Commercial Revitalization Planning Guide
A Toolkit for Community Based Organizations

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Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

LISC helps resident-led, community-based development organizations transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into healthy ones—good places to live, do business, work and raise families. By providing capital, technical expertise, training and information, LISC supports the development of local leadership and the creation of affordable housing, commercial, industrial and community facilities, businesses and jobs. We help neighbors build communities.

LISC's Center for Commercial Revitalization

The Center for Commercial Revitalization (or the "Center") is one of LISC's economic development strategic business units and acts as the national clearinghouse for information and resources to support local urban neighborhood business district revitalization efforts. It also manages LISC's Commercial Corridor Revitalization Network, coordinates training and technical assistance for local LISC and community-based organization staff, identifies potential financial resources, and cultivates working relationships with other national, regional and local support and resource organizations.

The mission of the Center for Commercial Revitalization is to support LISC's network of local offices and community-based organizations in the creation and implementation of comprehensive commercial corridor revitalization strategies specifically targeting urban neighborhood markets.

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Forward

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC): A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP IN THE REVITALIZATION OF URBAN BUSINESS DISTRICTS

During the latter half of the 20th century, urban commercial corridors across the country that were once thriving and vibrant centers of neighborhood commerce and social interaction fell victim to significant disinvestment, rising crime, and high vacancy rates as suburban shopping malls lured away the valued customers that once sustained them.

Over the past 25 years, LISC has worked with thousands of community based organizations (CBOs) across the country to revitalize and rebuild their communities. Many of these groups have included rebuilding neighborhood commercial districts as part of their comprehensive approach to revitalization. In keeping with LISC's commitment to supporting the creation of neighborhoods that are economically, socially and ethnically diverse places for people to live, work and recreate and to assist communities in reclaiming the vitality of their traditional neighborhood business districts, LISC established the Center for Commercial Revitalization ("the Center") in 2003.
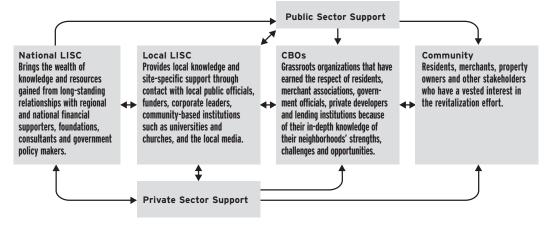
The Center is the result of a four-year pilot program launched in 1996 between LISC and the National Trust for Historic Preservation's National Main Street Center (NMSC) called the Neighborhood Main Street Initiative (NMSI). LISC and NMSC selected six LISC-supported CBOs, representing a wide cross-section of urban neighborhood business districts, to participate in the pilot program. Based on the outcomes cited in a two-year economic impact assessment of these pilot programs, it was clearly demonstrated that CBOs could and should assume a leadership role in the development and implementation of comprehensive revitalization plans for urban neighborhood business districts. The economic impacts cited, as well as the intangible outcomes, led LISC to begin expanding its network of local revitalization programs in 1998 beyond the initial six sites to eventually serve 35 neighborhoods within 16 cities by 2003. During this expansion phase, increased experimentation with various implementation models, organizational structures, and additional strategic components became the norm. In 2002, LISC initiated a complete strategic review of the NMSI including a discussion and an examination of the lessons learned as well as the insights and experience gained during the demonstration phase. This resulted in the renaming of the Neighborhood Main Street Initiative to the Center for Commercial Revitalization to reflect its new, broader focus.

As one of LISC's economic development strategic business units, the Center provides training, technical assistance and other support to local LISC offices and commercial revitalization programs. It acts as the national clearinghouse for information and resources to support local urban neighborhood business district revitalization efforts and also manages LISC's commercial corridor revitalization network. Additionally, the Center also coordinates training workshops and technical assistance for local LISC and CBO staff, identifies potential resources, and cultivates working relationships with other support and resource organizations.

As the Center's network has grown, it has become evident that CBOs working in urban commercial districts face a number of unique challenges including concerns about safety, extremely complex neighborhood politics, ethnic conflict and mistrust, difficulty accessing capital, and high concentrations of blighted and vacant property. Over the past 10 years, LISC and its network of CBOs have responded to these common challenges by adapting existing retail revitalization tools and creating new ones specifically suited to the complex and contentious issues faced by urban neighborhoods.

Partnering for Success: The Center for Commercial Revitalization operates through partnerships between National LISC, local LISC and community-based organizations who understand best the unique and pressing needs of their neighborhoods.

		Public Sector Support	
National LISC Brings the wealth of knowledge and resources gained from long-standing relationships with regional and national financial supporters, foundations, consultants and government policy makers.	**Local LISC** Provides local knowledge and site-specific support through contact with local public officials, funders, corporate leaders, community-based institutions such as universities and churches, and the local media.	**CBOs** Grassroots organizations that have earned the respect of residents, merchant associations, government officials, private developers and lending institutions because of their in-depth knowledge of their neighborhoods' strengths, challenges and opportunities.	**Community** Residents, merchants, property owners and other stakeholders who have a vested interest in the revitalization effort.
		Private Sector Support	

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The 8 Key Elements of Successful Revitalization Programs

Urban commercial districts face complex and locally specific problems and no one approach can possibly be successful in every urban district. LISC's strategy for commercial revitalization is built around the need for flexible, on-the-ground responses to the specific issues facing each neighborhood. The specific work plans and projects of each program will vary tremendously, but LISC's experience to date leads to the conclusion that successful neighborhood commercial revitalization programs share the following **key elements**:

Community Initiated: Successful urban neighborhood business district revitalization programs must evolve from key community stakeholders' desire to affect positive change. Key stakeholders include residents, merchants and property owners supported by community-based organizations, local government and others important to the revitalization process.

Comprehensive: Truly effective urban neighborhood business district revitalization programs must be comprehensive in their design and implementation, addressing a wide array of social, economic, physical and political issues.

Collaborative: Creating an effective collaborative process is extremely important to the revitalization effort for two primary reasons: It allows stakeholder voices to be heard and brings together the collective resources of the community.

Diverse: Based on current demographic trends, urban neighborhoods are becoming increasingly culturally, racially, and economically diverse places to live, work and recreate. The best revitalization programs embrace this diversity and incorporate it as a community asset.

Vision Directed: Obtaining community buy-in for a specific vision-directed revitalization plan for a neighborhood business district can be very challenging but is critical to success. The agreed upon vision should focus on the future and lead to specific, realistic and achievable activities directed toward changes—both large and small—within a certain timeframe.

Capital Intensive: In most urban neighborhoods, success will involve significant new capital investment in commercial and residential real estate development, interior and storefront renovations, infrastructure and streetscape improvements. The revitalization plan must ensure the availability of adequate capital to support these types of activities.

Market Oriented: Urban neighborhood business districts must begin their revitalization efforts with the appropriate market information including an in-depth analysis of the specific economic, social and physical conditions present in the district. Conducting market analyses, completing business inventories, undertaking consumer surveys and other market research will greatly assist stakeholders in understanding their markets and will lead to the development of realistic strategies for economic growth.

Sustainable: Revitalization of urban neighborhood business districts requires a long-term approach. Stakeholders must continuously identify resources, both financial and human, to sustain the revitalization effort as well as build new institutional and systemic change mechanisms to manage the business district as a community asset over the course of many years.

TRADITIONAL URBAN BUSINESS DISTRICTS: THE CENTERPIECE OF HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

In these days of mega-malls and big box retailers, the importance of urban neighborhood business districts should never be underestimated. The strongest, healthiest urban neighborhoods offer quality affordable housing, good schools, accessible open spaces *and vibrant commercial corridors*. If a neighborhood's business district is strong, the surrounding neighborhood benefits because the commercial district is a barometer of the overall level of economic confidence in a neighborhood.

A thriving, vibrant commercial district provides economic opportunities for entrepreneurs, much-need entry-level jobs and workforce training opportunities, and convenient access to goods and services for neighborhood residents. Across the country, CBOs and community development corporations (CDCs) are called on by neighborhood residents to *do something* about their commercial districts, perhaps in part for these benefits, but more often for the far less tangible reason that people want their neighborhoods to become "better places."

WHY PLAN?

You have probably heard the expression a thousand times, "Fail to plan; plan to fail."

Trite though those words may be, they ring especially true for those engaged in urban revitalization efforts. Developing a realistic strategy for improving an urban commercial business district requires quite a bit of

research because commercial districts, unlike malls, are each unique. While every city has only one downtown, most have numerous neighborhood-serving commercial districts. These neighborhood districts not only compete with downtown, malls and big box power centers for customers, but they also compete with one another. Retail corridors, sometimes only blocks apart, compete with each other for the business of local residents. Each district or corridor occupies a unique economic niche, offering a different mix of businesses, serving a different mix of customers. Many primarily serve residents of the immediate neighborhood while others draw customers from throughout a city or even a region. While all neighborhood districts offer certain goods and services, some distinguish themselves with clusters of restaurants while others offer arts and entertainment activities.

While malls can be developed according to a set formula based on local demographics, growing a commercial district requires an in-depth understanding of many aspects of the existing community which cannot be understood from demographics and other publicly available data alone. *To know what kind of retail development is really possible in an urban neighborhood, you have to understand who lives there, what they want, how they feel about the neighborhood, their safety concerns, their spending habits, the physical limitations of the existing buildings and lots, the condition and needs of the streets and sidewalks and many other locally-specific factors.*

Without this in-depth knowledge, many retailers, developers, and investors misunderstand urban neighborhoods. They fail to see the real market opportunities that exist in urban business districts. They may, for example, overreact to concerns about crime or fail to notice even dramatic signs of change in neighborhoods that they have historically considered too risky for investment. Community leaders may also lack an understanding about what kind of change is realistically possible. For example, they may *underestimate* the degree to which real safety concerns might lead neighborhood residents to shop elsewhere even if new stores were to open in their neighborhood.

Finding the realistic middle ground requires a very clear understanding of both the challenges a neighborhood faces and the resources it has (or can tap into) to meet those challenges. LISC's commercial revitalization strategy is built on the recognition that CBOs and CDCs, with access to in-depth, on-the-ground knowledge of a neighborhood, are in the best position to craft development strategies that are both realistic and locally appropriate. In many cases this local knowledge is the key to identifying real untapped market opportunities.

While community organizations may be in a unique position to learn about their neighborhood markets, they don't automatically possess this kind of knowledge. Even the most on-the-ground organizations have to take steps to learn about, and stay in touch with, their neighborhood markets.

HOW TO USE THIS PLANNING GUIDE

The planning tools in this book represent the shared learning of dozens of urban commercial district revitalization programs from all parts of the country. One of the central lessons that the Center has learned is that there is *no single recipe for success* in our diverse urban neighborhoods. Each place requires a slightly different approach, different tools and even a different overall level of effort. But that does not mean that we all have to start over from scratch and reinvent solutions to similar problems.

This planning guide provides examples of tools, techniques, and activities that other urban commercial districts have used to develop unique local strategies for the long-term redevelopment of their commercial districts. In some cases we simply describe the planning work that a CBO undertook and how the activity helped inform their strategy. In other cases we have reprinted the actual survey instruments, assessment forms, and other tools that were developed and utilized. Elsewhere, we compiled composite tools based on the best elements of several real world tools.

While some of the tools in this book may be useful without modification in some situations, most will serve best as examples or templates than as fill-in-the-blanks tools. These tools are intended to show what is possible, to highlight the full range of issues that might need to be addressed and to provide a starting point, but they are no substitute for a CBO thinking hard about what it already knows and what it needs to know about the business district in order to formulate an effective strategy.

ACCESSING THE TOOLS ONLINE

The planning tools included in this toolkit are available in electronic format from LISC's Center for Commercial Revitalization. Visit **http://www.lisc.org/section/areas/sec1/commercial** and select "resources" to download modifiable electronic versions of these tools and many other similar resources.

1. Urban Commercial Revitalization Programs

While many commercial districts have merchant associations or benefit from various programs such as façade improvement loans or business attraction efforts, LISC has found that in most urban neighborhoods piecemeal improvement efforts are not sufficient to bring about change. For this reason many communities have launched sustained comprehensive commercial revitalization programs. These programs generally involve a single Community Based Organization (CBO) or Community Development Corporation (CDC) coordinating a broad coalition of neighborhood stakeholders including merchants, residents, property owners, nonprofit agencies, city departments, financial institutions and others who agree to work together toward a common vision for an improved commercial district. These programs generally raise funds to hire a full time district manager to coordinate the efforts of these stakeholders over a period of several years. While these comprehensive programs often undertake activities like façade loans or business attraction, individual activities can have a greater impact when they are part of a coordinated strategy where each activity serves to enhance and reinforce the others.

Meaningful economic change does not happen overnight. Successful revitalization programs are sustained efforts focusing attention on a particular district over the long-term. In spite of the emphasis on producing immediately noticeable results, funders, volunteers and other program partners understand that the most important changes may not be apparent for several years. Once those changes do start to become clear, sustained activity will be necessary to maintain them. Short-term programs may produce some immediate changes but are unlikely to result in any lasting change in the economic success of a commercial district.

COMPREHENSIVE WORK PLANS

There is no single recipe for successfully revitalizing an urban commercial district. While many districts undertake similar activities each place has unique assets and unique opportunities and therefore each place requires a unique mix of activities to bring about change. Each successful program crafts a work plan that combines a set of activities that address different challenges that the community faces. The idea is that by taking on several aspects of change at once these actions will reinforce one another and bring about a more lasting change.

Some of the most common activities include:

Storefront Improvement: Many programs raise funds to offer grants or very low interest loans to merchants or property owners to invest in storefront façade improvement projects including new signs, paint, new awnings, removing bars from windows, etc. A large number of these relatively small changes can add up to a whole new look for the entire street.

Real Estate Development: Many urban districts have abandoned buildings or vacant lots in key locations. Redevelopment of these properties creates an opportunity to bring in new retailers and contributes to a sense that the neighborhood is "coming back."

Crime Prevention: Crime is a serious issue in most urban neighborhoods. Revitalization programs often work with police departments to organize merchants and residents to combat crime, address the many physical conditions that might encourage crime and make changes that help customers feel safer.

Business Support: Existing merchants often lack the experience and capital to meet all of the community's retail needs effectively. Many programs make a concerted effort to help merchants find technical assistance and loan capital to improve the quality of their existing businesses.

Business Attraction: Most urban districts also need to attract new businesses to really thrive. Many programs promote their district to realtors or business owners with brochures or other materials. Some identify specific retailers that could contribute most to the district and reach out to them. Other revitalization programs even take on marketing of specific vacant properties.

Community Festivals: Fairs and festivals bring people into the district (both neighborhood residents and others) for food, music and other activities and highlight the positive changes that may be occurring in the area. A well-organized event can help craft a new identity for the district and help change overall perceptions of the area.

Promotional Material: Many programs create brochures, posters, banners, business directories and other material designed to promote the district to potential customers and contribute to a new positive image for the district.

Streetscape Improvements: Often the condition of the streets and sidewalks is an impediment to change and programs will raise grant funds to invest in repaving streets, rebuilding sidewalks, installing new benches, trash cans or signs along the sidewalks.

Focus on Signal Changes

We refer to these programs as "comprehensive" because they attempt to make more than one kind of change at the same time. Community challenges are generally interrelated and our solutions need to be tied together also. However, no one CBO or group of stakeholders can change everything at once. Instead, successful revitalization programs focus their limited resources on changing a few visible things that will help change people's minds about the area and lead to other changes later.

Most of us never consult census data or crime statistics and yet we conclude that one neighborhood has become safer, another has gentrified and yet another is becoming an arts district. We base these conclusions on the evidence of a small number of visible changes. It could be something as big as a new housing development or as small as new crosswalks; it could be new stores opening; it could be a vacant lot being turned into a pocket park. From these little bits of information we make up whole stories about what is happening in our community. Positive changes reinforce each other and tell a story about how a place is getting better. A handful of the right improvements can convince people that things are looking up and lead people to start talking about blight as opportunity. Successful revitalization programs **manage perceptions** by focusing their limited resources on generating the kinds of small changes that help convince people that things are getting better.

THE ROLE OF THE LEAD AGENCY

While some communities create new organizations to manage these comprehensive revitalization initiatives, LISC has found that in most cases it is more effective for an existing Community Based Organization (CBO) to serve as the lead agency and take ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the revitalization plan and coordination of other stakeholders. Even when this lead agency has no previous experience with commercial revitalization, an existing CBO can bring important resources such as staffing, fundraising capacity, financial management and political and community relationships. These resources allow stakeholders to focus their efforts on the revitalization work itself rather than on the creation of a new organization.

Generally, the lead agency:

- Is a tax-exempt 501(c)3 organization so that it is eligible to receive grant funds.
- Has community development or neighborhood improvement as a central purpose as evidenced by the organization's mission, plans, and activities.
- Has the capacity to work closely with diverse local stakeholders, organize additional support, and be prepared to collaborate in the decision-making process.
- Has a track record raising funds and managing grants.
- Demonstrates active support from local stakeholder organizations and relevant local politicians.

Coordinator not Implementer

However, even the strongest organization cannot manage a task as complex and diverse as "revitalization" alone. The best local programs are the ones that tap into the energy and resources of the broadest range of other stakeholders. While a CBO may manage the overall strategy, they pull in others to provide business loans or manage street sweeping, to coordinate an anti-graffiti program or organize a farmers market. Sometimes the work is done by specific volunteers, sometimes it is done by another organization, attracted by the synergy of offering its service in the context of a coordinated revitalization program. The exact division of labor is different in every site but those organizations that try to do it all themselves tend to get a lot less done.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE	CBO BOARD
• Define and revise the vision for the district.	• Review and endorse the vision
• Fundraising	• Fundraising
• Set annual work plan	• Review performance relative to objectives
• Identify stakeholders and volunteers	• Review program spending relative to budget
• Build new partnerships	• Evaluate program manager
• Evaluate program manager	

Dual Oversight

The CBO board and senior management have to be involved in setting the program's goals and evaluating its results. The goal of revitalizing the target commercial district should be a priority for the whole organization and it should be seen as a key responsibility of the CBO board to insure that the organization's other programs are contributing toward that goal (and that the revitalization program is supporting the organization's other goals). At the same time, the CBO board may not be closely enough associated with the target commercial district to provide the day-to-day oversight necessary for a community based revitalization program. For this reason many CBOs have established advisory committees made up of revitalization program volunteers who set an overall agenda for the commercial district revitalization and insure that the work of program committees is integrated and working toward a common vision.

Exhibit 1: Relationship of the Commercial Revitalization Program within the Lead Agency organizational structure.

THE ROLE OF COMMITTEES

Committees take a significant amount of time and energy to manage and if they are not managed effectively they can cover the same ground month after month. Nonetheless, there are few other ways to maintain the ongoing involvement of stakeholders and coordinate their activities over the long term. As a result, the effectiveness of a revitalization program often boils down to its success in managing committees.

Committee Structures

Most revitalization programs involve several committees with related but distinct responsibilities. Traditional Main Street™ programs have four committees: Design, Promotion, Economic Restructuring and Organization. Many urban programs have found different structures to be effective. Depending on local priorities, the work can be divided up in a number of different ways. There does not appear to be any one committee structure that is best for every community. However, it is important to be sure that everything on the work plan is associated with one committee or another. Of course not all of the work is actually done by committees. Some work is done in committee meetings, some is done by committee members between meetings, and, of course, much is done by staff and reported to one committee or another.

Common Committees:

Design/Physical Improvements Committee: plans for and educates the community about the physical design of the district. Potential responsibilities include inventorying visual problems in the district; administering a façade improvement program; codifying design guidelines; participating in design review of proposed developments; and/or advocating for public streetscape investment.

Safety and Quality of Life Committee: improves the safety, cleanliness and overall quality of life in the district. Potential Responsibilities include analyzing crime data, organizing a business watch program or managing neighborhood clean up days.

Parking and Traffic Committee: works to identify and address parking and circulation issues which effect district businesses. Potential responsibilities include conducting a parking study, analyzing interaction between pedestrians and automobiles, and working with local government to implement changes.

Economic Restructuring Committee: works to strengthen the local economy by supporting local businesses and attracting new businesses to complement the existing mix. Potential responsibilities include conducting a business and building inventory, developing business attraction targets, and working with brokers to address existing commercial vacancies.

Marketing and Promotions Committee: develops and implements promotional strategy for the district. Potential responsibilities include developing a district brand and collective advertising opportunities, generating positive media coverage, creating a business directory and/or district website.

Real Estate Development: encourages and oversees new real estate development in the district. Potential responsibilities include identifying opportunity sites, reviewing and amending applicable zoning codes, and developing sites.

Organization: works to create and maintain organizational capacity. Potential responsibilities include recruiting volunteers, facilitating organizational collaboration, and developing community leadership.

Special Events: plan and prepare for events to promote the corridor and raise funds for the revitalization program. Potential responsibilities include soliciting event sponsors, arranging entertainment, and promoting events.

The committee structure can change over time. Some communities start with only an overall advisory committee and create temporary working committees for initial planning work and launch standing committees only later once a multi-year work plan has been outlined. Others create several standing committees and charge each with some portion of the initial planning work. Either way, over time new activities bring in new stakeholders and ideas to the program, which may make additional committees possible or even necessary for a time. Later, committees may need to be merged to maintain momentum. This is a normal part of the lifecycle of a revitalization program. Regardless of the committee structure, the advisory committee will meet regularly to keep all stakeholders aware of the progress that is being made.

THE ROLE OF STAFF

While volunteers are an essential element of successful programs and can carry much of the revitalization effort, the volunteers need some level of organization and continuity over time to remain on target. Programs with full-time staff tend to be more productive, but effective program management often does not require more than a single, dedicated staff person. The most common initial staff position created is the district manager. This person is charged with overall responsibility for coordinating the revitalization effort. It is important to acknowledge and articulate that this role is not to carry out all of the planning and implementation activities, but to *coordinate* the many individual volunteers and stakeholder organizations that are collaborating on this effort. The role of staff is to organize, support, and encourage the various stakeholders as they develop the community vision and implementation strategy. Staff is also responsible for managing logistics such as scheduling meetings and maintaining communication among various stakeholders. Additionally, staff is generally responsible for tracking outcomes and reporting on progress *(See Chapter 13 – Measuring Impact)*.

Ideally, the district manager has:

- An ability to motivate others
- Volunteer recruitment and management experience
- Commitment to community
- Comfort with diversity
- Meeting facilitation skills
- Project management skills
- Fundraising/grant administration skills
- Event planning experience
- Public relations skills
- Appropriate language skills

In addition to the manager, many programs provide part-time clerical support for the district manager. Other programs may add additional staff with specialized roles as their programs grow. Depending on local priorities and available funding, other potential full- or part-time staff may include:

- Assistant Program Manager
- Community Safety Coordinator
- Merchant/Community Organizer
- Event Coordinator
- Business Assistance Coordinator
- Commercial Real Estate Developer
- Grant Writer/Coordinator.

2. Planning for Revitalization

If each urban commercial district is unique and requires a unique revitalization strategy and a different mix of improvement activities, then the success of each revitalization program depends to some extent on how well each organization understands the unique circumstances of its target district. Successful programs all spend some time initially and as a part of their ongoing work to collect information about the physical, social and economic conditions of their neighborhoods and use that information to craft strategies for revitalization that respond to these unique local conditions. Commercial District Planning is a process of collecting a very wide range of information from formal sources (like the U.S. Census) and informal sources (like talking to merchants), analyzing the resulting "data" to better understand the market forces that are at work, synthesizing the results to formulate and refine a realistic vision for the future of the neighborhood, and developing a concrete work plan for change.

WHEN SHOULD PLANNING HAPPEN?

The commercial revitalization planning described in this toolkit is generally undertaken as the first step in launching a new commercial district revitalization program. These programs often happen when an existing community based organization or one or more community leaders decide that the neighborhood commercial district requires focused attention. In many cases, some broader community visioning or planning work leads to a recognition of the importance of the commercial district to the overall health of the community. But this general support for commercial revitalization is not the same thing as a detailed revitalization strategy. Once resources are committed to launch a program, the district manager must coordinate an in-depth planning process to craft a unique strategy to guide program implementation.

In other cases, general recognition of the need for commercial revitalization leads to some kind of planning grant before ongoing implementation resources are committed. A community might complete a commercial district planning process in order to outline a revitalization strategy and work plan which would then be submitted to funders in order to secure the resources necessary for implementation.

Whether you have funding and a commitment to pursue a comprehensive business district revitalization program or you need to conduct research first to determine if such a program is feasible, this guide provides a starting point for how to create an action strategy for a successful, long-term revitalization program. While different districts may undertake many of the same activities, each one will need to spend some amount of time and energy up front planning a unique strategic direction that can be used to guide the prioritization of time, energy and resources. This strategy can then be built upon and refined as part of the ongoing implementation work. Commercial district planning is both a *starting point* and an *ongoing activity* for every strong revitalization program.

KEY QUESTIONS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS

Developing a revitalization strategy which incorporates the 8 Key Elements requires pulling together a number of diverse community stakeholders and then asking difficult questions to uncover a strategy which is both inclusive and workable. The following questions are among the most important questions to answer during the revitalization planning process. The tools, exercise, and profiles in this book will help guide you as you work through these questions.

AREA OF WORK	KEY QUESTIONS
Define the target area	What are the district's boundaries?
Involve Stakeholders	Who has a stake in the success of the district? What is the best way to involve them in the planning process?
Develop a Vision for the Future of the District	How do the stakeholders envision the district in the future? Who will be the customers? What will draw customers to the district?
Understand Business and Building Stock	What types of businesses are located here? How much commercial space is available? What percentage of space is vacant or underutilized?
Define the Trade Area	Where do most customers come from?
Understand Demographics and Spending Power	Who are the local consumers? How much disposable income do they have? Where do they currently spend it? What are their unmet needs?
Evaluate Safety Concerns	What current conditions make people feel unsafe? What can be done to improve the safety and the perception of safety?
Assess Streetscape Conditions	What are the conditions of the buildings and storefronts? What is the condition of the streets, sidewalks and other public space? How is parking provided in the district?
Evaluate the Business Mix and Competition	What are the district's assets and challenges? What is the current mix of retail tenants? Where else do people shop and why? How does the district compare with its competition?
Target Desirable Retail Tenants	What types of retail tenants are desired? Can appropriate space and parking be provided for these tenants? Where are the best opportunities for new development?
Create Action and Funding Plan	What needs to change in the district (Physical, Social, Economic, Political Elements)? Who has the resources needed to improve the district? What are the best opportunities for change to pursue given the needs and resources? Who will work on which aspects of the revitalization plan? What committee structure makes the most sense? What is the budget for each project? What are the goals for the end of one year?

Many of these questions can be answered by the advisory committee simply sitting down together and discussing them. Others require some level of research to answer adequately. Some communities spend six months undertaking a comprehensive planning process and engage one or more consultants to help fully answer questions like these. In other communities, funding limitations or time pressures lead to a much quicker, less in-depth, planning process that, nonetheless, addresses the same key questions.

BASIC STEPS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

INITIAL VISIONING

Engage Stakeholders: Identify key stakeholders in the district (**Tool 3-1**) and engage them in the process through one-on-one interviews and/or questionnaires (**Tool 3-2**) about commercial revitalization opportunities.

Convene Advisory Committee: Bring together a small group of six to 12 key stakeholders representing a diversity of differ-ent perspectives (city, merchants, residents, local nonprofits, etc.) to lead the commercial revitalization planning process.

Define Target Area: Define boundaries of the business district.

Background Scan: Compile existing research, market studies, and planning reports for the neighborhood. Conduct a series of brief telephone interviews with local stakeholders to find out who is currently working on programs or projects that impact the commercial district.

Community Meeting to Evaluate Current Assets and Challenges: A large community meeting provides an opportunity to present brief background data regarding market demand, existing businesses, and vacancies. Then meeting attendees complete a SWOT exercise (**Tool 4-1**) to identity current assets and challenges in the district.

Community Meeting to Develop a Vision: The initial community meeting provides an opportunity to gather community input on the future vision for the district. Use the Community Identity Exercise (**Tool 4-2**) to help the group brainstorm and stimulate discussion. Notes from this meeting can be used by a smaller group to draft vision statements.

IN-DEPTH RESEARCH

Walking Survey #1: A small team of two to five volunteers conducts a Building and Business Inventory (**Tool 5-1**) to record information about the existing businesses, the condition of buildings and any vacant sites.

Compile Neighborhood Market Snapshot: Purchase online demographic and economic data *(See Chapter 6 – Understanding Market Data)* which, together with data from any previous reports, will provide a quick "snapshot" of the local market. Based on the results, consider hiring a professional market research firm to answer specific remaining questions about the market potential for the district.

Conduct Surveys and Collect Local Data: Prepare and disseminate surveys *(See Chapter 7 – Using Surveys and Interviews to Collect Local Market Data)* to appropriate stakeholders in order to "reality-check" and supplement downloadable market data. Collect appropriate data from local sources such as city government, schools, and churches.

Collect Crime and Safety Data: Establish a relationship with the local police department and gather and analyze local crime statistics. Collect additional information on safety and the perception of safety through merchant and/or consumer surveys. *(See Chapter 8 – Assessing Crime and Community Safety)*

REFINING THE VISION

Walking Survey #2: Another small group of volunteers walks the district to conduct an assessment of the quality of streetscape conditions (**Tool 10-1**) in the district including a general evaluation of the parking opportunities and the condition of sidewalks, streets, street furniture and trees.

Refine Vision and Identify Implementation Goals: Working group reviews one or more potential vision statements drafted based on the previous discussion and begins to identify specific activities that would be necessary to achieve the vision.

Community Meeting to Present Formal Vision Statement: Seek feedback on the draft vision statement from a larger group of community stakeholders. Allow participants to brainstorm potential program activities to address key challenges in the district.

DEFINING COMMUNITY AND COMMERCIAL IDENTITY

Identify Business Attraction Targets and Opportunity Sites: Based on community feedback, develop a list of desired retail types. Research their site and location preferences, and match preferences with list of opportunity sites in the district.

Host a Design Charrette: Host a community design charrette to collect ideas that can be used to create district design guidelines with assistance from design professionals.

Brand the District Identity: Work with marketing professionals to translate the community vision statement into a logo and a concise slogan to be used to promote the district internally and externally.

