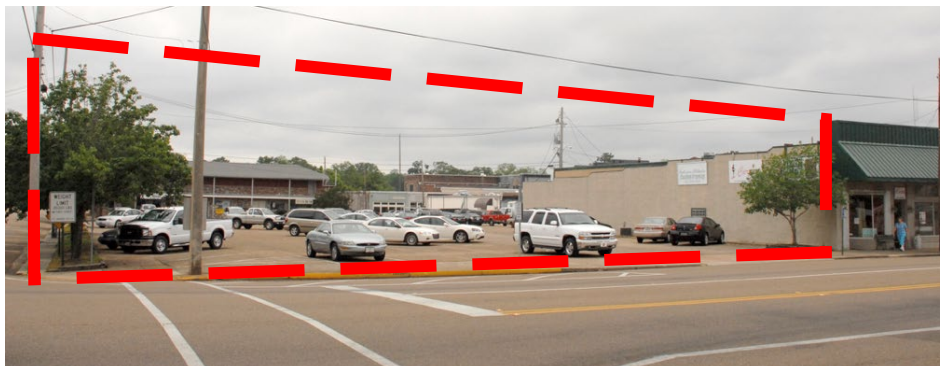
The Impact of “Missing Teeth”

Downtown districts must offer a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment in order to be successful. While commercial areas along highway corridors focus on automobile traffic, downtown districts are different. They are mixed-use areas with a variety of amenities focused on attracting people. In order for a downtown area to function properly, it must be an active place with people present throughout the day.

Designers and planners have learned from centuries of city planning and design, what creates a place and environment for people. One of the most critical principles of creating a space for people, is having a sense of enclosure. In a downtown area, the facades of the buildings literally form a wall along the street. This wall, when combined with the buildings across the street, establish the feeling of an outdoor room. This “room” provides the foundation for creating a comfortable, walkable environment for pedestrians.

Every downtown experienced the loss of buildings for various reasons throughout time. Fire, demolition, decay, and unfortunate Urban Renewal practices are common causes of loss. These vacant lots either remain, or more than likely, have been converted into parking lots as the downtown area attempted to compete with the auto-centric strip malls, fast-food restaurants, and shopping centers along the commercial corridors.

These vacant lots scattered throughout the downtown create voids in the continuous facades of buildings. In planning and design fields these voids and gaps are often referred to as “missing teeth.” The gaps create barriers for pedestrians and make connections between businesses and areas difficult because people are oftentimes not willing to continue past these voids.



This corner parking lot breaks the “wall” of the streetscape and creates a gap in the downtown area for pedestrian activity. These gaps negatively impact the connectivity and walkability of a downtown district.



DESIGN

Vacant Lots & Parking Lots

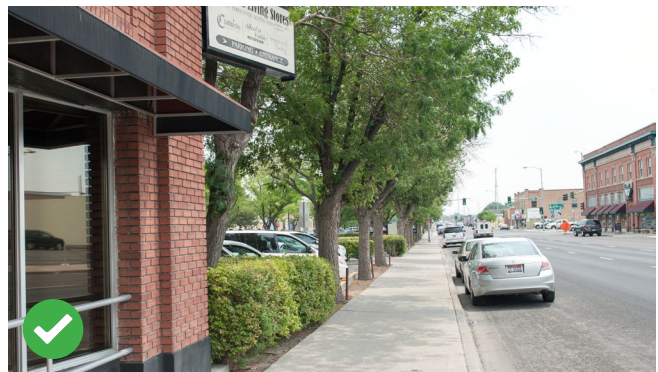
Short-term repair strategies

Ideally these lots would house an infill development that is compatible with the surrounding historic structures. While this will always be the long-term goal, short-term strategies may also be taken to mitigate the impact of the missing teeth and reestablish the feeling of a “wall.” Short-term strategies could include elements such as landscaping, fencing, railing, faux facades, or public art.

These short-term strategies will begin to stitch the downtown back together again and reestablish a critical component of the streetscape. Incremental repairs such as these will slowly begin to transform how the streetscape functions and lay the foundation for more detailed interventions in the future.



Without any interventions, vacant lots create gaps in the downtown area and present major challenges for pedestrian connectivity throughout the area.



A low-growing hedge and canopy trees reestablish the streetscape wall along a parking lot in Downtown Twin Falls, Idaho.



A short brick wall and metal fencing screen a vacant lot and reestablish the streetscape “wall” in Downtown Starkville, Mississippi. The vacant lot is being used as an outdoor seating area for the adjacent restaurants.



Eupora, Mississippi utilized a faux façade on a vacant lot to mimic the frontage of a former storefront. The space now houses an art park adjacent to the historic BLY Theatre.



Recommendation

Utilize short-term repair strategies to mitigate the negative impact of vacant lots and parking lots along major corridors in the downtown area.

Selfie Wall

Engagement Art

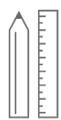
"Selfie walls" are an exciting trend in communities around the country. Aimed at engaging people, particularly the younger generations, and generating traffic via social media, selfie walls are murals that encourage visitors to take selfie photos. Often, they are very simple in design and display the community or district name or an inspirational message. These installations can generate a buzz on social media and serve as a destination for visitors traveling nearby.

Corinth, Mississippi enlisted the services of a local artist to design an interactive mural in a prominent location downtown in order to attract and encourage engagement from visitors. The mural featured a Coca Cola theme which is a nod to Corinth's history as one of the first bottling locations in Mississippi. The pouring of the bottle encourages visitors to interact with the mural in photographs. The artist also included a hashtag message "#enjoycorinth" which encourages visitors to include that hashtag in their social media posts. This allows community leaders to easily monitor social media traffic related to the mural which gives them insight into the typical audience visiting the location.



Recommendation

Several beautiful murals have been installed in and around Downtown South Milwaukee. Continue that path, and incorporate an interactive mural with a unique hashtag to encourage social media promotion of your visitors.



Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Rather than viewing vacant storefronts as a negative, use them as a canvas for public art or other creative displays. These displays can distract visitors from the vacancy, create an attraction, and provide an opportunity to highlight something unique about your community.



Vacant storefronts are an inevitable challenge in every downtown. Some are only vacant for a short period of time while others seem to linger for decades. While storefront vacancies provide a great opportunity for a new business, visually they create challenges for the downtown areas and quickly turn into an eyesore.

It is important for community leaders to take an active role in managing downtown vacancies and working with property owners to ensure

they are constantly attempting to promote and fill their storefronts. In the meantime, however, it is critical for communities to develop short-term strategies for maintaining vacant storefronts so they do not detract from the character of the downtown or negatively impact surrounding properties.

Short-term strategies that can lessen the impact of storefront vacancies could include:

- "Opportunity" listing posters
- Paint Boarded Storefronts and Upper Floor Windows
- Temporary Gallery Displays
- Know the Locals Posters
- Large-scale Banner Displays



Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

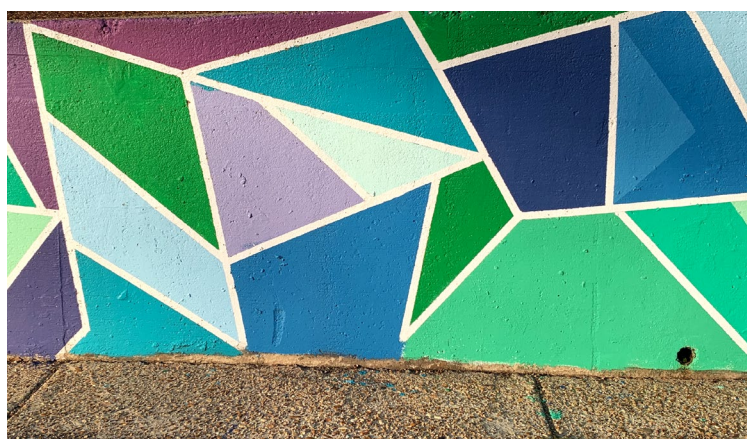
"Opportunity" Listing Posters

Rather than a simple "For Sale" or "For Lease" sign purchased at the local hardware store, a coordinated effort to market the vacant buildings can create a totally different perception of the downtown. Custom, branded posters advertising the vacant properties as "Full of Opportunity" will provide a great alternative to standard sale or lease signs. This message shifts the narrative from a negative empty storefront to a story in the making. What could happen in this space? Who will be the next entrepreneur to start a new adventure here? When visitors see these signs throughout the downtown area, it is apparent that there is an organized effort to generate activity in the downtown area and provides a totally different impression than seeing for sale signs throughout the downtown.



Paint Boarded Storefronts and Upper-floor Windows

Nothing gives the impression of a dying downtown worse than boarded up storefronts and windows. Visitors assume this is indicative of a struggling community with issues related to vandalism and crime. Short-term action can be taken to prevent that type of impression on visitors. Use the plywood as a canvas to create a public art project. Oftentimes local art teachers or artist can be engaged in this short-term strategy. Rather than painting upper floor windows beige, use solid black to mimic an actual window. Light colors often bring attention to the boarded-up or bricked windows while black is not as noticeable. Of course, artwork is welcome on the upper floor windows as well when possible.



Hint: If you do not have access to an artist, use painters' tape, 3-4 paint colors, and a paint-by-number approach to create a geometric mosaic. Add a public engagement component by engaging children who can easily participate in this type of artwork.

Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Temporary Gallery Displays

Work with the property owners to use the vacant storefront as a temporary gallery space. Use easels to display artwork from local artists or students. Students will love seeing their artwork displayed and the display may also attract family members to the downtown area.

Another option is to print oversized historic photographs of the town and display them in the storefront. This will allow people to appreciate the beauty of the downtown area and the buildings. Pipe-and-drape systems or simple drop cloths can be used as a backdrop for the displays and screen the rest of the vacant property from view.



Know the Locals Posters

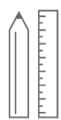
Another creative strategy is to use the vacant storefronts as a canvas for telling the story of your community. What is the history of the building? Who are the interesting characters in your community? Who are the business owners that are an important piece of the downtown fabric? Develop custom posters that tell those stories and display them in the vacant storefront windows. These could feature local residents, business owners, or other interesting stories. The posters should include a photograph and a brief quote.

This type of campaign could utilize a theme of "Did you Know?" or "My Why." A poster could include a historic photograph and tell the story of the building such as,

"Did you know that 100 Main Street was originally a hospital? The Washington County Hospital was located on this site from 1879-1923..."

Another poster could include a portrait and tell the story of why a local business owner chose to locate in your downtown:

"I have been baking since I was a kid and have always dreamed of opening a bakery. My 'why' is because downtown is the heart of this community and I want to be a part of the next chapter of this community's story."



Vacant Storefronts Displays

Short-term Strategies

Large-scale Banner Displays

A longer-term strategy is to install custom billboard-type signage across the storefronts. This is particularly useful in situations where the building is in a state of extreme disrepair. Laurel, Mississippi created large display banners celebrating famous members from the community. The banners disguise the dilapidated building and provide an opportunity to create a tourism attraction by promoting the unique stories of the community.



Before



Detail

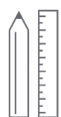


After



Recommendation

Use vacant storefronts to display art, creative displays, or promotional material that tell the story of downtown. Work with property owners to implement short-term improvement strategies in vacant storefronts.



Creative Business Signage

Unique & Interesting

Businesses should install signage that reflects their unique identity and enhances the character of the downtown area. Three-dimensional, custom shaped, and individually lettered signs are appropriate. Properly illuminated signs, hanging and blade signs, painted signs, as well as hand-painted storefront windows should be encouraged.

Simple, two-dimensional pan signs and cabinet signs should be discouraged as they do not enhance the character of downtown. Existing business signs should be properly maintained. Any broken or missing signs should be removed and replaced immediately as to not detract from surrounding properties, serve as an eyesore, and negatively impact a visitor's impression of the downtown.



Broken and missing signs create a negative impression for visitors.



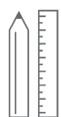
Two-dimensional pan signs should be discouraged because they are not visually interesting and do not provide the detail needed to create a unique downtown character.



All signs should respect and complement the architectural details of the building. Signs that overlap brick details should be discouraged.



Cabinet signs are not appropriate in a downtown area and should be discouraged.



DESIGN

Creative Business Signage

Unique & Interesting



downtown strategies



Recommendation

Encourage business owners to install signage that reflects their unique identify and enhances the character of the downtown area. Three-dimensional, custom shaped, hand-painted, and individually lettered signs should be encouraged. Facade grants can be utilized for this purpose.



