CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWNS: SHARED ATTRIBUTES OF OUTSTANDING SMALL & MID-SIZED DOWNTOWNS

Gary Ferguson
Executive Director
Ithaca Downtown Partnership

September 2005

Research findings conducted for the
Cornell University Civic Fellows Programs

Why do some downtowns succeed while others struggle? What characteristics or attributes are shared by outstanding downtowns? What lessons for other cities can be gleamed from communities that have perceived excellent downtowns? Are there certain attributes that must be present for downtowns to be seen as successful?

The goal of this research is to assess attributes of successful downtowns in small and mid-sized cities. These are municipalities ranging in population from 25,000 to 250,000. Typically, these cities have a single downtown district. Larger cities often have multiple downtown centers and districts that complicate cross comparisons with smaller cities.

The cities selected for study all have regional and national reputations for outstanding downtowns. Rather than select cities based on specific criteria, cities were chosen that are known in the downtown revitalization community as being successful and well regarded communities. Most, but not all, have some affiliation with institutions of higher education. At the outset, the only thing these cities appeared to share was a reputation for strong and vibrant downtowns. It is the intent of this research to determine if there are other factors or attributes shared by so called "great downtowns".

Eleven cities were selected for inclusion in the study. These were:

- State College, PA
- Burlington, VT
- Providence, RI
- Northampton, MA
- Portland, ME
- Madison, WI
- Ann Arbor, MI
- Boulder, CO
- Charlottesville, VA
- Chapel Hill, NC
- Wooster, OH

Site visits were conducted in each sample community between fall 2004 and summer 2005. For each city in-person interviews were held with at least two people: the head of the downtown organization and a representative from city government familiar with downtown affairs. Walking tours of downtown and driving tours of the larger community were also part of each site visit. Based on the site visit, a written summary of each downtown was prepared.

Other Efforts to Identify Attributes Needed for Successful Downtown Revitalization

There have been other attempts to identify attributes for successful downtown revitalization. Some have been undertaken by practitioners, others by academic researchers.

In 1999, Jennifer Moulton wrote an article for the Brookings Institution entitled "Ten Steps to a Living Downtown". In her effort to prescribe critical elements needed for successful downtowns, Moulton offers two prerequisites for any downtown desiring to be competitive with other areas: "the physical environment must be of a character and quality that people will want to live there" and there must be an investment motive for downtown home ownership. Assuming these thresholds have been achieved, she offers the following list of elements needed for success:

1. All parties should agree that housing is a downtown priority;
2. Downtown must be legible, that is it should be a well-defined or branded place;
3. Downtown must be accessible, with physical infrastructure maintained and beautification undertaken;
4. Downtown must have new and improved regional amenities; traffic generators that will attract users from throughout the region;
5. Downtowns must be clean and safe;
6. Downtown must preserve and reuse old buildings;
7. Downtown regulations must be streamlined and be supportive of residential growth;
8. City resources should be devoted to housing. Incentives should be available to promote housing;
9. The edge of downtown should be surrounded by viable neighborhoods;
10. Downtown is never done; management continues on a daily basis.

In 2001, St. Cloud State University professor Kent Robertson wrote a similar article entitled "Downtown Development Principles for Small Cities" where he identified eight principles for successful downtown development. Robertson's eight principles were:

1. There needs to be a strong private/public partnership.
2. A vision/strategic plan for downtown needs to be developed.
3. Downtown should be multi-functional, embracing many different uses.
4. Downtowns must take advantage of their own particular heritage.
5. Downtowns should be linked to the city waterfront, wherever possible.
6. Downtowns should be pedestrian friendly and walkable.
7. Downtowns should have established design guidelines.
8. The importance of parking should not be overstated.

In the monograph "The Downtowns of the Future: Opportunities for Regional Stewards" (2001), authors Mary Jo Waits, Doug Henton and Chi Nguyen borrow from Carnegie Mellon professor Richard Florida's creative economy work to identify the characteristic of a downtown in the 1990's-2010's era. The creative downtown of the 21st century should be characterized by:

- Cultural diversity;
- Night life;
- Networking opportunities;
- Technology infrastructure (at that time fiber optics);
- Mixed-use development;
- Compactness; and
- Density.

In a recent study conducted by ERA Associates for Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the consulting firm studied six comparable college communities and found that the subject communities relied on the following strategies and tools for successful downtown revitalization:

- Downtown development density, encouraged by zoning amendments;
- Modest infrastructure upgrades, especially pertaining to street lighting;
- Parking improvements, including new facilities; and
- Mixed-use development, including upper story residential.

A number of communities undertake studies to assist them with downtown revitalization. In the case of Tulsa, Oklahoma, the community convened an Urban Models Task Force to examine best practices and prepare a report that provided advice and prescriptions to the Tulsa community on how to best achieve downtown revitalization. The Task Force reviewed literature and other cities concluded there were eight principles for creating a viable downtown:

1. Take a broad, regional approach on metropolitan development;
2. City planning should be long-range and comprehensive and encompass needed policies and financial incentives to encourage people to live, work and play downtown;
3. Cultivate a downtown atmosphere as a place for a diversity of uses and activities and residential neighbors;
4. Encourage development that contributes to a distinctive and attractive sense of place;
5. Support downtown development with a transportation network that maximizes access and mobility and reduces dependence on the automobile;
6. Support mixed land use and density in the downtown area;
7. Build on the unique assets of the downtown;
8. Establish guidelines for quality design.