CREATE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Delineate Work Plan and Staff Needs: Based on feedback from the community meeting, prioritize potential activities, develop a work plan and budget for implementing those activities. Identify staffing needs and hire accordingly.

Generate Fundraising Targets: Identify sources of sustainable funding for program implementation.

Identify Data Points to Track Outcomes: Based on the goals of the work plan, identify several data points which will be used to track program progress over time. Collect baseline data for these indicators.

Note: Activities can be performed in any order or concurrently within each group.

Final Deliverables

This type of planning process will produce several final products including:

1. A vision statement for the future of the business district.

2. A building and business inventories.

3. A business attraction targets and opportunity sites.

4. A collaborative work plan that outlines priority revitalization activities.

5. An organizational structure to maintain accountability during implementation.

6. A fundraising plan.

7. Baseline data for outcome tracking.

This process can be altered to fit the timeline and resources of your district. A complete community planning process might take up to six months to complete and involve a large advisory committee with support from a paid staff person and several consultants. The advisory committee might meet monthly with subcommittees meeting more frequently. Staff would compile research, interview neighborhood stakeholders, develop an inventory of buildings and businesses, and create merchant and consumer surveys. The advisory committee would focus on articulating a vision for the future of the neighborhood, identifying additional stakeholders to involve, brainstorming and prioritizing improvement projects and crafting an organizational structure to sustain the work over time. Consultants could be hired to conduct a retail market analysis and help identify business development opportunities.

It is also possible to undertake a planning process in a period as short as six weeks with a small group of volunteers willing to meet weekly with support from a part-time staff person (or one or two exceptionally dedicated volunteers). This approach would likely include fewer large community meetings. Extensive surveying and working with consultants would likely be skipped, but analyzing downloadable market data and assessing existing physical and business conditions should not be skipped. The final deliverables for a shortened planning process should be the same, but the level of detail may vary. If you undertake a shortened planning process, make sure that you allow enough time to collect the information needed to develop a vision and outline a collaborative work plan for the implementation phase.

ONGOING PLANNING

No matter how much time and effort a community invests in up-front planning before launching a revitalization program, planning becomes an ongoing part of commercial revitalization. Every program undertakes some level of ongoing planning to fill missing pieces in their understanding of the local market conditions or simply to stay on top of changes that take place over time. For example, at the very beginning of their commercial revitalization efforts, the Spanish Speaking Unity Council in Oakland, Calif., conducted a customer survey to better understand what people saw as the key challenges facing the neighborhood and to gauge their willingness to get involved in improvement efforts. Several years later, as the Unity Council's Fruitvale Main Street program began to work to strengthen existing merchants and attract new ones, they conducted another customer survey, this time focused on learning about the specific goods and services that local residents would like to be able to buy in the district.

Some groups will weave this kind of ongoing planning work into their annual work plan—undertaking some kind of research project every year, while others will complete a planning phase and then switch into 'implementation mode' for several years before returning to undertake a new phase of planning at some point.

TAKING ACTION DURING THE PLANNING PHASE

In many low-income communities people often complain that they have been "studied to death" by one research project after another that does not lead to any actual change. It is much easier for foundations and government agencies to fund planning studies than real change. But when these studies are not acted on, it generates a deep cynicism on the part of some residents or business owners. In some communities this legacy means that no matter how important advanced planning may be, it cannot be the first step that a successful program will take. Sometimes, it is easier to jump immediately into action and then, on a parallel track, undertake the research that will help guide future action. Immediate action to organize a community clean up event or launch a store front improvement program can go a long way toward demonstrating that you are serious about making real, physically-noticeable changes in the commercial district and not simply studying community problems. Even small, immediate, tangible projects can let people know that you are serious about making changes and can help motivate people to get involved.

While there are many good options for taking action during the planning phase, try to choose one or two which relate to your most pressing needs and can be achieved in a relatively short period of time. For example, if district cleanliness is viewed as a major problem by many stakeholders, then a district clean up day might make sense. A longer-term project like a major community festival, might appeal to more people but try to resist committing major resources (staff time, money, etc.) until you have had time to evaluate all the needs and opportunities *(See Chapter 12 – Defining an Implementation Strategy)*. Ideally, immediate actions undertaken during a planning process will be significant enough to get people involved but won't take undue attention away from the planning work.

EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO KEEP STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED

- Decorate the commercial corridor for the holidays.
- Organize a crime and safety walk with the police.
- Sponsor a street tree planting event.
- Paint a mural on an unsightly wall.
- Organize a clean up day.

Profile: Excelsior District Planning Process

In the spring of 2002, San Francisco Supervisor Gerardo Sandoval hosted a series of town hall community meetings to discuss issues in the city's Excelsior neighborhood. Neighborhood residents discussed a range of neighborhood concerns but one issue that came up repeatedly was the condition of Mission Street, the area's historic commercial district. Sandoval committed that he would find a way to focus more resources on improving the commercial district and bring in new businesses. With technical assistance and staff support from the Bay Area LISC office, and funding from the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Economic Development, a group of community residents, merchants and community institutions convened to create a revitalization strategy for Mission Street. The committee, known as the Excelsior Action Group (EAG), met every two weeks for nearly four months and was able to collect a wealth of information about both the challenges and the strengths of the district in order to map out a realistic plan for improvement. With this plan in hand, the group was able to secure partnerships with several community organizations, commitments for increased services from the City and ongoing funding from LISC and the City to hire staff to implement the Excelsior Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Project (ENCoRe).

Engaging Stakeholders:

After completing a thorough review of relevant background documents and analyzing demographic data for the neighborhood, the LISC team conducted one-on-one stakeholder inter-

views. Twenty-five interviews were conducted with a mix of merchants, residents and property owners, local community based organization staff, and government and church leaders. Subsequently, three focus group meetings were held with different stakeholders including youth, resident associations, and immigrant activist organizations. These meetings provided a forum for introducing the commercial district revitalization initiative and enabled organizers to collect input regarding the most pressing challenges and the key opportunities to improve the commercial district.

During the planning phase, a subcommittee of the EAG organized a successful Halloween promotional event (Safe-R-Treat), with more than 60 merchants agreeing to stay open late to welcome trick-or-treating families. The event engaged new volunteers and EAG meeting attendance grew as a result of the visibility generated by the event.

Market Research:

The EAG began detailed research into the challenges identified by the community. Volunteers completed a Business and Commercial Building Inventory (**Tool 5-1**), that included mapping all vacant storefronts. This information was used to conduct a Business Cluster Analysis of the 254 commercial enterprises in the 10-block district. Bars and restaurants were the largest cluster while beauty shops were second, with grocery stores and dental clinics following. Anchors include Safeway, Walgreen's, Goodwill, and a branch of the San Francisco Public Library. LISC provided market data reports *(See Chapter 5 –*

Compiling a Building and Business Inventory) which confirmed that neighborhood residents were doing the majority of their shopping outside the area and supported the conclusion that an improved Mission Street could capture a much greater share of this spending—enough to support new businesses. The focus groups and community meetings provided insight into why residents were shopping elsewhere and indicated that changing their behavior would require more than just new businesses—the street would need to be cleaner, feel safer, have easier parking and improved crosswalks, among other things.

Responding to this feedback, the EAG undertook additional research including an inventory of parking spaces and a catalogue of "eyesores," storefronts in need of improvement such as cleaning or extensive façade repairs (**Tool 10-1**). Data on pedestrian accidents and an analysis of placement of crosswalks and pedestrian visibility was conducted, revealing that significant improvements were indeed necessary.

Defining the Neighborhood Vision:

Through stakeholder interviews and action group meetings, the committee attempted to gather the elements of a vision for the Mission Street shopping district. The process included identifying the neighborhood's strengths and those traits that make it unique (**Tool 4-1**). Merchants, residents and other stakeholders were asked what kind of neighborhood they would want to the Excelsior to be. The EAG developed an initial vision which was later refined by a broader group of stakeholders and ultimately presented at a town hall meeting. The vision emphasized the commercial district's role as a meeting place for the neighborhood's diverse cultural groups and as a place where neighborhood residents meet their daily needs. The vision called for Mission Street to be active both day and night, though at that time there was very little nighttime activity.

Creating the Work Plan and Organizational Structure:

Through the EAG and focus group meetings, a long, creative list of recommended action items was generated. One EAG meeting focused on prioritizing these actions and identifying those that should be implemented immediately and those that could wait. Top priorities included:

- Implementing a façade improvement program.
- Improving public safety, especially at night, through a relationship with police department.
- Conducting business recruitment activities in order to fill vacant storefronts.
- Organizing a large-scale neighborhood street fair.

It was determined that in order to sustain the momentum for the five to seven years necessary to implement the program and make lasting changes, the EAG would need the ongoing support of paid staff. One of the challenges in this neighborhood was a relative shortage of existing nonprofit organizations. Most San Francisco neighborhoods have several established community organizations providing economic development or community services but Excelsior has very few. EAG leaders considered forming a new nonprofit but decided that the effort necessary to create a new organization would take their energy away from their purpose: improving Mission Street. Instead, after considering several potential partners, they decided to invite the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, a CDC based in a nearby neighborhood to act as the lead agency for the project and provide supervision and support to the program staff. Thanks to the community's clear work plan and initial fundraising efforts, the BHNC Board was able to agree to take on an unusual role outside of their historic area of focus.

A full-time district manager was hired in early 2003 and since that time has implemented much of the initial plan. Notable accomplishments over the past few years include: recruiting over 30 businesses to fill vacant storefronts and create more than 100 jobs; organizing merchants to collaborate on neighborhood beautification and community building efforts; producing an annual business directory; hosting a well-attended annual street fair; and increasing city and region-wide visibility of the commercial district via a community branding and marketing plan. While the community still faces real challenges, early planning work has helped them make the most of limited resources and was key to getting different parts of the community to work together toward the same vision.

3. Identifying and Involving Stakeholders

To develop and successfully implement a commercial revitalization strategy, it is important to incorporate the ideas and vision of a diverse set of the stakeholders from the beginning. Individuals and groups who are part of the process of creating the vision and strategy are far more likely to be active supporters during the implementation phase than those whose ideas were not incorporated. Additionally, a planning process can be an excellent opportunity to bring together different segments of the community to build stronger relationships.

GETTING STARTED

- Identify and interview key individuals and CBOs.
- Distribute outreach materials to diverse stakeholders.
- Meet with local government staff to foster good working relationships.
- Hold two to three town hall-type community meetings.
- Maintain frequent contact with stakeholders.

IDENTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS

Local stakeholders, the people who live or operate businesses in the district, are often in the best position to recognize the area's assets and challenges. Incorporating the experiences and opinions of many local stakeholders will help to accurately inform the work of staff and consultants. Yet, not all stakeholders live, work, or operate businesses in the district. Everyone that is concerned about the commercial district is a stakeholder. For example, a bank—even one that doesn't have a branch in the district—might be very interested in the revitalization planning process because it wants to eventually make small business loans to district merchants. Similarly, a historic preservation organization may be interested in helping to preserve the architecture in your district.

More than likely, your CBO already has existing relationships with some of the important stakeholders, but challenge yourself to think broadly about what other perspectives can be brought to the table. A concerted effort to pull together a variety of perspectives will generate lively, potentially contentious, discussions that will help produce creative strategies to address revitalization. To begin to identify the stakeholders in your district, organize a meeting of known stakeholders and ask them to help you identify additional people and organizations that may have an interest in an improved commercial corridor and neighborhood.

A simple way to collect this information is through the Stakeholder Mapping Exercise (**Tool 3-1**), a worksheet with a list of potential stakeholder types and space for each respondent to write the name and contact information for organizations or individuals in the district who should be included in future meetings.

COMMON STAKEHOLDERS FOR COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PLANNING

- Business owners and merchant groups
- Residents and homeowner/tenant organizations
- Local government officials, both elected and appointed
- Banks/small business lenders
- Civic and cultural groups
- Local private corporations
- Economic development organizations
- Chamber of Commerce
- Regional planning entities
- Community development organizations
- Property owners and landlord organizations
- Artists
- Realtors
- Shoppers
- Police
- Religious institutions
- Social service agencies
- Historic preservation organizations
- Transportation and parking authorities
- Colleges and universities
- Architects, contractors and developers
- Schools and youth groups

METHODS FOR ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

After identifying additional stakeholders, reach out to them and inform them of your intent to develop a commercial revitalization strategy. Let them know that their input and support is critical to developing a strong vision and a new future for the area. Remind them of the benefits that a revitalized district will bring for them. For example, merchants may benefit from an increased consumer base and subsequent opportunities to expand. Property owners would benefit from increased property values and lease rates which accompany successful revitalization. The city will benefit from an increased tax base. Residents may benefit from improved access to goods and services, increased safety, and overall quality of life improvements.

It is particularly important to develop strong relationships with local business owners and area residents. Depending on the hours of their businesses, many business owners may have difficulty attending community meetings. Initially, it is a good idea to make personal contact with business owners at their locations. This is an opportunity to gauge their interest and ability to participate in the revitalization planning process and collect information on what meeting times might be most convenient for them. If there are non-English speaking business owners, make sure to have the capacity to involve them in the process in their native language. Ideally, your staff would include individuals who can speak the relevant languages; but if your organization lacks this capacity, you may want to partner with other local organizations or volunteers who possess the needed language skills.

The Stakeholder Outreach Form (**Tool 3-2**) is a good tool to begin to engage new stakeholders. It allows you to collect information about individual perceptions of the district as well as gauge interest in increased involvement in the planning process. It can be dropped off to local merchants and residents, handed out at a local community event, or distributed at meetings of existing local organizations. Make sure to provide easily-accessible places to return the survey and quickly follow up with anyone who expressed an interest in being part of the process. All contact information collected through this exercise should be maintained in a database for future correspondence.

Another means of initially engaging stakeholders is to organize Community Town Hall Meetings, moderated discussions of a diverse group of people who are interested in commercial revitalization. It can be structured as either a single meeting or a series of meetings over time. If you are planning a series of meetings, it is best to schedule them in advance so that people can be aware and save the dates.
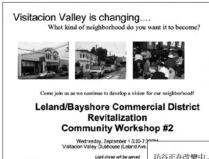
Exhibit 2: *Organizers in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley advertised community meetings in multiple languages*

Community meetings are beneficial because they not only provide a forum for hearing people's ideas and concerns, but also because they allow individual stakeholders to see and meet others who are interested in the process. Recognizing that others are engaged in the effort helps to build momentum and strengthens connections between groups and individuals around a shared purpose.

Once you have initially engaged stakeholders, you will want to be able to provide structured opportunities for them to increase their involvement. Each stakeholder has unique resources to offer and will want to participate in different ways. The strongest programs offer a continuum of ways for people to participate ranging from filling out surveys to committing to a position on the advisory committee.

HELPFUL HINTS

It is often a challenge to draw a critical mass of the community to your town hall meetings. To help increase attendance:

- Choose an accessible location.
- Announce the date of the meeting early and often.
- Promote the meeting in multiple languages, if demographic data indicates a significant presence of non-English speakers in the district.
- Provide translation at the meetings.
- Make personal contact with community organizations, merchants, and individuals to remind them of the upcoming meeting.
- Provide refreshments and advertise that they will be served.
- If possible, provide on-site childcare.

CREATING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Through the stakeholder outreach process you may identify other organizations whose missions complement your revitalization goals. Some of these organizations may be interested in being directly involved in your planning process, others may want to assist you but lack the capacity to fully participate. Try to work with each other and develop mutually-beneficial structures for approaching the revitalization process.

CREATING A STRONG WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is important for all commercial revitalization programs to have a strong working relationship with the local government, but this relationship is particularly important in low-income urban areas. Many low-income commercial districts are plagued by crime, trash, and public disinvestment. Improvements in public investment and the provision of city services, such as street cleaning and graffiti removal, may be necessary before you can successfully attract private investment and strong new retailers. Additionally, city governments are frequently the source of operating funds for implementation of a commercial district revitalization program so if you do not already have a commitment for funding, it is important to engage the city early on in hopes of gaining financial as well as political support for your efforts.

You should meet with your neighborhood's local government representative and gain his/her support for your effort. You may even want to invite him/her to sit on your advisory committee. Additionally, it is beneficial to establish personal relationships with key staff from such departments as the Police, Public Works and Planning departments as well as the Mayor's or City Manager's office. Let them know of your goals, seek their advice, and keep them abreast of your progress. These relationships will come in handy when you are trying to improve the quality of city services in your district or assist a local business owner navigating the planning and permitting process.

TOOL 3-1: STAKEHOLDER MAPPING EXERCISE

Please write the names of any individuals or organizations that fit the categories below. If you have contact information for these organizations, for example a website address or staff names, please provide that information as well. Thank you.

Business Owners:
_____
_____
_____

Property Owners:
_____
_____
_____

Local Residents and Homeowner/Tenant Associations:
_____
_____
_____

City Staff/ Politicians:
_____
_____
_____

Youth and/or Social Service Agencies:
_____
_____
_____

Brokers or Realtors:
_____
_____
_____

Private Corporations/Financial Institutions:
_____
_____
_____

Other Community Based Organizations (CBOs)/Non Profit Organizations:
_____
_____
_____

Schools and Educational Institutions:
_____
_____
_____

Police Department:
_____
_____
_____

Civic and Cultural Groups:
_____
_____
_____

Small Business Assistance Agencies:
_____
_____
_____

Local Religious Institutions:
_____
_____
_____

Other:
_____
_____

TOOL 3-2: STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH FORM

[Include short introduction about your revitalization efforts and goals]

What are the most pressing issues to address in this business district? *Please rank your top 3.*

☐ Public safety

☐ Merchants keep limited hours

☐ Neighborhood reputation

☐ Lack of cleanliness along corridor

☐ Pedestrian safety

☐ Storefront appearance

☐ Availability/quality of goods & services

☐ Lack of parking

☐ Lack of foot traffic

☐ Other:

_____

Would you be interested in helping to improve the area by attending community meetings or working on projects related to commercial revitalization?

Y ☐   N ☐

Contact Information

Name:

_____

Organization (if any):

_____

Email:

_____

Phone

_____

Address:

_____

_____

_____

Are there other groups or individuals you would recommend we talk to about potential interest in participating in the commercial revitalization program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please provide any additional comments or thoughts on the reverse side.

4. Developing a Community-Based Vision

Each commercial district is unique; each has a unique past, present, and future. While there is no one way to improve every district, a successful strategy for improvement has to be built around a specific vision for what kind of place the stakeholders want the place to become. People will disagree about what kind of future is desirable. Merchants view the future of the district through a different lens than the residents, and among residents there are usually many competing ideas for improvement. Strong business district revital-ization programs, at their start, and as an ongoing part of their day-to-day work, engage a wide range of stakeholders in discussions about defining that future, moving people in the direction of consensus. While full consensus is very rare in urban communities, the only way to improve a district is through the coor-dinated effort of many different stakeholders and that coordination requires some level of **common vision**.

Most programs begin with some intentional visioning process which includes one or more community meetings along with interviews or focus groups with residents, merchants and other stakeholders. Over time, as you collect useful research on the challenges and opportunities in your district, this general direction is refined into a more specific vision that describes the economic and cultural *niche* that the district aspires to fill. This process by generally leads to a written vision statement summarizing the generally agreed upon direc-tion for the district. The vision informs the revitalization process by helping participants select both what to do to improve the area and how to do it. A revitalization program involves many very small changes in a district, those changes won't add up to something greater if they don't each reinforce a specific identity.

GETTING STARTED

- Conduct a SWOT analysis of district.
- Conduct the Community Identity Exercise.
- Brainstorm what the district will be like in 10 years.
- Identify a targeted consumer niche.
- Draft written vision statements in a small group.
- Compare and discuss alternative vision statements.

WHAT IS A "VISION?"

The vision is a story about the kind of place your neighborhood will be in the future and what kind of change you are working toward. It is what you want people to say when they talk about the district.

A strong vision answers questions like:

- What type of customers will the district try to serve/attract?
- Why will people want to visit and continue to visit the district?
- What will be people's perception of the district?
- What kinds of businesses are appropriate to attract?
- What kinds of businesses are not appropriate?
- What types of products and services will be available here?
- What will make the district unique from neighboring retail districts?
- What will it look like?
- What hours/days will the district be open and active?

A vision is generally the product of a series of difficult choices. A desire to avoid conflict leads some commu-nities to address many of these questions without really answering them. A district that tries to sell everything to everyone may not succeed at selling any-thing. A strong vision sticks its neck out and not only tells us what the district can be but also (indirectly) what it is not going to try to be. For example, a district that is trying to be a regional destination for arts and entertainment is probably not also going to be the place where neighborhood residents buy shoes and clothing. While successful districts often serve more than one niche at once, a vision statement that strings together many different ideas with a series of "and's" or includes phrases like "vibrant" or "unique" without saying more may be a sign that there is still important visioning work to be done. Long lasting success in commercial corridors is usually dependent on a strong vision which guides the actions of various stakeholders.

Profile: Southeast Community SWOT Analysis

The facilitators working on the South East Community Plan in Indianapolis conducted 17 focus groups and collected the opinions of over 140 diverse stakeholders. Consultants counted the frequency of comments made during the focus group discussions, identified recurring themes, and then grouped the comments according to those themes. They created graphs to illustrate the relative popularity of the unique themes which were addressed during the focus groups.

The more than 1,100 individual comments were then distilled into SWOT analysis which summarized the six primary conditions for each category.

SWOT ANALYSIS[i]

Strengths
- Business community
- Resident involvement & neighborhood association
- Many types of diversity
- Community and social services
- Changing image
- Community involvement with schools

Weaknesses
- Street & infrastructure conditions
- Shallow leadership pool
- Property conditions
- Unfriendly redevelopment policies
- Low employability of residents
- Crime

Opportunities
- Community building
- Workforce development
- Retail recruitment
- Increasing neighborhood property values
- Church collaboration
- Population diversity

Threats
- Poor communication
- Gentrification
- Weak city responsiveness/services
- Abandoned buildings & absentee landlords
- Not enough financial resources
- Losing bus service

DEVELOPING A VISION

Developing a meaningful vision can be the most difficult part of a revitalization program. The challenge in many urban neighborhoods is that different individuals are attached to competing visions for the community often related to differences in history, culture, and demographics. Others may offer no positive vision but can be very clear about the kind of change they don't want. Different people and institutions may all agree that the streets need to be cleaned, but might have very different ultimate goals in mind. It is possible to begin working together without resolving all of these differences but to be effective over the longer term, you want local stakeholders to begin working toward the same vision. The exercises and activities described in this chapter are designed to engage diverse community stakeholders in a discussion about what the commercial district is and what it could be and to generate the raw material from which a shared vision can be constructed.

The first step is often to develop a shared analysis of the current situation in the neighborhood. This can include sharing and discussing the results of market data analysis, surveys, and other research as well as collectively brainstorming community assets and challenges. A strong vision is supported by market data and grounded in an understanding of current physical conditions and constraints.

SWOT ANALYSIS

It often useful to begin with a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Exercise (**Tool 4-1**). This exercise provides a format for synthesizing the information you have been collecting as well as a concrete means of collecting stakeholder perceptions of the district.

Strengths are the existing assets of your district. They are the physical, human, and commercial mix elements that make your district attractive relative to competing districts. Examples include: unique architecture; a growing residential population; or a cluster of food-oriented businesses.

Weaknesses are elements of the district which detract from consumer interest and merchant success. Examples include: lack of parking; physical disrepair; or safety concerns.

Opportunities are internal or external conditions which make it possible to successfully undertake a project or plan. Examples include: planned public infrastructure upgrades; neighborhood demographic shifts; or the availability of affordable real estate.

Threats are also internal or external conditions, but those which will potentially impede progress towards a thriving commercial district. Examples include: declining population, absentee property owners, or a planned shopping mall within the trade area, but outside of your commercial district.

The act of listing existing conditions under each of the headings can be very helpful in revealing how to position your district. You will want to build on strengths and addresses weaknesses. This will increase your ability to take advantage of opportunities and reduce threats. Generally, the SWOT exercise is conducted as a facilitated discussion as part of focus groups and/or town hall community meetings where responses are written on flip charts and discussed by everyone present. While the information collected during this exercise will be valuable, the process of discussion can be equally important in helping stakeholders with differing perceptions of the district to better understand each other's points of view.

REVEALING THE COMMUNITY IDENTITY

From a place of shared understanding of present conditions, it will be easier to construct a collective vision of the place you are trying to create. Yet because the process of creating a strong vision can be challenging, it is helpful to use a concrete exercise to get the process rolling.

The **Community Identity Exercise** (**Tool 4-2**) will help you collect ideas about such things as what the area is currently known for, what images people relate to the district, and what people value about other commercial districts. It also provides an opportunity for stakeholders to consider what makes a commercial district attractive and distinct and whether or not those attributes are possible and desirable for your district.

This exercise should be included as a part of an advisory committee meeting, but it is also a means of collecting the ideas of a larger group of stakeholders. It can be used either in a larger community town hall meeting or as part of the agenda at regular community meetings such as those of the merchant association or neighborhood association. To facilitate the exercise, give people 10 to 15 minutes to fill out the Community Identity Exercise form on paper and then allow 15 to 20 minutes for a brief discussion about differing perceptions of the district. The facilitators should collect the written surveys and also take notes, ideally in a large format so that the audience can view them.

"What Will the District be Like in 10 Years" Exercise:

After collecting ideas on the existing community identity, you want stakeholders to collectively brainstorm how they envision the revitalized business district. At a community meeting, ask the stakeholders to imagine and describe the district as they see it 10 years in the future. Present the questions below to the group as prompts for generating ideas. Encourage participants to share what they think will be unique and interesting about the district.

- Who will be the district's main customers?
- Where will these customers come from?
- What will draw them to this district?
- What kinds of businesses will be in the district?
- What will make the district unique from neighboring retail districts?
- What will the district look like?

This discussion will also likely produce a number of ideas for activities to undertake to implement the revitalization strategy. While these activities should not be written in the vision statement, they should be collected and maintained for use in developing a strategic action plan *(See Chapter 12 – Defining an Implementation Strategy)*.

IDENTIFYING A NICHE FOR YOUR DISTRICT

Another important step in the visioning process will be to identify a niche for your district. As discussed in detail in Chapter 8, a district niche is a specialized market segment, defined by either the product/service category or by a specific consumer market segment. Identifying your niche is the process of determining who you are trying to serve and what you hope to offer them.

- Do you want a district with retail outlets which primarily serve local residents or which attract consumers and visitors from throughout the city?
- Do you want to serve specific segments of the population such as youth, the elderly, or college students?
- Do you want to be a district which is a regional destination for tourists?
- Do you want to be known as a district which provides comparison shopping for a specific product such as art, antiques, or cultural food/products?

Increasing competition among retail districts and malls makes it imperative that you clearly define a unique niche for your district as part of your vision. Every district needs its own niche, even if that niche is convenience retail which primarily serves local residents and employees. See *Chapter 9 – Understanding the Business Mix* for more examples of specific product or consumer niches.

"If Your District was a Car" Exercise:
In a community meeting or focus group ask people "If this commercial district was a car, which model would it be?" Not every car is a luxury car but people often default to imagining every revitalized district as an *upscale* district. There are at least as many different potential niches for urban commercial districts as there are for cars. There are SUV districts and pickup truck districts, sports car districts and minivan districts. And just like cars, neighborhood commercial districts appeal to people (or turn people off) based in part on issues of self-image and cultural identity. Just as cars are about something more than transportation, commercial districts are about more than shopping.

ROLE OF CULTURE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD'S IDENTITY

Urban neighborhoods are almost all culturally diverse. The interaction between cultures can be a source of creative energy and also of intense conflict. It is part of what we love about our neighborhoods and part of what makes them so frustrating. Diversity can be a tremendous asset or a real economic and political liability. Tapping into the potential of diversity as an asset requires paying very close attention to cultural issues. While this is probably true in every urban district, it means something very different in each neighborhood.

Cultural Positioning
Everything from the shop windows and signs to the mix of businesses to the physical condition of a district sends important and almost unconscious signals to people about what "kind" of place it is. One key to revitalization is to pay very close attention to the way that the very things which make some people comfortable, make others *uncomfortable*. This difference of "who is comfortable" is not just about ethnic backgrounds. Differences in age, education, class background, sexual orientation or even just "taste" can influence who is comfortable where. Seniors and youth may be looking for different things. There is no one physical space that works for everyone—**every district has to choose** who it wants to attract. Well-managed commercial districts "position" themselves in this sense and target their improvement projects toward building the kind of space where their target customers will feel comfortable spending time. An upscale district may need designer street lamps to appeal to its target market while a working class district may avoid them for the same reason.

Avoiding Theme Park Culture
No matter how much they are associated with one ethnicity, the vast majority of neighborhoods are, in reality, quite diverse. It is often tempting, but only

rarely appropriate, to develop an ethnic theme (i.e. Chinatown, Little Italy, etc.) for each district. With few exceptions these themes leave more people out than they include. More sophisticated approaches draw on a neighborhood's ethnic makeup and history as a source of inspiration in creating a more inclusive overall identity.

Overcoming Cultural Differences
The revitalization process presents an enormous opportunity to build trust and improve understanding across cultures. Inevitably, at the beginning of any revitalization process, different groups (ethnic, economic, political, etc.) within any neighborhood will come to the table with different goals for the future of the community. CBO-led revitalization programs create a setting for what is often the first real discussion between these groups. And, while there is nothing that guarantees the success of these discussions, the result is often that participants discover more common ground than they expected. When it is possible for people with very different backgrounds to come together and spell out a common agenda for neighborhood improvement the result is that every small change becomes easier to accomplish.

This can be especially powerful in communities where significant segments of the resident population speak different languages or where merchants and residents come from different cultural backgrounds. CBOs often hire outreach workers with appropriate language skills and cultural backgrounds who can help each group better articulate goals and concerns and translate them back to the other stakeholders as part of a coordinated planning process. Frequently, this kind of process helps everyone better understand the motivations of the other actors in the neighborhood. While there may still be very important differences, it is easier to move forward when you understand what is at stake for your neighbors. In many diverse urban neighborhoods, real improvement is not possible without this kind of process.