6

downtown strategies

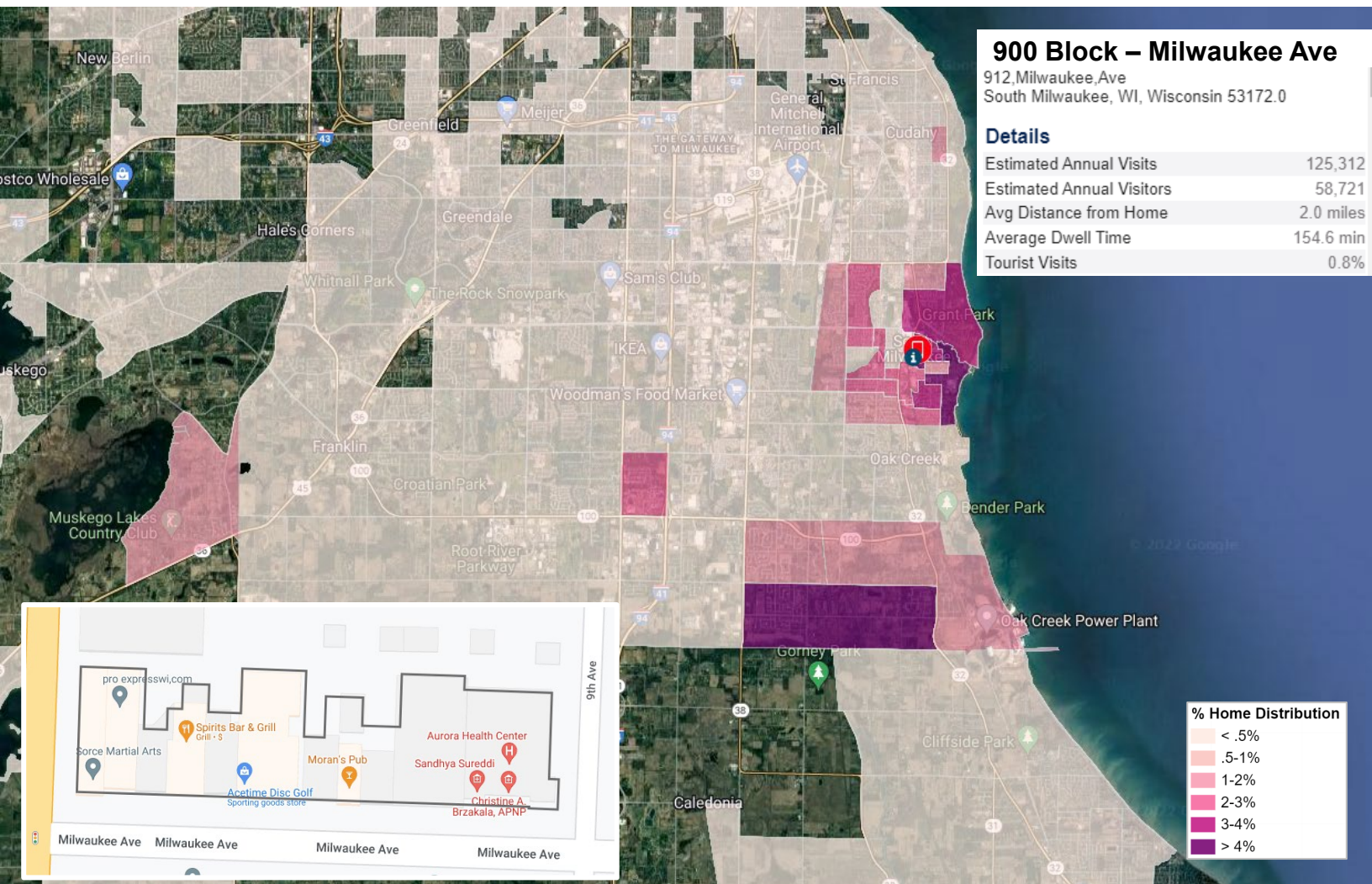
TOURISM & PROMOTION

Smart promotion initiatives position your Downtown or commercial district as the center of the community and hub of economic activity, while creating a positive image that showcases a community's unique characteristics.

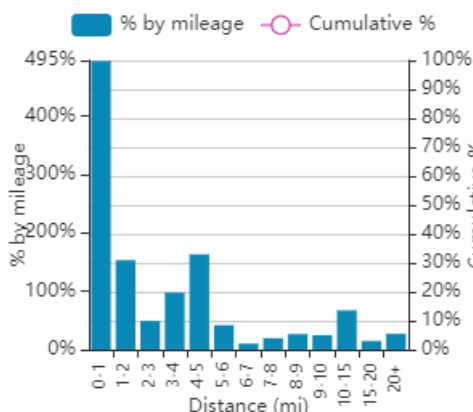


TOURISM & PROMOTION

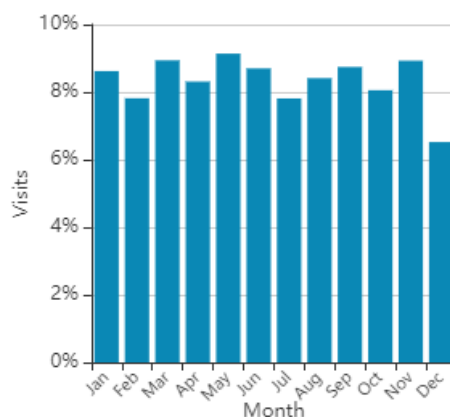
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



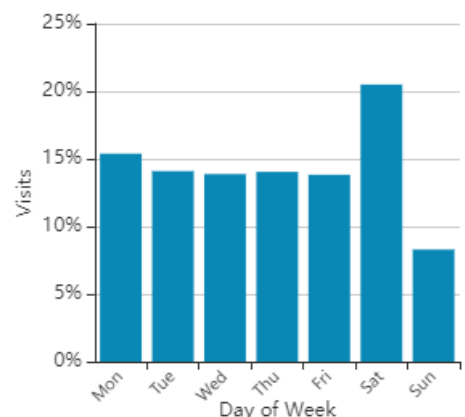
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month



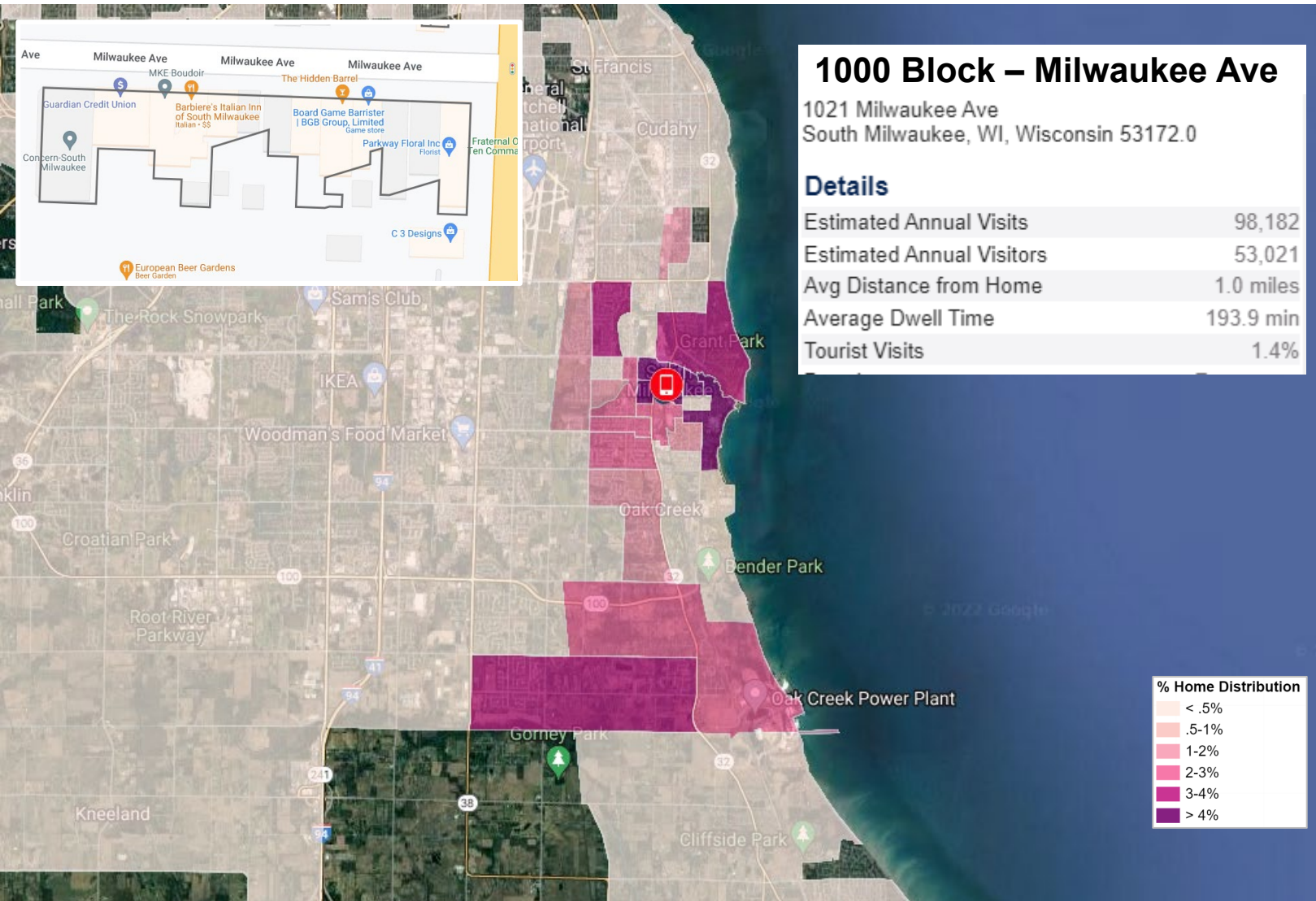
Visits by Day



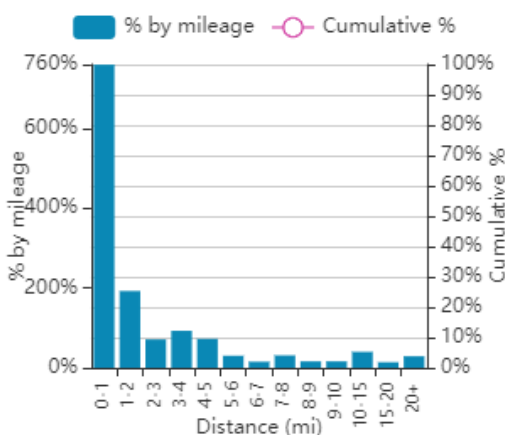


TOURISM & PROMOTION

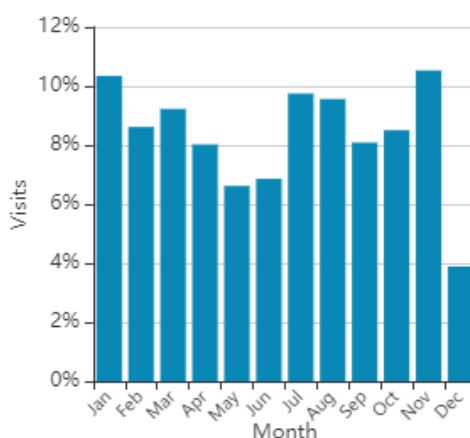
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



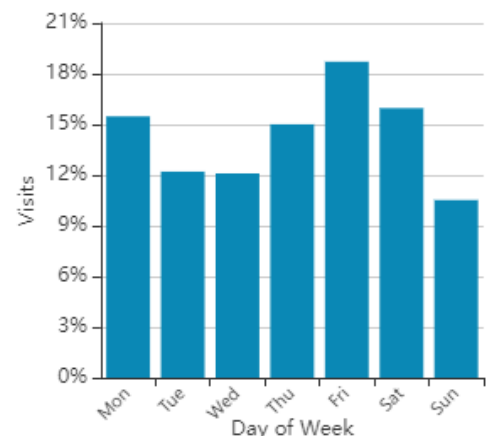
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month



Visits by Day

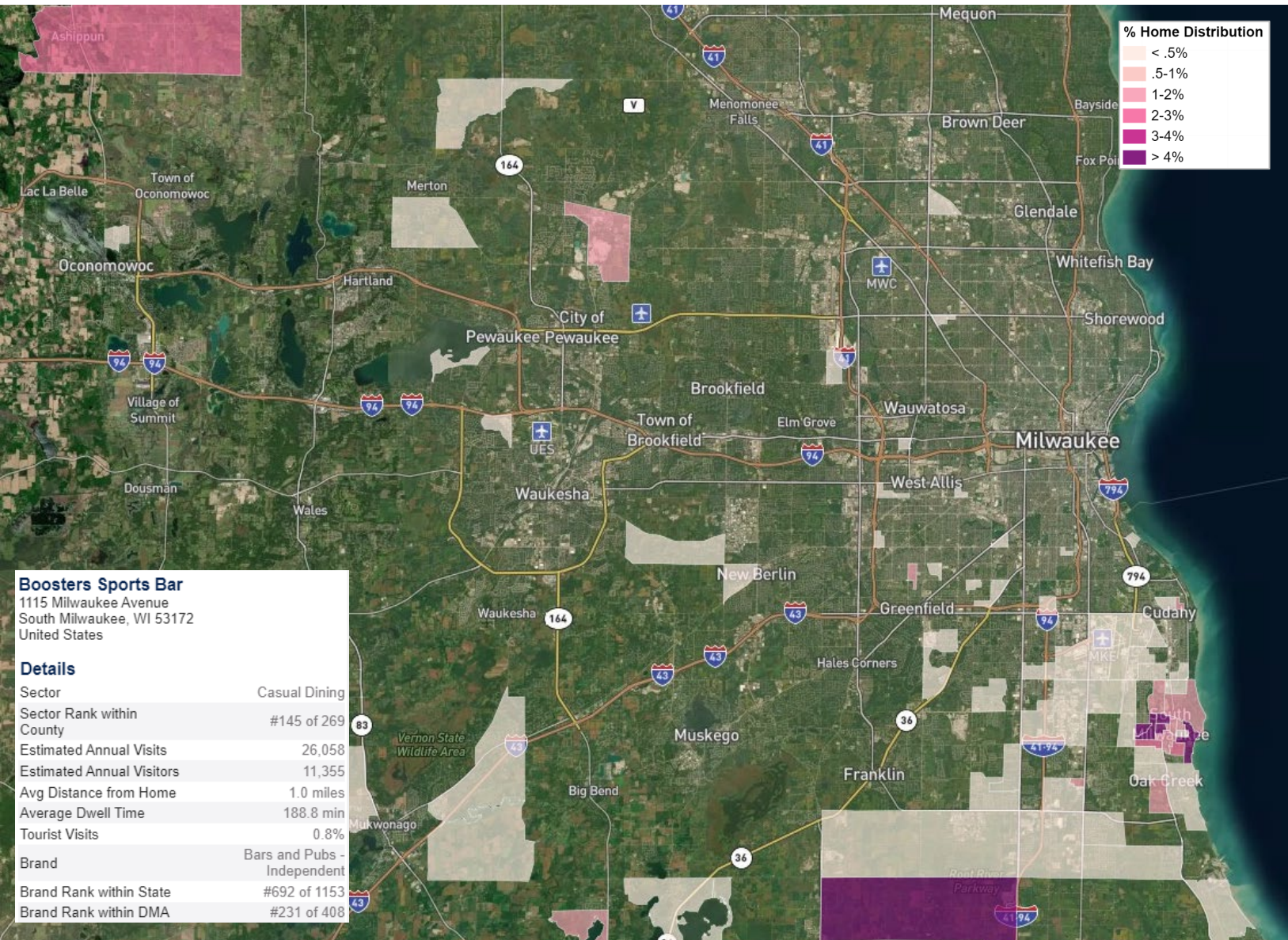




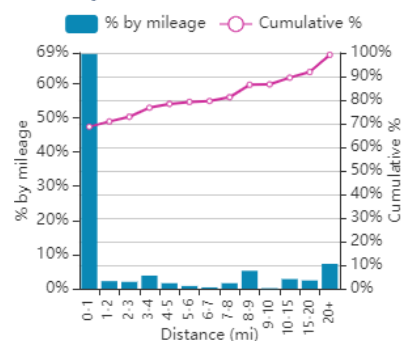
TOURISM & PROMOTION

downtown strategies

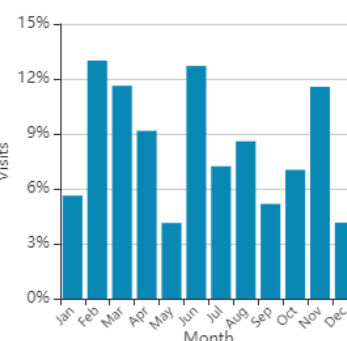
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