CRAFTING A WRITTEN VISION STATEMENT

The notes from all of these community visioning exercises and discussions can be used by a smaller group of people to draft one or two written versions of the community vision for the future.[i] Vision statements are difficult to write and many successful programs have no formal vision statement, even though they do have a common vision driving their strategy. However, clear written vision statements can be useful and the process of crafting a vision statement can itself serve as an excellent visioning exercise. The vision statement serves as a way to capture all of the hard work that has gone into visioning in one place and to easily

and consistently communicate the vision to others who may have not been involved in the initial visioning process.

Below are a few examples of vision statements from neighborhood commercial districts around the country. Reading them you get a strong sense of the differences between the districts although you may never have visited either one. While Visitacion Valley seeks to provide affordable daily needs for neighborhood residents in a village atmosphere, Fountain Square seeks to attract both residents and visitors to their arts and entertainment district.

Visitacion Valley, San Francisco

Visitacion Valley's commercial district is a thriving village center that is a welcoming and safe environment with shops, restaurants and services providing a wide variety of affordable daily needs for neighborhood residents. The commercial district is well connected to the surrounding neighborhood and creates gathering places for the community's diverse population, particularly for its large youth and family population. Public transit is easily accessible for residents to travel between the commercial district and their homes as well as to connections to the rest of the city, and reasonable parking opportunities are also available. The entrance to the commercial district is distinctly marked to give a sense of arrival and pride for the Valley. There are people on the street and cafes and retail activity spill out into the public space, taking advantage of Visitacion Valley's sunny weather and enjoying the unique greenery in the neighborhood. The village center is a lively, pedestrian-friendly and visually appealing environment for eating, shopping and socializing during the daytime and into the early evening hours.[ii]

Fountain Square, Indianapolis

We see a day in our future… when Fountain Square sidewalks are filled with strolling residents and visitors who leisurely enjoy the unique flavor of a true artists' community. Everywhere you look, the expression of art is evident and accessible, from building murals to street sculpture to art on display in shops and restau-

rants, open and ready for business. The ethnic influences and theatrical history and architecture of the place are complemented by beautifully restored public gathering areas featuring a central fountain and welcoming green spaces. People flock to the area to sample many of the city's best ethnic restaurants and frequently treasure hunt in antique stores, unique artisan's shops and galleries. At night, Fountain Square comes alive with live theatre, music and dancing. Revelers easily walk among a collection of unique entertainment hot spots and, on a few occasions each year, Fountain Square closes the streets and opens its doors for some of the city's most anticipated neighborhood-wide festivals.[iii]
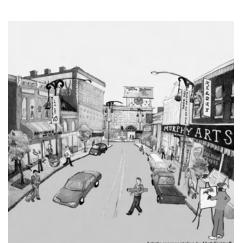
ALTERNATIVE VISION STATEMENT EXERCISE

The act of drafting potential vision statements can be very challenging and it is advisable to have an individual or small group (two to three people) collect the ideas of the larger group and transform them into one or more proposed vision statements rather than asking a large group to draft a statement together. Writing by committee in large groups tends to lead to statements that are both vague and uninspired. Instead, several options can be presented to the wider community for feedback and editing in a manner similar to the Lower Divisadero Street example below (**Tool 4-3**). This approach allows people to call out specific elements of the vision statement that they especially like or object to without requiring a group to compose a statement "by committee." Armed with specific reactions to the draft statements, organizers can then go back and take the time to compose new versions that addresses the concerns without losing the valuable elements.

REFINING THE VISION

While the initial visioning process will produce a strong idea for the future of the district, the research you undertake during the planning process will provide information which will help you refine your vision over time. The data will help you find a middle ground between the community's greatest aspirations and the reality of what changes are feasible in the district in a 10-year time frame. Armed with in-depth research about current market conditions, resident and consumer preferences, opportunity sites, and retailer preferences, you will be in a better position to craft an ambitious but realistic strategy. Often this refined vision is more specific than the initial one but remains true to the community values expressed in the initial visioning discussions.

Exhibit 4:
An artistic representation of a day in the future of Fountain Square

Courtesy of Fountain Square Main Street, Indianapolis

Rendering by Matt Eickhoff

Artistic representation by Matt Eickhoff

Profile: Re$tore Buckeye Initiative

The Buckeye District in Cleveland, Ohio is a diverse community of low- to middle-income families which is situated in a good location for drawing visitors from other neighborhoods as well as from downtown Cleveland. Buckeye Area Development Corporation (BADC), an organization active in housing rehabilitation in the area for over 25 years, has been working on the commercial revitalization of Buckeye Road, the commercial corridor, for nearly 10 years. They began by purchasing 11 key properties along the corridor in an attempt to decrease the rate of physical deterioration and abandonment. Their strategy was to buy properties at reasonable prices and hold them until revitalization efforts induced market interest in redevelopment. At the same time, BADC was working to make incremental improvements to limit vacancies, decrease crime, and improve the physical appearance of the district.

Comprehensive Planning

In 2000, comprehensive commercial revitalization planning efforts began in earnest when the Buckeye Road District was chosen as one of the first four neighborhoods to participate in the Re$tore Cleveland Initiative.

The new program, Re$tore Buckeye, successfully engaged local stakeholders including merchants, property owners, residents, and banks in an effort to improve a 21-block corridor along Buckeye Road. BADC commissioned market studies to help develop a full understanding of the market and design opportunities in the area. Additionally, they conducted a streetscape analysis and demographic and workforce profiles of the neighborhood. This research fed the creation of a strong, directed vision for the future of the district and a coordinated strategy to achieve that vision.

Refined Vision

Their planning and market research led to the recognition that while there was a strong untapped market for additional retail in the area, the market would probably not support 21 blocks of thriving retail.

The refined vision for the district segments the commercial corridor into three distinct nodes in order to foster dynamic street life by creating a critical mass of entertainment and arts-oriented retail, promoting a mix of uses, and by allowing pedestrians and automobiles to co-exist in mutually supportive ways.

- **Performance Row** is envisioned as a pedestrian-oriented entertainment district which will promote the African American culture and jazz history of the area. This node will capitalize on the historic Moreland Theatre which is currently inactive but serves as a centrally-located and architecturally-significant point along the corridor.
- **The Commons** will provide the opportunity for new types of housing and office development, including 25 live/work townhouse spaces for artists known as Artisan Square.
- **The Strip** provides appropriate space for auto-oriented commercial uses and will be used to support the existing Buckeye Plaza strip mall.

Currently, the entire 21-block Buckeye Road target area is zoned for retail but Re$tore Buckeye is working to change the existing zoning code to reflect their new strategy of concentrating the retail into specific nodes. Under their zoning plan the permitted retail square footage would be reduced by half. As they have refined their strategy they have undertaken a set of activities that specifically reinforce this new strategy for the district. For several years they have hosted an annual festival (The Soul of Buckeye) but recently they added another smaller event, Arterial, the annual Buckeye Road Arts Festival. The idea was that the arts festival would give local artists a chance to sell their work while at the same time demonstrating that Buckeye was already an area with lots of artists.

They also began a partnership with Cleveland Public Arts and ParkWorks to create a series of public art installations throughout the neighborhood. At the same time, plans call for new "live-work" housing specifically for artists to fill in portions of the corridor between the proposed retail nodes. This increased emphasis on the arts helps build momentum to support the Performance Row and the proposed Buckeye Community Arts Center to be housed in the rehabilitated Moreland Theater.

Results

The efforts of the Re$tore Buckeye Initiative are paying off with evidence of a decrease in crime in the district, increased volunteer participation, growing attendance at community festivals, and increased interest in district properties by market-rate developers. Ancillary funding for streetscape improvement, security services, and district promotions and marketing will be provided through the newly created Buckeye Special Improvement District.

TOOL 4-1: SWOT EXERCISE

DISTRICT:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION NEEDED:

TOOL 4-2: COMMUNITY IDENTITY EXERCISE

1. Please list one word or phrase that describes why this neighborhood is unique or different from other neighborhoods:

2. What types of businesses is this district most known for?

3. Please list 3 images, including existing icons or neighborhood identifiers, that come to mind when you think of this shopping district:

4. If the area had a slogan, what would it be?

5. Are there particular aspects of this district that should be emphasized or avoided?

Emphasize: Avoid:

6. Choose some words or a phrase that describe your current shopping experiences here.

7. Are there any shopping districts in the region that you particularly like?

District Name	Things you like about this district:	Does this exist in our district? Y/N	Would this be appropriate for our district? Y/N

8. Overall what do you think makes a neighborhood business district attractive?

TOOL 4-3: ALTERNATIVE VISION STATEMENTS EXERCISE

Instructions:

Work with the person sitting next to you to review two vision statement options and answer the questions below.

Option A

In 10 years...

Lower Divisadero Street, situated between picturesque Alamo Square Park and Golden Gate Park's Panhandle, knits together multiple neighborhoods, serving as an attractive pedestrian-friendly walking district with local-serving retail, eclectic specialty stores, unique cafes, and restaurants. Residents of all income levels are able to meet all daily shopping needs locally through independent businesses. Tree-lined streets, clean sidewalks and artistic elements reflect the identity of the neighborhood and make Divisadero lively, friendly, and safe throughout the day and evening. Diverse, politically active individuals, families, and merchants take pride in their community and work together to shape the neighborhood's future.

Option B

In 10 years...

Lower Divisadero, situated between picturesque Alamo Square Park and Golden Gate Park's Panhandle, serves as a destination for neighborhood residents and visitors from throughout the Bay Area who are attracted to the funky mix of cafes, restaurants, evening entertainment uses, and eclectic specialty stores. The live-music scene generates activity through the day and night creating an atmosphere of vitality and excitement. Nighttime establishments and local residents coexist respectfully and work together to promote Divisadero identity and ensure that it remains clean, safe and attractive into the future.

If you had to choose either Option A or Option B, which one would you pick?

_____

Please list your favorite elements from Option A and Option B:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Please list the elements that you do not like from either Option A or Option B

_____

_____

_____

_____

Are there any elements you think are missing from either vision statement? Y N

If yes, please list:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Created by: Bay Area LISC for Lower Divisadero St, San Francisco, CA

5. Compiling Building and Business Inventories

A critical element of the planning process is to develop a comprehensive understanding of the commercial space: your district. It is important to compile a detailed inventory of the existing commercial spaces in your district and the businesses which occupy them. Gathering this data is not a hard science, but it is often a great opportunity to engage community stakeholders in the planning process.

GETTING STARTED

- Walk the district to collect building and business data
- Talk to local merchants and brokers
- Collect building and business data from local government
- Calculate total commercial space in district
- Create and maintain database with current inventories and contact information

Accurate information about the condition of buildings and the presence of existing retail is very useful as you begin to create a revitalization strategy for the future. Contact information for all building owners/business owners is important for maintaining effective communication during the revitalization process. Knowledge of vacant commercial space provides the ability to market available properties to potential renters and buyers. Accurate figures on the square feet of retail, office, and public use space in the district are useful in analyzing market supply of space. An inventory of existing business types is useful for comparing your business mix with competing districts and for identifying commercial opportunities which may currently be undersupplied in your district. A specific business directory, including information on specific hours of operation and goods and services offered, is useful when developing retail event strategy, and district promotions.

BUILDING AND BUSINESS INVENTORY

A building inventory compiles information about the physical condition of commercial property. A business inventory provides information on what types of businesses are in your district. Although they are distinct, the two are complementary and often it is most efficient to collect information simultaneously.

Building Inventory should include at least the following information for each commercial property in your district:
- Address
- Assessors parcel number
- Current use and occupancy Status
- Availability for sale or lease (*If it is on the market, collect relevant contact information*)
- Building condition
- Zoning classification
- Number of stories
- Commercial square footage
- Contact information for property owner and listing broker

Optional information to collect includes:
- Building amenities such as commercial kitchens, outdoor patios, ADA accessible, etc.
- Historic status, if applicable
- Pictures of commercial space and façade

Business Inventory should include the following information for each business in your district:
- Business classification by type (*a categorization system is included in the walking survey tool below*)
- Date of establishment
- Business hours
- Total square footage of leased space
- Contact information for business owner and/or manager
- Primary language of owner and manager

Optional information to collect includes:
- Length of lease
- Monthly rent
- Number of full time and part time employees

GATHERING BUSINESS AND BUILDING INVENTORY DATA

Walking Observation

A walk through the corridor will provide a lot of basic information to start your building inventory database. Bring a camera and many copies of the Walking Survey (**Tool 5.1**) and record as much information as possible, just by observing the buildings. It may also be helpful to bring a map of the local area on which to take notes on the specific sites of vacant lots, storefronts, and development opportunity sites. Photos of individual buildings and interior commercial spaces can prove very helpful for both data collection and for marketing purposes in the future.

A walking inventory is also a great means of engaging and identifying stakeholders. Volunteers, provided with basic training on what to look for and record, can be a great means of collecting this information. Additionally, all contact information collected through this process will help build a database of stakeholders to update on the revitalization planning process.

Local Government Sources

Typically the departments of planning, economic development, neighborhood development, and/or building inspections will have compiled some of the information needed for the building inventory. It is a good idea to contact these departments early on to see what information they may have available.

The local planning department will be able to provide a copy of the zoning ordinance and general plan map. They may be able to provide information about the historic status of buildings in the district, specifically whether any local buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The city or county tax assessor's office is likely to have information on the value of the property, the year the structure was built, and potentially total square footage. In some areas, this kind of data is readily available to the public either for free or for purchase. In other places it takes a concerted effort and perhaps the involvement of local elected officials to obtain electronic files containing basic public data.

Note: Local governments also generally have sales tax data for individual businesses. This data provides the clearest picture of the local businesses mix but because it is confidential data, most jurisdictions can't provide it to outside entities. However, it is sometimes possible to get a list of businesses from the property tax database without the associated confidential information.

Local Merchants and Property Owners

After compiling initial information about properties and businesses, it is a good idea to talk with merchants and property owners. Ask them to review the data you collected to fill in any missing information or correct misinformation.

Local Brokers

Determine which commercial real estate brokers, if any, currently work in or around your district. Contact them and let them know about your revitalization planning process. Ask them if they would be willing to share information they may have compiled to market properties in your district. Suggest that you may be able to arrange a meeting with local property owners who will likely become more proactive about leasing once the revitalization effort is underway.

CREATING A DATABASE

After completing the walking survey of the district, enter the data into a database so that it is easily searchable and can be updated regularly. The building and business inventory will help guide your strategy, but it will also be a useful and dynamic tool as the strategy is implemented. The database will not only allow easy access to information on properties available for lease and goods available in the district, it will also house contact information so that you can maintain communication with business and commercial property owners. You will want to keep this information current. After an initial inventory, you can use the Neighborhood Observation Form (**Tool 13-1**) to keep your inventories up-to-date.

Anyone with experience working with databases can build a simple database file to hold this information fairly easily in a program such as Microsoft Access or FileMaker. However, there are a number of private companies that sell more fully featured database products specifically designed for retail district management. Village Manager (**www.village-manager.com**) is one of these specialized products which manage building and business inventories as well as contact information for volunteers, property owners and other key stakeholders.

Profile: FOCUS Indianapolis Online Building Database

 The City of Indianapolis undertook a comprehensive Commercial Corridor Inventory for each of the five districts in their Fostering Commercial Urban Strategies (FOCUS) program. Information was obtained by volunteers who used handheld Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) devices to collect accurate information about building conditions, occupancy, and availability for sale/lease. Information about applicable land use and zoning codes was also compiled. The information is available online in an interactive Commercial Corridor Inventory database for five districts. The database is available at: **http://imaps.indygov.org/ focus/corridor_program.asp**. The city and the CBOs involved in revitalization planning hope that potential business owners will use the information in the database to locate available space in their districts.

Exhibit 5: Commercial property listing from the FOCUS Commercial Corridor Inventory

Courtesy of Indianapolis Department of Urban Economic Development and 10 East Main Street

Corridor: E 10TH St.

Parcel Information

Parcel #: 1011339
Address: 3406 E 10TH St.
Est. SqFt: 2910
Land Use: 6
Zoning: C3
Condition: Good

Building Information

Building Address: E 10TH St.
Building Condition: C
Building Stories: 1
Building Occupancy: U
Building Sale/Lease: L
Building Parking: N
Building Year Built: 1930

Property Information

Address(es):_____

	Size	Uses
_____	Stories:_____	Ground floor: _____
_____	Street Frontage: _____	Upper floor(s): _____
_____		
_____		
_____		

Age of building (estimate): _____   Condition of building:_____

Total # of Parking Spaces Avail.:____   # In Front:_____   # in Rear _____

_____   # in Use at _____   (time/day of week)

Vacancy:

Vacant Lot_____   Vacant bldg_____   Opportunity Site___

Contact info if for lease/sale: _____

Property Ownership Information—If Available

Parcel number:_____   Block #_____   Lot #: _____

Property owner name, address, phone #:

_____

_____

_____

Business Information

Name of business: _____

Address: _____   Ground Flr/Upper Flr? _____

_____

Description of Product/Service:

_____

Square footage (estimate): _____   Condition of space: _____

Business Owner/Staff Information—If Available

Owner's name:_____   Number of Employees: _____

Owner's address:_____   Full-time:_____

_____   Part-time:_____

Owner's phone: _____   Hours of Operation: _____

Manager's name: _____   Primary language: _____

Additional notes about business or conversation with owner/manager:

_____

_____

Business Type:

Retail:
- ☐ Antiques
- ☐ Apparel and Accessories
- ☐ Appliances
- ☐ Art/Hobby Supply
- ☐ Auto Sales/Repair/Parts
- ☐ Bar
- ☐ Bookstore/Comics
- ☐ Coffee shop
- ☐ Convenience/Liquor
- ☐ Dine In Restaurant
- ☐ Electronics
- ☐ Florist
- ☐ Food Market
- ☐ Gas Station
- ☐ Gift Shop/Card Store
- ☐ Hardware
- ☐ Home Furnishings /Furniture
- ☐ Industrial Supply
- ☐ Jewelry
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Pet Supplies
- ☐ Pharmacy
- ☐ Photography
- ☐ Take Out Restaurant
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Miscellaneous

Services:
- ☐ Accommodations
- ☐ Accounting
- ☐ Banks, Saving, Lending Institutions
- ☐ Beauty Salon/Barber Shop/ Nail Salon
- ☐ Cleaning
- ☐ Computer Services
- ☐ Day Care
- ☐ Dry Cleaning/Tailor/ Laundromat
- ☐ Education/Instruction Services
- ☐ Funeral Home
- ☐ Insurance
- ☐ Legal Services
- ☐ Mail/Packing
- ☐ Medical/Physical Therapy
- ☐ Real Estate
- ☐ Social Services
- ☐ Theaters
- ☐ Miscellaneous

Government/Civic
- ☐ Fire
- ☐ Government Administration
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Police
- ☐ Post Office
- ☐ Religious Institution
- ☐ Community Center
- ☐ School
- ☐ Other Civic Use

6. Understanding Market Data

There is a wealth of easily-accessible market data available for every neighborhood business district and it is becoming increasingly affordable to obtain. However, this public data can be difficult to fully understand and the challenge of understanding it drives many communities to hire professional market research firms. While professional market research may be necessary at some point, community stakeholders must have a basic understanding of the data and its potential uses to effectively direct a consultant and interpret the results. With a little effort, community leaders can learn to understand the basic data as well as know what it can and cannot tell them. In spite of certain shortcomings, this public data can help paint a more complete picture of what is really happening in your business district and provide clues for successful business attraction and expansion opportunities.

GETTING STARTED

- Find and read previous market studies, if available.
- Identify the trade area for the district.
- Download demographic and spending power data reports.
- Interpret market data reports.
- Hire market research consultants to supplement and "reality check" reports.

DOWNLOADING MARKET DATA

There are literally thousands of different web sites offering data that could potentially be useful in understanding neighborhood business district markets. Much of this data is available free from government agencies such as the United States Census Bureau but compiling and comparing data from many different sources can be time consuming and complicated. Fortunately there are several private companies that bring all of this data together and sell basic reports that combine data from several sources. Two of the most popular are:

ESRI – **www.esribis.com**

Claritas – **www.claritas.com**

Each company allows a user to define a custom study area (from a small neighborhood to a whole county)

and download simple reports that describe the population that lives there and the businesses that operate there. For less than $200, it is possible to obtain a set of reports that provide a fairly comprehensive picture of your neighborhood market. The examples below are based on reports available from ESRI but Claritas offers basically the same reports in a different format.

Note: LISC's Center for Commercial Revitalization provides local LISC offices with access to a number of specific ESRI reports. LISC's Center for Commercial Revitalization also maintains a list of market research consultants who have worked in urban communities and has access to the online market reports described below. For more information on how to access these services, please contact your local LISC office.

CREATING A NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET SNAPSHOT

ESRI offers over 50 different reports each with different sets of data designed for slightly different purposes. A fairly complete picture of the trade area for a neighborhood-serving commercial district can be obtained with the following set of reports:

- Demographic and Income Profile
- Business Summary
- Retail Goods and Services Expenditures
- Retail Marketplace Profile
- Traffic Profile

DEFINING A TRADE AREA

To conduct any kind of market analysis you have to begin by making certain assumptions about the size of your trade area. A trade area is the geographic area within which most of a business' customers either live or work. While defining the trade area for an individual business is difficult, defining the trade area for a commercial district is much harder. Each type of business tends to have a different size trade area. People generally travel much further for some kinds of products than others. A drugstore may sell primarily to people who live within a few blocks while an auto dealership will have customers that live more than an hour away. To speak of the trade area of a commercial district is really somewhat misleading. Every district has many different trade areas—some clusters of businesses will primarily serve neighborhood residents
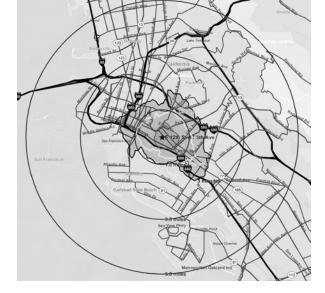
Exhibit 6: *Enhanced Site Map showing 1, 3 and 5-mile areas and the 1,2 and 3-minute drive time areas around Oakland's (Calif.) EastLake district.*

while others will draw people from several surrounding neighborhoods, while one or two may have citywide trade areas.

How Big is Your Trade Area?

Neighborhood retail districts are said to have trade areas between 0.5 miles and 3 miles in diameter and to serve between 3,000 and 30,000 people. Larger districts (those with more stores and more total retail square footage) will tend to have larger trade areas than smaller districts. Districts that sell more "comparison goods," things like electronics or furniture, will naturally have larger trade areas than those that focus more exclusively on "convenience goods" such as groceries. However, there are very important differences between various areas of the country and between higher density and lower density areas and there has been almost no research on the trade areas of commercial districts serving low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

The best way to identify your district's trade area would be to survey shoppers in your district, ask them where they live and then plot the results on a map. If you drew a line around the area where most of the dots were clustered, that would be your trade area. An easier approach would be to just ask people what zip code they live in and then define your trade area as the zip codes where most of your customers live. In some states it is possible to write down the license plates

of people parked in your district and submit a list of numbers to the state and receive a list of the customers' zip codes. However, this kind of survey work is time consuming and expensive and it is very common for market researchers to simply apply some general rules of thumb based on other areas that they have studied.

Distance from District Center: Computer mapping technology allows you to draw a circle of varying sizes around the center of the business district (usually 0.5 - 3 miles) and generate reports based on the population of that exact circle. The center of the district will often be defined based on the busiest intersection in the center of the commercial district. Of course, since much of the information that the market data companies are using is only provided by zip code or census tract, they make some assumptions to estimate the population of any custom area. Even if the estimates are slightly inaccurate, they are likely to be far more accurate than the numbers you would have generated if you were forced to define your trade area based on zip codes or census tracts alone.

Drive Time Areas: It has become relatively easy to define trade areas in terms of "drive time." Drive time is a more complicated but probably a more accurate representation of who shops in your district. The system calculates who lives closest to your address or intersection based on how long it takes to drive there. This means that people who live on the other side of a body of water, for example, won't be counted but people at the next off ramp will. The drive times are calculated 'as if' people could drive at a constant speed *without ever stopping*! The result of this assumption is that the numbers of minutes don't make intuitive sense. It might realistically take people in the two minute drive time radius something more like 10 minutes to get to the center of your district depending on traffic.

Researchers often do not know what the appropriate trade area is at the beginning of their research, so they will often generate and analyze data for more than one sized area and present the results side by side. One way to evaluate the appropriate trade area for your district is to first generate reports for 1, 2 and 3 minute drives (or 1, 3 and 5 mile areas) and then look at the results and see if one or the other of the areas "seems" right or wrong in some way. If the larger area has a very different median income, for example, than the smaller area, that might indicate that it is too large. If you know your district, you should recognize your customers when you look at the demographic reports.

Overview

This report provides a brief description of the population living within your study area.

Reading the Report

This is the population of your study area according to the 2000 U.S. Census.

Median household income is the best indicator of how much people in your area earn. People here earn about $31,000 per household.

This section shows the distribution of your population by age. There are 6,387 people in the area who are between 36 and 44 years old— 16.1% of the total population are in that age group.

This is the study area you selected for this report.

These are estimates for the population in 2003 and 2008.

This section shows the projected annual rate of growth for your area compared with your state and the nation as a whole.

The median income is expected to rise to almost $40,000 by 2008.

Demographic and Income Profile
LISC Center for Commercial Revitalization - Neighborhood Market Snapshot

LISC — Center for Commercial Revitalization

E 12th St AT 5th Ave
Oakland, CA 94606 — Site Type: Radius

		Latitude:	37.7951
Longitude:	-122.2548
Radius:	1.0 miles

Summary	2000	2003	2008
Population	39,576	41,014	43,789
Households	17,055	17,471	18,600
Families	7,863	8,061	8,591
Average Household Size	2.30	2.33	2.33
Owner Occupied HUs	2,560	2,655	2,859
Renter Occupied HUs	14,495	14,816	15,741
Median Age	33.9	34.6	36.0

Trends: 2003-2008 Annual Rate	Area	State	National
Population	1.32%	1.5%	1.18%
Households	1.26%	1.49%	1.37%
Families	1.28%	1.49%	1.31%
Owner HHs	1.49%	1.67%	1.53%
Median Household Income	3.06%	3.36%	3.11%

Households by Income	2000 Number	Percent	2003 Number	Percent	2008 Number	Percent
< $15,000	4,209	24.6%	3,900	22.3%	3,442	18.5%
$15,000 - $24,999	2,665	15.6%	2,492	14.3%	2,317	12.5%
$25,000 - $34,999	2,674	15.6%	2,534	14.5%	2,431	13.1%
$35,000 - $49,999	2,879	16.8%	3,040	17.4%	3,001	16.1%
$50,000 - $74,999	2,465	14.4%	2,524	14.4%	2,891	15.5%
$75,000 - $99,999	1,058	6.2%	1,262	7.2%	1,670	9.0%
$100,000 - $149,999	811	4.7%	1,163	6.7%	1,769	9.5%
$150,000 - $199,000	222	1.3%	303	1.7%	608	3.3%
$200,000+	150	0.9%	253	1.4%	471	2.5%
Median Household Income	$31,232		$34,149		$39,697	
Average Household Income	$41,936		$49,109		$61,641	
Per Capita Income	$18,475		$21,233		$26,558	

Population by Age	2000 Number	Percent	2003 Number	Percent	2008 Number	Percent
0 - 4	2,320	5.9%	2,383	5.8%	2,559	5.8%
5 - 14	4,313	10.9%	4,505	11.0%	4,498	10.3%
15 - 19	2,155	5.4%	2,233	5.4%	2,377	5.4%
20 - 24	3,335	8.4%	3,346	8.2%	3,473	7.9%
25 - 34	8,500	21.5%	8,346	20.3%	8,234	18.8%
35 - 44	6,387	16.1%	6,687	16.3%	7,259	16.6%
45 - 54	4,883	12.3%	5,381	13.1%	6,214	14.2%
55 - 64	2,798	7.1%	3,174	7.7%	4,035	9.2%
65 - 74	2,474	6.3%	2,398	5.8%	2,338	5.3%
75 - 84	1,702	4.3%	1,779	4.3%	1,881%	4.3%
85+	709	1.8%	782	1.9%	921	2.1%

Race and Ethnicity	2000 Number	Percent	2003 Number	Percent	2008 Number	Percent
White Alone	8,736	22.1%	8,401	20.5%	7,936	18.1%
Black Alone	8,973	22.7%	8,660	21.1%	8,027	18.3%
American Indian Alone	268	0.7%	256	0.6%	258	0.6%
Asian Alone	16,377	41.4%	17,989	43.9%	21,034	48.0%
Pacific Islander Alone	97	0.2%	104	0.3%	106	0.2%
Some Other Race Alone	3,270	8.3%	3,516	8.6%	3,968	9.1%
Two or More Races	1,856	4.7%	2,089	5.1%	2,462	5.6%
Hispanic Origin (Any Race)	5,963	15.1%	6,388	15.6%	7,153	16.3%

Data Note: Income is expressed in current dollars.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000 Census of Population and Housing. ESRI BIS forecasts for 2003 and 2008.

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This is the breakdown of your population by race. The Asian population in this area is expected to grow from 41.4% of the population in 2000 to 48.0% by 2008.

Source of the Data

The numbers for 2000 are based directly on the 2000 U.S. Census. If your study area includes parts of several different census tracts, ESRI estimates the population (and other statistics) of your exact area based on the populations of each of those tracts and the percentage of each tract that falls within your study area. The 2005 and 2010 numbers are based on the 2000 census numbers but are adjusted with a complex formula that ESRI has created from national and statewide population trends.

Defining Terms

Households vs. Families: The census counts not only the number of people in an area but also the number of households and families. A "household" is all the people who live in a single housing unit. It may be a family of 4 or a single person or 7 unrelated people—each is one household. The census defines a "family" as more than one person related by blood or marriage living in the same household. Therefore there are always more households than families in any area.

Median/Average/Per Capita Income: In addition to breaking down the population into income groups, the report provides the median and average household incomes and the per capita income. The per capita income is just the total income reported by everyone in the area divided by the number of people who live there. It is generally more useful to look at household income because, for example, the population includes children who don't often have any source of income but every household has some source of income. The *average* household income is the total income reported for the area divided by the number of households. It can be misleading because a few very high income households in an area can raise the average income quite a bit and make it look like people are generally better off then they are. The *Median* Household Income is a better indicator of what people in the area generally earn. If you took the income for every household and made a list from lowest to highest, the median would be the number in the middle of this list: half of the households in the area earn more than the median and half earn less.