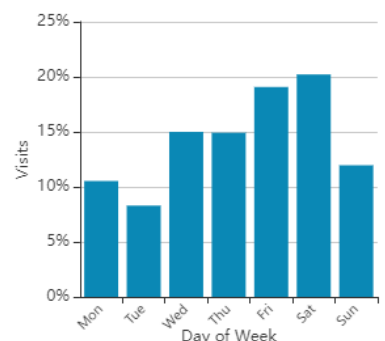
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month



Visits by Day

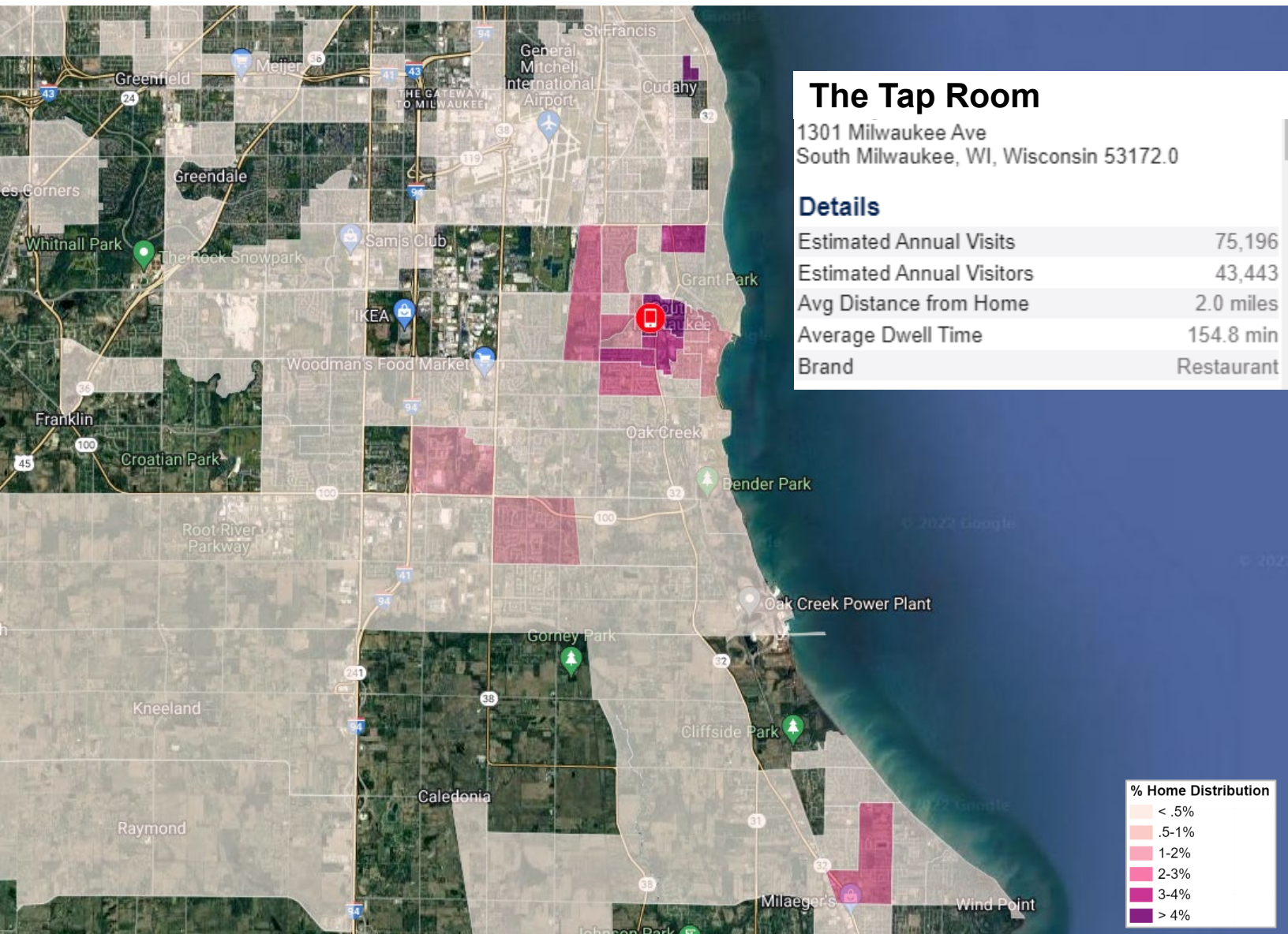




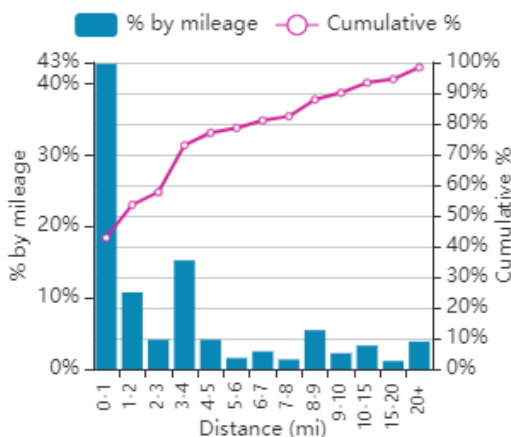
downtown strategies

TOURISM & PROMOTION

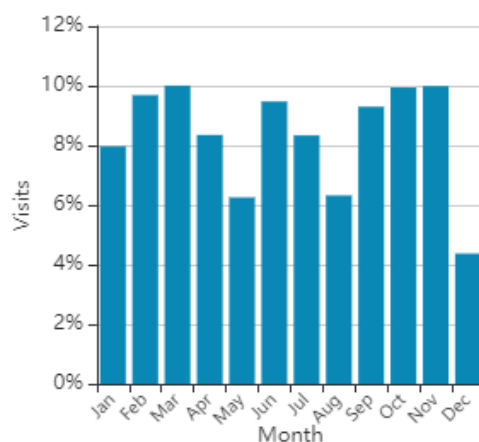
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



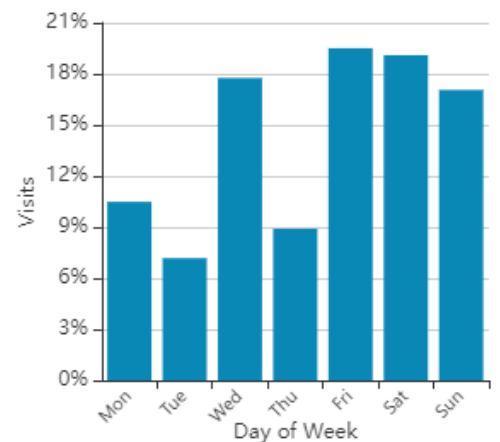
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month

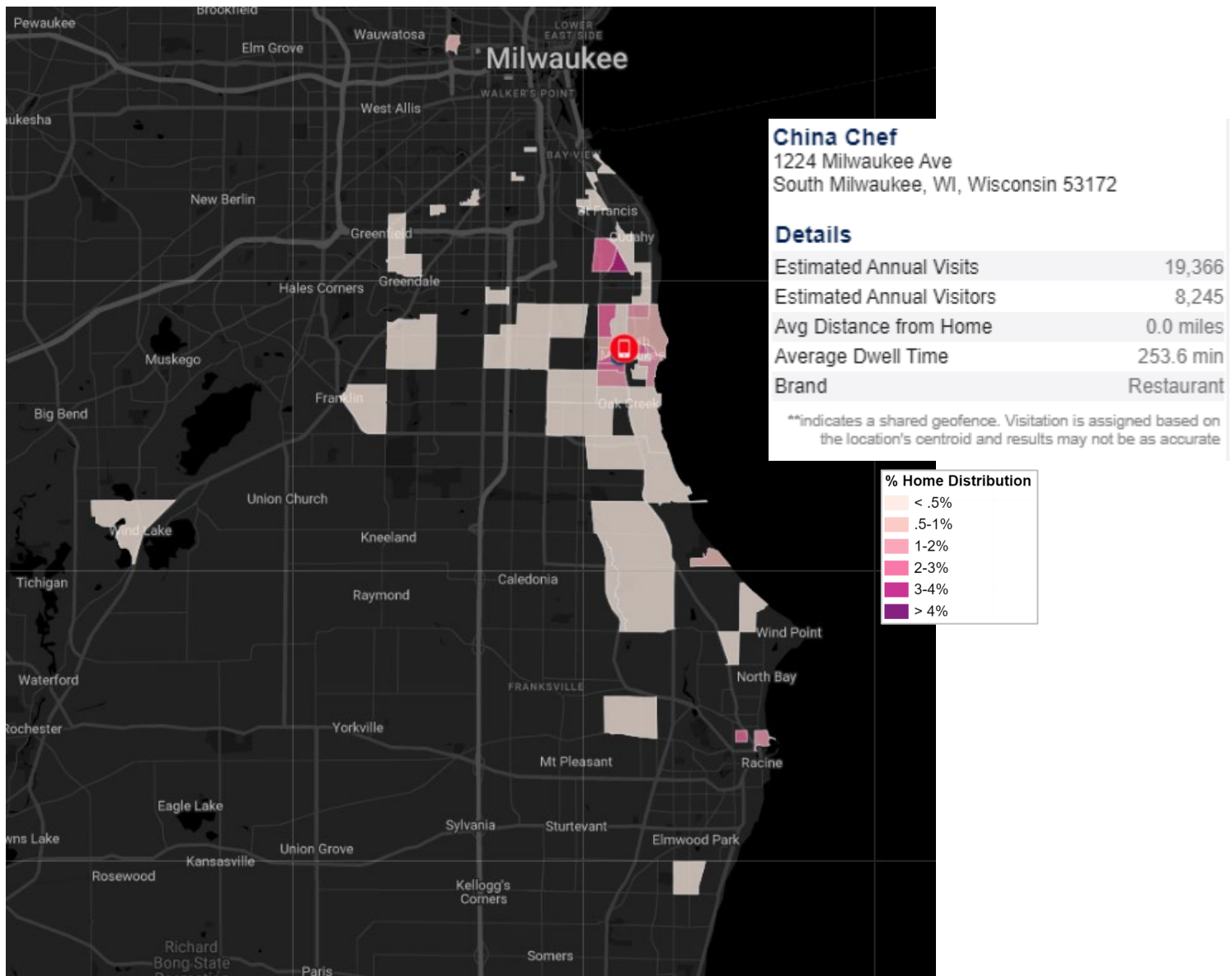


Visits by Day

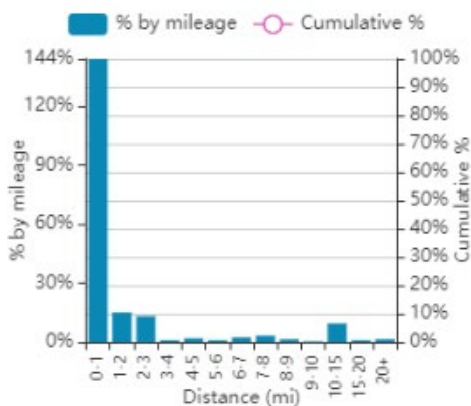




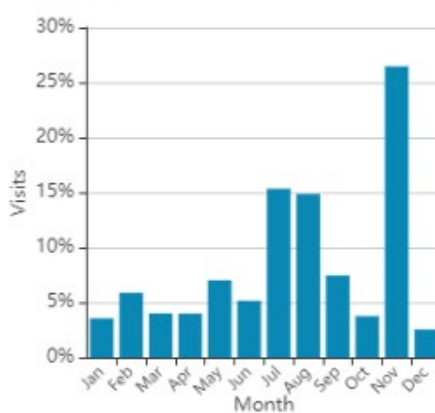
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



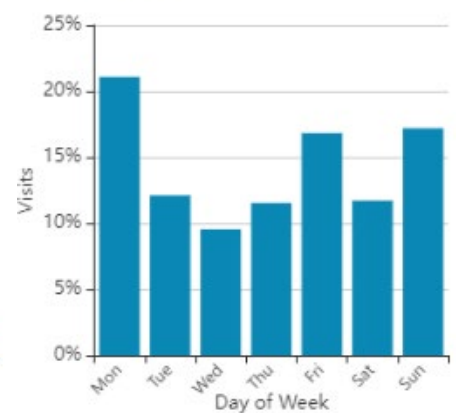
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month



Visits by Day





Wayfinding Signage

Wayfinding in Downtown landscapes proves to be critical beyond basic navigation. Identification and information represented in elements such as monuments, directional systems, directories, interpretive and even regulatory signs enrich our experiences with Downtown environments.