Shortcomings of the Data

Census Undercount: The Census is supposed to count everyone but actually finding every single person would be impossible. Over the past few decades the Census Bureau has been getting better at counting people, but in 2000 they are estimated to have "missed" over 3 million Americans. It has long been well understood that the Census tends to under-count low-income and minority populations more than others. Researchers at UCLA found that while the undercount for the state of California was approximately 1.4%, in some neighborhoods in Los Angeles, 5.9 percent of the population was not counted[iv]. This undercount means that not only might the population figures on this report be understated but the income and spending estimates on the other reports will understate the economic strength of your community to whatever extent the Census failed to count everyone.

Under Reporting of Income: Keep in mind that the Census data presented here reflects only income that people have *reported* to the Census. In most low- and moderate-income urban neighborhoods the actual income is far greater than the reported income—we just don't know how much greater. A research project in Chicago showed that families with reported incomes of less than $10,000 per year reported *spending* over $25,000 on goods and services[v]. It is impossible to know how much income is unreported but some researchers estimate that 20 percent of U.S. economic activity is unreported and much of this activity takes place in low-income urban areas—where the percentage of unreported income would, therefore, be much higher. Some unreported income is from illegal activity but most is from activities that are perfectly legal (like childcare) but not reported to the IRS or Census Bureau.

The daytime/nighttime population ratio is the ratio of the number of employees in area businesses to neighborhood residents. A high ratio indicates that daytime workers may be an important customer base.

The report shows the total number of businesses in each category, the percentage of total businesses in the area that fit into each category, the number of employees at the businesses in each category and the percentage of the area's total employees that work at the businesses in each category.

Example: There are 21 eating and drinking places in this study area and they employ 69 people. While these businesses make up 4.8% of total businesses they only offer 1.4% of the neighborhood's jobs.

Business Summary
LISC Center for Commercial Revitalization - Neighborhood Market Snapshot

Leland Ave AT Bay Shore Blvd
San Francisco, CA 94134
Drive Time: 2 minutes

Site Type: Drive Time

Total Businesses:			433
Total Employees:			5,084
Total Residential Population:			23,994
Daytime/Nighttime Population Ratio:			0.21

	Businesses		Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Agriculture & Mining	3	0.7%	57	1.1%
Construction	47	10.9%	671	13.2%
Manufacturing	30	6.9%	331	6.5%
Transportation	16	3.7%	75	1.5%
Communication	4	0.9%	21	0.4%
Electric, Gas, Water, Sanitary Services	5	1.2%	1,104	21.7%
Wholesale Trade	30	6.9%	360	7.1%
Retail Trade Summary	80	18.5%	439	8.6%
Home Improvement	5	1.2%	48	0.9%
General Merchandise Stores	1	0.2%	27	0.5%
Food Stores	20	4.6%	109	2.1%
Auto Dealers, Gas Stations, Auto Aftermarket	4	0.9%	22	0.4%
Apparel & Accessory Stores	2	0.5%	4	0.1%
Furniture & Home Furnishings	12	2.8%	64	1.3%
Eating & Drinking Places	21	4.8%	69	1.4%
Miscellaneous Retail	15	3.5%	96	1.9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate Summary	11	2.5%	51	1.0%
Banks, Savings & Lending Institutions	1	0.2%	3	0.1%
Securities Brokers	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Insurance Carriers & Agents	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Real Estate, Holding, Other Investment Offices	8	1.8%	47	0.9%

Overview
This report provides a count of the number of businesses located within your study area in each of several standard categories. It also provides the number of employees in these businesses. It is helpful in identifying existing clusters of businesses in your community.

Source of data
The data is based primarily on tax filings and is supplemented by telephone listings and other sources. The data may be several years old.

Shortcomings of the data
These reports often fail to capture many small independent retail businesses and home-based businesses (even when they pay their taxes regularly). Therefore the reports generally understate the number of businesses in urban neighborhoods. The employee counts are often quite inaccurate also.

Using the Data
Area residents are not the only customers for your stores. If your district is located near places where large numbers of people work, these employees represent an important market for your businesses. The relative importance of workers is measured by the daytime/nighttime population ratio shown at the top of the report. A ratio of 1 would represent an area where there were exactly as many workers as residents. Areas with a high ratio will tend to have more businesses that target workers (i.e. more places to eat lunch, etc.) Consider listing the number of employees in addition to residential demographics in your promotional material or leasing packet.

In addition to the total number of employees, the types of businesses where the largest numbers of people work can also be important to the district's strategy. Health Care workers might support a uniform store, for example. A district's promotion strategy might be influenced by the employer mix. For example, a district with a few very large employers might want to work with these companies to sponsor promotional events, while one with many smaller employers may have no choice but to reach employees directly.

RETAIL GOODS AND SERVICES EXPENDITURES

Overview

This report provides estimates of the average household spending and total annual spending on each type of retail good or service. It is useful in identifying categories where your community has relatively higher spending power.

Reading the Report

Retail Goods and Services Expenditures
LISC Center for Commercial Revitalization - Neighborhood Market Snapshot

E 116th St AT Buckeye Rd
Cleveland, OH 44120

		Latitude:	41.481
		Longitude:	-81.6029
Site Type: Radius		Radius:	1.0 miles

Top Tapestry Segments:		Demographic Summary	2003	2008
Modest Income Homes	26.8%	Population	33,321	32,528
City Commons	17.2%	Households	14,453	14,331
Metro City Edge	16.5%	Families	7,912	7,805
Old and Newcomers	12.0%	Median Age	32.6	33.2
Simple Living	7.1%	Median Household Income	$25,206	$29,181

	Spending Potential Index	Average Amount Spent	Total
Apparel and Services	69	$1,827.80	$26,417,222
Men's	66	$337.49	$4,877,803
Women's	70	$598.67	$8,652,602
Children's	65	$271.92	$3,930,102
Footwear	72	$345.35	$4,991,353
Watches & Jewelry	67	$170.21	$2,460,048
Apparel Products and Services[1]	73	$104.15	$1,505,314
Computer			
Computers and Hardware for Home Use	52	$139.42	$2,015,052
Software and Accessories for Home Use	49	$15.16	$219,147
Entertainment & Recreation	55	$1,620.64	$23,423,106
Fees and Admissions	52	$296.28	$4,282,160
Membership Fees for Clubs[2]	52	$78.74	$1,138,052
Fees for Participant Sports, excl. Trips	51	$55.96	$808,809
Admission to Movie/Theatre/Opera/Ballet	55	$74.97	$1,083,499
Admission to Sporting Events, excl. Trips	52	$27.70	$400,347
Fees for Recreational Lessons	50	$58.91	$851,453
TV/Video/Sound Equipment	57	$544.48	$7,869,386
Community Antenna or Cable Television	59	$290.10	$4,192,832
Color Televisions	55	$58.73	$848,825
VCRs, Video Cameras, and DVD Players	53	$19.95	$288,408
Video Cassettes and DVDs	53	$17.60	$254,347
Video Game Hardware and Software	55	$17.05	$246,460
Satellite Dishes	47	$1.88	$27,119
Rental of Video Cassettes and DVDs	56	$34.34	$496,295
Sound Equipment[3]	56	$100.73	$1,455,830
Rental and Repair of TV/Sound Equipment	61	$4.10	$59,270
Pets	58	$187.09	$2,703,988
Toys and Games	68	$141.76	$2,048,786
Recreational Vehicles and Fees[4]	42	$137.78	$1,991,323
Sports/Recreation/Exercise Equipment[5]	58	$121.15	$1,750,931
Photo Equipment and Supplies[6]	54	$71.88	$1,038,863
Reading[7]	53	$120.23	$1,737,669
Food	70	$5,229.75	$75,585,573
Food at Home	71	$3,174.40	$45,879,532
Bakery and Cereal Products	71	$484.67	$7,004,868
Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs	72	$865.25	$12,505,515
Dairy Products	69	$341.60	$4,937,112
Fruits and Vegetables	70	$549.11	$7,936,357
Snacks and Other Food at Home[8]	70	$933.76	$13,495,680
Food Away from Home	69	$2,055.35	$29,706,041
Alcoholic Beverages	71	$334.14	$4,829,347
Nonalcoholic Beverages at Home	69	$262.32	$3,791,375

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This section repeats some basic demographic data about your study area—it should be the same as the data on your Demographic and Income Report.

The Spending Potential Index compares the estimated average spent per household to the national average. If your average is the same as the national average the Index = 100. If their estimate for the average in your area is higher than the national average the index will be greater than 100.

This column provides an estimate of the amount that each household spends annually. It is just the total spending in each category divided by the number of households.

This column represents the total annual amount that they estimate that people living in your study area spend on goods and services in each of these categories.

Example: The average household in this area is estimated to spend $2,055.33 per year on food away from home (i.e. eating out). This is 69 percent of the amount that the average American household spends on food away from home. All 14,453 households in the study area together spend a total of $29,706,041 each year.

NOTE: The spending potential index tells you about how your average household compares with the national average but it is not a good indicator of the spending power of your neighborhood relative to other neighborhoods.

Source of Data

This report is based on information collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in their annual Consumer Expenditure Survey. The BLS surveys 5,000 households each year and publishes a report on how much different people spend on different consumer goods and services. The data is not collected for different locations—there is only one national sample. ESRI takes the information from this national sample and then, based on the demographics of your area, estimates how much people in your study area spend on each of these products. For example, if the Consumer Expenditure Survey says that African-American seniors spend $250 per year on footwear while Asian teens spend $1,200, they multiply the number of people in each of these categories by the appropriate figures and do the same for everyone else in the area population to arrive at their estimate of total expenditures on footwear for your study area. The average amount is just the total amount spent divided by the total number of households.

The Retail Marketplace Profile (see page 45) compares estimated consumer spending with actual reported sales in the study area and therefore provides a better picture of untapped market opportunities. However, that report is organized by type of store rather than type of product and may be less accurate.

Defining Terms

Spending Potential Index: The Spending Potential Index compares the estimated average spent per household to the national average. If your average is the same as the national average the Index = 100. If their estimate for the average in your area is higher than the national average the index will be greater than 100.

Tapestry Lifestyle Segments: This report includes a summary of the study area's population according to a lifestyle segmentation system known as Tapestry. Tapestry is one of several such systems which group people (and neighborhoods) based on likely consumer behavior in order to simplify the process of identifying target markets for retailers and other businesses. ESRI publishes several other reports that provide more complete data on the Tapestry segments. There are some serious problems with systems like Tapestry reinforcing negative stereotypes of urban neighborhoods. See "Exposing Urban Legends: The Real Purchasing Power of Central City Neighborhoods" by John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn, Brookings Institution, June 2001 available at: **http://www.brookings.edu/es/urban/ pawasaratexsum.htm** for a discussion of the application of these segmentation systems to low-income urban neighborhoods. Example: The average household in this area is estimated to spend $2,055.33 per year on food away from home (i.e. eating out). This is 69% of the amount that the average American household spends on food away from home. All 14,453 households in the study area together spend a total of $29,706,041 each year.

Shortcomings of the Data

Average Spending vs. Total Spending: Like nearly all national market research data these reports are built around the assumption that marketers are interested more in *average* household income and spending than they are in the *total* (aggregate) spending in an area. Most retailers and market analysts seem to have assumed that areas with higher *average* spending per household would also be the areas with the highest *total* spending. This is very far from the truth. This faulty assumption puts low-income urban areas at a very serious disadvantage. What urban markets sometimes lack in average spending power they often more than make up for in total spending because they are generally much more densely populated. In a higher-income, lower-density area each family may spend more on shoes each year than families in the low-income neighborhood but since there are far more families in the low-income community, the total spending on shoes may be far higher. Failure to appreciate the impact of density is one of the key factors that have led retailers to underestimate the potential of neighborhood markets. To really understand a neighborhood market, you have to encourage retailers to look at the total spending not just the household average.

Therefore it is important to notice that ESRI's Spending Potential Index is based on the average spending per household not the total spending. This means that if you run this report for two different study areas with one mile radii, the lower-income area might have a lower spending potential index for any given product, while at the same time having estimated total spending on that product that is quite a bit higher than that of the other area. The spending potential index tells you about how your average household compares with the national average *but it is not a good indicator of the spending power of your neighborhood relative to other neighborhoods*.

Open Doors: The Businesses of the Excelsior

The Excelsior's lively commercial corridor features over 260 businesses with a mix of small independents and established franchises that attract a wide variety of shoppers. Residents and visitors alike shop, eat, and seek entertainment up and down the corridor. Today, the Excelsior has some of the most competitive commercial lease rates in the city, making it one of the best placed, most affordable locations for businesses in San Francisco.

Nearby Annual Spending*

Restaurants	$3539
Apparel	$3645
Entertainment	$3965

$0 $1000 $2000 $3000 $4000

Source: ESRI Business Information Solutions

Anchor businesses, such as Walgreens, Kragen and Safeway, generate remarkable foot traffic along the Mission Street commercial corridor

With over $10,000 spent annually per household on entertainment and local restaurants, the Excelsior is a great location for new businesses

Driving distance from the intersection of Mission & Geneva.

Exhibit 7:
The business attraction booklet for San Francisco's Excelsior District provides spending data for the three categories that the community identified as top priorities for new businesses.

Using the Data

This report answers questions such as:

- How much do people in this area spend on various goods and services?
- What is the total dollar amount of spending on each item?
- How does average spending per household compare with the national average?

The goods and services expenditures report, used in conjunction with the Retail Marketplace Profile *(See page 45)*, can help to identify potential business types that might succeed in a neighborhood. While the total estimated consumer spending for any given category may sound impressive, it is hard to know how large it is *supposed* to be. If it says that residents of your trade area spend $3 million a year on men's clothing, is that a lot relative to other areas?

While the Spending Potential Index is not an ideal indicator of a neighborhood's spending power, it can help put your neighborhood's numbers in context by comparing them to national averages. The categories with the highest numbers in the Spending Potential Index column represent goods and services that people in this area are likely to spend more of their money on relative to others in the country. If these goods and services are not readily available in your area, they *may* represent opportunities for new businesses or for new product lines for existing businesses.

In relatively high density urban areas, the average spending per household may not be as compelling an indicator of spending power as the "Concentrated Buying Power" which can easily be calculated by taking the number of square miles in your trade area divided by the total estimated consumer expenditures for the area. This total spending per square mile offers a means for comparing the relative spending power of different areas with different levels of housing density. (Note: if your study area is based on a 1 mile radius it contains 3.14 square miles. 2 miles = 12.57, 3 miles = 28.27)

Another way to use this report is to identify a neighborhood in the surrounding area that has the kinds of retail that local stakeholders think your commercial district should have and run this report for that district and compare the spending power of that district's trade area to your own.

Overview

This report compares the estimated spending by local residents to the total sales estimated for local businesses. For some store types, local businesses may sell more than local residents which suggests that outsiders are coming into the area to shop in these businesses. In other categories, residents spend more than local stores sell suggesting that residents are shopping outside the area.

Example: In this area there are 20 food and drink businesses that, together, do $3,858,183 in annual sales. Residents in the area are estimated to spend $29,191,694 each year at food and drink businesses. A leakage factor of 76.7 indicates that residents are spending more than two-thirds of this money outside of the area.

This column lists the total annual sales by businesses of each type within the study area based mostly on sales tax figures.

This column provides an estimate of the total amount that neighborhood residents spend annually in each type of business both inside the neighborhood and elsewhere.

If area residents spend more money than local businesses receive, the difference is called "leakage"—it is money that is seen as leaking outside of the neighborhood. A zero in this column would mean that the total sales is equal to the estimated spending by local residents. A positive number means that residents spend more than local businesses sell. A negative number (surplus) means that businesses sell more than residents are likely to be spending (i.e. people from outside are shopping here).

Source of data

The count of businesses and the retail sales figures are based on sales tax records but may be estimated based on tax data reported for larger areas (like a whole county) and then estimated for your area based on the number of businesses. The consumer demand estimates are more complicated but are ultimately based on data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics which is then adjusted based on data from the Census of Retail Trade.

Defining Terms

Leakage Factor: If area residents spend more money than local businesses receive, the difference is called "leakage." Leakage is money that is seen as leaking outside of the neighborhood when people go elsewhere to spend their money. A zero leakage factor would mean that the local shops received as much money as local people were estimated to spend. A positive factor represents local money that is spent outside the area. Negative numbers (surplus) indicate that people from outside the area are coming into the neighborhood to shop (i.e. the area sees more goods sold than the total estimated demand for all local residents). Keep in mind that both of these things happen in every neighborhood all of the time so that even if there is zero leakage factor it just means that the money people in the neighborhood spend elsewhere balances evenly against the money outsiders are spending in the area.

NAICS Codes: This report is organized according to NAICS (North American Industry Classification System) codes. These codes, which used to be called SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) codes, are used by the Census Bureau and others to categorize all U.S. businesses. The coding system is designed such that similar businesses are grouped into more general categories so that results can be totaled and subtotaled at different levels of detail. For example, grocery stores are 4451 while liquor stores are 4453. Code 445 is used to refer to all "food and beverage stores" including groceries and liquor stores among others. Similarly, code 44 ("Retail Trade") summarizes all of the categories that begin with 44. On this report, ESRI has selected only a small handful of the thousands of four-digit NAICS categories. Some of the four-digit categories appear on the list beneath the three-digit category that they fit within while others are listed without their summary category.

Shortcomings of the data

Layers of Estimates: Like the Retail Goods and Services Expenditures Report, the consumer demand information here is ultimately based on information collected in the Bureau of Labor Statistics annual Consumer Expenditure Survey. However, the survey asks people about how much they spend on certain *goods* but this report lists demand for certain kinds of *stores*. For example, the survey tells us how much people say they spend on clothing but not whether they buy it at clothing stores or department stores. While the Retail Goods and Services Expenditures Report presents estimates for each study area based on the same categories used in the annual survey, this Retail Marketplace Report attempts to estimate the sales for each type of retail business (i.e. clothing stores, department stores, etc.). In doing so it inherits all of the problems related to the very small sample size of the Consumer Expenditure Survey while introducing an additional set of assumptions that are not likely to apply equally in every community.

To take just one example, even if the estimate of how much people in a given neighborhood spend on clothing were accurate, this report assumes that a percentage of that money for every neighborhood is spent at online retailers but internet usage is not the same in every community. If the amount spent online is overstated, the estimated demand for clothing stores will actually be higher than what is shown on this report. The danger of layering assumptions upon assumptions is that, because the result is a very specific number, people tend to think that the result is more accurate than it really is. These numbers should be understood for what they are: rough estimates based on some very general assumptions.

Leakage: The concept of leakage is very important but it can be misleading when applied at the neighborhood scale. At a large geographic scale (think nations or regions) the extent to which local money is spent outside the region is a fairly good measure of the health of the local economy. Economic development professionals tend to focus on identifying goods that are being imported which could be produced and sold locally as a way of keeping more money circulating in the local economy. This can work on the neighborhood scale also; when people leave the community to buy groceries, there may be an opportunity to "capture" a greater share of local spending by opening a grocery store in the neighborhood. However, leakage in the automobile dealers category probably does not represent any kind of opportunity. We can calculate a leakage factor for every category for any sized geographic area but the smaller the study area, the fewer of the numbers have any real meaning. Just because we can calculate a number should not lead anyone to conclude that their neighborhood should expect to capture any particular percentage of what local residents spend on new cars. Even with categories like hardware, clothing and shoes, no neighborhood captures all of the local residents' spending. Neighborhoods are not really self-contained economies in that way.

Using the data

This report is intended to answer one important question: Is there unmet consumer demand for any type of additional retail stores?

The leakage factor provides a quick way to evaluate the potential market for each type of business. For some of the business categories, a high leakage factor is an indicator that a new business could succeed in your community. For others, it is simply an indicator that the entire category of business is just operating at a larger regional scale—meaning no neighborhood can expect to capture much of the sales anymore. Unfortunately, no one can tell you which is which. Some people will say that in the age of big box super centers, neighborhoods can no longer expect to compete in hardware sales (NAICS 4441) while others will point to new smaller store formats being offered by Home Depot and the continued success of many independent neighborhood hardware stores. This report cannot tell you whether a neighborhood hardware store can survive in your community, but it can tell you how much your residents are spending outside the area on hardware.

Categories that merit special attention for urban commercial districts include:

NAICS 4413: Auto Parts, Accessories, and Tire Stores
NAICS 4421: Furniture Stores
NAICS 4422: Home Furnishings Stores
NAICS 443/NAICS 4431: Electronics & Appliance Stores
NAICS 4441: Building Material and Supplies Dealers
NAICS 4442: Lawn and Garden Equipment and
 Supplies Stores
NAICS 4451: Grocery Stores
NAICS 4452: Specialty Food Stores
NAICS 446/NAICS 4461: Health & Personal Care Stores
NAICS 447/NAICS 4471: Gasoline Stations
NAICS 4481: Clothing Stores
NAICS 4482: Shoe Stores
NAICS 4483: Jewelry, Luggage, and Leather Goods
 Stores
NAICS 4511: Sporting Goods/Hobby/Musical
 Instrument Stores
NAICS 4512: Books, Periodical, and Music Stores
NAICS 4529: Other General Merchandise Stores
NAICS 4531: Florists
NAICS 4532: Office Supplies, Stationery, and Gift Stores
NAICS 4533: Used Merchandise Stores
NAICS 4539: Other Miscellaneous Store Retailers
NAICS 7221: Full-Service Restaurants
NAICS 7222: Limited-Service Eating Places

Further Research

The Census Bureau provides an enormous quantity of additional demographic data for predefined geographic units (i.e. zip codes, census tracts) on their website **http://factfinder.census.gov**/. Each state has annual population growth and forecasting data available at various levels of geography. The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides information on consumer spending patterns and details on the Consumer Expenditure Survey at **www.bls.gov/cex/#data**.

Additional ESRI Reports which may be of interest include:

- **Housing Profile:** provides additional information on local housing conditions including the number of vacant units, the age of housing units, the number of multi-unit buildings as well as estimates of rents and home values at the time of the 2000 Census.
- **Net Worth Profile:** estimates the total net worth of local residents by age group and provides a breakdown of sources of wealth (housing, stocks, etc.).
- **Retail Market Potential Report:** provides estimates of the number of consumers in the study area that have exhibited certain consumer behaviors such as purchasing bottled water, renting a DVD within the last 30 days, eating at a sit down restaurant in the last six months, etc. It offers additional reports specific to certain industries including health care, pets, sports, and restaurants.

7. Using Surveys and Interviews to Collect Local Market Data

In addition to quantitative market profile data, surveying customers, potential customers, merchants, and employers in your commercial district can provide valuable information for defining a successful revitalization strategy. In some districts, the demographics of the surrounding neighborhood are actually quite different from the demographics of actual customers, either because many customers are coming in from outside the area or because the district is mostly serving a specific sub-group of the neighborhood's population. Directly surveying customers shopping in your district can provide information about your actual customers and what they want to see in the district. Surveying local residents about where they shop, what kinds of products they buy and how often, will yield important information about why retail leakage is occurring and what you may be able to do to capture some of that spending potential. Additionally, surveying local merchants and employers can provide useful information about the current business climate as well as perceptions about consumer demographics.

GETTING STARTED

- Survey district customers and residents in the target area.
- Interview merchants.
- Interview large local employers, if applicable.

CONSUMER SURVEYS

Consumer surveys are a great tool for collecting information about consumer attitudes towards your district, shopping preferences and values, spending power, and demographics. They help reveal when, where, why, and how often people visit your district. Some types of surveys, such as phone surveys and focus groups, can also provide a means of assessing why people may not choose to visit your district, providing clues about aspects of the district to change.

While surveys generate invaluable information, they are challenging to administer and compile. Many organizations employ consultants and/or volunteers from a local university to help them conduct an effective survey. Additionally, it may be difficult to engage a range of people in the survey, so it is advisable to offer a small "gift" i.e. candy or a coupon as motivation to take the survey or participate in the focus group. Regardless of whether you plan to administer the survey yourself or employ others, there are several things you will want to think about before designing your survey.

Types of Consumer Surveys

- **Consumer Intercept Surveys:** This technique employs interviewers to greet shoppers in the district and administer a brief questionnaire. To get a diverse and representative sample, surveying should be done at different locations and at different times of the day and week. These surveys capture information about the existing consumer base and are particularly useful for assessing which types of additional retail consumers want and areas that need improvement in the district. Intercept surveys are also good tools for understanding more about the existing trade area, the demographics of the consumer base, and their means of transportation to the district. Intercept surveys provide a good opportunity to assess consumer perceptions about provision of parking or safety in the district as well. (**Tool 7-1**)

- **Telephone Surveys:** Interviewers contact a random sample of phone numbers from a predetermined market area and interview them in much the same way as the intercept survey. Unlike an intercept survey, this type of survey provides a means of learning about the preferences and attitudes of *potential* consumers who may not currently shop in the district. This type of survey is a useful means of determining why individuals living in your market area do or do not frequent your district. It is an opportunity to find out from local residents what additions and changes would help make your district an attractive shopping location. (**Tool 7-2**)

To conduct a telephone survey you will likely have to purchase a random sample of telephone numbers from a company specializing in this practice. Be advised that numbers are often not fully up-to-date and/or may not be categorized as solely residential numbers. If you have a choice of number providers, be sure to ask them how recently their lists have been updated for accuracy and if they are able to provide only numbers which are assigned to residential customers.

- **Mailed Surveys:** This technique also allows you to reach potential as well as existing consumers as surveys can be mailed to a sample of addresses in the market area. A benefit of this type of survey is that you can ask more questions because individuals will likely have more time to fill out the survey. A downside is that the response rate for mail surveys will most likely be much lower than phone or intercept surveys. Additionally, individuals who take the time to fill out written surveys at home may not be truly representative of shoppers or potential shoppers in your district. Surveys can be mailed to your existing contact database or a purchased database. Additionally, the U.S. Postal Service will allow mailing to specific mail carrier routes. (**Tool 7-3**)

- **In-Store Surveys:** These are surveys that are left with merchants to distribute to their customers. This may be an option if you want to conduct a very short, multiple choice survey. They are appropriate for collecting information such as residential location by zip code, basic demographics, or frequency of visits to the districts. Often merchants are unwilling or unable to help you with the surveying. If you have engaged merchant stakeholders then you may consider this, otherwise it is advisable to conduct surveys independently.

- **Focus Groups:** Focus groups are structured interviews of a small group of people (six to 10) at the same time lasting roughly one and a half hours. Ideally, focus group participants will be chosen to represent a sample of your target market, i.e. a mix of men and women, diversity of races, incomes, and ages. You can collect a lot of good information about shopping habits, perceptions about your district, and desire for certain types of retail goods or services. Focus groups function best when structured around a pre-defined set of questions and are carefully facilitated to ensure full participation.

- **Zip Code Surveys:** These surveys, conducted by merchants at the register, ask only a single question: What is your zip code? They are useful for determining your target area for market analysis.

For more information on companies that conduct surveys or provide phone or mailing list data, visit www.greenbook.org a free, interactive database of market research companies worldwide.

WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION DO YOU WANT TO COLLECT?

Surveys have the potential to provide a wide variety of information, but you should try to focus your questions to generate information which will be most useful to your planning process.

Consumer surveys are a useful tool for determining such information as:

- Existing trade area
- Current demographics *(age, gender, ethnicity, household income, presence of children, education level, occupation, primary language, housing tenure)*
- Consumption preferences: *(chain stores vs. independent retail outlets, specific types of retail that people would like to see in the neighborhood)*
- Frequency of visits to the district
- Time of visits *(day of the week and hours)*
- Point of origin for shopping in the district (home, work, child care, school, tourist)
- Which features consumers value in retail districts *(cleanliness, lighting, public open space, active façades, public art/murals, police presence, gathering space)*
- Where else people shop and why
- Access to district *(drive, walk, bike, public transit)*
- Need for parking
- Specific stores visited
- Amount spent per visit
- Interest in special events
- Perceptions of the district *(safety, cleanliness, availability/quality of goods and services)*
- Interest in participating in revitalization planning activities

The possibilities for surveys are great, but don't try to collect all of this information in one survey. Decide what questions you need answered at any given point in the planning process and target your survey question accordingly.

Collecting many examples of recent consumer surveys conducted in your region is one of the best ways to generate ideas about what type of questions to ask. Many CBOs have engaged the assistance of local universities or research institutes in their region to help them formulate and refine their questions and survey approaches. University students, potentially on a volunteer basis, can also be a great asset when administering and processing surveys.

Profile: Central Avenue Customer Survey

The Northeast Community Development Corporation (NECDC) conducted both a consumer intercept survey (Similar to Tool 7-1) and a telephone survey (**Tool 7-2**) to gain more information about why people do or do not shop along Central Avenue in Northeast Minneapolis.

Over a 15-day period, several trained volunteer interviewers were positioned at various locations throughout the district to survey consumers. Surveys were conducted on all days of the week for two shifts, noontime and early evening, each day. Several of the interviewers had Spanish and Arabic language fluency in recognition of the rapid increase in Latino residents and the concentration of Middle Eastern businesses in the district.

The survey revealed important information for the planning process such as:

Top Five Businesses Desired on Central Avenue are:

1. Live music or entertainment venue
2. Ice cream shop
3. Copy center/mail store
4. Coffee shop
5. Health and fitness facility

Top Five Businesses to Avoid Attracting to Central Avenue are:

1. Tobacco store
2. Fast food restaurant
3. Bagel shop
4. Gift/card shop
5. Interior decorating store

A few months later, NECDC conducted a telephone survey to collect data on local residents' perceptions of the district regardless of whether they regularly visited the commercial area. Over the course of four evenings, NECDC staff and volunteers used 3,700 random phone numbers, which had been purchased to represent an even spread throughout the census tracts in the market area. A total of 2,025 phone calls were made resulting in 194 completed surveys. Unfortunately, many numbers turned out to be disconnected. Although NECDC reduced the number of questions in the original survey for use on the phone, they found that phone surveying took as much time if not more than intercept surveys.

Nevertheless, NECDC found the phone surveys very worthwhile because it allowed them to learn that safety issues and lack of interesting retail options deterred residents from visiting the district more frequently. Improving safety and having a full service grocery store were among the most popular responses regarding what would draw consumers to the district.

The survey results and market data provided the research base for a structured public meeting to discuss options for a prosperous business mix on Central Avenue. The survey data was also distributed to local businesses as a way to encourage them to further penetrate the marketplace and respond to consumer preferences. Detailed summaries of the surveys can be found on the Northeast Community Development Corporation's website at **www.NECDC.org**.

MERCHANT SURVEYS

Merchant Surveys (**Tool 7-4**) are another method of gathering information about existing retail conditions in your district. Many local merchants have a wealth of knowledge both related to their own business and to the key issues of the district in general. These surveys provide a means of not only assessing business needs but also of increasing merchant interest and involvement in the revitalization planning process. Business surveys can be conducted by mail or phone, but most community development organizations find that surveying is most fruitful when conducted in person, at the place of business. Merchants can be questioned both on their perception of the consumer base as well as what businesses or business types they feel could add or detract from the overall commercial vitality in the district.

EMPLOYER INTERVIEWS

In districts where employees represent a significant market, it is worth considering interviewing or surveying major employers to get more information about the likely spending patterns of their employees. Some of the things you might want to know include:

- Number of full- and part-time employees.
- Range of annual incomes.
- Hours that employees work.
- Whether there is a cafeteria at the location.
- Whether employee parking is provided.
- Whether the employer is interested in supporting the revitalization effort.

It is best to conduct these interviews in person, at the place of work, but if there are a significant number of large employers in your district and resources are limited, then a short written survey can be distributed to local employers.

[Include an introduction briefly describing your revitalization efforts and the boundaries of your business district]

How much time do you expect to spend in this shopping district today?

_____

Which specific businesses have you visited or do you plan to visit today?

_____

What additional types of businesses would you like to see in this district?

_____

What additional types of businesses would you NOT like to see in this district?

_____

Please circle the answer that best describes you

How much did you spend or do you plan to spend at businesses in this district today?
☐ $0   ☐ $1 - $10   ☐ $11-$25   ☐ $26-$50   ☐ $51-99   ☐ $100 or more

How often do you visit this shopping district?
☐ Daily   ☐ 2 - 4 times/wk   ☐ Once a week   ☐ 2 times/month   ☐ Once a month
☐ 3-6 times/year   ☐ Not regularly

When do you usually visit this shopping district?
☐ Weekdays   ☐ Weekday Evenings   ☐ Weekend days   ☐ Weekend evenings   ☐ No set times

How do you usually access this shopping district?
☐ Car   ☐ Public Transportation   ☐ Walk   ☐ Bike

Do you have difficulty parking?
☐ Frequently   ☐ Rarely   ☐ Never

How safe do you feel during the daytime in this district?
☐ Very Safe   ☐ Somewhat Safe   ☐ Not Very Safe   ☐ Not at all Safe

How safe do you feel at night in this district?
☐ Very Safe   ☐ Somewhat Safe   ☐ Not Very Safe   ☐ Not at all Safe

Do you live in this neighborhood?   ☐ Y   ☐ N

Do you work in this neighborhood?   ☐ Y   ☐ N

What is your gender?   ☐ M   ☐ F

What is your zip code?

Are you aware of the Commercial District Revitalization Planning Process?   ☐ Y   ☐ N

If you would like to be involved please include your contact information at the bottom of this form.

_____

_____

Do you have any suggestions for changes in this district?

_____

_____

TOOL 7-2: RESIDENT TELEPHONE SURVEY

[Include an introduction briefly describing your revitalization efforts and the boundaries of your business district]

How often do you visit [*NAME*] shopping district?

☐ More than once a week   ☐ Once a week   ☐ Few times a month   ☐ Once a year   ☐ Never

If you are not a frequent shopper in this area, what is the primary reason for this?

_____

_____

Which business do you visit most frequently?

_____

_____

Which other businesses do you visit?

_____

_____

What would motivate you to shop in this district more frequently?

_____

_____

Are you aware of the Commercial District Revitalization Planning Process? ☐ Y   ☐ N

Would you like to be involved in this process?   ☐ Y ☐ N

If yes, ask for contact information.

_____

_____

_____

_____

ENCoRe is a partnership of the Excelsior Action Group and the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center to revitalize Mission Street's Commercial Corridor in the Excelsior. As part of this effort, we are gathering information from Excelsior residents in order to serve the neighborhood, identify service gaps, and fill them with community feedback. This information will be used solely to serve Excelsior residents the best way possible and will not be used to solicit respondents with other commercial interests, nor will it be sold to third parties. Please take a few minutes to fill out the survey and return it to the address listed below. So tell us what you think! Thank you.

Name and Address (*optional*):

_____

_____

_____

Gender (*check one*): ☐ M ☐ F

Age range (*check one*): ☐ Under 20 ☐ 20-30 ☐ 31-40 ☐ 41-50 ☐ 51-60 ☐ 61 +

National origin (*check all that apply*): ☐ Asian ☐ Hispanic ☐ African American ☐ Caucasian ☐ Native American ☐ Other

1. How often do you shop or eat on Mission Street in the Excelsior? (*Circle one*)
a) 5-7 times/week   b) 2-4 times/ week
c) Once/week   d) Less than once a week

2. How do you get to Mission Street in the Excelsior?
a) Car   b) Public transportation   c) Walk   d) Bike
e) Other

3. What types of stores do you think are needed on Mission Street in the Excelsior and that you would shop at? *Check yes or no.*

a) Groceries ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Health food store ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Bakeries ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) Clothing ☐ Yes ☐ No
e) Electronics ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Housewares ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Furniture ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Garden supplies ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Book stores ☐ Yes ☐ No
j) Pet supplies ☐ Yes ☐ No
k) Bike shop ☐ Yes ☐ No
l) Music store ☐ Yes ☐ No
m) Other

4. What types of services do you think are needed on Mission Street in the Excelsior and that you would use? *Circle yes or no.*

a) Movie theater ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Live music establishments ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Nightclub/bar ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) Family entertainment place ☐ Yes ☐ No
  i.e. roller rink, bowling
e) Live theater ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Video rental ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Gym ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Hair/beauty salons ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Banks/financial services ☐ Yes ☐ No
j) Medical services ☐ Yes ☐ No
k) Child care ☐ Yes ☐ No
l) Dance/fitness classes ☐ Yes ☐ No
m) Cultural event/meeting place ☐ Yes ☐ No
n) Other

5. Would you shop at any of these establishments if they were on Mission Street? Circle yes or no. (Some believe that chain stores may have a negative impact on smaller, independent businesses/stores. Others believe that chains increase the number of clientele that will visit the commercial corridor)

a) Ross Dress for Less ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Old Navy ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Gap ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) Independent clothing store ☐ Yes ☐ No
e) Barnes and Noble ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Independent book store ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Pasta Pomodoro ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Starbucks Coffee ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Peet's Coffee ☐ Yes ☐ No
j) Independent coffee shop ☐ Yes ☐ No
k) Other_____

6. What types of goods and services do you purchase/use on Mission Street? *Circle yes or no.*

a) Groceries ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Clothing ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Restaurants/Bars ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) Entertainment ☐ Yes ☐ No
e) Banking ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Medical ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Laundry ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Haircut/nails ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Auto repair ☐ Yes ☐ No
j) Other

7. What are the major disadvantages of shopping or doing business on Mission Street/Excelsior? *Circle yes or no.*

a) Limited hours ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Poor selection goods/services ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Lack of entertainment ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) High prices ☐ Yes ☐ No
e) Lack of restaurants ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Unfriendly/poor service ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Lack of parking ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Dirty ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Not safe ☐ Yes ☐ No
j) Inconvenient location ☐ Yes ☐ No
k) Other

8. What are the major advantages of shopping or doing business on Mission Street/Excelsior? *Circle yes or no.*

a) Convenient location ☐ Yes ☐ No
b) Less traffic/crowds ☐ Yes ☐ No
c) Friendly services ☐ Yes ☐ No
d) Fair prices ☐ Yes ☐ No
e) Within walking distance ☐ Yes ☐ No
f) Support local businesses ☐ Yes ☐ No
g) Easy to find parking ☐ Yes ☐ No
h) Good selection of goods/services ☐ Yes ☐ No
i) Cultural/ethnic/ ☐ Yes ☐ No
   linguistic diversity
j) Other

9. Where besides this neighborhood do you do most of your shopping?

_____

_____

10. Where besides this neighborhood do you go for dining out and entertainment?

_____

_____

11. If this neighborhood could be like another neighborhood in San Francisco, which would you want it to be like, and why?

_____

_____

Services follow up: Contact Information
What is the best way to contact you about future revitalization efforts?

☐ Phone:
_____

☐ E-mail:
_____

☐ Personal Visit or
☐ Mail

Name/Address:

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOOL 7-4: MERCHANT SURVEY

Name:

_____

Business:

_____

Address:

_____

Phone Number:

_____

E-mail:

_____

Business Type:

_____

PART I – About the Merchant

I'd like to ask you some questions about your business here on Mission Street.

1. How long have you been in business at this location?

_____

2. Over the last five years, has your business:
☐ Improved dramatically
☐ Improved somewhat
☐ Stayed the same
☐ Decreased somewhat
☐ Decreased dramatically
☐ Wasn't here

3. Do you own or lease your space?
☐ Own
☐ Lease
[If lease] What is the length of your lease?

_____

4. In terms of the following, roughly how would you describe your customers by **percentage**?

Trade Area: ☐ from the Neighborhood
☐ from SF/Daly City   ☐ from outside SF

Age: ☐ Under 20   ☐ 21-34   ☐ 35-49   ☐ over 50

Ethnicity: ☐ Chinese   ☐ Filipino   ☐ Latino
☐ Afro-American   ☐ White   ☐ Other

PART II – About the District

5. What would you describe as the boundaries of the shopping district? What is the heart of the district?

_____

6. What do you think are the greatest strengths/ characteristics/assets of the shopping district?

_____

7. What do you think are the weaknesses/challenges of the shopping district?

_____

_____

8. How would you rate the district on the following characteristics

	Good	Fair	Unacceptable
Attractiveness	☐	☐	☐
Cleanliness	☐	☐	☐
Parking Convenience	☐	☐	☐
Shopping Hours	☐	☐	☐
Customer Service	☐	☐	☐
Pedestrian Safety	☐	☐	☐
Crime	☐	☐	☐
Variety/Quality of Goods/Services	☐	☐	☐
Special Events/Festivals	☐	☐	☐
Storefront Appearance/ Window Displays/Signage	☐	☐	☐

9. What changes need to occur in the shopping district to bring more shoppers in?

_____

_____

What are the things that you think keep change from happening here?

_____

_____

10. Are you familiar with any organizations or nonprofits that serve the community in the neighborhood? What are they? Any other important institutions in the neighborhood?

_____

_____

11. Are there any business/merchant associations you have been involved with in the community?

_____

_____

12. Are you aware of any organizations providing business assistance to you or other business owners in the Excelsior?

_____

_____

13. What would you say are the biggest needs of businesses on this street?

_____

_____

14. To what extent do business owners talk to each other and work together here?

_____

_____

Is that enough? ☐ Y   ☐ N

If No, what kind of communication and organization among merchants would you like to see?

_____

_____

15. Are you aware of vacant retail property in the neighborhood?

_____

Which ones?

_____

_____

16. What kind of businesses would you like to see more of here?

_____

_____

17. We are exploring a commercial revitalization program which aims to make the businesses more inviting and increase the profitability of individual businesses. This kind of program would require participation and coordination of merchants, residents and others through various committees. Would you be willing to attend meetings to explore the possibilities of such a program?

☐ **Yes**   ☐ **No**   ☐ **Don't Know**

18. If Yes, what times are you available for meetings?

☐ Evenings, after what time? _____

☐ Mornings before what time _____

☐ Lunchtime at _____

19. Are there other merchants (or other residents) we should talk to about neighborhood improvement? Who are they?

_____

_____

_____

8. Assessing Crime and Community Safety

Issues of crime and safety can seriously hamper the revitalization of your district. Crime not only deters consumers from visiting the district, but it also often prevents potential business owners from locating in your area. Improving safety in your district is a collaborative process. The local police department, neighborhood merchants and residents, and potentially, local politicians, have an interest in decreasing the occurrence of crime in your district. While these stakeholders all have the same goal, their efforts are often not coordinated. CBOs are well-positioned to act as a liaison between different stakeholder groups and can produce a more coordinated, effective approach to improving safety. CBOs can also change the physical environment of a district—by supporting façade improvements, lighting installation or new commercial development—to help prevent crime and make merchants and shoppers feel safer.

One of the most effective means of identifying safety issues and developing strategies to address them is to include the local police department in your revitalization planning process from the beginning. A strong relationship with local police facilitates identification of opportunities which are small enough to change, but systemic enough to produce lasting benefits. The first step is to understand the level of criminal activity in the district as well as individuals' perceptions of crime in the area.

GETTING STARTED

- Meet with police department.
- Collect and analyze historical and current crime data.
- Survey stakeholders about perceptions of, and experience with, crime in the district.
- Conduct Retail Safety Checklist with local businesses and police department.

GRAPHING AND MAPPING CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN THE DISTRICT

Collecting data on the type, location, and time of reported crimes in the district is necessary to understand where crime is a problem and which types are the most common. Charting this data over a period of time will illuminate if crime is increasing or decreasing in the area. Breaking down the data into types of crime, such as property crimes, vice crimes, or drug crime will provide a sense of which type of crime is most frequent and should be targeted for improvement. Knowledge of the location and time (both day and hour) of reported crimes provides useful information on where to increase police presence or target community safety watch resources. Finally, graphically displaying crime trends may be useful in identifying disparities between actual criminal occurrence and the perception of crime.

The data collection process can also provide a concrete way to establish a more solid working relationship with the local police department. Start by asking what information the police have already compiled and are willing to share. As you try to access the crime data, it will be helpful to:

- Be clear about how you will (and how you won't) use the data. Some CBOs have been able to secure much more specific and useful reports from their police departments after signing an agreement or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) stating that the data will not be shared with the public, but will be primarily used for internal planning.
- Emphasize what your organization brings to the table in terms of an organizing track record and development capacity. Police may be more willing to respond if they see your revitalization efforts as an asset in their crime-fighting toolbox.

If there is resistance on the part of the police department to sharing this information, it may be necessary to engage local politicians to help access this information initially.

Profile: Re$tore Cleveland Crime Analysis

The Re$tore Cleveland Initiative took a proactive approach to addressing community safety in its target districts. Staff established a relationship with the Cleveland Police Department in which commercial district revitalization program managers gained access to a database of criminal activity in their districts. This information was used to produce charts and maps of locations and types of crimes over time.

Exhibit 8: Re$tore Cleveland crime data comparing occurrences in the neighborhood to those within the commercial corridor buffer
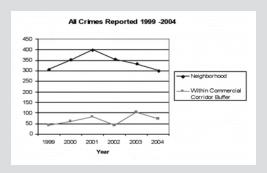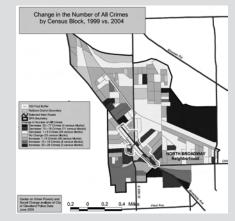
Exhibit 8 illustrates that there was a slight decrease in the number of reported crimes in the neighborhood over the six-year period from 1999 to 2004. The occurrence of crime has been falling steadily from its peak in 2001. Yet, looking at the occurrence of crime along the commercial corridor illustrates that crimes have increased in this area between 1999 and 2004. The greatest number of crimes during this time period occurred along the corridor in 2003. Data not shown in this chart indicated that larceny-thefts were the most common type of crime annually in the general district, but non-aggravated assaults comprised the highest volume of crimes in the commercial corridor.

The Re$tore Cleveland Initiative then partnered with researchers at the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western University to map the data using Geographic Information System (GIS) software. They produced maps illustrating the occurrence of crime by type as well as the change in crime by census block over time.

Courtesy of the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western University and Re$tore Cleveland

Exhibit 9: Map of Change in Crime 1999 - 2004
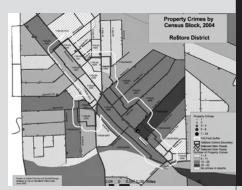
Mapping the data, as shown in Exhibit 9, revealed that while there was an overall increase in reported crimes within the corridor boundary reported crime actually decreased in most areas within the boundary, except for the two individual census blocks. This greater level of detail provided important information on where to target resources for safety improvements and police patrols.

Maps such as were also created that pinpointed the occurrence of specific types of crime in the district, i.e. property crimes or vice crimes. For example, Exhibit 10 illustrated that property crimes occurred most often at a couple of specific intersections. This type of information allowed Re$tore Cleveland to look at what is unique about these corners, i.e. less traffic, insufficient lighting, or the presence of vacant buildings, that made them more susceptible to crime than other areas in the district.

The Re$tore Cleveland Initiative found tracking criminal activity over time to be highly useful. It revealed that some of their commercial districts which are perceived as unsafe have actually had a marked decrease in crime over the period of the revitalization program. The crime maps are being used to help create detailed safety action plans for each district. They also serve as a baseline of crime against which to measure the effectiveness of safety improvement programs.

Exhibit 10: Property Crimes by Census Block, 2004
Courtesy of the Center for Urban Poverty and Social Change at Case Western University and Re$tore Cleveland

SURVEYING

Surveying merchants, residents, and shoppers about their perception of crime and their experience with different types of crime provides useful information about how to effectively address safety issues in the community. Specific crime and safety surveys can be conducted or a few questions about safety can be incorporated into more general surveys (*See Chapter 7 – Using Surveys and Interviews to Collect Local Market Data*) about the district.

Sample Questions to Include in a Resident or Consumer Survey:

- Are you concerned about crime and safety in this district?
- Do you feel safe in this neighborhood after dark?
- Do you feel safe in this neighborhood during the day?
- Have you or anyone you know been the victim of a crime in this area?
- Do you feel that safety in this neighborhood has improved or declined in the past few years?

If crime is a significant concern in your district, it may be worth while to survey merchants specifically about their experience with crime in the district. The Merchant Safety Survey (**Tool 8-1**) was created by the East Side Neighborhood Development Corporation (ESNDC) in St. Paul, MN as the first step in a coordinated Community Safety Initiative. This type of survey could also be adapted and distributed to residents or local shoppers.

The first section of the survey collects information about perceptions of safety within the district. The second section addresses direct experience with criminal incidents and reporting to the police. This section is particularly useful to reveal underreporting of crimes and assess the current level of communication between merchants and the police department. Understanding why business owners do not contact the police may be helpful in developing strategies to improve communication. The final section addresses the frequency of certain types of crime in the district in general. It can be very useful to collect this data to see if the perception of types of crime in the district is constant across business owners.

This survey not only allowed ESNDC to collect data about criminal activity in the district, it also functioned as a tool for engaging merchants in a community safety partnership. Shortly after conducting the survey,

ESNDC successfully gathered over 50 local business and property owners to meet with representatives from the St. Paul Police Department and the City Attorney's office. They discussed what has been done and what can be done in the future to reduce crime in the district. The high turnout of merchants is attributed to an aggressive marketing campaign about the effect of crime and strategies for prevention. In addition to advertising the community safety meeting in the local paper, ESNDC dedicated a whole issue of their monthly merchant newsletter to crime and business watch issue. This publicity of the issue, along with handwritten notes, and follow up phone calls from agency staff, helped to increase interest among merchants and draw them to the meeting. A critical mass of stakeholder involvement is an important element to the success of these partnerships.

CRIME PREVENTION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN (CPTED)

Crime prevention and perceptions of safety are not only related to police presence and activity on the street. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is the philosophy that espouses that thoughtful design of the built environment can help to reduce the incidence of crime as well as increase the perception of safety. These techniques were initially developed by Jeffery Ray in the 1970's and have been used successfully around the world. The basic CPTED principles may be useful in your district as you evaluate public safety and consider design guidelines for the corridor. Research indicates that decisions about whether to engage in criminal activity is more influenced by cues on the perceived risk of being caught than by cues of reward. CPTED strategies emphasize creating environments which enhance the perceived risk of detection, i.e. increased lighting, visible entrances and exits, use of mirrors to watch internal and external activity. The program is based on three basic strategies used to deter offenders from committing crimes: Natural Surveillance, Natural Access Control, and Natural Territoriality.

Natural Surveillance refers to limiting the opportunity for crime to occur by taking steps to increase the perception that the people can be seen. Design elements should maximize visibility and foster positive interaction between legitimate users of public and private space.

Natural Access Control means clearly differentiating between public and private space to limit the opportunity for crime. Thoughtfully-placed entrances, landscaping, and lighting help to limit access to private spaces and deter crime.

Natural Territoriality refers to reinforcing a sense of ownership of space. Ownership of space creates an environment where intruders are more easily identified.

Some police departments will conduct a professional CPTED assessment of specific properties or a commercial district. Also, there are many consultants available who specialize in this practice. Information on CPTED trainings provided by the National Institute of Crime Prevention is available at **www.cptedtraining.net**. Additional information and links to consultants specializing in CPTED assessment is available through the International CPTED Association at **www.cpted.net** This website also contains a comprehensive bibliography on the topic, but two recommended books are:

Crowe, Tim. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. 2nd Edition. 2000. Butterworth - Heinman.

Jeffery, C. Ray. *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design*. 1977. Sage Publications.

RETAIL SAFETY CHECKLIST

Additionally, LISC's Community Safety Initiative has created a Retail Safety Checklist (**Tool 8-2**) with input from a number of sources and guides. This assessment tool will help to identify physical elements and business practices which can be improved or altered to help improve safety for specific businesses. We recommend that you review this tool with your police department prior to use to ensure that it covers all elements that are appropriate for local businesses and crime trends.

SAMPLE ACTION STEPS

- Organize a business watch.
- Create and distribute business security educational materials.
- Install security cameras at crime hot spots.
- Hire a security guard to patrol the district.
- Ensure district lighting is appropriate and functioning.
- Organize CPTED Assessments for commercial properties.

TOOL 8-1: MERCHANT SAFETY SURVEY

Instructions: Please choose the answer that best represents how you feel about neighborhood security.

Section I:
I feel safe in my business.
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

I feel safe outside my business (on the sidewalk, for instance, or in the parking lot or alley).
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

I feel safe walking on Payne Avenue & Arcade Street at night.
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

My customers or clients feel safe when they visit my business.
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

I feel adequately protected by law enforcement.
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

I feel safer in *this* neighborhood now than I did a year ago.
☐ 5 (Strongly agree)
☐ 4 (Agree)
☐ 3 (Neither agree/disagree)
☐ 2 (Disagree)
☐ 1 (Strongly disagree)

Section II:
Approximately how many instances of the following has *your* business experienced in the last 12 months?
Please note the number
☐ Burglary   ☐ Theft or shoplifting
☐ Criminal damage ☐ Vehicle theft
☐ Robbery   ☐ Fraud (checks/credit card)
☐ Arson   ☐ Employee theft
☐ Graffiti   ☐ Violence against an employee
☐ None of these
☐ Other please explain

How many of these incidents did you report to the police?
☐ None   ☐ 1-2   ☐ 3-4   ☐ 5-6   ☐ 7-8
☐ 9-10   ☐ More than 10

For what reasons do you choose *NOT* to call the police?
☐ Small loss or minimal damage to premises
☐ Too time consuming
☐ Would increase insurance costs
☐ No confidence in police response
☐ Fearful of retaliation

Section III:
Instructions: Please select the answer that best represents how often you have experienced each of the following situations over the **past 6 months**.

I have seen or heard about violent acts in the Payne Arcade Commercial District.
☐ Never   ☐ 1 - 3 times   ☐ 4 - 6 times
☐ 7 - 9 times   ☐ 10 times or more

I have seen or heard about drug-related activity in the Payne Phalen Lake neighborhood.
☐ Never   ☐ 1 - 3 times   ☐ 4 - 6 times
☐ 7 - 9 times   ☐ 10 times or more

I have seen or heard about other instances of property crime in this neighborhood.
☐ Never   ☐ 1 - 3 times   ☐ 4 - 6 times
☐ 7 - 9 times   ☐ 10 times or more

Have you or anyone you know experienced any of the following in this neighborhood in the last 12 months?
Please select Yes or No for each item.
Mugging or robbery
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Break-in or vandalism to business
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Auto theft or auto vandalism
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Drug-related incident
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Domestic violence
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Other violent assaults
☐ Yes   ☐ No

Optional: (*This information will be kept confidential*)
Name/Address:

_____

_____

_____

Phone Number:

_____

Created by: East Side Neighborhood Development Corporation, St. Paul, MN

TOOL 8-2: RETAIL SAFETY CHECKLIST

Business name:

_____

Date:

_____

EXTERIOR			COMMENTS
Address visible from street?	Y	N	
Lighting working? Proper Coverage?	Y	N	
Adequate vehicle parking/access? Is it secure?	Y	N	
Landscaping properly trimmed?	Y	N	
Fences and/or gates present? Maintained?	Y	N	
Property clean and free of trash?	Y	N	
Signage in good condition?	Y	N	
Exterior openings secured? (Fire escapes, skylights, roof openings, air ducts, doorway transoms, loading docks, basement openings)	Y	N	
Security company on site?	Y	N	
Neighboring properties in good condition?	Y	N	

Additional comments:

INTERIOR			COMMENTS
Doors unobstructed? Height markers present?	Y	N	
Windows unobstructed? Exterior visibility good?	Y	N	
Adequate lighting? Lighting working properly?	Y	N	
Lighting left on after hours?	Y	N	
Security cameras present? Working? Proper coverage?	Y	N	
Mirrors present? Proper coverage?	Y	N	
Comments			
ATM(s) present? Working?	Y	N	
Counters—printable?	Y	N	
Clear lines of sight throughout store?	Y	N	
Door opening alarm present? Working?	Y	N	
At least two means of egress?	Y	N	

Assessing Crime and Community Safety

INTERIOR (CONTINUED)   COMMENTS

Employee property secured? Where?	Y	N	
Phone working? Location?	Y	N	
Emergency numbers posted? Police contacts posted?	Y	N	
Alarm system present? Working? Permitted?	Y	N	
Gun on premises?	Y	N	
Additional comments:			

BUSINESS PRACTICES   COMMENTS

Previous robbery response training?	Y	N	
Previous robbery victim?	Y	N	
Established robbery policy?	Y	N	
Business emergency contacts on file with police?	Y	N	
Greeting policy established?	Y	N	
Money counting policy?	Y	N	
Frequent cash deposits? Irregular schedule?	Y	N	
Insurance?	Y	N	
Sell products related to illegal or nuisance behavior (high-grain alcohol, spray paint, etc)?	Y	N	
Sales of above products as a percentage of total sales?	%	%	
Additional comments:			

ENVIRONMENT   COMMENTS

Community police officer assigned to area?	Y	N	
History of violence in immediate area?	Y	N	
Nearby crime hotspots?	Y	N	
Additional comments:			

9. Developing Business Attraction Goals

A critical mass of retail outlets and a mix of stores that work well together are important for sustaining vitality in your district. The ability of an individual retailer to attract customers and succeed financially is not solely a function of the goods and services provided by that store, but often it is also directly related to its interaction with other businesses in the district. A strong mix of retail types and outlets increases the consumer drawing power of the entire district. Each district is unique; some districts have a wide variety of different types of stores, while others may have a mix of retail outlets which address a specialized product or consumer market segment. Therefore, it is very important to understand the existing business mix in your district in order to help illuminate potential revitalization strategies which will effectively build on the current commercial activity in the area.

It is also important to have a sense of the site and location preferences for different types of retailers as you develop business attraction targets. Whether or not you are interested in attracting national or regional chain retailers to your district, frequently the best way to gauge the space, parking, and location needs of a retail type is to consider the preferences of large chain retailers.

GETTING STARTED

- Determine percentage of each type of existing retail in the district.
- Create map of retail uses by type, identifying anchors and retail clusters.
- Walk through competing business districts to compare your business mix.
- Compile information on sites available for lease or development.
- Collect location and site preferences for desired retail attraction types.
- Review relevant zoning regulations to ensure compatibility with vision.

ELEMENTS OF THE BUSINESS MIX

An **anchor** is a large store that functions as the major commercial draw. Most shopping malls have a major department store as the anchor. Macy's may draw consumers to the center, but they remain there and make purchases at the smaller retail outlets. In neighborhood commercial districts, a major supermarket or drugstore often functions as the anchor. While urban commercial districts need not always have an anchor to be successful, anchors attract customers and thus are desirable. If an anchor exists its presence should be noted and efforts to retain this retailer in the district are important.

Retail Clusters are groupings of similar or complementary retail outlets which are geographically linked in compact areas or nodes. Retail clusters benefit consumers by allowing them to address a number of shopping needs in a single shopping trip without having to move their car to a new parking place.

While not all districts will have easily identifiable clusters, examples of retail clusters could include beauty products and services, products related to a specific ethnicity, home furnishings, women's apparel, or arts and entertainment establishments. In large districts, clusters will be similar or complementary businesses that are located near one another. In small districts, any similar or complementary businesses, wherever they are, might be considered a cluster.

Economists tend to group retail districts or centers into two distinct categories: **convenience districts** and **comparison districts**. Convenience shopping primarily serves people who live and or work in close proximity to the commercial area. Convenience retail provides access to the goods and services of daily life. Drugstores, supermarkets, gas stations, and dry cleaners are all convenience retail. There is a somewhat finite demand for convenience goods and services. Convenience centers compete with each other by offering lower prices, better quality, more convenient parking, etc., but generally people prefer to shop at the closest center that meets their needs.

Comparison districts, on the other hand, offer customers the opportunity to shop for the same kind of product in more than one store. Comparison shopping will draw consumers from a wider market area to your

district for a certain more specialized types of goods or services. Individual retail outlets benefit from clustering many stores of a similar type that offer a range of brands and prices. Customers will travel farther to a place with several different home furnishing stores in hopes that if one does not have what they need, another one will. Auto Malls provide an extreme example where people will travel very long distances for the chance to compare several dealerships side by side. Products like fashion apparel, shoes, art, antiques and others tend to be sold in comparison districts or malls rather than in neighborhood convenience centers.

Retail Niche: A niche district specializes in serving a specific segment of the market. The specialization can relate to either consumer types or demographics or to the types of goods and services sold.