In order to create a successful wayfinding system, even in an age of smartphones and GPS, physical wayfinding elements and systems strengthen brands by improving the legibility, navigation, understanding, and accessibility of the environment.

Wayfinding Signage Systems

- Reinforce an area's defining history, architecture, and landmarks
- Give less prominent districts and destinations a much-needed boost
- Help the public find parking, improve traffic flow and ease the transition between car, pedestrian and transit use
- Reduce visual clutter with clear, consolidated and on-brand information and identity

The following is a set of signage features an example of a well implemented comprehensive signage system:



Recommendation

While some directional signage exists in the South Milwaukee community, it is recommended to add signs within the downtown, including those on the pedestrian level, pointing residents and visitors to public parking, Farmer's Market, and other points of interest. Begin by signing each public parking lot, and installing signs pointing to those lots as well.



Comprehensive Wayfinding Signage

Provided is an example of a comprehensive wayfinding signage system example. The system begins with welcome signs at the edge of the municipality and follow thereafter with large directional signs that reduce in size as the traveler's speed reduces and as he nears the interior of the community. Incorporating the existing South Milwaukee brand marks will be essential.

Example of well-designed comprehensive system



Design by: Deep Fried Creative



TOURISM & PROMOTION

Monthly Retailer Meetings

Communication is Key

Communication is key within the network of downtown businesses. Gathering regular feedback regarding the successes and challenges within the downtown is critical. This is especially true with downtown events and promotions.

The goal of most tourism initiatives is to bring activity into the downtown area in order to connect customers with local businesses. Ideally retailers and restaurants are able to capitalize on the increased traffic from the event and increase sales during that time.

Retailer Text Group

The appropriate downtown organization (Main Street Association, Downtown Business Association, chamber of commerce, etc.) should organize a text group for downtown retailers. This allows for easy communication between the organization and retail group as well as communication from retailers. Text-based communication allows for fast engagement and response.

Retailer Meetings

In addition to the text group, regular meetings with retailers should be held monthly or quarterly to discuss topics relevant to downtown. This allows for organizations to explain upcoming events; notify them of disruptions such as street closures; outline upcoming policy changes or political affairs; and gather feedback from previous events and promotions.

Regular communication with the retailers can improve the relationship between the various business owners as well as with the partnering organization. The organization can utilize the feedback from the meetings to determine what worked, what did not work, and what can be modified with future events to ensure that the return on investment is maximized. These meetings should be brief, focused, and productive.

Note: A similar, but less-frequent structure should be established with downtown restaurateurs.



Recommendation

Establish a group text with all downtown retail business owners. Host monthly (or quarterly) meetings with retailers to discuss upcoming and past events, promotions, or other relevant topics.



Social Media Presence



Recommendation

Establish a presence on social media for City of South Milwaukee and/or Downtown South Milwaukee. Using the template provided, create a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or annual content calendar to pre-plan social media posts and ensure topical and timely information is shared frequently enough to be maximally effective for your brand and efforts. Begin with Facebook and expand to other platforms as engagement rises.

Organizing and managing a posting schedule

Creating a posting schedule that works is a process of constant experimentation and refinement. In the end, this pays off not only with a social media content calendar that delivers results, but also by helping you continually gain a better understanding of what your audience is seeking. As you continue to fill in your social media calendar, play around with different posting times and the number of times per week you post. You'll gain tremendous insight into what works specifically for your audience.

Below are suggestions based on the most up-to-date research on how often to post to each social media platform for maximum visibility:

Facebook pages: 1-2 per day

Twitter: 3-10 times per day

Instagram: 1-3 times per day

Instagram Stories: 2-5 times per day

Pinterest: 3-20 times per day

LinkedIn: 1-2 times per week



Social Media Presence

Tracking and analyzing your social media content calendar

Account for specific campaigns across different social platforms. Different social media platforms serve different purposes, so you should plan strategically when looking to increase the reach of a given post on other platforms. It's important to remember that just because a post is popular on one platform, doesn't mean it will perform well on the others—for example, a post that does well on Instagram may need to be reused as the featured image for a more text-heavy post on LinkedIn, rather than being reshared without any changes.

Follow-up on your scheduled posts by establishing a process of responding and engaging with your audience.

As the marketer, your time is too valuable to spend deciding what to post on every single day. A well-planned out social media content calendar lets you use your time to plan for the future and focus on other aspects of your marketing strategy.

Benefits of using a Social Media Content Calendar

- Ensures you're sharing a good mix of content types.
- Guarantees people who are logged in at the same time every day don't see the same posts over and over.
- Maximizes the impact and reach of your content.
- Helps you recognize just how many event posts you're doing.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Should you be using Facebook to promote your community to residents and tourists?

68% of U.S. adults use Facebook and 51% of them use it several times a day.

The short answer? **Yes.** These tips and strategies will help you get the most out of your Facebook marketing efforts.

Create a Captivating Profile

A **profile picture** is the first point of contact your audience interacts with on your page. Easy recognition of the picture is key to being liked and found on Facebook search. Cluttering a profile picture with slogans, contact details is not recommended. Consistency with your branding is important for the coherence of your image.

Cover photos are another element representing your brand and speak loud to your customers as the first impression. Your cover photo should be high quality, engaging and eye catching. Don't clutter it with texts and be sure to change it often or during your campaigns.

Craft a Complete 'About' Page

This is the most visited section of your Facebook profile and informs your audience about your brand and values. Whenever visitors want to find out more information about your business, they head to this section. It is important to give them a clear and concise snapshot of what your brand is about. **Your mission, vision, your story, company information and any other relevant details that best showcase your brand.** Facebook allows you to customize sections that record your milestones, awards, etc.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Customize the 'Call to Action' Button on your Page

A **call-to-action button** is what prompts people to take a certain action. The button prompts things like 'Sign Up', 'Call Now', 'Book Now', 'Watch Video', etc. and users are offered the possibility to customize it to different URL destinations they consider pertinent. As a marketer, this gives you the opportunity to drive traffic from your Facebook page to your site easily. This can be added by simply clicking on the page and clicking on the 'Add a Button' box, choose which one you want to create and insert the URL you want to direct visitors to. Facebook Insights will help you measure and report the effectiveness of the CTA button.

Know your Audience

Facebook demographics are used to ensure you know your customer personas. They are continuously evolving hence the need to have tools to help you measure, report and keep track of the changes. Knowing your customers' behaviors will help you tailor your marketing campaigns and promotions to target them. **The below questions can help you better understand your ideal customers:**

- What is your brand user demographic? Their age, education background, gender, income level, etc.
- Which is the goal of your Facebook campaign? This helps you target the right audience that has the highest chances of being interested in your offer.
- Which is your competitive advantage? What differentiates you from other Downtowns?

Create Engaging Content

One of the most important Facebook rules is **creating content that probes your audience to take action**. Developing an engaging relationship with your followers is what will determine their interaction with your brand. As content creator, you should not just stick to general statements, opinions and facts but be bold and spice up your content with some fun. Questions, photos that ask questions, and fill-in the blanks are some examples of content that entice people to act.



Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Don't Forget to Engage

Respond to conversations in the right rhythm and cadence, **be responsive and social**. Going out of your way to make your audience feel important makes them bond with your brand. Quick feedbacks on Facebook are highly appreciated especially in the early stages of community building. This shows the brand commitment to customer service and smooth communication with its customers.

Create a Balanced Posting Strategy

How frequent you publish posts and when you post them is vital for your Facebook marketing activity. Posting too often might irritate your followers. On the other hand, not posting frequently enough might reduce your chances of credibility and authenticity. Striking a good balance between the two is the key to a strong brand presence.

Facebook insights will greatly help with this as once you have observed the performance of your previous posts you may customize the frequency, timing and strategy as required. **Here are some tips to help as you start off:**

- 1 Afternoons and evenings are the times of the day when most people visit their Facebook account so post between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.
 - *However, avoid being robotic by posting at the exact time daily.*
- 2 Posting twice a day is adequate to create awareness and gain post impressions. This ensures consistency and originality without looking spammy.
- 3 Always include images where possible.

There are apps and platforms that allow you to schedule posts in advance, so you're not on the clock 24/7.



Mistakes to **Avoid** in Facebook Marketing

Facebook gives organizations a platform to showcase its character, promote events, and connect with its users.

But with these benefits comes the potential for mistakes that can damage your brand.

What Not to Do

- 1 Never have a personal profile to represent a brand. Create an authentic Facebook Business Page.
- 2 Never publish personal content on your brand page. Always assign page roles on need-to basis and post as a brand not as a private person.
- 3 Never spam your followers. Aim to be classy, yet perceptive.

It is of outmost importance for all brands to understand how to properly manage a Facebook business page. The Facebook business page best practices previously listed aid to tight the connection between communities and brands. You get noticed, followed and engage with your target audience creating a reliable pool for lead generation.

But as Facebook is continuously evolving, you need to be up to date and willing to adapt and try different strategies to see massive success and results for your business.



Retail Promotion Strategies



Recommendation

Incorporate retail promotion strategies into Downtown South Milwaukee's program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings. Work with retailers to understand the benefits to capitalizing on existing events and staying open during those events.

In simple terms, tourism involves connecting downtown visitors with retailers and restaurants. This can take place through large community-wide events and festivals or small-scale retail promotional events such as farm-to-table dinners, ladies shopping nights, and arts events among others.

Data outlined in the Market Analysis outlines the profile of locals and regular visitors to the community. These people shop for their daily needs in South Milwaukee on a regular basis. This group should be the focus of local promotional events since they are already in the community and simply need to be enticed to visit the downtown area.

After 5 Events

One of the biggest ongoing complaints from the public about small-town downtowns is that stores close at or before 5:00 pm, making it difficult for working patrons to shop locally. Create a Facebook 'event' for an After 5 Shopping Night. Hold these event nights when stores are typically not open after 5 pm. By creating a Facebook Event, you'll also see "who's going" which can help you build a list of local shopping supporters. A key benefit of Facebook Events is that when a "friend" says they are "going" to an event, their friends will also learn about it too. Facebook Events are simple ways to crowd source for events.

Versatile Signage

Work with local retailers to install professionally branded sandwich board signs in front of their business. These signs are extremely adaptable: they can feature specials, words of humor, social media promotions, and most importantly, they provide readable content at sidewalk-level for pedestrians who don't always look left or right in a storefront window. They also give visual evidence that there is vitality and commerce in the business district.



Consistent sandwich board signs with the community logo can create a unified appearance and add activity to the sidewalk in downtown.



Retail Promotion Strategies

Cooperative Promotion

Focus on the comparative aspects of retailing in the district, clustering stores that are in the same category and can be promoted together. Whether it's a wine tasting event for ladies' night, where participants can pop-in to each participating store to taste a unique wine and do a little shopping while they're there, or a seasonal event like Christmas Open House, promoting retailers together within the Downtown District begins to brand downtown as a retail destination.

Quarterly Retail Promotional Events

Develop simple, quarterly events designed to engage local residents. These could be shopping events, food events, live music, or a combination. These events should not be large festivals. Rather they should be coordinated with the local retailers and restaurants to provide a special experience for the students.

An example of this type of event is an UnWine Downtown event in Starkville, Mississippi, which is a wine tasting retail event organized by the Main Street Association. Downtown retailers are provided with different brands of wine purchased at a discount from a local provider by the Main Street Association. Some retailers also include hors d'oeuvres. The Main Street Association promotes the event on social media. Tickets cost \$20-25 and retailers offer a 20% discount to participants.

Participants meet at the Main Street office at the beginning of the event and receive a plastic custom branded wine glass. They then spend several hours visiting the participating retailers where they shop and sample various wines. Although the event only attracts 175-200 participants, retailers routinely state that this is one of their biggest sales nights.



Wine tasting may not fit the targeted demographic, but the concept of specifically connecting the target audience with the retailers and restaurants downtown should be explored.

Small-scale events that are targeted for certain segments of downtown should be prioritized over large-scale events that exhaust organizational resources and time.



TOURISM & PROMOTION

Retail Promotion Strategies

Add-on Events

Rather than adding to the current workload of the downtown organization, connecting the dots between existing events and promotions can be a successful strategy for enhancing existing efforts.

Oftentimes organizations, businesses, or other groups host events and promotions in order to benefit their respective interests. These types of events could be fundraiser events, races, or other activities which are small events with limited impact on the overall downtown. However, coordinating and combining those efforts can greatly enhance the visibility and impact of those individual events. The downtown organizations should play a role in connecting the dots between existing efforts taking place downtown.

For example, in one community an organization hosts a race (5K, 10K, and half marathon) every January. Another group hosts a soup competition fundraiser called the Souper Bowl every February. In order to increase the impact of both events, the two groups collaborated and coordinated their efforts. Now the races begin and end in the core of downtown, ensuring that the runners and their audience are drawn into the downtown area. Following the race, the runners enjoy a creative lunch at the Souper Bowl which involves unique dishes prepared by local restaurants. Providing opportunities to hold the audience downtown for an extended period of time allows other retailers, restaurants, and businesses to capitalize on the large number of visitors.



What events are currently happening in your community that could be combined? A chili cookoff, burger competition, beer tasting, shopping event? Coordinating existing events or planning small, simple events can really enhance the experience for visitors and allow the downtown to capitalize on the increased traffic.

Incorporate Public Wi-Fi Zone Downtown

As Downtowns move to positioning themselves as destinations, rather than just an attractive place to drive-through, the need for a dedicated, public, free wi-fi zone becomes more prevalent. A free wi-fi zone encourages residents and visitors to stay in the Downtown area longer, and it allows them to search for restaurants and boutiques nearby, and better yet, gives them a strong connection to post photos or comments about their experience in your community, which furthers efforts of marketing or messaging. In addition, the zone can be set-up such that a landing page featuring a Downtown map and list of businesses is the first page that pops-up on connected devices.