Examples of Product Niche Districts:

- Entertainment district
- Restaurant row
- Auto row
- Antiques mecca
- Home furnishings
- Clothing/apparel
- Jewelry and handicrafts
- Cultural/ethnic products

Examples of Consumer Market Niches:

- College students
- Families with children
- Young professionals
- Office workers
- Tourists
- Retirees

UNDERSTAND THE BUSINESS MIX
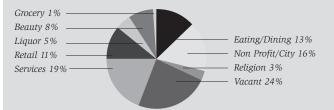
To begin to analyze the existing business mix in your district, use the business inventory you have created and try to identify different elements of the business mix. (*See Chapter 5 – Compiling a Building and Business Inventory for more information on how to categorize retail outlets.*) It can be helpful to determine the percentage of the total commercial activity that each retail type currently occupies in your district. While there is no set formula for the distribution of retail types for a successful district, understanding the breakdown of retail types in your district may help you to recognize which retail categories are over- or under-represented in your area compared with competing districts.

Profile: Third Street Business Mix Analysis

Bay Area LISC commissioned students from San Francisco State University to inventory and analyze the business mix of the 167 business locations along Third Street in the Bayview District of San Francisco. In addition to logging information about individual businesses, the students analyzed the existing commercial activity by retail type and presented it graphically in the table and pie chart (Exhibit 11).

Exhibit 11: Third Street Business Mix
Courtesy of Third Street Business Development Collaborative and Bay Area LISC (Source: 2005 Walking Inventory)

Business Category	Count	Percent
Vacant	40	24%
Services	32	19%
Non Profit/City	27	16%
Eating/Dining	22	13%
Retail	19	11%
Beauty	13	8%
Liquor	8	5%
Religion	5	3%
Grocery	1	1%
Total	167	100%

While the students identified very few significant retail clusters by product type, they noted that the most significant concentration of any single business type were the 13 beauty-related businesses. In addition the inventory identified eight liquor stores in the area. There are 19 restaurants and three bars; three of the restaurants serve Mexican food and four serve Asian food, three are independent cafes and two are national fast food chains.

The lack of business clusters within any particular retail category indicates that Third Street is not currently a shopping or dining destination that draws people from outside of Bayview. Typically, commercial districts that are city-wide destinations are distinguished from other districts by a particular specialty or constellation of specialties that makes them different and therefore attractive.

MAPPING CONCENTRATIONS OF BUSINESS TYPES AND RETAIL ACTIVITY

While you can look for clusters of business types in a list, it is often easier to see this information when it is presented on a map. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software is useful for creating maps for formal presentations, but it is not necessary to use this relatively complicated software at this stage. To look for concentrations of specialized retail types, or clusters, you can simply use markers or 'sticky dots' to color code a map of the district. Each broad category of retail should be assigned a specific color and each property on the map colored accordingly. Depending on the size of your district, you may want to break the district into sub-areas or nodes, and look for concentrations of types of retail in these areas as well. While it may very well be that there is no easily-identifiable cluster of specific retail type at this time in your district, the mapping exercise will also help to illuminate geographic concentrations of commercial activity as opposed to residential or office pockets.
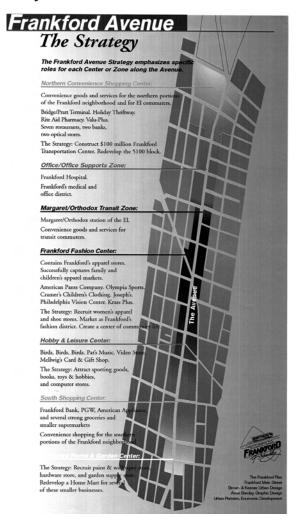
For example, Frankford Avenue Main Street in Philadelphia mapped existing retail clusters along Frankford Avenue and used this information to feed their strategy of attracting women's apparel and shoe stores to round out the cluster of businesses which provide family and children's apparel products. Exhibit 12 illustrates the retail clusters such as convenience shopping, office node, the fashion center, the hobby and leisure node, and the home and garden center.

EVALUATING COMPETING DISTRICTS

In addition to looking for concentrations of retail types, it is useful to compare the business mix in your district with the business mix in districts which you have identified as competitors. (Competing districts can be identified via consumer surveys or focus groups by asking where consumers usually shop.) Comparing your existing business mix with the mix in other local districts will help to reveal if certain types of good and services are over- or under-represented in your commercial area.

Take the time to walk around the competing districts and notice what businesses they have. First, decide on the general boundaries of the competing districts by noticing where most of the retail activity is. You will want to make a list of the most significant businesses and possibly count the total number of storefront businesses. If you are really ambitious and have the time, it is useful to have a complete list of retailers in the primary business area, but it is most important to get a sense of the major retail outlets and types in the district.

Exhibit 12: Existing and Proposed Retail Clusters along Frankford Avenue
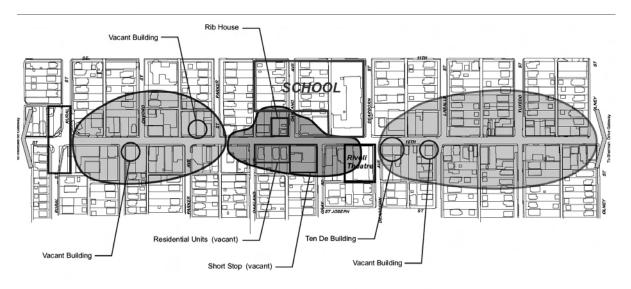
Courtesy of the Frankford Avenue Main Street Program

Try to understand what it is about the mix of businesses that makes the district attractive.

- What types of businesses does this district have that your district does not?
- What types of businesses do you have in common?
- How many of each retail type are present?
- Are there some businesses or types of businesses there that you think would do well in your neighborhood?
- Are there some that you know would never work in your neighborhood?
- Are there other elements which make the district appealing, (i.e. public outdoor space, community center, or school)?
- What businesses does your district have that the competing districts lack?
- How do their businesses compare with yours? (store size, product prices, diversity of brands, store hours)

Exhibit 13: Opportunity Sites and Business Nodes in the 10 East Main Street District

Courtesy of 10 East Main Street, Indianapolis

The idea is not to try to copy the competitor and make your district just like theirs. It is more important to figure out how your community is different and what might make it unique. However, at the same time, if competing districts in similar neighborhoods all have coffee shops and you don't, maybe you should think about whether a coffee shop would add to the attractiveness your district.

OPPORTUNITY SITE INVENTORY

It will also be useful to begin to identify potential opportunity sites for development or redevelopment in your district. Opportunity sites are vacant buildings or lots, or underutilized buildings which are located at key nodes or corners in your district. As you are compiling the building and business inventory, do not forget to collect information about parcels and commercial space which are currently vacant.

Vacant buildings or parcels can be an eyesore in the district and contribute to overall deterioration of the area. Knowledge of the attributes of vacant commercial space as well as contact information for the person responsible for leasing the space (property owner and/or broker) will be very useful as you work to attract new businesses to these locations. Additionally, vacant parcels provide a location for new development in the district which will not cause displacement of existing businesses or residents. Vacant and underutilized parcels adjacent to each other may also provide an opportunity to assemble larger parcels for development, which are often more attractive to those considering new development.

It is useful to have a district map with all of the opportunity sites clearly identified. Exhibit 13 was created by 10 East Main Street, Indianapolis to illustrate opportunity sites as well as individual nodes in the district in which to focus development. The map clearly identifies five vacant buildings as well as an underutilized building, the Ten De Building, which is strategically located at a key corner in the district.

In addition to a map visually locating each potential parcel, a comprehensive list of each site and its attributes is useful for considering which types of retail might best fit the vacant spaces.

Specific information to gather for opportunity sites in addition to the building inventory information includes:

- Property owner and contact information
- Broker—if applicable
- Property owner interest in leasing or selling
- Asking lease or purchase price
- Rehab construction needs—retrofitting, code requirements, etc.
- Site work needs—environmental remediation, grading, etc.
- Zoning constraints
- Time on the market
- Surrounding businesses
- Area characteristics

Ideally, you will be able to engage the property owner in discussions about potential redevelopment or leasing opportunities and be able to collect much of the

needed information directly from the owner or broker. But many urban districts that have undertaken revitalization planning find that absentee property owners are a major problem. If this is the case, you can begin to collect the necessary information from public sources and work with the city to consider strategies for promoting redevelopment of the sites.

LOCATION AND SITE PREFERENCES OF RETAIL TYPES

After you know what type of space is available in your district, the challenge is to find retail types which will fit well in these spaces. Most retailers have a set of criteria which they use to determine the viability of a site which may include demographics of the trade area and physical space requirements. National and regional chain stores often have published preferences for new locations; the preferences of chain stores provide a good guide for what an independent retailer of a same type would be looking for as well. For example, if you think that you would ideally like to attract an independent coffee and donut shop to your district, the simplest way to judge if your district has an appropriate location for this type of store may be to consider the location selection criteria of a national chain such as Dunkin' Donuts. Learning that Dunkin' Donuts prefers locations on major arterials on the "morning drive side" (the side of the road that morning commute traffic is concentrated on) and needs about 1,500 square feet of space will help you determine if you have appropriate space for an independent donut shop. Similarly, knowing the published parking and space requirements of a national movie theater operator will let you know early on if you have sites which can address the significant space and parking needs of any large movie theater operator.

Retailers often consider the following characteristics when opening new locations[vi]:

Site Preferences

Gross Leasable Area (GLA): the total store square footage, including storage space.

Minimum Frontage: the shortest acceptable width for the front of the store.

Parking Requirement: the minimum number of dedicated parking spaces needed.

Co-tenants: chain stores often seek locations that have attracted retailers of a different type with a similar target demographics because the synergy created by multiple retail outlets increases the collective drawing power.

Traffic and Access: most chains have average daily traffic (ADT) or vehicles per day (VDP) requirements. Certain stores require freeway access and/or freeway visibility.

Signage: the opportunity and local permission, usually via the zoning ordinance or design guidelines, to include their standard corporate signage. If this requirement is applicable, most retailers are looking to include large, often tall signage, to increase visibility.

Location Preferences

Population or Household Density: the minimum number of individuals and or households living within the stated trade area radius.

Demographics: the most commonly considered statistics include median income, educational attainment, and concentrations of certain age cohorts.

Buying Power: While many national retailers focus on household median income, some retailers will consider the collective buying power of the trade area considering population density and current sales leakage.

Retailers also usually have requirements related to location ownership and the length and type of lease, but during the planning stage, it is not necessary to

Exhibit 14:

SAMPLE OF RETAILER PREFERENCES[vii]				
	Starbucks	**Pizza Hut**	**Target**	**Safeway**
Gross Leasable Area (in Square Feet)	100 - 2,000	2,200 - 3,400	123,000 - 146,000	46,000 - 62,000
Preferred Co-tenants	Entertainment	All considered	All considered	All considered
Special Requirements	None provided	30,000 - 40,000 sq. ft. lot. 45 parking spaces	Customer base = mid- income, adult, female[i]	Customer base = high to mid- income adult

Source: Trade Dimensions Retail Tenant Directory

have specific knowledge about these things. You would want to develop a much more comprehensive understanding of a specific retailer's needs if you are actively trying to attract them, but at this point it is most important to determine if size and location limitations make the potential attraction of specific retail types reasonable.

WHERE TO FIND THIS INFORMATION

Published Industry Standards

The most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on retailer needs is the *Retail Tenant Directory*, which is published and updated annually by Trade Dimensions, International, Inc.

It provides retailer preferences with regards to gross leasable area (GLA), lease terms, parking spaces, minimum frontage, co-tenants, density, traffic counts, and customer base as specified by the retailer. It also includes information on current geographic areas of operation, targeted expansion states, and estimated new units planned annually, when this information is available. Summary information is provided by retailer name, but much of the information is also cross-listed so that you can search by GLA requirements and generate a list of potential tenants who may consider your existing or proposed retail space.

This publication is a very handy tool; unfortunately it is also quite expensive. It is available for sale by the publisher at: **www.retailtenants.com**. It may be available used from online book sellers for a more reasonable price.

Another source of this information is **www.tenantsearch.com/**; an online database of retailer needs which is accessible free of charge when using the demo function. While this is not as comprehensive as the Trade Dimensions publication, it provides useful location and site preference information for a number of popular chain retailers as well as contact information for each retailer it covers.

Corporate Websites

If you have specific retailers in mind, it is useful to begin your research by seeking out the corporate website of the retailer. Some chain stores make their new store location preferences available online. Dunkin' Brands, which franchises Dunkin' Donuts, Baskin Robbins, and Togo's, provides a list of demographic and site characteristics which it considers when approving new store locations. This information is listed under the Real Estate link on the corporate website **www.dunkin-baskin-togos.com**. You would not be able to access this information directly through the company's consumer website at **www.dunkin-donuts.com**, so be sure to locate the corporation's webpage, which is distinct for many retailers.

Call Corporate Headquarters: Even if your internet research does not uncover specific site and location requirements, it will most likely provide you with contact information for the company. Contact the Real Estate department and interview the contact person for your region about their interest in expansion and what their preferences are. Try to collect information on all of the criteria listed above; record their comments, even if they tell you that a certain criterion is not important to them. If they have requirements which you know your site cannot meet, ask them how stringent these requirements are and if, for example, they would consider reducing their parking requirements for a location that has significant transit traffic.

Observe Existing Locations for Specific Retailers

Another way to start to collect ideas on which retailers may be attracted to your district is to consider where these retailers are already located. Look at the size, the design, and the amount of parking provided at existing locations. If you begin to a see a consistent model across a variety of a specific retailer's stores in the region, then you can infer rough requirement with regard to site requirements. Then compare the opportunities provided in your district to see if it could potentially be a good match. It can be more difficult to understand specific demographic and buying power requirements through this method, but your local knowledge of the demographics of certain neighborhoods in the region will help you make an educated guess.

From the Real Estate Section of the Dunkin' Brands Corporate Website:[viii]

Although there are additional factors that go into selecting and approving new store locations, you will find basic requirements that Dunkin' Brands, Inc., looks for in a site. This information is for domestic markets only.

DEMOGRAPHIC REQUIREMENTS	
Population	• 15,000 or more population within the drive-time trade area • $38,000 or greater median household income
Employment	• 10,000 or more employees within the drive-time trade area desirable • Proximity to office parks desirable • Easy access from employment base
Shopping/Activity	• Anchored to regional, community or power centers • Major grocery chain in market located at the center • Entertainment/movie theaters
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	
Size	• 1500 sq. ft. for single brands • 2200 sq. ft. for combos • Patio – 15 - 20 seats desirable
Parking	• Minimum of 20 spaces, 30 + preferred • Drive-thru window preferred
Traffic	• Morning drive-time side preferred for DD • 20,000 average daily traffic count or better • Easy access from all traffic directions
Exposure	• Free-standing/shared pad site for trombo (corporate jargon) concepts • End-cap in center, anchored by major tenant
Signage	• Building signage on two sides • Prominent position on pylon, or monument sign
Lease Requirements	• Ten (10) year term with two to five year options • Landlord T.I.—between $15 - $30 per sq. ft. • Electrical—208 volts/600 amps • HVAC—1 Ton per 200 sq. ft. of premises • Water (1") line, plus gas (3/4" line) • 11' ceiling height, sprinkler system to code

Talk with a Local Commercial Broker

It may also be very useful to spend time talking with one or two commercial brokers who work in your area and are familiar with retailers needs. Most brokers should be willing to talk about the retail potential in your area with you. A walking tour with a broker who is willing to spend more time provides a great way to generate ideas about what types of retail might fit best in the existing space or would be willing to build on vacant parcels. Even brokers who are not actively listing space in your district can help you see your neighborhood from a retailer's perspective.

UNDERSTANDING ZONING CONSTRAINTS

As you think about business attraction and clustering, it is important to understand city regulations which may impact to the implementation of your vision. Local zoning regulations have an effect on both the types of buildings and use of land in your district. These regulations often permit one type of use to the exclusion of another. It is a good idea to have a strong understanding of the applicable zoning regulations to determine if they support or hinder your revitalization strategy.

Maps and descriptions of the zoning requirements for each type of zoning classification can be obtained from the local Planning Department and may be available on the department's website. It is also a good idea to review any citywide planning documents which may impact development and business recruitment in your district. Understanding these regulations is necessary for pre-development planning for a specific real estate project. While you can try to alter zoning regulations on a parcel-by-parcel basis to support your revitalization efforts, in some cases it may be necessary to undertake extensive reclassification of zones in the district so that the regulatory environment supports your strategy.

SAMPLE ACTION STEPS:

- Develop a business attraction packet including market data, community highlights, promotional material and information about available spaces.
- Develop a system for tracking available retail space in the district and providing that information to potential retailers.
- Contact desired retailers to assess interest in establishing a new location in your district.
- Host a walking tour of the district for real estate professionals.
- Engage brokers to market vacant properties in your district to desired tenant types.
- Identify public resources that might help businesses relocate to your district (loans, grants, technical assistance, tax credits, etc.).
- Prepare Request for Proposals for new development on vacant sites.

Example: Buckeye Road Land Use Analysis

The Buckeye Area Development Corporation (BADC) undertook an analysis of zoning regulations along its commercial corridor, Buckeye Road. They realized that the existing zoning, shown in Exhibit 16, called for more commercial retail space than the market research suggested is supportable. Wanting to target retail spaces in dense nodes along the corridor, BADC proposed changing the zoning, as shown in Exhibit 17, to reduce the permitted retail space by half and allow for additional office and residential space. In addition to clustering retail in certain areas to create condensed shopping locations, residential and office uses along the corridor will support existing and future retail by drawing more consumers into the immediate area.

Exhibit 16: Buckeye Corridor Existing Zoning:
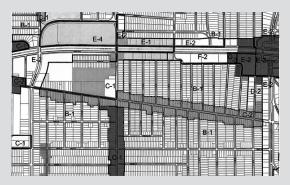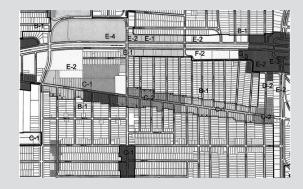Commercial uses zones are shown in shaded areas.

Exhibit 17: Buckeye Corridor Proposed Zoning:
Commercial uses zones were reduced to specific nodes along the corridor.

Images courtesy of Buckeye Area Development Corporation and the Urban Design Center of Northeast Ohio

10. Evaluate Streetscape Conditions

The physical appearance of your district has a significant impact on the comfort and enjoyment of visitors as well as the willingness of businesses to consider locating in your district. If your commercial corridor is filled with litter, graffiti, torn awnings and broken signs, these visual cues send the message that the neighborhood and merchants do not care about the business district. You want the streetscape and building design to reflect the community vision for the district and your commitment to revitalization, but you may have to make some changes for that to occur. Additionally, building and urban design elements also affect safety and the perception of safety in your district and so it is important to make physical improvements to both promote a sense of safety as well as potentially make the district less prone to crime.

Assessing the existing conditions of streetscape and building design will help you strategize the most appropriate activities for improvement and educate the community about the impact of aesthetic conditions on the viability of the business district. The architects at David H. Gleason Associates indicate that "urban design involves sidewalks, streets, landscaping, parks, parking lots and structures."[ix] Other important elements include street furniture, lighting, traffic patterns and traffic signs. "Building design includes front, rear, and side facades, window displays, business signs, merchandise layout, and the design of fixtures and fittings."[x]

GETTING STARTED

- Assess the condition of buildings and inventory "eyesores."
- Identify any buildings with historic status.
- Assess the appearance/maintenance of public spaces.
- Conduct parking inventory.
- Organize community design charrette.
- Work with professionals to develop basic district design guidelines.

Walking Observation of External Building Conditions and Eyesores:

In a similar fashion to the building and business inventory, collect information about the external appearance of commercial buildings by sending a handful of volunteers to walk and observe the district's buildings. Use **Tool 10-1** to grade each property according to the scale provided in the worksheet. The reverse side provides space to note any "eyesores," unsightly visual elements in the district such as vacant lots strewn with trash, vacant store fronts with broken windows and faded old signs.

It may be useful to take digital pictures of the properties, particularly those which are most in need of rehabilitation, both to provide a baseline for tracking outcomes and for seeking funding for façade improvement programs. Façade condition information should be logged in the building and business database. A comprehensive list of eyesores should be created and potentially plotted on a business district map. If eyesores are clustered in a certain area of the district, you know that this a good place to focus your district clean up efforts.

EVALUATE HISTORIC STATUS OF DISTRICT BUILDINGS

If you believe that you have a critical mass of important historic buildings or a few key landmark buildings, which are potentially worthy of historic status, then it may be worthwhile to conduct an assessment of the historic significance of buildings and architecture in your district. Being listed on the National Register of Historic Places allows developers of these buildings to access the Historic Preservation Tax Credit which provides a subsidy for proper restoration and reuse of historic structures. Additionally, rehabilitating historic buildings can provide a unique focal point in the district and instill community pride. Detailed technical information on a variety of issues related to preserving historic structures is provided by the National Park Service. Their *Preservation Briefs* are available online at **www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm**.

STREETSCAPE ASSESSMENT

In addition to understanding the condition of the buildings in the district, it is also useful to collect information about the existing streetscape conditions along the primary corridors. Streetscape assessments evaluate the physical condition of the streets, sidewalks, and public spaces in the district. This assessment may be more challenging than a building inventory and many CBOs employ the assistance of landscape architects who are familiar with the kinds of elements used to create a streetscape that is pleasant and inviting. If you choose to work with a professional firm for this aspect of the planning process, it is important to have a refined community vision for the district to guide the work of the professionals. But even if you choose not to hire a professional design firm, you can begin to evaluate the streetscape by conducting another walking inventory, but this time with a focus on the public spaces as opposed to private commercial properties.

Understanding the attributes, assets and deficiencies of the streetscape is important because shoppers enjoy districts that are well-maintained and visually attractive. A streetscape assessment allows you to step back and think about how the public spaces in your district impact the appeal of your district. Consider whether streetscape elements help to create a sense of place and identity for the district. Additionally, consider the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), presented in Chapter 8, to evaluate how streetscape elements affect security and the perception of safety.

Documenting the strengths and weakness of the existing streetscape conditions will feed your revitalization strategy. The assessment will illuminate unique visual and public elements to highlight as well as reveal common visual and public amenities that are currently lacking in the district. Armed with this information, you may decide to invest in streetscape upgrades and/or work with the city to develop a plan for public capital improvements and/or to improve provision of city services and scheduled maintenance of existing public infrastructure.

With a large district map and digital camera walk through the district asking such questions as:

- Are there trees in the district?
  - If so, what condition are they in?
  - Are they the appropriate size and shape?
- Are the sidewalks wide enough for a small group of people to stroll comfortably?
- Do the sidewalks provide enough space to introduce outdoor tables at local cafes and restaurants?
- Are the streets well-maintained and free of excessive potholes?
- Are there benches or other places for pedestrians to rest?
- Is the area clean and largely free of graffiti?
- Are public trash receptacles available throughout the corridor? Are they emptied regularly?
- Are the intersections safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers?
  - Are there crosswalks and is there sufficient signage?
- Is there adequate lighting to make people feel safe in the area after dark?
- Are there examples of public art? Are they well-maintained?
- Are transit stops clearly marked? Is shelter provided?
- Is there adequate public open space in the district? Is it well maintained?

After assessing these aspects of the streetscape, it is helpful to draft a plan for streetscape improvements. As many streetscape upgrades are capital intensive, it is important to develop an action plan in phases which creates opportunities for improvement which require limited financial investment. Also, many streetscape enhancement projects are under the local government's jurisdiction so it is especially important to involve government representatives in this stage of the planning process.

PARKING INVENTORY

An assessment of the provision and appropriate place-ment of parking in the district may also be useful. Both potential retailers and consumers are interested in the ease of parking in your district. A lack of parking may discourage visitors from stopping to shop, but an excess of parking may falsely indicate that no one is visiting the district which may also deter potential customers. Well-located, but underutilized parking lots may provide opportunities for new development or the introduction of public green space.

A simple parking inventory can be conducted in-house, but if parking issues are a serious obstacle to retail and consumer attraction in the district, then you might consider commissioning a professional parking analy-sis. Be sure to first check with your local department of parking and traffic or public works department to see if they have completed a parking assessment of the area within the last few years. If public agencies have not or will not conduct a parking needs assessment, then locate a transportation planning or landscape architec-ture firm to help you undertake this assessment.

A parking inventory should reveal if there is adequate parking for commercial uses. It should provide answers to the following basic questions:

- How many public parking spaces exist in the district? (Count on-street and public lots)
- Is there a charge and/or time limits for this parking?
- How many spaces exist in private parking lots?
- Is the existing parking over-utilized or under-utilized?
- Does the existing parking provide convenient access to local businesses?
- Are parking lots well-marked and easy to locate from the main commercial corridor?

An initial parking inventory can be conducted by a simple walking observation of the district. Again with a map and camera, walk the district and count the number of parking spaces in each lot, note the fees associated with them, and how many spots are in use at a given time. An accurate parking inventory requires observation at different times of the day and different days of the week. For example, although a walking tour of the district may reveal that only half of the available public spots are in use at noon on a Wednesday, a tour on Saturday at 5 p.m. may indicate that all spaces are in use. Make sure to count not only the spaces in public parking lots, but private lots with spaces reserved for business customers.

Profile: Girard Avenue Streetscape Analysis

Exhibit 18: Elements of the Streetscape and Ideas for Improvements

Courtesy of the Girard Coalition, Philadelphia, Brown + Keener Urban Design, and KSK Architects and Planners.

The Girard Avenue Coalition conducted a streetscape analysis to help them target public and private capital investment along one corridor in Philadelphia.

The information from the assessment helped to generate a Five Year Capital Projects Plan, which complements the overall commercial corridor revitalization strategy. The planned infrastructure upgrades will help create a sense of place and support the identity that the Girard Coalition is promoting. Even marginal investments in such things as good looking trash cans, unique, but functional, street furniture, and colorful district ban-ners will help the district build a stronger identity.

Profile: Excelsior Action Group Parking Inventory

In San Francisco's Excelsior District, one of the most frequently cited barriers to a vibrant commercial corridor, particularly by merchants, was parking. While in some neighborhoods, a lack of parking promotes pedestrian shopping, this does not happen in the Excelsior. Instead, many park illegally or double park in front of stores, creating traffic congestion and a potential for accidents. For this reason, EAG found a volunteer to walk the district and count the number of lots and parking spaces by type. The data was compiled in a table (Exhibit 19) and the information was used to generate strategies including:

- Ask businesses with existing but unused lots to open them for shared customer parking.
- Develop a new public parking lot on Mission Street if a site can be identified.
- Consider asking the Department of Parking and Transportation to more strictly enforce parking regulations.

Exhibit 19: Parking Inventory, Excelsior District, San Francisco

Type of Parking	Estimated number of lots	Estimated number of cars
Public lot	1	39
Private Lots for Shoppers	13	239
Underutilized private lots	8	104
TOTAL	22	383

Courtesy of Excelsior Action Group

DEVELOP BASIC DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

Many communities find it useful to develop design guidelines to help promote the community vision for the district. These guidelines should be used to review any proposals for new development or substantial rehabilitation in the district. Design guidelines are technical and specific and usually require the expertise of design professionals. Nevertheless community input is important and many local residents have creative ideas on how to visually represent and improve the district. One effective means of collecting community ideas is to organize a design charrette. A design charrette is an interactive community workshop facilitated by architects that helps identify design problems and solutions. Design professionals can then take the ideas expressed at the charrette and create formal design guidelines for the district. While urban design and architecture services can be expensive, many urban districts benefit significantly from the visual consistency and public infrastructure investment that can result from these studies. If your budget does not provide for a professional consulting contract, it may be possible to find professionals who are willing to work on a pro bono basis or to locate an upper-level graduate school design class which would prepare community-driven, design guidelines for a class project.

When the Fruitvale Main Street Program was developing district design guidelines, architects from David H. Gleason Associates recommended that the stakeholders try to keep the following general design principles in mind:[xi]

- District design should reinforce the commercial nature of the district.
- Design should reflect the economic, social, and ethnic composition of the district's current and targeted customers to make shoppers feel comfortable in the area.
- Design should reflect the difference in activities in different nodes, i.e. retail area, office area, and residential area.
- Design should be flexible and accommodate different uses. For example, a street or parking lot may provide parking during the weekdays, but be transformed into the space for weekend farmers' markets.
- Urban design should balance inherent conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. Unlike malls, automobiles and buses share the space in the commercial district with pedestrians. Make efforts to ensure pedestrian safety in your district, but also provide an easy, logical traffic flow for motor vehicles.

- Street furniture, fixtures, and landscaping proposals must consider the long term cost of maintenance as well as the initial cost before decisions are made. If beautiful new landscaping is introduced, but cannot be maintained, this may have a negative overall effect on the district because weeds and unmaintained green space detract from the district.

District design guidelines can be enforced through official adoption in the city planning code, meaning that city staff would review all proposals for consistency with design guidelines. Another way of employing the design guidelines is to create a design committee that actively works with any developers proposing new construction or substantial rehabilitation in the district and requesting that the developers respect the community vision for the district and comply with the basic guidelines. The second option provides a means of asserting community goals without becoming ensnarled in the lengthy process of altering government code.

SAMPLE ACTION STEPS

- Organize district clean up events.
- Meet with city staff to discuss graffiti abatement programs.
- Work with local artists and youth to create colorful murals throughout the district.
- Implement a Façade Improvement Grant or Loan Program.
- Raise funds for a pocket park.
- Install new trash cans, planters and/or benches along the street.
- Install colorful street banners that promote the district.
- Appoint merchant block captains to maintain clean sidewalks.

TOOL 10-1: SAMPLE BUILDING CONDITIONS AND EYESORE INVENTORY FORM

Use the following grade system, adapted from the FOCUS Indianapolis Building Condition Code, to evaluate the condition of commercial buildings in your district.

On the reverse side, make note of any "eyesores" in the area. It is advisable to use at least one inventory form per block.

External Building Condition Grading System

A: Excellent: *No rehabilitation needed.*

B: Superficial Problems: *If less than 50% of paint is peeling. Window screens are missing or torn. Business Sign is torn, faded, or broken. Gutters and downspouts are slightly rusty.*

C: Minor Problems: *If 50% or more of paint is peeling. Foundation has hairline cracks. Window or door glass is cracked. Shingles are loose or missing. Gutters and downspouts are severely rusty, peeling, and/or dented.*

D: Major Problems: *Foundation is crumbling. Walls and/or chimneys are leaning. Roof is sagging. Wood is rotting or masonry is loose. Doors and/or windows are missing. Minor fire damage is visible.*

F: Dilapidated Building: *Exterior walls are leaning or bulging, have large holes, rotting and missing material. Foundation is sinking, has large cracks, missing bricks, and/or large holes. Roof exhibits extreme sagging, warping, and/or holes. Windows/Doors have broken or missing glass, or have boarded, rotten or rusted, distorted frames. Chimney is leaning, missing bricks, or collapsed. Gutters/Downspouts have holes and/or are sagging.*

Business Address:_____ Grade: _____

Notes:_____

Business Address:_____ Grade: _____

Notes:_____

Business Address:_____ Grade: _____

Notes:_____

Vacant Lots *List Address and major problems (i.e. litter, weeds, loitering, unsightly fencing, etc.)*

_____

_____

Vacant Storefronts: *List Address and major problems (i.e. covered or broken windows, broken signage, litter, graffiti, etc.)*

_____

_____

Dead or Dying Street Trees: *List by nearest address*

_____

_____

Graffiti: *Estimate occurrences per block. Note if it is found on private property or public property*

_____

_____

11. Branding the District Identity

While a written vision statement can say a lot about what kind of place you are trying to create, a comprehensive brand strategy including logos and taglines may be more effective in communicating your vision to others. Many communities undertake branding initiatives which allow community stakeholders to work with marketing, design, and/or public relations professionals to develop a graphic and concise visual identity for the commercial district. District brands and marketing efforts help to generate the kind of excitement that will be necessary to bring about change.

Anne Briseno, district manager of the Payne Arcade Commercial District, states that "when thinking about branding it's important to understand that a brand is not just a simple slogan or logo. A brand is the relationship between the customer and the product"[xii] Brands function to help develop loyalty to a specific product, in this case a commercial district. For many urban commercial districts, branding serves not only to keep pace with the competition, but also to counteract negative stereotypes. Effective brands should be relevant to the consumer and believable; for these reasons it is important to have a strong market-based vision and have made some progress to signal changes in the district before rolling out a brand initiative.

GETTING STARTED

- Gather stakeholder ideas for a "visual vocabulary" for the district.
- Consider changing the district's name or developing a new 'tagline.'
- Create a logo for the district.
- Work with a professional marketing firm to develop a comprehensive brand and promotions strategy.

Often the process of developing these brand materials leads communities to further discuss and refine their vision. Different logo and tagline options can communicate very different ideas about the community. For this reason, it is generally helpful to generate a number of alternatives and engage community members in a process of discussing and refining them. While external marketing professionals can bring fresh ideas to the process and add value, community stakeholders must feel that the promotional identity truly reflects their vision.

The result of a branding study might include some or all of the following:

- A logo
- A slogan or tagline for promotional material
- A new name for the district
- A rendering (architectural drawing) of the street "after" revitalization
- A related theme for a signature festival or community event

Comprehensive branding services can be expensive, so it is a good idea to try to access pro bono or discounted services. The Taproot Foundation (**www.taprootfoundation.org**) is a national organization that connects nonprofit agencies with business professionals, including those in marketing and branding. They may be able to help you locate branding professionals who will develop a logo and tag line to effectively promote the vision of your district. Additionally, it is worthwhile to contact local branding agencies directly and see if they would be willing to provide their services for free or reduced fees.

Profile: Excelsior Branding Concepts

In 2006 the Excelsior Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization Program (ENCoRe) in San Francisco's Excelsior District launched a marketing campaign designed to encourage more local residents to shop on Mission Street. The program was able to secure pro bono design assistance from Julio Martinez, a professional graphic designer whose family owns a shoe store in the Excelsior district. Julio worked with a committee of local stakeholders to come up with 10 different potential marketing concepts. The committee narrowed the options down to the four ideas represented in Exhibit 20 which were presented at a monthly ENCoRe meeting. The final choice (the design in the top left—'Go Around The Globe. In One Place') was used as the basis for a series of mailings, a business directory and newspaper ads. The design plays off the fact that the area is known for street names like Brasil, France, Persia, London and Madrid while at the same time highlighting the diversity of dining and shopping opportunities that the committee felt was a key district asset.

Exhibit 20: Excelsior Logo Options

Courtesy of Julio Martinez and ENCoRe

DISTRICT NAMES

If your district lacks a common name or currently has a name which does not reinforce your vision, then you may want to think about renaming your district. It is important that the decision to rename the district be left in the hands of the community. If they don't support the new name, they won't use it and the renaming exercise won't be successful. Be wary of renaming districts with an established name in the wider community because it can be very challenging, and expensive, to effectively change.

SAMPLE ACTION STEPS

- Create business directory.
- Organize a street fair or promotional events.
- Generate positive media coverage.
- Plan walking tours of the district.
- Create street banners promoting the brand.
- Incorporate district brand on individual commercial signage.
- Include brand in holiday or seasonal decorations in the district.
- Promote brand through gateways and public art.
- Organize co-op advertising opportunities for merchants and the revitalization program.

Profile: Payne Avenue Branding Study

The East Side Neighborhood Development Company (ESNDC) and the Payne Arcade Business Association (PABA) in St. Paul, Minn., have undertaken two branding efforts for the Payne Arcade Business District in the past 10 years. They learned that it is very important to base your vision and brand identity on market research. The initial vision and brand identity for the district, "Old Town," was built on such assets as historically significant architecture, a cluster of antique stores, and a residential community which had been in the area for generations. Unfortunately, after a few years they realized that this identity was not being reinforced by the changing businesses and demographics of the neighborhood. Many of the antique shop owners were elderly and as they retired their businesses closed permanently. Additionally, the demographics have been changing over the years and many new immigrants, particularly Mexican and Southeast Asian immigrants, now call the neighborhood home. They are opening businesses such as ethnic bakeries and sit-down restaurants. ESNDC and the community undertook a second branding effort in order to accurately reflect the neighborhood's changes. Logo creation (Exhibit 21) and tagline direction was provided pro bono by Yamamoto Moss, a highly-regarded brand consulting firm in the Twins Cities region. The agency worked with community members to decide on a final direction for the branding and promotions. The short survey below was distributed to merchants as part of the monthly marketing and promotions newsletter published and distributed by ESNDC.

Exhibit 21: Payne Avenue Logo

The tagline chosen by the community was "Global Beat on Main Street!" This tagline captures and supports the increasing diversity of the market areas and promotes a welcoming attitude to old and new alike. The new logo involves bright colors, dynamic imagery, and diverse lettering in an effort to convey the increasing diversity along the avenue. At the same time, rather than referring to the district as "Old Town," a name that worked well with the previous emphasis on antiques, ESNDC began using the street name "Payne Avenue" to refer to the district as a whole.

MERCHANT SURVEY

What tagline would you like for the commercial district?

Please check one…

☐ "Global Beat on Main Street"

☐ "Where Lives Take Root"

☐ "Unity of Spirit, Pride of Place"

☐ "Many Voices, One Spirit"

☐ "Unity, Growth, Pride"

12. Defining an Implementation Strategy

Successfully implementing a commercial corridor revitalization plan requires undertaking multiple projects simultaneously and coordinating a large number of stakeholders. Businesses or community organizations alone cannot revive their neighborhood; revitalization is most effective when the efforts of businesses are designed to complement the actions of community organizations, neighborhood residents, and local government agencies. Working collaboratively, these different entities can ensure that each one's distinct efforts support a single coordinated strategy that produces lasting neighborhood improvement. The implementation process will be long and complex so it is important to clearly delineate from the beginning which goals you plan to pursue.

PRIORITIZING IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

In order to realize the vision for your district, you will need to take several coordinated actions as part of a comprehensive strategy to reach your goals. One of the biggest challenges facing new commercial revitalization efforts is prioritizing among the many problems and potential solutions. Throughout the planning process, you will no doubt generate many ideas and initiatives to improve your district. All of these ideas should be captured during the various phases of the planning process and maintained for this step of prioritizing activities and creating a work plan. In contrast to a long "wish list" of random actions, a strategic work plan tells you which things need to happen first, as well as which actions should wait until a later point in the process.

More important than any specific activity is the mix of activities; the right mix of activities will help generate and sustain momentum for your revitalization program. To keep stakeholders engaged and committed to the idea that change is possible and happening, there must be some activities that show immediate visible results. But if all of your actions produce immediate results, there is a risk that participants will feel like the program is "window dressing" over the real problems. You should plan to include some actions which take longer to implement but address some of district's most challenging problems. Ideally, your strategy will include a mix of actions ranging from those which are relatively simple and produce immediate results to actions that address deep systemic issues and may take years to produce results that are clearly visible to the wider community.

Given the community's many needs and limited existing resources, it will likely be challenging to come to a consensus about which problems to address first. Nevertheless this process is a critical step in revitalization planning. While it may be tempting to charge forward and tackle many pressing issues with creative programs, it is important to create a work plan which is achievable within the stated time frame. Limiting the actions you commit to will not only increase your chances of being successful, but positive progress will also help build and maintain momentum for your revitalization effort.

To begin to prioritize your activities, it is useful to organize the many ideas you have generated throughout the planning process under headings of Goals, Strategies, and Actions.

A **goal** is the desired outcome which motivates you; it should be ambitious, but grounded in the market research you have collected throughout the planning process.

A **strategy** is the means of accomplishing the goal.

Actions are the discreet tasks and programs undertaken to implement the strategy.

You should have a few goals, under which there will likely be a few corresponding strategies and many actions.

For example the East 10th Street Civic Association in Indianapolis structured a portion of their plan as follows:

Goal: Define Corridor Identity

Strategy: Beautify Corridor

Sample Actions: Initiate Mural Program, Organize Consistent Neighborhood Cleanup Days

Sometimes good action ideas are generated before defining a specific goal or strategy. This is a normal part of the community process, but it is important to try to work backward to determine if the suggested action relates substantially to your primary goals. If you cannot link the suggested action to one of the agreed upon priority goals, then it is probably best to save that action idea for potential use later in the process.

COMMUNITY ACTION PRIORITIZATION ACTIVITY

A constructive way to gather community input about which actions to pursue first is to use the Community Action Prioritization Activity as part of either an advisory committee meeting and/or a larger town hall-style community meeting. The basic elements of the activity are:

- Write out all of the improvement action ideas (not the goals and strategies). Ideas should be written on large paper and posted for all to view. At the beginning of the exercise, read aloud and briefly describe all of the listed action ideas.
- Give each participant three "sticky dots" of two different colors. Explain that one color (red?) represents urgent action, meaning that it should be undertaken immediately, and the other color represents an important action, meaning that it is a high priority but may not be quite as immediate.
- Ask participants to come forward and place their dots to indicate their opinion on the most urgent and important actions on the list.
- After all the dots are placed, count the number of each color dots next to each item and point out the top few actions which received the most votes for each category. Ask participants to point out any trends they notice or other observations that they may have based on the results. Make sure to keep a record of the number of votes, delineated by urgent and important, which each action idea received.

This activity can provide important community feedback, but it should not be seen as the final word in setting a work plan. Because of the different perspectives in the community, the dot exercise will often identify more urgent and important actions than is realistically feasible to attempt at one time.

It is helpful to make the community aware from the beginning of the Dot Exercise that you plan to adjust the priority of certain action items based on how they rank according to different criteria. The best mix of activities will not necessarily be those with the highest total ranking but the highest ranked activity from each of several categories. For example, you might want to ensure that some of your activities respond to the district's most pressing needs while others are among the least expensive to implement.

Evaluation criteria might include:

- **Addresses Most Pressing Needs:** Rank projects according to the extent to which they respond to the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis.
- **Builds on Existing Assets:** Rank projects based on the extent to which they respond to the strengths identified in the SWOT analysis.
- **Least Expensive/Easiest to Finance:** Rank projects according to estimated costs and ability to access implementation funding. For example, if there is an identified funder ready to support an action item, then that action should rise to the top of the list.
- **Quickest to Show Results:** Rank projects according to the length of time it will take to complete and/or show results, i.e. short, medium, long
- **Clearly Identified Implementer:** Rank projects according to the availability and willingness of a person or existing group to take responsibility for it.

If your district is large and your visioning process has identified distinct nodes, then another criterion for evaluating potential implementation activities is to rank them according to which area of the district the project will most directly address.

DEFINING YOUR WORK PLAN

The goals, strategies, and actions you have decided to pursue over the new few years, should be documented in a simple, clear work plan which is accessible to all stakeholders. Your work plan will be the guide that keeps all of the stakeholders on the same page and it is also the document from which you can hold yourselves accountable. The work plan is an evolving document which should be reviewed and updated annually to ensure that the goals and actions continue to reflect community priorities and implementation capacity.

A Sample Work Plan (**Tool 12 -1**) is provided at the end of this chapter to get you started. As many CBOs report referencing the work plan nearly every day, it is useful to dedicate the time upfront to ensure that is both comprehensive and easy to read. Your work plan should contain the following information for each action:

- The person, committee or organization who has taken responsibility for implementing the action (Lead)
- Additional persons, committees, or organizations which have agreed to provide key support for the effort. (Support)
- Secured or proposed funding sources for each activity.
- Estimated activity start date and end date (if applicable).

It may also be helpful to note on the work plan if an action item is targeting a specific node in the district. Many revitalization programs find it useful to maintain information on proposed actions for the future directly on their work plan.

SUSTAINING FUNDING FOR YOUR PROGRAM

One of the key organizational development questions for any new revitalization program is whether it will be financially sustainable. It is important to think ahead about the long term funding options for staffing your revitalization program and how you will pay for the various activities you have decided to pursue. While many programs are successful in raising outside grant funding for start-up costs or special projects, such as comprehensive planning, over time much of the funding for these programs will come from the local community, either from merchants and property owners or from local government sources.

Profile: 10 East Main Street

The East 10th Street Civic Association is a community-driven organization dedicated to the commercial revitalization and historic preservation of the 10 East Main Street corridor located on Indianapolis' Near Eastside. The Association officially incorporated as an organization and gained Indiana Main Street status in 2002 following one year of community planning. Having secured funding through the City of Indianapolis, LISC and United Way of Central Indiana, the established board of directors hired a full time district manager to coordinate the revitalization efforts.

The Association and its volunteer leaders undertook a series of four comprehensive planning meetings, facilitated by the planning consulting firm Development Concepts, Inc. Through these sessions, the community stakeholders analyzed the district's opportunities and threats, and utilized this data to define the goals for the East 10th Street Commercial Revitalization Work Program.

Prioritizing Activities

Recognizing that there was an imminent threat to the existing businesses, the stakeholders settled on reinforcement of the existing retail as their primary goal. Two additional main goals include defining the corridor identity and improving the physical environment. During the planning meetings, the community generated many ideas to improve the district, and with the help of the external facilitator, they pared it down to a feasible list of strategies and actions based on the Association's organizational capacity.

District in Indianapolis

As the Association and its stakeholders prioritized action items, they also redefined their organizational structure to better fit the goals and objectives outlined in the Work Program. Initially, the very committed volunteers were organized under the Main Street Four Point Approach™, but they recognized that staffing committees and organizing meetings required substantial energy, limiting resources and time available for taking action. Given that the majority of the volunteers were also working full-time, the Association realized they needed to provide opportunities for distinct, short-term projects as opposed to standing committees with monthly meetings.

Organizational Structure

The East 10th Street Civic Association currently maintains four committees: Pipeline (real estate development project coordination), Design (general streetscape planning), Economic Restructuring (business retention and growth development), and Promotions and Marketing (overall promotion and marketing of corridor). Most of these committees meet on an as-needed basis, while those with significant current work to address have regularly-scheduled meetings as often as twice a month. This flexible structure allows the organization to focus on the most pressing needs while not over-extending their busy staff and volunteer pool.

The Association has also created Project Teams that allow volunteers to focus on their specific interests through short-term projects. The four project teams include the Business Crimewatch Team, Web Development Team, Fund Development Team, and the Beautification Team. The East 10th Street Civic Association believes that this more flexible organizational structure enables roughly 35 dedicated volunteers to accomplish a number of revitalization goals.

Rehabilitation of the Mayfair Building in the 10 East Main Street District

Results

While the organization has a number of issues still to address, they have made substantial progress in their first few years, particularly given their limited paid staff. In addition to the full-time district manager, it only employs a grants coordinator on contract for roughly 10 hours per week several months out of the year. Additionally, the Association has sporadic graduate and undergraduate student interns to help along the way. And, just as important, the Association has partnered with other community collaborators periodically using the neighborhood community center's staff, community service workers and corporate volunteer programs.

The Association recently closed on their fifth commercial real estate acquisition. And, with the assistance of many different community partners, is rehabilitating a strategically-located mixed-use building, and was able to attract an existing business from the fringe of the district into the center. It has also successfully worked with the City of Indianapolis to condemn abandoned properties, prepare them for redevelopment, and attach restrictions to the deeds ensuring that future uses meet the community's needs and vision.

As you create your work plan, you should develop estimated costs for each action item and try to balance actions which are capital intensive with those which can be accomplished with limited financial resources. Additionally, you should create a program budget which includes not only the estimated costs of specific projects and events, but also includes such costs as employee salaries, office space, and associated memberships. **Tool 12-2** provides a worksheet for preparing an initial program budget. The use of funds must balance with sources of funding for your program. Funding for revitalization programs can come from a variety of sources, but the most common ones are delineated below.

Local Government Sources
Revitalization programs are a relatively inexpensive way for local government to stimulate economic growth and improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Many cities have developed specific programs to provide ongoing operating support and technical assistance to neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs.

The most common sources of operating income from local governments are:

• Community Development Block Grants
• Tax Increment Financing (Redevelopment)
• General Fund
• Special Business District Programs

It is important to engage your local government early in the planning process so that it knows your organization's capabilities and motivation. If the local government is involved as a stakeholder from the beginning it will be more likely to provide financial support when it is needed.

Business Improvement Districts
One of the best ways to sustain a revitalization effort over the long-term is through the formation of a special assessment or business improvement district (BID). A BID is a special assessment paid by all of the property owners and/or businesses in the commercial district. Property owners (or sometimes businesses) vote to establish the BID to fund a specific set of services. Once established, the BID generates a reliable stream of revenue that can pay for program staffing, street cleaning, promotions, security or other needs. While it is generally difficult to convince businesses and property owners to voluntarily tax themselves, LISC's experience is that this task is easier after several years of a successful revitalization program when merchants can more easily see the ways in which their bottom line

benefits from neighborhood improvements. Though the revenue is collected by a local government, BIDs are generally managed by a nonprofit entity. A CBO-based revitalization program can serve as the designated management entity for a BID and can combine BID revenue with other fundraising to support a comprehensive program.

Local Corporate Sponsorships
Seeking multi-year financial support from local corporations can be a viable funding strategy. Ideally, look for support from a large corporation which is either headquartered or has a large office in or near your district. If this is not applicable, then consider approaching one of the corporations which is headquartered in your city or region, regardless of whether they have a location near your district.

Other Fundraising Strategies
Foundations: Some national foundations have made multi-year commitments to help launch revitalization efforts. These grants are generally very competitive and tend to go to the most needy districts.

Event Income: Income generated from district and organization fundraising events can be substantial, but considering the person hours needed to provide a successful event this type of income should be seen as somewhat supplemental. Event income is great if the event serves an additional purpose besides fundraising, but relying on fundraising events to support a district manager salary may require too much staff time to be efficient in the long run.

State and Federal Economic Development Programs: Each state has an Economic Development Department which is likely to have resources to help support your effort. Additionally the Federal Economic Development Administration makes grants to local organizations working to stimulate commercial growth and increase job opportunities in economically distressed areas. A description of their current funding programs can be found at: **www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/ Investments.xml**. The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (**www.cfda.gov**) is another resource for identifying federal grant sources which may be appropriate.

Americorps: This a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service which provides grants to support a program of full- or part-time volunteers in direct service to the community. Some revitalization programs use Americorps volunteers to fill the district manager position. For information on funding availability and program requirements see their website at **www.americorps.org**.

Profile: Boston Main Streets Corporate Buddy Program

The Boston Main Streets program developed the Corporate Buddy Program, which pairs a large business or corporation with each of the city's 19 Main Street districts to provide financial support and business technical assistance. Corporate Buddies have been an integral part of Boston's Main Streets program since its inception in 1995. Corporate buddies are asked to contribute $10,000 annually to their district's Main Street organization to support staff and activities. The corporations are also asked to commit a minimum of six hours/month to Main Streets activities via a corporate liaison and support employee volunteer work with the local organization.

The principles of the program are that the Corporate Buddy will commit to the following things:

- Maximize the effectiveness of the local Main Streets program.
- Deepen corporate commitment to the communities in which they do business.
- Create opportunities for collaboration and shared responsibility between corporations and local merchants.
- Enhance the quality of life for residents by offering added services, a higher community profile and a deeper investment in the community.

In return the local Main Street organization is expected to increase the Corporate Buddy's familiarity with the district by providing tours and opportunities to publicly support local merchants. Additionally, the local Main Street organization maintains strong communication with the Corporate Buddy and provides adequate acknowledgement of the partnership in any promotional materials and/or at events.

SAMPLE OF BOSTON'S CORPORATE BUDDY PARTNERSHIPS	
• Bowdoin Geneva Main Street	• Bank of America
• Brighton Main Streets	• New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc.
• Centre/South MainStreet	• Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Massachusetts
• Chinatown MainStreet	• CVS
• Dudley Square Main Street	• Bank of America
• East Boston Main Street	• Sovereign Bank

Boston has found that the most successful partnerships are those in which a corporate representative holds a seat on the local Main Streets board of directors and takes an active role in the decision-making process. Partnerships also appear most successful when the corporate buddy is either headquartered or has a particular business presence in the local district, as opposed to those partnerships which involve a city-wide business, headquartered downtown, partnered with a neighborhood district. The Main Street districts are supported by a variety of business types, but nearly half of the current Corporate Buddies are banks or other financial institutions. The value of the corporate buddy program is not limited to the direct financial support. City and Main Street staff believes that the partnerships with well-known corporations provide additional legitimacy to the program when they seek funding from other sources.

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	FUTURE	FUNDING SOURCE	LEAD AGENCY/CMTE	SUPPORT AGENCY/CMTE
Goal #1 Strategy A:							
Action							
Action							
Strategy B:							
Action							
Action							
Goal #2 Strategy C:							
Action							
Action							
Strategy D:							
Action							
Action							
Goal #3 Strategy E:							
Action							
Action							

TOOL 12-2: PROGRAM BUDGET TEMPLATE

Source Of Funds

General Operating

City Contribution:	$_____
Membership Fees:	$_____
BID Fees:	$_____
Donations	$_____
Grants:	$_____
Corporate Sponsorships	$_____
Program Revenues:	$_____
Total General Operating	$_____

Special Events

Corporate Sponsorship:	$_____
Other Revenues:	$_____
Total Special Events	$_____

Miscellaneous

Other:	$_____
Total Other	$_____
Total Sources of Funds	$_____

(Amount must equal Total in Uses of Funds)

Uses of Funds

Personnel

District Manager Salary	$_____
Assistant Manager Salary	$_____
Support Staff Salary	$_____
Payroll Taxes	$_____
Workers Compensation	$_____
Employee Medical Benefits	$_____
Contracted Services	$_____
Total PERSONNEL	$_____

Operations

Office Rent	$_____
Utilities	$_____
Telephone	$_____
Equipment Purchases, Leasing, Repair	$_____
Liability Insurance	$_____
Directors and Officers Insurance	$_____
Office Supplies	$_____
Postage	$_____
Printing and Copying	$_____
Travel and Training	$_____
Accounting and Bookkeeping Services	$_____
Bank Services	$_____
Internet Services	$_____
Dues and Subscriptions	$_____
Business Expenses (Meetings, Functions)	$_____
Contingency	$_____
Other:	$_____
Total Operations	$_____

Special Events, Projects, And Fundraisers

Special Event Insurance	$_____
Special Event #1:	$_____
Special Event #2:	$_____
Project #1:	$_____
Project #2:	$_____
Fundraiser #1:	$_____
Fundraiser #2:	$_____
Total Special Events, Projects, And Fundraisers	$_____
Total Uses of Funds	$_____

13. Measuring Impact

Part of every revitalization planning process involves asking the question, "How will we know that we are succeeding?" It is important for community leaders to come to some agreement about this issue at the outset of the revitalization effort. It is equally important to collect the kind of "baseline" data that will allow you to later demonstrate that your work is paying off as you intend it to. While that might sound like a simple task, it is often one of the most difficult aspects of this work. Data tracking can be time-consuming and challenging, but this information is necessary to help build and maintain community momentum, and it will also be very helpful when seeking continued funding of your revitalization program.

GETTING STARTED

- Identify set of indicators to track.
- Collect baseline data.
- Define systems for tracking data over time.

IDENTIFYING THE MEASURABLE OUTCOMES OF IMPROVEMENT

Unfortunately, not everything that counts can be counted easily. Some of the most important changes that people are seeking in commercial revitalization programs are changes in the way people *feel* about their neighborhood. Improved crime statistics do not necessarily mean that people *feel* any safer. While surveys might capture changes in attitudes, to get a clear picture of this kind of change they need to be professionally designed and administered with absolute consistency at regular intervals over many years. This is not practical for most revitalization programs. Less quantitative approaches like focus groups can provide an easier means to learn about qualitative changes.

At the same time, if attitudes are really changing, we should eventually see evidence of that in some of the things that are easier to count. Ideally, each community will identify a combination of qualitative

and quantitative changes that they will track over time and will collect baseline information about these specific conditions and then update that data at regularly scheduled intervals. The advisory committee should formally adopt these "improvement indicators" and decide how frequently data will be collected for each indicator.

CHOOSING IMPROVEMENT INDICATORS TO TRACK

Your choice of indicators should be directly related to the primary goals of the program. In addition to finding concrete things which are relatively easy to count, look carefully at your Work Plan and try to come up with measurable things that will show that you are having the kind of impact that you were hoping for. For example if your goal is *the neighborhood business district is economically viable* and one of your strategies is *to help existing and established business grow and stay in the business district,* then potential indicators of success may include: an increase in business revenue, an increase in sales taxes, and reaching a target number of business expansions.

Recognize that data collection and reporting of outcome tracking takes time and should be included as one of the district manager's responsibilities. Indicators that the district manager might maintain quarterly information on include:

Investment in buildings
- Count and value of façade improvements
- Count and value of interior building improvements
- Count and value of new real estate projects

Change in businesses and job opportunities
- Net new businesses
- Net new jobs

Investment in streetscape/open space
- Value of streetscape improvements
- Value of open space improvements

Investment in revitalization program
- Value of public sector grants
- Value of private foundation grants
- Value of corporate grants
- Value of local business/property owner donations/fees

Level of program participation
- Count of meetings attendance (cumulative total)
- Count of participants in events
- Count of organizations participating in Work Plan

Diversity of program participation
- Count of people who participate in meetings (unique individuals)
- Primary language of meeting participants
- Ethnic distribution of formal leadership
- Percent of formal leaders who are low-income
- Count of youth participants in meetings and events

Public sources also provide indicator data and should be reviewed at regular intervals, perhaps annually, to note changes. Sales tax revenue for the district as well as commercial property tax valuations for the district might be tracked over time. Crime data, such as number of reported thefts, misdemeanors, violent crimes, and pedestrian accidents, can also be a valuable way of tracking improvements.

Keeping your Building and Business Inventory current by completing the Business and Building Changes Observation Form (**Tool 13-1**) at regular intervals will also provide useful tracking data such as the number of business openings or closings and the commercial building vacancy rate.

COLLECT BASELINE DATA AND CREATE TRACKING SYSTEM

Once you have come to consensus about which indicators to track over time, you should begin by collecting "baseline" information for all of these indicators. Information on the state of the business district today is necessary to provide a point of comparison later.

At this time you should also design a system for collecting and maintaining indicator data. Decide how frequently data for each indicator will be updated, where this information will be kept, and who is responsible. Most revitalization programs update some indicators quarterly and others annually and maintain all data in a single database. District managers usually prepare reports for program stakeholders once or twice per year.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EVALUATION AND TRACKING OUTCOMES

While tracking "easy to count" indicators will help you judge if you are making progress, this will not tell you if your efforts and specific strategies and actions were the cause of improvement. To collect causal information as well as data on changes in community perceptions, it would be necessary to conduct a formal evaluation of your revitalization program.

Professional evaluators can come to your community and evaluate the effect of the program via extensive interviewing, data collections, and conducting professionally-designed surveys (resident and merchant) at regular intervals. Evaluation is more comprehensive and better able to address the large questions of how much real change is happening because of the revitalization program. A formal evaluation may include identifying a "control district," a district with similar makeup but which does not have a comprehensive commercial revitalization program. Evaluators will compare the changes in the two or more districts and be better able to identify what changes result from the revitalization program. Evaluators will also be able to provide information on potential areas of improvement or program restructuring to better reach stated goals.

TOOL 13-1: BUSINESS AND BUILDING CHANGES OBSERVATION FORM

Businesses:

Are there any new businesses or expansions in the district?

NAME	OPENING DATE	BUSINESS TYPE	# FULL TIME JOBS	# PART TIME JOBS	RENT/ MONTH	N: NEW E: EXPANDED

Are any businesses closing or planning to close?

NAME	CLOSING DATE	BUSINESS TYPE	# FULL TIME JOBS	# PART TIME JOBS	RENT/ MONTH	REASON FOR CLOSURE

Do any businesses need technical assistance?