Special Event Growth Opportunity



Recommendation

Enhance the success of Downtown South Milwaukee's Farmer's Market by hosting a Farm to Table dinner Downtown. Engage existing restaurants to participate in the dinner, and recruit pop-up vendors to activate sidewalk space or vacant storefronts that are tenantable for the period before the dinner begins.

A Farm to Fork Event is an all-local meal event designed to facilitate relationships and inspire community conversation in a delicious, fun, and healthy way by pairing locally grown produce and meat with local chefs who prepare the ingredients for attendees. These events are intended to benefit your local community as well as contribute to the larger local food system conversation.





downtown strategies

ECONOMIC VITALITY

Economic Vitality focuses on capital, incentives, and other economic and financial tools to assist new and existing businesses, catalyze property development, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



Targeted Industries for Downtown

TERMS:

Custom Trade Area: Who is currently spending money on general merchandise in the community. Who are they and where do they live?

Gap Analysis: What do the people living within the Custom Trade Area spend money on outside of the Custom Trade Area? Where is money “leaking” out of the community?

Market Analysis

When recruiting national retail to a community, an extensive Market Analysis is used to identify current consumer trends, a profile of current consumers, Custom Trade Area (who is currently shopping in the community), and a Gap Analysis (Leakage Report).

Community leaders should utilize the same data to inform decisions about business growth, development, and recruitment for the downtown area. The Market Analysis chapter of this Strategic Plan identified this information based on the Custom Trade Area from a major general merchandise store within the community.

Customers who are regularly shopping in the community for general merchandise, are a great target audience for downtown businesses. The Gap Analysis identified which retail categories people within the Custom Trade Area are currently leaving the trade area to buy. In other words, what are these people spending money on outside of the community? Since local customers are currently spending money on goods and services outside of the community, it is reasonable that they would spend that money locally if those needs were offered. **Below are the top retail categories identified in the Gap Analysis that would be excellent targets for downtown.**



building
materials



home
furnishings



clothing



lawn &
garden



automotive parts



Recommendation

Any business recruitment strategy, effort, or incentive should prioritize the top retail categories identified through the Gap Analysis.



Recruiting Retail Downtown

Retail leads can be broken down into four general categories:

1 Existing Businesses within or near the business district

Often the best leads are found near home. Leads might include existing businesses seeking more space or a better location in the business district. The district's business owner survey as well as ongoing conversations and personal contacts of the recruitment team, chamber of commerce and other economic development professionals can help identify these leads.

2 Emerging Entrepreneurs

Downtowns and business districts are often attractive to independent businesses. Accordingly, leads might include home-based or garage-based businesses seeking more fitting space and a convenient location for their customers. These leads might include managers of existing businesses wishing to go into business on their own. Commercial lenders, business schools, Small Business Development Center (SBDC) counselors, Main Street program business specialists, Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE), chamber of commerce and other public or private small business professionals should be asked to help identify these leads.

3 Existing Local or Regional Businesses

Local or regional businesses, particularly those that have branch stores and are ready to expand, are often excellent prospects. These business operators typically have a good knowledge of the market area and may already have multiple stores. They are often interested in expansion as a way to improve their penetration of the market. These leads can be identified through your team's knowledge of the business mix in other communities in the region and information collected from your local consumer research. In addition, realtors, commercial brokers, sales representatives and supplies that work within the region can be helpful. Sometimes ads in regional business, real estate and regional lifestyle periodicals can generate leads.

4 National Chains

If local or regional businesses are not interested in expanding, larger national chains can be contacted. It is important to be realistic about the kinds of chains that might be interested in a small community as their market, store size and parking requirements may preclude them from considering your district. Leads can be identified through directories and private databases listing chain site selection criteria and contacts. In addition, leads can also come from commercial brokers, trade shows, "deal making forums," and conferences such as those offered by the International Council of Shopping Centers.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

downtown strategies

Property Inventory

Understanding the Real Estate

Recruiting businesses to the downtown area is totally dependent on the available real estate. An owner of a shopping center knows exactly how many units they have as well as key information such as square footage, utility infrastructure, rent, installed grease traps, and access to parking among others. That information is readily available when an interested tenant inquires about the property.

While it is much more difficult, a proactive downtown should have that same type of information for downtown properties. A downtown property inventory is a digital document that would outline information such as:

- Property parcel number
- Address
- Property owner
- Property owner contact information
- Number of stories
- Year built
- Square footage
- Current tenant
- Currently listed for sale or lease?
- Rent amount
- Sale price
- Assessed value
- Grease trap in place?
- Available utilities

Keeping this information up to date can be challenging, but collecting this data is extremely helpful when potential businesses are interested in the community. Being able to easily outline vacant and available property can drastically improve the development and growth of downtown. A property inventory can help appropriate organizations sell the downtown area to prospective business owners.



Recommendation

Utilize the Property Inventory provided by Downtown Strategies to understand who owns what buildings, which are available, and what uses may be ideal for each vacancy.



ECONOMIC VITALITY

downtown strategies

Real Estate Analysis



Site Address 1220 MILWAUKEE AVE SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WI 53172

Parcel No. (APN) 770-0229-000

Land Use COMMERCIAL, MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL

Buildings 3 Buildings

Lot Area 3,600 SF (0.08 ACRES)

Adj. Lots Owned NONE

Year Built

Owner (Assessor) GARABERNT LLC

Owner Address (Assessor) S100W19390 DEBACK DR MUSKEGO, WI 53150

Last Market Sale 4/12/10

- The Former Casey's on the Avenue is a very well positioned building with recent use that should be approachable for backfill with limited capital.
- The building itself is about 1,200 square feet and appears to be well built.
- It is a very approachable size and great use for another bar, restaurant, coffee shop or other dining use.
- It has a very visible and great signage opportunity, but we would recommend opening the store front to allow people passing up and down Milwaukee Avenue to see activity inside.
- Ample street parking as well what is offered outside of Bucyrus Club is only a half block down.
- The building is walkable from most of the downtown neighborhoods and is located around other well established retail businesses.



Real Estate Analysis



Site Address 1208 MILWAUKEE AVE SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WI 53172

Parcel No. (APN) 770-0233-000

Land Use COMMERCIAL, MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL

Buildings 1 Building

Lot Area 7,200 SF (0.17 ACRES)

Adj. Lots Owned 1 3,600 SF (0.08 ACRES)

Owner (Assessor) MICHALS, ROBERT J

Owner Address (Assessor) 7380 S CLEMENT AVE OAK CREEK, WI 53154

- The city owned lot at 1214 Milwaukee Avenue is a key midblock property that sits next to these two available properties in the heart of Downtown South Milwaukee.
- By reimagining this property, a fresh new mixed use opportunity could present itself in downtown.
- The initial recommendation would be to open up the storefront at 1210 along Milwaukee Avenue.
- Whether this property be used for boutique or restaurant space, an open and inviting storefront should draw in more traffic to the tenant space.
- Dependent on weight bearing areas along the wall, and the overall condition of the building, it might be a unique option to reimagine the building with very small storefronts opening to the west.
- By creating a walkway, new storefronts, and patios where applicable, a unique activation of the city owned lot could create appeal to this property.
- At its deepest, the building is only about 60 feet deep when considering a western facing point of egress, which would allow for only one point of entry.
- The building could have shared restroom facilities, and a dedicated rear entrance for retail tenants as well as residential tenants.
- With the city owned lot, creating outdoor infrastructure, bringing a patio up to grade, and creating a small parklet as well as dedicated parking spaces could make this truly a unique space.
- By giving quality shell space and very small SF, unique users would be encouraged to open brick and mortar storefronts in the heart of Downtown South Milwaukee.
- At 1214, the recommendation would be to create residential space with a dedicated ground floor entry and shared mail room, etc.
- In the rear of the space is area for retail tenant waste removal, a back courtyard, or limited dedicated parking.
- Alleyway access allows for another point of access aside from the elevated entrance along Milwaukee Avenue.
- Also, by activating this property, this area could be treated as an outdoor entertainment area for open containers, music, etc.



ECONOMIC VITALITY



downtown strategies

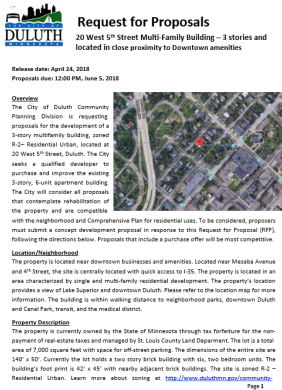
City-Issued RFP for Development

Determining your future

Many city officials believe that municipal government shouldn't "be in the business of real estate." On the contrary, governments should use their assets to determine their future, prioritizing development to their standards and outlining objectives for success in exchange for incentives or the real estate asset.

RFP Samples

Supplementary to this plan, you'll find several examples of RFPs issued by municipal governments for their city-owned property. Take note of the objectives listed and how a city asset can be used as a development incentive.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
DEVELOPMENT OF CITY-OWNED PROPERTY
LOCATED AT THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF
OLIVE BOULEVARD AND MIDLAND BOULEVARD



CITY OF UNIVERSITY CITY
6801 DELMAR BOULEVARD
UNIVERSITY CITY, MO 63130



Developer Request for Proposals
(RFP)



Zeeland Michigan:
Downtown Passageway and Infill Building
at 135/137 East Main Avenue



Recommendation

Evaluate the city's real estate assets, particularly at 1208 Milwaukee Avenue, and create an RFP outlining the vision and intended outcomes for the redevelopment of the property. Consider using the asset as an incentive for the chosen developer that has the best track record of revitalization and is well-capitalized enough to see the project to fruition.



Business Recruitment Packet

Downtown Economic Development

Almost every downtown desires to have more retailers, restaurants, and other businesses. Ideally this growth would happen organically as the perception and reputation of the downtown shifts to become a destination. Building a strong sense of place within the downtown is important. The downtown should be clean, inviting, safe, and attractive. The properties and buildings should be well maintained and ready for tenants. The area should be active and frequently used for events. While all of these elements are important pieces of the puzzle, communities can also take an active role in recruiting businesses to the downtown.

Many communities have successfully targeted specific businesses in nearby cities or regions and recruited them. This could be a relocation, convincing the business to open a second location, or convincing them to open another concept in the new community.

Successfully pitching the community to this business requires a structured and organized presentation of data. The new business does not just need to hear the feel-good stories about your community, they need to know if their concept can financially survive and thrive in your community. When recruiting national retailers to a community, they focus on the market data including the custom trade area (who is currently spending money in your community), demographics, community profiles, real estate analysis, and available properties. A similar approach can be taken when attempting to recruit a local business to your downtown.

A Business Recruitment Packet contains information relevant to recruiting a potential business in an easy-to-follow format. The packet could include:

- Market analysis data summary
- Map of the downtown district
- List of available properties with real estate information
- Guide to necessary approval processes
- Guide to available incentives and programs
- Point of contact information



Recommendation

Create a custom Business Recruitment packet that can be distributed to targeted retailers, restaurants, and other businesses, as well as existing property owners with renovation opportunities. The packet can be used to personally recruit specific businesses from the region or elsewhere in the community and to promote existing incentives.



Supporting Entrepreneurship



Recommendation

Work with property owners to encourage development of entrepreneur ready shell space in ground floor of vacant properties. Determine opportunity for local incentives from the City of South Milwaukee to accompany this effort.

Identify partners such as Small Business Development Center, regional power company, state economic development agency, local higher education institutions, or other agencies to develop a program for entrepreneurs and business startups.

Expectations have changed

Many property owners are unaware of the changing trends in downtown real estate. In the past, the tenant was responsible for all upgrades and modifications needed to adapt the space for their business needs. However, that trend has flipped. Many small businesses, especially entrepreneurs and start-ups, do not have the financial capital available to fund renovations and improvements to a property. Additionally, they need to open their business as soon as possible and do not have time to wait for costly and time-consuming renovations.

Property owners must be prepared to invest in their buildings and get them ready for a quality tenant. Updated infrastructure (HVAC, electrical, plumbing, etc.) is a necessity in addition to more modern needs such as high speed or fiber internet. Cosmetic updates, such as the “vanilla shell” concept, are the responsibility of the property owner in order to attract a quality tenant. As a rule of thumb, a prospective business should be able to open in a new space within 90 days. Property owners must understand that the days of holding property until a tenant is willing to update the property are over and they must have tenable space ready for potential tenants.



Properties in this type of condition do not allow for a potential tenant to open their business in the next 90 days. Property owners must make their properties tenable in order to recruit high quality tenants.



Supporting Entrepreneurship

What is Shell Space?

Shell space refers to a suite or floor within a building that has floor, walls, windows and a roof, but no interior improvements. It may also have some basic HVAC, plumbing and electrical.

Shell Condition Space Typically Does Not Include:

- Demising walls
- Doors, frames and hardware
- Ceilings
- Finishes including paint and flooring
- Millwork
- Mechanical Systems
- Electrical Power and Lighting
- Plumbing for restrooms and breakroom areas

Shell condition space is typically found in new construction but can also be found in older Downtown buildings if the landlord has demoed an existing suite or is looking to attract new tenants.



A typical example of a shell space in a new development



Entrepreneur Meet-Up Events

Fostering Entrepreneurial Networks

Downtowns serve as a great “nest” for entrepreneurs to test concepts and grow over time. A common question for many communities is how to identify entrepreneurs and foster their growth?

A short-term strategy is to tap into the existing entrepreneurs in the community. Citizens who recently took a risk and opened a new downtown business. These types of people are often connected with other like-minded individuals in the community. They likely know others who are operating an at-home business, striving to become a start-up, exploring options for brick-and-mortar locations.

Florence, Alabama has placed an emphasis on growing tech-related businesses in the community. As a starting point a local volunteer group hosted monthly Tech Meetups. They invited tech-related business owners to attend a meet and greet event at a downtown location. These meetups had no structured agenda in the beginning. The only goal was to gather like-minded individuals in the same space in order to spark conversation. These gatherings started small but grew over time as they attracted more attendees. The typical audience was a mixture of established business owners, new start-ups, and future entrepreneurs, all with a similar interest in tech.

This allowed the like-minded businesspeople to meet, establish relationships, and foster the growth of an entrepreneurial network in the community. The relationships allowed participants to connect to resources throughout the community they would not have known about otherwise. Florence identified tech companies as a focus, but meetups could focus on a variety of sectors such as retail, restaurants, and art; or they could target a broad audience centered on sparking business activity downtown.

Hosting regular meetups focused on identifying existing and potential entrepreneurs is a great first step in cultivating an entrepreneurial network and spark growth in the downtown area. The goal is to provide a space for these people to meet, establish a relationship with one another, discuss challenges they are facing, and learn about resources available to them in the community.

These events should be informal and take place in a comfortable, neutral location in the downtown area such as a coffeeshop, restaurant, or meeting space. Government facilities or chamber of commerce offices are not good locations for these types of gatherings. Lunchtime or happy hour are great time frames for these events.



Recommendation

Host monthly meet-up events for existing and potential entrepreneurs. These should begin as simple meet-and-greet events and can grow into opportunities for gathering input and hosting guest speakers on specific topics.



Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

Almost every downtown wants more retail space but struggles with a lack of available properties. This is typically due to either untenable spaces, oversized vacant properties, or an overabundance of service industries (attorneys, office space, etc.). Could adding a simple wall solve some of those challenges?

Oversized Spaces

Most pre-WWII buildings in historic downtowns were built using a similar pattern. Average storefronts are typically 25-35' wide and the buildings are 75'-125' deep resulting in an overall square footage of 1,800-4,300 square feet. While these large spaces met the needs of retailers in the past, they are much too large for current retail trends.

Entrepreneurs, start-ups, retailers, and other small business ventures need a much smaller footprint than what has been desired over the past several decades. Larger space equates to larger rent costs and the lack of start-up capital is a barrier to entry for many small businesses. This creates a major challenge for many downtown areas experiencing vacancies or a lack of retail space. As odd as it sounds, downtown properties often have too much space to attract retailers and small businesses.

Current businesses are desperately searching for spaces of less than 1,000 square feet in order to keep their overhead and startup expenses low, but the available downtown building stock is comprised of large spaces, often in need of extensive renovations.

Case studies of communities and property owners that have successfully implemented solutions to oversized spaces can be found in the Appendix.

On the following page, we detail two (2) typical scenarios of oversized buildings and display modifications that can be made with demising walls.



Recommendation

Encourage property owners to utilize demising walls to create small footprint retail/start-up spaces. This low-cost strategy can be used to modify a large vacant building, add flexibility to an existing space, or add retail space to an existing office building while generating revenue for the property owner.



Demising Walls

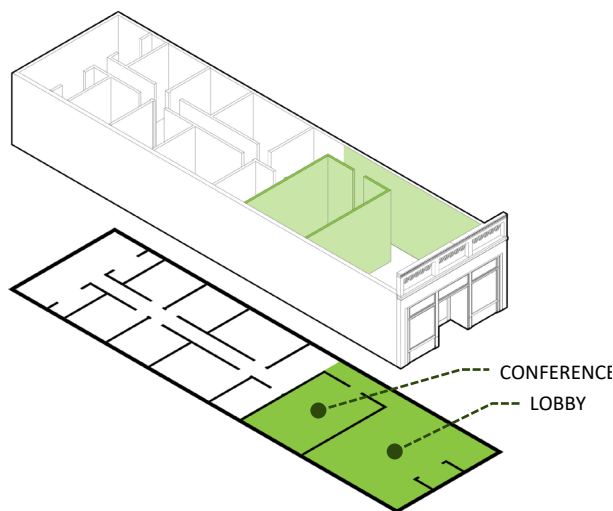
Creating a Smaller Footprint

Example Demising Wall Modifications

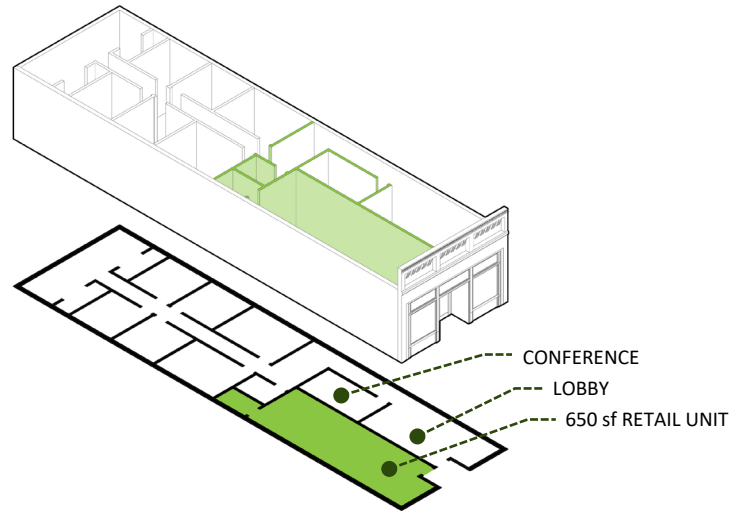
The graphic below illustrates how a demising wall can be used to modify existing building footprints. Two scenarios are shown. **Scenario 1** is an existing office building that occupies the entire building footprint including the storefront. By modifying the underutilized lobby and conference room area with a demising wall, an additional small footprint retail space is created. This additional unit provides revenue for the property owner, offers much needed retail space, and activates the storefront and sidewalk downtown.

Scenario 2 illustrates how a large, vacant building can be modified into a small storefront unit by adding a demising wall. This provides a more affordable space along the storefront and activates a vacant building. This approach allows property owners to phase renovations rather than renovating the entire building at once.

SCENARIO 1

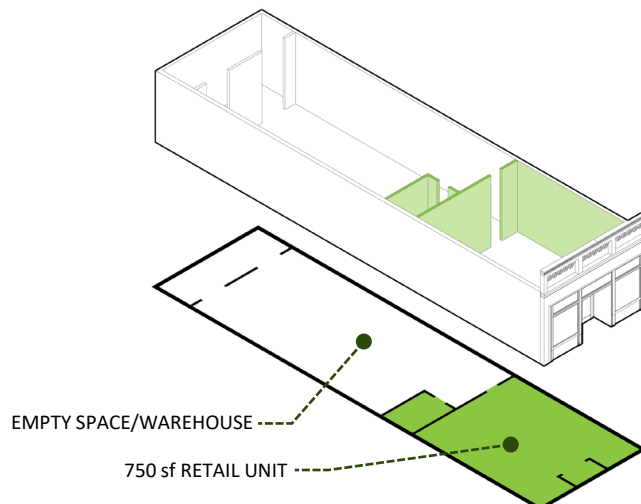


Original Layout: A typical downtown office space with an underutilized lobby area and conference room provides an opportunity to add additional retail space.



Modified Layout: Adding a demising wall to reduce the size of the lobby and conference room adds an additional retail space to the downtown and provides additional income for the property owner.

SCENARIO 2



Oversized Building: An oversized (2,500+ sf) “shell” of a building which is too large for a start-up retail business. A smaller (<1,000 sf) retail space can be added along the storefront.



Small Business Training

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Many examples of how retailers are innovating for success come from big box retailers. While small business brick-and-mortars may struggle in the shadow of Walmart and other big box stores, they can benefit from exploring actions that many big box retailers are taking to innovate along with other strategies specific to medium and small business. Successfully retail businesses exhibit the following trends:

Integrate customer offerings across channels through omnichannel retail strategies.

There is an increasing emphasis on the omnichannel experience as businesses look for new ways to connect to customers offline and online. The rise of e-commerce has been a notable trend, accounting for up to 12% of the retail market in 2020. The omnichannel strategy relies on the concept of seamless shopping experience in brick-and-mortar stores along with a variety of digital channels, which provides the added value of both instore assets and online access. Walmart is looked to as the prime example of an omnichannel retailer that has upgraded brick and mortar stores resulting in increased foot traffic while also increasing its online offerings.

Make use of technology to strategically grow business. Develop technological capacity where needed.

Successful retailers are adapting to increasing technology use by consumers and using technology to streamline and create new ways of doing business. Large retailers are looking to engage with technologies such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality. A great challenge for small retailers is keeping up with the fast pace of technological change. However, they can explore options, evaluate potential returns on investment, and take strategic steps to technologically innovate. From a customer-facing perspective, retailers can embrace mobile technology and mobile payment methods, use video marketing, use social media, and offer same-day delivery options and “buy online pick-up in store” services. From an operational perspective, businesses are anticipated to increasingly use POS (point of sale) technologies, operate on the Cloud, and utilize other digital tools such as Shopify and Comment Sold.



Small Business Training

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Build a strong digital presence as a touch point for initial and recurring interaction with customers.

While not as widely noted as e-commerce as a trend, **digital-first retail** is arguably more influential than e-commerce. Digital-first retail is the growing tendency of consumers' shopping journeys to be influenced by digital channels, regardless of where the ultimate transaction takes place. Leading brands, from Apple to Nike to Walmart, are evolving into digital-first organizations. They're investing to create product content that serves as the bridge between the online and offline worlds, and helping consumers shop when, where and how they want. While e-commerce now accounts for approximately 12% of all retail sales, it's projected that web-influenced physical store sales are about five times online sales.

Invest in understanding the customer. One notable trend is customer experience.

Retailers are doing more to understand and engage the customer. One important trend is that customers are increasingly valuing experience. Customer experience has been called the next competitive battleground. The success of Apple, Lululemon, and Free People are attributed to creating a valued, personalized in-store customer experience. Technology provides an opportunity for retailers to understand and connect more directly with customers.

Strengthen brand engagement and build a base of loyal followers.

Lululemon and Free People are commonly cited examples of companies that have built strong brands based on quality and lifestyle. This branding has been attributed to not offering products at a discount, whereas other companies have trained customers to buy during regular product discount periods. However, other off-price retailers such as Ross and TJ Maxx take advantage of culture of bargain hunting and have survived their competitors. These retailers are examples of brand identities that have found a niche in consumer preference.



Small Business Training

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

Leverage consumer preference for uniqueness, authenticity and local flavor. Explore submarkets and consider engaging local institutions and community.

Consumer preference for uniqueness, authenticity, and local flavor is noted to be on the rise. Brick-and-mortar retailers and those on main streets are poised to capitalize on this trend. Related to this trend, local retail stores can benefit from awareness of the resources and efforts of local institutions and building relationships with local institutions and the community. Examples from cities where local businesses and main streets are invigorated communities creating strong local business associations; working with local agencies to support walkability, streetscape improvements, and residential and commercial use; renovating historical buildings in commercial districts; and attracting restaurants, breweries, and shops that contribute to local personality.

Are strategic about innovating ways of doing business.

Across trends, successful retailers are strategic rather than reactionary in finding innovative ways of doing business. They are evaluating business nuts and bolts and opportunities unique to them, right-sizing brick-and-mortar stores, carefully constructing brands, finding niche markets, finding new ways to serve the customer, creating new partnerships and connecting with expertise and networks. New technologies for most small businesses is not an either/or proposition. They can adopt the use of new technologies and still rely on the tried-and-true ways of doing business.



Recommendation

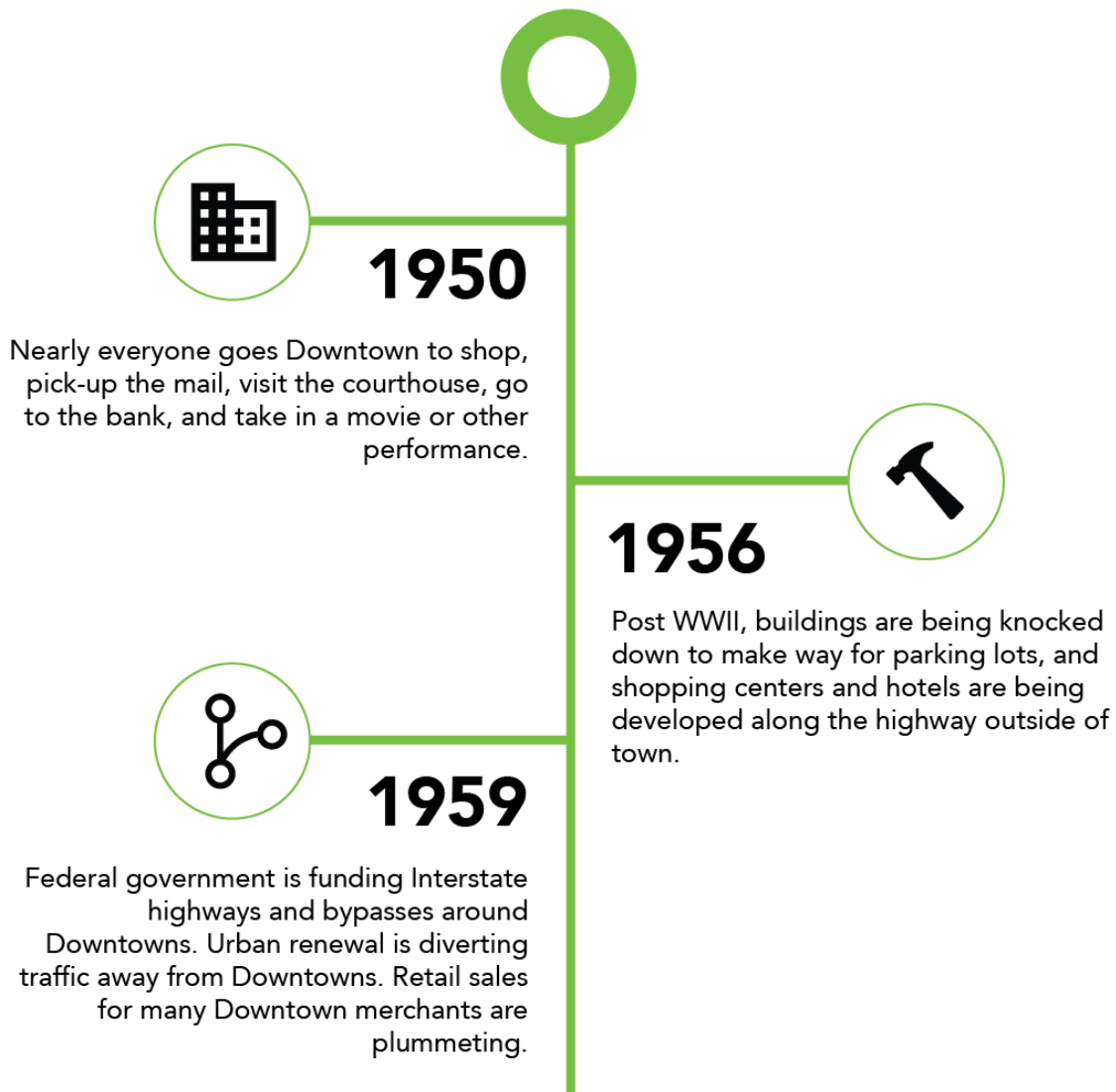
Hold merchant training and workshops to encourage Downtown business owners to increase their level of operations, modernize their reliance on technology, and implement new and savvy ways to reach customers of all generations.