NAME	DATE OF CONVERSATION	LANGUAGE SPOKEN	TYPE OF ASSIS-TANCE DESIRED	REFERRED TO	DATE OF REFERRAL	OUTCOME

Notes: Please log issues that were brought up during your conversations with merchants and residents

CONTACT (BUSINESS, NAME, PHONE NUMBER)	CONVERSATION TOPIC	NEXT STEPS	DATE

Physical Changes

NAME OF BUILDING OR BUSINESS	ADDRESS	TYPE*	NEW/REHAB*	# SQ.FT.	INITIATED BY:*	PRIVATE FUNDING SOURCE	$ AMOUNT	PUBLIC FUNDING SOURCE	$ AMOUNT	TOTAL COST
Completed:										
In Progress:										
TOTAL										

*Key

Type: Facades: **F** Streetscape: **S** Green Space: **G** Commercial Space: **CL** Community Space: **CS**
New/Rehab: Rehab: **R** New Construction: **NC**
Initiated by: Property Owner: **PO** Tenant: **T**

Additional Notes:

Measuring Impact

Appendix A: Hiring a Market Analysis Consultant

In addition to reviewing the public market data, you may find it necessary or helpful to hire a professional market analysis firm to generate more in-depth and specialized market reports about your district. While there are many firms capable of producing these reports, ideally you should choose a firm which has experience looking specifically at urban markets. Contact your local LISC office for advice on consultants in your area who have specific expertise in urban markets. As previously noted, public data often does not provide an accurate reflection of the buying power of dense urban neighborhoods. Additionally, appropriate retail clustering and supportable square footage in urban neighborhood commercial districts differs from suburban strip malls. Therefore, it is best to work with a consultant who has a clear understanding of the specific needs of your type of district as well as the potential pitfalls in relying on specific data sources with regards to dense urban markets.

As you begin to think about contracting for market analysis studies, it is important that you have a clear idea of the needs and potential uses of this information. Professionally prepared market analysis reports can be expensive and you don't want to spend your money paying for answers which will not be useful as you define your district's niche or attempt to implement your strategy.

Before preparing a Request for Proposals for Retail Market Analysis (**Tool A-1**), make sure that you have had contact with your local government, particularly the departments of planning, economic or workforce development, and/or neighborhood development to gather any relevant reports pertaining to your district. Review all of these reports and create a list of information and past recommendations which you may be able to use to help generate ideas for specific questions that a consultant can answer.

Types of consulting engagements include:

- Buying Power/Leakage
- Supportable Square Footage
- Supermarket
- Restaurant/Specialty Store
- Competitive Analysis

It is important that you hire a consultant at the correct time in the revitalization process so that the information in the reports is both accurate and usable. Because real estate and economic markets can change relatively quickly, market analysis reports are usually accurate for three years at most. For example if you are interested in a report which helps to determine the feasibility of attracting a supermarket or drugstore to a strategically-located vacant building in your district, it would be best to make contact with the property owners and determine at least a vague interest in selling the property before hiring a market researcher to conduct a competitive analysis.

TOOL A-1: REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR RETAIL MARKET STUDY

Introduction to the Program
[Describe target area, key stakeholders, and general revitalization program goals here]

Desired Tenant Categories
The stakeholder planning process has identified the following preliminary list of types of tenants as both desirable and appropriate for this district:

- Produce market
- Women's and Children's Clothing Stores
- Book Store
- Record Store
- Ice Cream Parlor
- Sit Down Family Restaurant

Key Questions
The purpose of this research project is to help Client to refine a strategy for business development for the target commercial district. While improved market information will be useful in a number of different ways, Client has identified the following key questions:

- To what extent are existing local businesses meeting local demand for retail goods and services?
- Is there sufficient unmet demand to support new businesses in any of the desired tenant categories?
- Are there other categories of retail or service businesses that might be more likely to succeed in the district given current market conditions?

Scope of Assistance
A consultant will be chosen to conduct a commercial market study to evaluate the retail potential for the target commercial district.

The components of the studies should include, but are not limited to the following items:

Background Review
- Consultant shall review existing research reports, community planning documents, and other written material provided by Client and conduct a walking tour of the target area jointly with Client and other key community stakeholders in order to become familiar with the current conditions and community goals for the commercial district.

Trade Area Identification
- Based on existing conditions and current plans for the district, identify appropriate geographic boundaries for the likely primary trade area for retail businesses located in the target district. The Trade Area should be defined in a way that takes existing physical, social and psychological boundaries into account.

Demand Analysis
- Provide estimates of total consumer spending for common retail categories with emphasis on the categories containing the desired tenant types listed above.
- Demand analysis shall incorporate potential spending by individuals employed within the trade area, as appropriate.

Competitive Supply Analysis
- Consultant shall analyze the neighborhood's competitive position in relation to neighboring commercial districts and shopping centers. Consultant will produce a map identifying competitive destinations and a narrative description of the competitive environment and the relative strengths of each competing destination.
- Consultant shall provide estimates of the total sales by retail category within the target district's identified trade area.

Leakage Analysis
- Consultant shall provide detailed estimates of retail sales leakage (comparing estimated spending with sales of area businesses) for each retail and service category.

Supportable Space Analysis
- For each of the desired tenant categories and any other retail or service category for which a significant market opportunity is evident, Consultant shall estimate the approximate number of additional square feet of retail space that could be supported assuming that the target district were to succeed in capturing a reasonable share of the identified retail leakage.

Recommendations:

Based on the above analysis, consultant shall provide client with recommendations for:

a. Types of retail tenants that would be most likely to succeed in the target area given the existing and expected market conditions.

b. Steps that community stakeholders and local government could take to improve the competitive position of the district and its marketability to prospective retailers of the recommended types.

c. Further research tasks that could help refine Clients business development strategy.

d. Future steps that the Client should take to update the analysis over time.

The scope of the assistance should also include regular meetings with the Client to ensure understanding of the study, and to help devise next steps.

Proposal Content

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should contain three parts:

1) Statement of Qualifications: This section of the proposal should describe the general capacity of the respondent to the types of assistance listed above and the specific assignment of individuals with the background and skills to carry them out. This section should contain the following:

a. *Firm Profile:* Describe the applicant firm and the range of services commonly provided. Provide an overview of the firm's general approach to retail market analysis and experience performing the types of tasks identified above under Scope of Assistance. Please highlight any experience working in underserved urban neighborhoods and/or with Community Based Organizations.

b. *Project Team:* Identify all individuals (including any subcontractors) who will be providing the technical assistance services, including a description of their proposed assignments and the skills they bring that are appropriate to the assignments. Please attach a resume for each team member.

c. *References:* Provide the name, address, and phone number for three references who can comment on the respondent's qualifications.

2) Scope of Work and Timeline: This section should describe the specific methodology to be used in producing market studies and provide a estimate of the time commitment required for these elements.

TIMELINE

3) Cost: In this section, the respondent should provide a cost breakdown for the proposed costs of the research project, with appropriate explanatory detail and justifying costs and calculations. If applicable, please submit hourly rates for each individual as well.

Selection Process

A committee of local stakeholders will evaluate the proposal based on the following criteria:

- Quality of Proposal content and consistency with the RFP
- Overall qualifications and references
- Experience with the target audience
- Cost of technical assistance

Responses

Please submit one original and two copies of your proposal by 5:00 pm on Friday, _____ to:

_____

_____

_____

Feel free to call _____ at (___) ____ - _____ with any questions concerning this RFP. Thank you for your interest.

Depending on local circumstances, existing research and budget, the following items might be included instead of, or in addition to, items included in the sample scope of work above.

TOOL A-2: ALTERNATIVE ELEMENTS FOR CONSULTANT SCOPE OF WORK

Demographic and Income Adjustment (Drill Down)
- Consultant shall obtain local data for the purpose of "reality checking" the existing public demographic and income data. Consultant shall provide revised estimates of population and spending power based on factors such as:
  - Census undercount of population
  - Undocumented income
  - Informal economy

Cluster Analysis
- Based on a business inventory supplied by Client, Consultant shall produce one or more maps highlighting existing business clusters or complementary uses within the existing business mix and identify potential development strategies that would leverage the strengths of the existing distribution of businesses.

Trend Analysis
- Consultant will obtain local data (as practical) to supplement public demographic and economic data, and analyze trends in building permit issuance, crime, real estate values and volume, commercial rental rates, sales tax, demographics and income and provide a general analysis of current market and investment trends highlighting factors that would favorably influence the retail market environment.

Retailer Needs Analysis
- Based on the quantitative analysis, Consultant and Client shall agree on the three most promising tenant categories, and consultant shall research published requirements and conduct brief interviews with retailers in order to provide an outline of likely physical, demographic and economic requirements for tenants in each of the three chosen categories, including:
  - Store square footage requirements (range)
  - Parking requirements
  - Traffic/foot traffic requirements
  - Demographic/economic requirements
    - Population/household density
    - Income level (median income/concentrated buying power)
    - Age composition
    - Ownership rate
    - Etc.

Opportunity Site Analysis
- Consultant shall evaluate a short list of key real estate development opportunity sites provided by Client and identify sites that could potentially be appropriate for the target business types. For each of the most promising sites, Consultant shall compile a brief Site Assessment which provides basic information about the size, location, physical features, existing buildings, etc. on the site and recommendations for the most appropriate retail configurations for reuse of the site.

Marketing Material
- In additional to the final written report, Consultant shall prepare a graphically compelling presentation highlighting findings and recommendations suitable for presentation to local elected officials, business leaders, real estate industry leaders and potential tenants. Consultant will participate in one presentation at a meeting or event coordinated by Client and will provide material that Client can use to present the findings at subsequent meetings.

Community Training
- Consultant shall design and deliver a one to two hour training workshop to help community stakeholders understand the methodology and conclusions of the analysis.

Appendix B: Resources

GENERAL PLANNING AND COMMERCIAL

REVITALIZATION RESOURCES

🤝 **American Planning Association**
www.planning.org

The American Planning Association is the national organization for urban planning professionals. The website provides research, news, conference and workshop information, and a consultant directory. Some sections of the site require paid membership, but there are substantial resources available to the general public.

🤝 **CEOS for Cities**
www.ceosforcities.org

CEOS for Cities is a national network of mayors, corporate CEOs, university presidents, foundation officials and business and civic leaders who work together to help urban areas make the most of their assets. The website provides access to CEO blogs and research articles on such topics as branding cities, specific needs of new immigrant neighborhoods, and urban development financing mechanisms. It also provides access to past episodes of SMART CITY RADIO, a weekly, hour-long public radio talk show that takes an in-depth look at urban life, the people, places, ideas and trends shaping cities.

🤝 **National Charrette Institute (NCI)**
www.charretteinstitute.org

NCI is a nonprofit educational institution which helps teach professionals and community leaders about the process of creating collaborative community plans which are both feasible and inspiring. Their website provides access to tools, research, and publications which may be valuable in the commercial revitalization planning process.

✍ **Community and Economic Development Toolbox**
www.cdtoolbox.net

The Community and Economic Development Toolbox provides a strong set of tools related to such issues as community planning, main street revitalization, and economic development. The tools were originally designed for rural communities in the northeast, but cover basic principles and techniques of community planning and economic development which are applicable in urban districts. This web site is a joint collaboration between Cornell University and Penn State University.

📖 *Community Economic Development Handbook: Strategies and Tools to Revitalize Your Neighborhood*

Written by Mihailo Temali. Published by Amherst H. Wider Foundation, 2002.

This book reviews lessons and strategies for effective community economic development strategies. Chapter 4 specifically addresses commercial revitalization and is supported by helpful worksheets. The book also addresses such topics as organizational development, micro-enterprise, and job development. *This publication is not available for download online.*

✍ **Culture Shapes Community**
www.cultureshapescommunity.org

Culture Shapes Community explores the importance of arts and culture in shaping communities. One of the major initiatives is "Shifting Sands—Art, Culture, and Neighborhood Change" based on the premise that neighborhood-based arts and cultural organizations are unique stakeholders in poor neighborhoods experiencing economic and demographic shifts. The website provides access to free downloads of publications such as *Mobilizing Arts and Cultural Resources for Community Development* and *Urban Redevelopment and the Role of Arts & Culture*.

✍ **Cyburbia**
www.cyburbia.org

Cyburbia is a web community for planners. It provides helpful user forums, news, and research on urban planning topics.

Downtown Research and Development Center
www.downtowndevelopment.com

The Downtown Research & Development Center provides a forum for exchanging news, information and ideas on how to develop and rebuild urban commercial centers. This company sells books and newsletters addressing issues of commercial development. Selected publications of interest include *Main Street Renewal*, *Business Improvement Districts*, and *The Dimensions of Parking*. The website also provides access to related free articles, industry links, and events calendars.

The Economics of Historic Preservation
www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=125687

Written by Randall Mason. The Brookings Institution, 2005.

This academic research article reviews the value of historic preservation and the methods used to assess the value of preservation.

In the Face of Gentrification: Case Studies of Local Efforts to Mitigate Displacement
www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=155751

Written by Diane Levy, Jennifer Comey, Sandra Padilla. Urban Institute. 2006.

This research article reviews the challenges associated with balancing community revitalization without increasing the effect of gentrification and displacement on low income households. It presents strategies from case studies around the country of communities that have taken innovative approaches to ensure that low and moderate income residents can remain in revitalized communities.

International Downtown Association
www.ida-downtown.org

The International Downtown Association is a network of leaders working for vital and livable urban centers. It provides information on events, trends, and research related to downtown and urban district development. The bookstore has an extensive list of worthwhile publications available for purchase.

KnowledgePlex
www.knowledgeplex.org

KnowledgePlex is an information portal for affordable housing and community development practitioners. It provides free access to an impressive array of research publications, discussion forums, calendars of practitioner events, and up-to-date news on relevant topics.

Linking Land Use and Transportation
www.fhwa.dot.gov/planning/ppasg.htm

Developed by the Federal Highway Administration, this website provides tools for planning and implementing projects related to both transportation and land use. Some of the case studies address commercial corridors. The site also provides information on potential planning grant sources.

Main Street Renewal: a Handbook for Citizens and Public Officials

Edited by Roger Kemp. Published by McFarland and Company, Jefferson, NC. 2000.

This book is a compilation of the work of over 50 authors with direct experience with Main Street revitalization programs. While not all of the examples and case studies are drawn from urban areas, the work addresses critical issues such as business retention strategies, streetscape improvement projects, and assessing development potential.

This publication is not available for download online.

National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC)
www.ncrc.org

NCRC is a membership organization of community leaders and organizations working to increase the flow of private capital into traditionally underserved communities. NCRC provides tools to help build community capital and individual net worth. The website provides access to useful research and publications, tools for small business development, and a calendar of events and workshops on related topics.

National Trust for Historic Preservation– National Main Street Center
www.mainstreet.org

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has been developing and promoting its signature, comprehensive approach to commercial revitalization since the 1970's.

Its website provides detailed information about their approach, program, services offered, training, and an extensive collection of resources and tools for Main Street revitalization. Some of sections of the website are available only to paying members of their network.

Web Resources   Organization   Publication

NeighborWorks America
www.nw.org

NeighborWorks is a national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts. Research, case studies, and strategies, addressing all aspects of community revitalization and community economic development in particular, are available on the website.

The Orton Family Foundation
www.orton.org

The Orton Family Foundation works with non-profit organizations and planning agencies to help communities make smart land use decisions. The website contains a database of tools to promote effective community planning. It also contains case studies and a library of useful documents.

Planetizen
www.planetizen.com

This network for planning and development professionals provides access to industry research, newsletters, forums, and a consultant directory. Some resources are only available to members, but membership is free.

PolicyLink
ww.policylink.org

Policy Link is a national nonprofit research, communication, capacity building, and advocacy organization addressing issues of economic and social equity. Their resources and publications address many pertinent topics such as equitable development, community organizing, and public investment.

Responsible Hospitality Institute (RHI)
www.rhiweb.org

RHI is a clearinghouse and facilitator of networks to create more safe and vibrant places to socialize. Their Resource Center provides an up-to-date source of materials and resources related to dining and entertainment districts.

Revitalizing Commerce for American Cities: A Practitioner's Guide to Urban Main Street Programs
www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=49663

Written by Karl F. Seidman. Published by the Fannie Mae Foundation. 2004.

This book provides a comprehensive overview of urban Main Street programs. It provides in-depth case studies of four commercial revitalization programs across the country illustrating the tactics and techniques which have proven particularly effective in urban Main Street districts.

Smart Growth America
www.smartgrowthamerica.com

Smart Growth America is a nationwide coalition that works to support "citizen-driven planning that coordinates development, transportation, revitalization of older areas, and preservation of open space and the environment." The website offers general information on each of these issues, as well as updates on federal legislative activity on issues related to smart growth, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

Turning Around Downtown: Twelve Steps to Revitalization
www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=79501

Written by Christopher Leinberger. The Brookings Institution, 2005.

This article presents strategies for creating "walkable urbanity." It reviews approaches to creating the right mix of retail, maintaining rents and sales prices that foster new commercial development, and providing a critical mass of experiences and opportunities to keep consumers in the district.

University of Wisconsin Center for Community Economic Development
www.uwex.edu/ces/cced/

The Center for Community Economic Development has developed many tools and resources to assist community organizations with economic revitalization. The Downtown and Business District Market Analysis guide is particularly useful. The site also provides links to many free sources of national demographic and economic data. The archive of their newsletter "Let's Talk Business" provides access to many useful short articles on retail trends and business strategies.

✋ Urban Land Institute (ULI)
www.uli.org

ULI is a research and educational organization for real estate professionals. ULI is involved in a variety of initiatives focused on urban redevelopment issues and partnerships with community development organizations through their Urban Revitalization Programs. This website provides access to forums, publications and events which address inner cities' unique markets and the barriers to development and redevelopment. Many of these projects were undertaken in partnership with LISC.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RETAIL

✋ International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
www.icsc.org

ICSC is the trade association of the shopping center industry. It provides access to publications, directories, and statistical data related to retail trends. Much of the site requires paid membership, but some sections are accessible to all users.

✋ International Economic Development Council (IEDC)
www.iedconline.org

IEDC is a membership organization for economic development professionals. Their Resource Center contains a consultant database, business site selection data standards, and an annotated list of links to small business assistance resources. The site also includes the Economic Developer's Reference Guide, which provides summary and trend information on a number of economic development topics relevant to urban neighborhood districts.

⌕ Retail Tenant Directory
www.retailtenants.com

The Retail Tenant Directory is a comprehensive source for information on retailer site and location preferences which may be purchased as a book or database on CD-ROM from this website. A sample directory is available for free download.

⌕ Retail Traffic
www.retailtrafficmag.com

Retail Traffic is an online magazine which reports on retail real estate and retailing trends.

⌕ Tenant Search
www.tenantsearch.com

Tenant Search is an online database of retailer site and location preferences. Free access is provided to a demonstration database with a limited number of entries.

DATA SOURCES AND MAPPING

⌕ American Factfinder
www.factfinder.census.gov

Factfinder provides access to United States Census Bureau Data Sets including the 1990 and 2000 Census.

⌕ CommunityWalk
www.communitywalk.com

CommunityWalk is a free site that allows you to make specific maps of your district based on GoogleMaps images. The simple interface allows the user to categorize addresses by business type and/or search for locations by name or address. This site is an easy way to create cluster maps or map business locations.

⌕ Consumer Expenditure Survey
www.bls.gov/cex

The Consumer Expenditure Survey provides consumer data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

⌕ DataPlace
www.dataplace.org

DataPlace, a product of KnowledgePlex, is an extensive and simple-to-use database of housing and demographic data. In addition to assembling a variety of data from multiple sources, DataPlace provides cutting-edge tools that let you display information using charts, profiles, and even satellite-rendered images and maps. The site also assists you with analyzing, interpreting, and applying the information.

⌕ North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)
www.census.gov/epcd/www/naics.html

This is an economic dataset which classifies industries by category and specific type, NAICS codes.

⌕ **Web Resources**   ✋ **Organization**   ☐ **Publication**

Purchasing Power and Workforce Density Data Home Page
www.uwm.edu/Dept/ETI/PurchasingPower/purchasing.htm

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Employment and Training Institute provides comparison data on purchasing power, business activity, and workforce density for all census tracts, residential ZIP codes, and the 100 largest metro areas in the U.S.

United States Census Bureau Maps and Cartographic Resources
www.census.gov/geo/www/maps/

This site, operated by the Census Bureau, provides access to free maps and GIS files in a diverse array of geographic locations.

MARKET RESEARCH

Claritas
www.claritas.com

Claritas is a private company that sells downloadable demographic and market segmentation reports. These reports provide a quick snapshot of a neighborhood economy.

ESRI
www.esri.com/software/bao

ESRI's Business Analyst Online sells prepackaged downloadable market data reports on demographics, consumer spending, and businesses specific to your trade area.

Exposing Urban Legends: The Real Purchasing Power of Central City Neighborhoods
www.brookings.edu/es/urban/pawasaratexsum.htm

Written by John Pawasarat and Lois M. Quinn. The Brookings Institution, 2001.

This research article explains how researchers in Milwaukee created an alternative to private marketing data using a variety of local and state sources. It offers ideas on how to use similar data to create realistic economic profiles for your district.

Initiative for a Competitive Inner City
www.icic.org

The Initiative for a Competitive Inner City is a national non-profit organization that works to help inner cities meet their economic potential. The website has research articles and resources addressing the economic potential of dense inner city neighborhoods.

The Market Potential of Inner-City Neighborhoods: Filling The Information Gap
www.knowledgeplex.org/showdoc.html?id=1047

Written by Robert Weissbourd, Christopher Berry. Brookings Institution, 1999.

This research article reviews how popular data sources, particularly federal data sources, fail to accurately capture and convey the market potential in inner cities. It also suggests ways for business leaders and governments to improve the data and market reports.

MetroEdge
www.lisc.org/section/areas/sec1/metroedge

LISC's MetroEdge is a market research firm which provides market reports which combine information from traditional data sets with on-the-ground research. Additionally, Metro Edge staff has specific experience working in urban neighborhood markets and identifying emerging market trends.

Retail Trade Area Analysis: Concepts and New Approaches
www.directionsmag.com/features.php?feature_id=5

This article from Directions Magazine presents multiple approaches to defining a retail trade area and the benefits and downsides of each.

Social Compact
www.socialcompact.org

Social Compact is a coalition of business leaders from across the country who are promoting business investment in lower-income communities for the benefit of current residents. They developed a "DrillDown" approach to retail market analysis that combines federal data with on-the-ground sources to construct a more accurate picture of local spending power. Social Compact provides consulting and training throughout the country.

🔲 The 2000 Census Undercount in Los Angeles County
repositories.cdlib.org/lewis/wps/42/
Written by Paul M. Ong, Doug Houston. University of California at Los Angeles, 2002.

This working paper presents the analysis of the Census undercount with specific reference to the high undercount rates in poor, predominantly minority neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods with a large number of children.

🔲 Using Information Resources to Enhance Urban Markets
www.brook.edu/metro/umi/pubs/20050314_inforesource.htm
Written by Robert Weissbourd, Riccardo Bodini. The Brookings Institution, 2005.

This research paper provides lessons for practitioners who seek to use data resources to effectively promote community economic development in urban markets.

SURVEYS

📡 GreenBook
www.greenbook.org
GreenBook provides an extensive database of firms which provide market research services internationally.

📡 StatPac Inc
www.statpac.com/surveys
StatPac provides a free downloadable tutorial on how to effectively write, design, and analyze surveys.

📡 Survey Monkey
www.surveymonkey.com
Simple, free software for creating online surveys.

CRIME AND SAFETY

🤝 Community Safety Initiative (CSI)
www.lisc.org/section/areas/sec1/safety
LISC's Community Safety Initiative (CSI) helps establish partnerships among law enforcement, residents, business owners and members of other neighborhood institutions. CSI provides case studies and partnership profiles of programs across the country that have effectively addressed crime and safety issues in their communities.

🔲 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
Written by Tim Crowe. Published by Butterworth - Heinman, 2000.

This book provides an overview of CPTED principles as well as practical advice for those who are interested in applying the idea to the built environment. This publication is not available for download online.

🔲 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design.
Written by C. Ray Jeffery. Published by Sage Publications, 1977.

This book was written by the criminologist who coined the phrase Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. This early work on the subject addresses many facets of Crime prevention including the built environment and psychology as they affect the instance of crime. This publication is not available for download online.

📡 CPTED Watch
www.cpted-watch.com
This website provides basic information on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) as well as areas devoted specifically to its application to retail and parking areas.

📡 Crime Reduction Toolkits
www.crimereduction.gov.uk/toolkits/index.htm
This website provides ideas and activities for deterring criminal activity. The tools are organized by type of crime and location.

📡 **Web Resources** 🤝 **Organization** 🔲 **Publication**

**Weed & Seed: Community
Capacity Development Office**
www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ccdo/ws/welcome.html
A strategy and grant program developed by the U.S.
Department of Justice, Weed & Seed works to reduce
crime and increase the provision of needed social serv-
ices in designated high crime neighborhoods across the
country. This website provides information on how to
qualify for Weed & Seed grants, program ideas, and
strategic planning advice.

DESIGN AND STREETSCAPE

Growing with Green:
Business Districts and the Urban Forest
**www.cfr.washington.edu/research.envmind/CityBiz/
BizQual-FS2.pdf**
This short research article from the University of
Washington explores both the benefits and the costs
associated with introducing and maintaining trees in
commercial districts.

**National Transportation
Enhancements Clearinghouse**
www.enhancements.org
This website provides project ideas for streetscape
upgrades as well as a directory of federal funding
sources. The site also provides access to interesting
research including Communities Benefit!, a report on
the economic and social benefits of transportation
enhancements.

Project for Public Spaces (PPS)
www.pps.org
PPS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating
and sustaining public places that build communities.
Their site includes articles, images, and useful links
addressing placemaking and community building. They
organize trainings and write popular publications on
the topic.

**Technical Preservation
Services Preservation Briefs**
www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm
Preservation Briefs were developed by the National
Park Service over the span of 40 years. They provide
detailed guidance on specific topics related to preserva-
tion of historic structures.

Trust for Public Land (TPL)
ww.tpl.org
TPL is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organi-
zation that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks,
community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and
other natural places. If you are interested to conserving
land in your district for a park, then TPL may be able
to provide ideas, strategies, and/or resources to further
your goals.

BRANDING AND MARKETING

Smart Solutions Group
**www.smartsolutionsgroup.net/Newsletter/
january2004.htm**
A newsletter article on the value of branding which
specifically address the assets of branding locations
for economic development.

Taproot Foundation
www.taprootfoundation.org
The Taproot Foundation provides pro bono consulting
services to non-profit organizations on a competitive
basis. The non-profit foundation brings together teams
of professionals who are willing to volunteer their time
to provide professional quality products and services
on issues including marketing and branding to local
non profit organizations.

What Main Street Can Learn from the Mall
www.theatlantic.com/issues/95nov/malls/malls.htm
Written by Steve Lagerfeld. Published in Atlantic
Monthly, November, 1995.

This article provides advice from a landscape architect
and a retail specialist on practical lessons that retail
districts can learn from malls on the psychology of
retail commerce.

*Online version is only available to current Atlantic
Monthly subscribers.*

FUNDRAISING

🕮 **Business Improvement Districts: A Practical Tool for the Revitalization of Downtown Neighborhoods**
www.planning.unc.edu/courses/261/actman/bidweb1.html
This site, compiled by the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of North Carolina, provides information about the formation and value of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

🕮 **Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance**
www.cfda.gov
This is government source of comprehensive information on federal funding sources. It also provides useful resources such as a step-by-step guide to developing grant proposals.

🕮 **The Foundation Center**
www.foundationcenter.org
The Foundation Center provides numerous resources related to project and program fundraising. In addition to educational guides on fundraising, it provides free access to a database of foundations. Subscribers have access to an online database of over 80,000 grantmakers.

🕮 **Grants.gov**
www.grants.gov
Grants.gov is a one-stop shop for finding, learning about, and applying for federal grants. It offers applications for more than $400 billion in grants each year - every grant announced by the 26 federal grant-making agencies. The database is searchable by program area, agency, RFP date, and keyword.

PROFILED LOCAL COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION PROGRAMS

East Side Neighborhood Development Co.; Payne Arcade Comm. District, St. Paul, MN
www.esndc.org

East 10th Street Civic Association: 10 East Main Street, Indianapolis, IN
www.teneast.org

ENCoRe: Excelsior District, San Francisco, CA
www.eagsf.org

Fountain Square Commercial District, Indianapolis, IN
www.discoverfountainsquare.com

Girard Coalition: Girard Avenue, Philadelphia, PA
ww.girardcoalition.org

Northeast Community Development Corporation, Minneapolis, MN
www.necdc.org

Restore Buckeye Initiative, Cleveland, OH
www.badoc.org/RestoreBuckeye.html

CITY WIDE COMMERCIAL REVITALIZATION INITIATIVES

City of Boston Main Streets
www.cityofboston.gov/mainstreets/

FOCUS - Indianapolis Urban Economic Development
imaps.indygov.org/focus

Indianapolis Cultural Districts Program
www.discoverculturaldistricts.com

Re$tore Cleveland Initiative
www.cndc2.org/retail_commercial.htm#restore

San Francisco Neighborhood Marketplace Initiative
www.bayarealisc.org

🕮 **Web Resources** 🤝 **Organization** 📄 **Publication**

References

[i]Southeast Community Plan Update, Final Report. April 2006.

[ii]From *Leland/Bayshore Commercial District Revitalization*.

[iii]Vision statement available at: www.discoverfountainsquare.org. This vision statement was made possible, in part, through support from The Cultural Districts Program, managed by Indianapolis Downtown, Inc. Fountain Square is one of Indianapolis' six cultural districts. To learn more see www.discoverculturaldistricts.com.

[iv]Ong, Paul M. and Houston, Doug. *The 2000 Census Undercount in Los Angles County*. University of California at Los Angeles, December 2002.

[v]Weissbourd, Robert. *The Market Potential of Inner-City Neighborhoods: Filling the Information Gap,* Brookings Institution, 1999.

[vi]Summary developed by Strategic Economics for Bay Area LISC.

[vii]*Retail Tenant Directory*. TradeDimensions International, Inc. Wilton, CT. 2005. Starbucks p. 846-7, Pizza Hut p.706, Target, p; 876, Safeway, p. 874.

[viii]http://www.dunkin-baskin-togos.com/html/real_estate.asp. Last visited 6/23/06.

[ix]David H. Gleason Associates, Architects *Report on Phase I of the Urban Design Study, Fruitvale Neighborhood Business District*. Prepared for the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, Oakland, CA. 1998. p. 8.

[x]Ibid.

[xi]Ibid.

[xii]Adapted from *Branding News*, August 2004. Published by the East Side Neighborhood Development Corporation and written by Anne Briseno.

Acknowledgements

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