APPENDIX

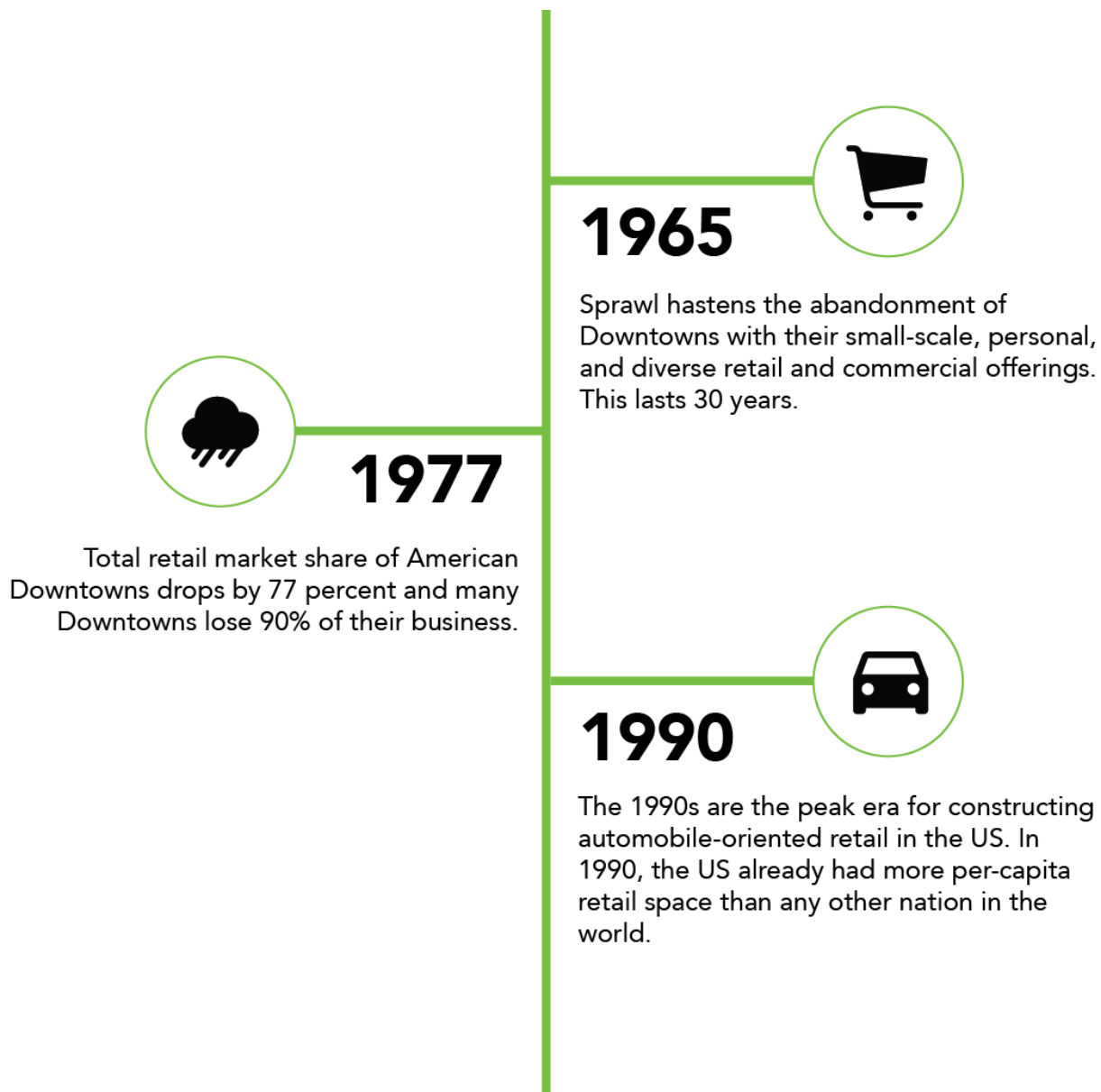
History of America's Downtowns

As we seek to redevelop and revitalize our Downtowns to their original vitality and significance, it's important to recognize how Downtowns functioned decades away, and how we got to this shift in perspective and priority.





History of America's Downtowns





History of America's Downtowns

**1994**

Amazon was founded and the Internet era begins. Consumer connections are greatly enhanced and more dynamic through the Internet as goods can be purchased anywhere from a computer.

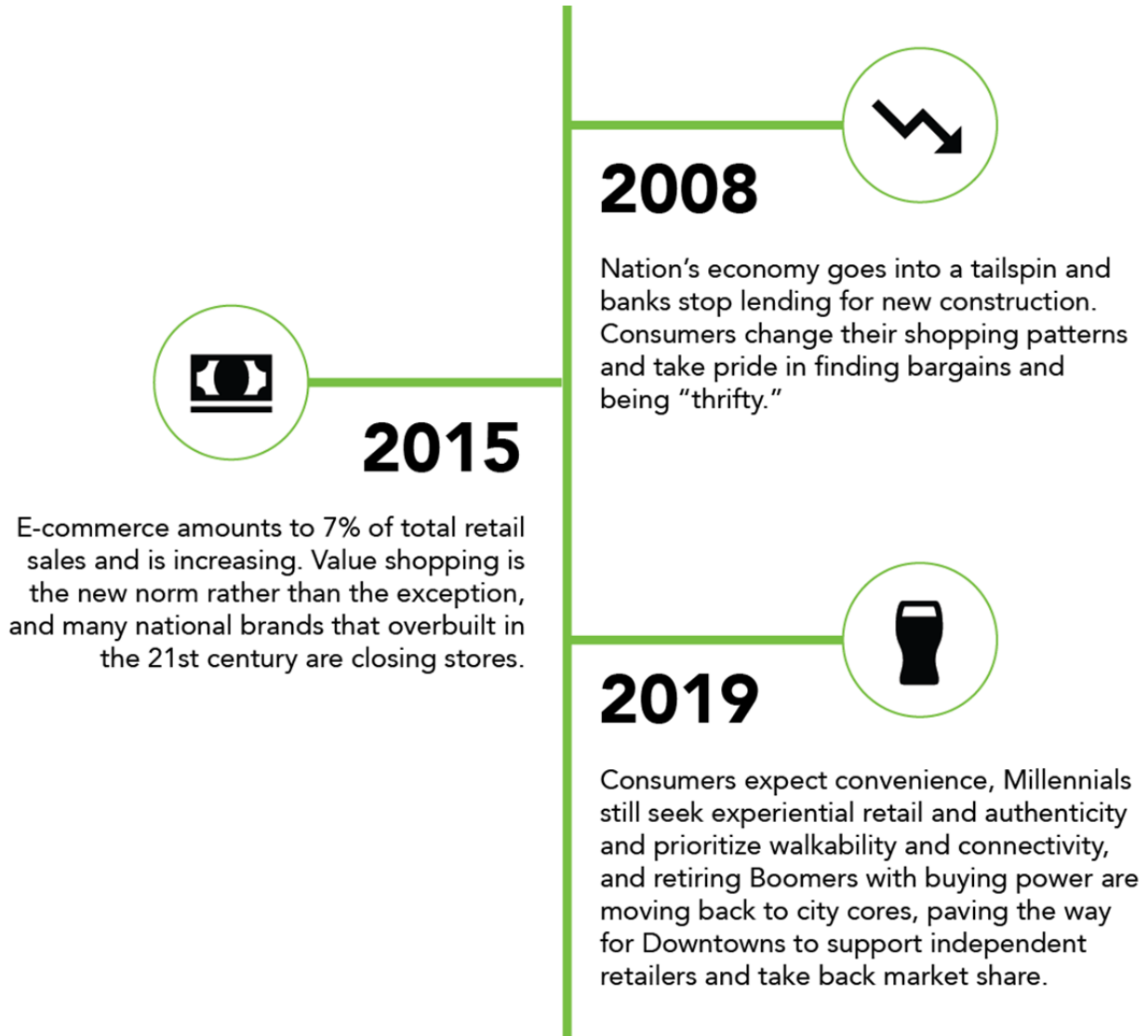
**2005**

Millennials seek more "authentic" experiences in their purchasing, marking a return to the mid-20th Century concept, when nearly all US shopping was local and unique to place.

**1999**

Declining urban crime and the New Urbanism prompts a change in market preference for living in walkable, urban places. Retailers begin to experiment with mixed-use town centers and "lifestyle centers" to recreate and/or mimic Main Streets and Downtowns.

History of America's Downtowns





History of America's Downtowns



2020

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted everyday life around the world. In the beginning lockdowns and quarantines forced a new way of life working from home through virtual platforms and focusing on locally owned businesses. Shop local campaigns became a survival tactic as citizens rallied to support mom-and-pop businesses in their own neighborhoods and communities.

Downtowns adapted to the ever-changing shopping habits of consumers. Curbside pickup, outdoor dining, omni-channel retail, adoption of technology, and other trends helped businesses survive the early days of the pandemic.



Post Pandemic

As life begins to return to the new-normal following the height of the pandemic, some trends and habits remain. Customers continue to value convenience, which includes mobile ordering, curbside pickup, delivery services, as well as quick service and casual dining restaurants. Both national retailers and local businesses are adopting these once temporary strategies as long-term shopping trends.

The pandemic brought a renewed sense of community pride and appreciation for supporting local. Citizens of all generations now value a high quality of life in all aspects of their lives, which is causing a shift toward small towns.

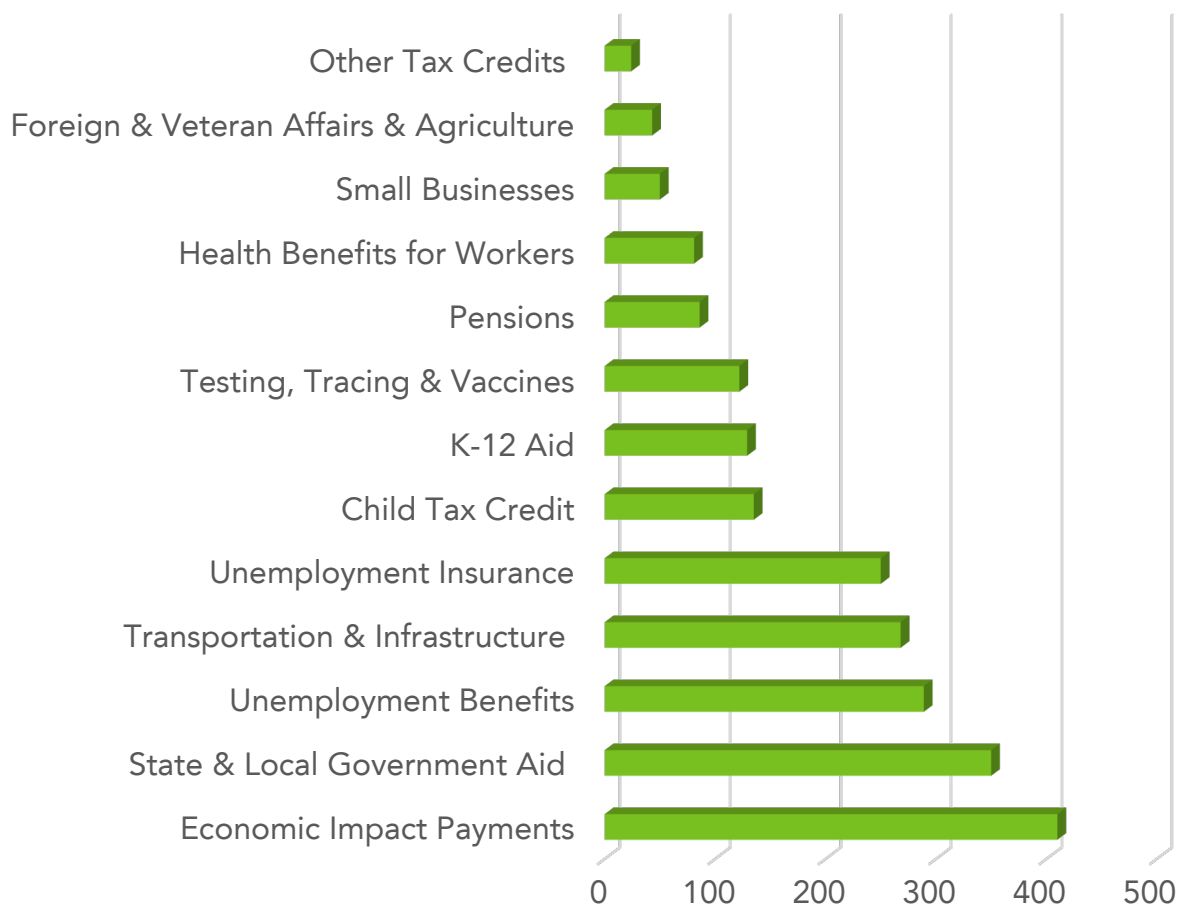


American Rescue Plan

On March 10, 2021, Congress passed the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021** (H.R. 1319) providing \$1.9 trillion of relief and stimulus funding for vaccines, schools, small businesses, everyday Americans, anti-poverty programs, and a whopping \$350 billion for states and local governments.

President Biden signed the bill into law on March 11, 2021.

American Rescue Plan Relief (\$ Billions)



■ American Rescue Plan Amounts by Category (in billions)



American Rescue Plan

Funding for Cities & States

- \$350 billion of the bill was allocated to local and state government.

Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund

States, the District of Columbia, tribal governments and U.S. territories received \$219.8 billion in aid to be distributed, as follows:

- States received a total of \$195.3 billion in aid, of which:
 - (1) \$25.5 billion was split evenly among each state and the District of Columbia, with each state and the District of Columbia receiving \$500 million of aid; and
 - (2) \$168.55 billion was distributed based on each state's share of total unemployed workers over a three-month period of October 2020 to December 2020.
- District of Columbia received an additional \$1.25 billion payment.
- Tribal governments received \$20 billion in payments.
- U.S. territories received \$4.5 billion in payments.

In addition to the above allocations, the U.S. Treasury received \$50 million to cover costs of administration of the fund.



American Rescue Plan

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Allocation of Funds to Local Governments

Local governments received \$130.2 billion in aid to be split among counties, metropolitan cities and non-entitlement (localities with population less than 50,000) units of local government, as follows:

- Counties received \$65.1 billion in population-adjusted payments based on each county's share of U.S. population, with additional adjustments for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) recipients.

Milwaukee County Allocation: approximately \$183,417,734

- Metropolitan cities received \$45.57 billion in payments.
- Non-entitlement units of local government (localities with a population of less than 50,000) received \$19.53 billion in payments distributed by individual states and funded by the U.S. Treasury. Each jurisdiction received population-adjusted payments based on such jurisdiction's share of the state population, not to exceed 75 percent of its most recent budget as of Jan. 27, 2020.

South Milwaukee Allocation: approximately \$2,045,810



Recommendation

Utilize American Rescue Plan funds to implement specific measures of this plan, primarily supporting small businesses, lease assistance incentives, tourism enhancements, and others.



American Rescue Plan

How Can Funds be Used?

Funds must be allocated by Dec. 31, 2024 and only for the following purposes:

- to respond to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19 or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel and hospitality;
- to provide premium pay to eligible workers of the locality that are performing such essential work, or to provide grants to eligible employers that have eligible workers who perform essential work;
- for the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue of the locality due to the COVID-19 public health emergency, relative to revenues collected in the most recent full fiscal year prior to the emergency (pending Treasury guidance stating otherwise, (many organizations have interpreted the legislative text to allow for replacing revenue that was lost, delayed or decreased as a result of COVID-19); or
- to make necessary investments in water, sewer or broadband infrastructure.

Final Rule – Answering FAQs

The U.S. Treasury released the final rule on January 6, 2022 for the State and Local Coronavirus Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA.) The final rule goes into effect on April 1, 2022; however, cities and other recipients can choose to take advantage of the final rule's flexibility and simplifications immediately.

The final rule “provides state, local, and tribal governments with even broader flexibility to pursue a wider range of uses to respond to local public health and economic needs — as well as greater simplicity, so they can focus on responding to the needs in their communities and maximizing the impact of their funds,” according to the Treasury’s press release.



American Rescue Plan

ARPA Final Rule Offers Broad Flexibility & Simplicity

The largest update in the Final Rule permits localities to utilize up to \$10,000,000 (often a localities entire allotment) in general governmental services, without having to account for a specific loss or without having to adhere to formulas.

In layman's terms: This funding has allowability for **BROAD** use, with **MINIMAL** restrictions, and **NO** requirement for justification of lost revenue during the pandemic.

Standard Allowance for Lost Revenue

A significant update to the final rule relates to the calculation of lost revenues, which now allows a city to use the funds for almost any governmental purpose. The rule now provides an alternative to the complex calculation of lost revenues by allowing recipients to use a "standard allowance" option, which assumes the recipient experienced a revenue loss equal to the lesser of their full ARPA distribution or \$10 million.

Recipients that select the standard allowance may use that amount — in many cases their full award — for government services, with streamlined reporting requirements.

Recipients must choose one of the two options (calculating actual lost revenue or taking the standard allowance) and cannot switch between these approaches after an election is made.

What's classified as a government service?

Government services generally include any service traditionally provided by a government, unless Treasury has stated otherwise. Government services is the most flexible eligible use category under the SLFRF program, and funds are subject to streamlined reporting and compliance requirements. Recipients should be mindful that certain restrictions, which are detailed further in the Restrictions section and apply to all uses of funds, apply to government services as well.



American Rescue Plan

Acquisition of Property & Capital Expenditures

The final rule clarifies that recipients may use funds for programs, services, and capital expenditures that respond to the public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

Negative Economic Impacts of COVID

Supporting Disproportionately Impacted Small Businesses

Treasury presumes that the following small businesses are disproportionately impacted by the pandemic:

- Small businesses operating in Qualified Census Tracts
- Small businesses operated by Tribal governments or on Tribal lands
- Small businesses operating in the U.S. territories

Assistance to disproportionately impacted **small businesses** includes the following uses:

- Rehabilitation of commercial properties, storefront improvements & façade improvements
- Technical assistance, business incubators & grants for start-up or expansion costs for small businesses

General Capital Expenditures

Expenditures must be related and reasonably proportional to the pandemic impact identified and reasonably designed to benefit the impacted population or class.

No pre-approval is required; however, some expenditures require recipients to complete and meet the requirements of a written justification for capital expenditures as part of their regular reporting.

The following capital projects are considered **ineligible**:

- Construction of new correctional facilities as a response to an increase in rate of crime
- Construction of new congregate facilities to decrease spread of COVID-19 in the facility
- Construction of convention centers, stadiums, or other large capital projects intended for general economic development or to aid impacted industries



American Rescue Plan

Restrictions

While recipients have considerable flexibility to use funds to address the diverse needs of their communities, some restrictions on use apply across all eligible use categories. These include:

- For all recipients except for Tribal governments: No extraordinary contributions to a pension fund for the purpose of reducing an accrued, unfunded liability.
- For all recipients: No payments for debt service and replenishments of rainy-day funds; no satisfaction of settlements and judgments; no uses that contravene or violate the American Rescue Plan Act, Uniform Guidance conflicts of interest requirements, and other federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Treasury Documents

1. The Statement Regarding Compliance with the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Interim Final Rule and Final Rule provides information on the effective date and a brief summary of changes and additional requirements.
2. The Overview of the Final Rule, is a user guide that boils the rule text down into an easy-to-understand summary. The Overview of the Final Rule includes a non-exhaustive list of projects that recipients can undertake with ARPA funds without undergoing additional independent analysis.



Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

How can community leaders combat this challenge of having spaces that are too large to meet current retail trends? A successful short-term strategy that many communities are implementing is using demising walls to break up the large building footprints into a more manageable space for small businesses.

A demising wall is a specially constructed wall that separates two different uses or occupancies. Community leaders can work with property owners to add demising walls to their oversized spaces to create a smaller storefront unit.

There are several benefits to this approach.

- Allow property owners to renovate a small portion of the building rather than expansive renovations.
- Provide small spaces for start-ups and allow for expansion over time.
- Activate vacant storefronts adding vibrancy to the downtown area
- Provide low-cost units for start-up businesses



A typical storefront vacancy in a building that is too large for many modern-day retailers or start-ups.

Storefront Office Space

Many downtowns, especially county seats, struggle with a lack of retail space due to the overabundance of storefront office space. Attorneys, real estate agents, doctors, and other offices are a valuable piece of the downtown fabric because they bring people downtown and add 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. customers. However, they often dominate the storefronts of downtown making it difficult to add retail businesses.

Oftentimes these service industry businesses do not need the large square footage they currently occupy. Some communities have encouraged these businesses to reduce the square footage of their office and add a demising wall to create a small storefront space. This small square footage space adds much needed retail space to the downtown and generates additional revenue for the property owner.

Main Street Alabama worked with several member communities to create a sample pro forma showing the potential revenue that could be generated for the property owners by adding the additional storefront unit. Other incentives such as grant program to fund the addition of demising walls could be implemented to spark to addition of retail space downtown.



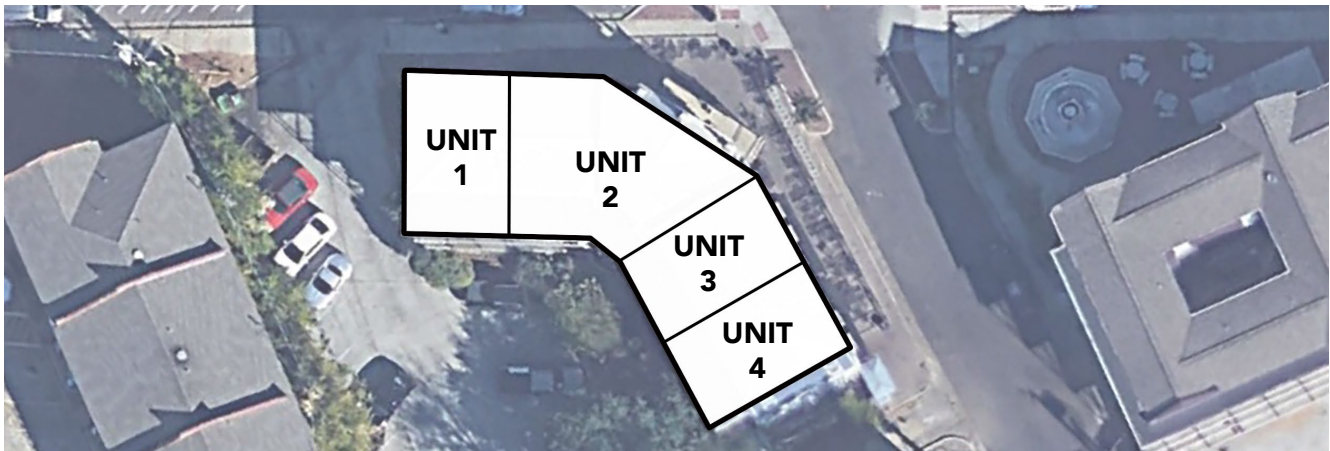
Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

Example: The Cotton Exchange Building

The Cotton Exchange Building in the Cotton District in Starkville, Mississippi, provides another excellent example of utilizing demising walls. The 3-story, mixed-use building has retail/commercial on the ground floor and residential units on the upper floors. The number of ground floor units can evolve with the ever-changing economic market. At one point the ground floor was home to 4 tenants including 2 salons and 2 restaurants. Over time, Bin 612, a popular restaurant, grew and expanded into the adjacent units after a salon and the other restaurant closed. Currently Bin 612 occupies three out of the four units with the salon occupying the fourth space. If there is a turn in the economy, the restaurant is able to contract and release units and by closing the wall again the property owner can add a smaller tenant.

Demising walls allow the property to be flexible as tenants can expand or contract based on economic conditions.





ECONOMIC VITALITY

Demising Walls

Creating a Smaller Footprint

Micro-Retail

Another trend in downtown areas is the addition of micro-retail space. Micro-retail includes spaces of 50-200 square feet. These spaces offer a very low cost of entry for start-up businesses and can spark activity in downtown areas.

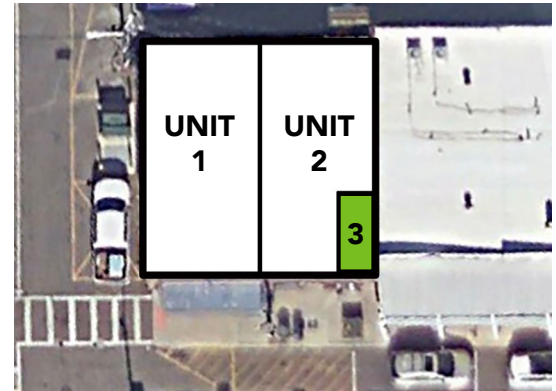
The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a wave of home-based businesses and start-ups, many of which would love to test a brick-and-mortar concept. However, the rent and utility costs of a 1,000+ square foot space is a huge barrier. Adding demising walls to create micro-retail spaces creates units that could attract these types of entrepreneurs.

Where can you find these entrepreneurs? Your local farmers' market or crafts fair often has vendors who make jewelry, clothing, food-based items, etc. and operate in a 10'x10' tent or booth space. They are accustomed to the small square footage and could transition nicely into a permanent space.

Buffalove Development in Buffalo, New York, converted a large downtown building into multiple micro-retail units in order to attract entrepreneurs, makers, and crafters. This concept makes wise use of a large downtown building by utilizing demising walls to create multiple, small units. This adds needed retail space with affordable rents and diversifies the tenants for the property owner. Rather than searching for a single large tenant, the property owner recruits multiple small tenants. (<https://www.buffalovedevelopment.com/523-main-street>)



downtown strategies



Fresh Ink, a local stationery and paper gifts store in Oxford, Mississippi, occupies a less than 100 sf space. The space was created using a demising wall and divided storefront with the adjacent salon.



downtown strategies

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