There is no shortage of prescriptive lists prepared by academics and practitioners designed to assist policy makers appreciate what steps must be taken to build a better downtown. However, what about downtowns that are already perceived to be successful? What shared attributes do these communities possess?

Finding #1: No Single Organizational Model Exists

- *Contrary to expectations, there is no single way cities with great downtowns deliver their downtown services.*
- *Instead, these cities have found varying ways to provide needed services.*
- *Each model reflects the institutional strengths present in the community.*

It might be expected that the cities with great downtowns would share similar downtown organization models. Based on an examination of the eleven case study cities, this does not appear to be the case. Contrary to expectations, there is no single way communities deliver their downtown services.

Traditional comprehensive downtown programs operated by membership organizations or BIDs exist in less than half of the sample cities. In a comprehensive program, the downtown organization assumes the lead role in providing a broad array of downtown services, ranging from economic development to management of the downtown environment to marketing and special events. This was the model found in State College, Boulder, Wooster and Portland.

In a majority of the case cities, a traditional comprehensive downtown program was not in evidence. In Burlington, the Church Street Marketplace Commission is a municipal department of City government. In Providence, the Providence Foundation has assumed the lead role in advocating and facilitating for downtown revitalization. In Northampton, the Chamber of Commerce has adopted a downtown agenda and serves as the organization charged with downtown marketing, events and advocacy. Chapel Hill created a three party Local Development Corporation that brings together Town, University of North Carolina and downtown business interests to advance the downtown agenda. In Ann Arbor, the lead role in downtown affairs is assumed by a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) which focuses on economic development issues. In Charlottesville, a weak merchant organization is attempting to strengthen itself after years of attempting to operate under various organizational formats.

The existence of such a variety of organizational models among the "great downtown" communities suggests that the type of downtown organization is less important than the overall ability of the community to deliver needed services. While organization models varied considerably, nearly all of the sample communities were able to obtain similar broad arrays of downtown services. These services typically include the following:

- District Marketing
- Retail Promotion
- Special Event Planning
- Downtown Advocacy
- Downtown Landscaping and Beautification
- Environmental Management (litter, graffiti)
- Safety and Security
- Business Attraction, Retention & Expansion
- Business Assistance
- Project Planning and Facilitation
- Strategic Planning

The difference was who actually provided the service.

Among the sample communities, district marketing, retail promotions, special events, and project facilitation were most frequently delivered by the downtown organization. In the fifty plus year history of downtown organizations, these were the traditional areas of interest and expertise of downtown organizations. It is not surprising they represent the most popular type of downtown organization activity. Landscaping, clean/maintenance activities, safety, and business recruitment represent the activities least likely to be provided by the downtown programs

The organization model in use helped define the activities offered by the primary downtown organization. The Chamber in Northampton was best prepared to offer marketing and promotional services, but not business recruitment and economic development activities. Conversely, the Ann Arbor DDA was well organized to deliver economic development and parking services, but unable to itself deliver marketing and event activities. In Boulder, the downtown BID provided supplemental ambassador services, but deferred to the City Parks Department for landscaping. In Burlington, the downtown program was a City Department and was responsible for landscaping.

At a minimum, there were at least two providers of downtown services in every community. In State College, the responsibility for service provision was split between the downtown BID and the City. In most of the sample communities, there were three to five multiple service providers. Ann Arbor, for example, had City departments, the DDA and several small merchant associations all involved in the service delivery chain.

Regardless of who provided the service, a key finding was that almost without exception, basic downtown services were being provided, just by different entities.

Finding #2:	These downtowns tended to have multiple traffic generators that supplemented the presence of a larger institution(s), all within short walking distance.

- *Many, but not all of these traffic generators were purposely strategically located.*
- *Serendipity had as much to do with some location decisions as careful planning.*

Most of the sample communities have some university or college presence. The proximity of these campuses to downtown varies greatly. In cities like State College, Chapel Hill, Ann Arbor and Madison, the campuses abut downtown or are actually part of the downtown geography. In cities such as Providence, Wooster, Burlington, Charlottesville, and Boulder, the university presence is anywhere from a half mile to two miles away from central downtown.

Universities can provide incredible spin off impacts on downtowns. Besides hosting thousands of undergraduate and graduate students, they are also major employers. Charlottesville, whose university is a mile and a half away from downtown, reported that downtown received far more patronage benefit from faculty and staff than students. But the impact of higher education goes beyond students and staff. Campuses are repositories for museums, performance halls, sports venues and other attractions that regularly draw thousands of visitors. Some downtowns are well positioned to capture these occasional visitors. State College, Madison, and Ann Arbor report large influxes of patrons into downtown following football and basketball events. Chapel Hill was working with the University of North Carolina on an Art Quad project that would abut the downtown and provide a steady year round supply of visitors to the central core of the town.

While universities provided tremendous benefits to their host cities, they also can and do act as competitors. Recognizing the need and the opportunity to service the many students, staff and guests that patronize campuses, universities often choose to operate their own food service venues, their own retail stores and in some instances their own hotels. State College respondents noted that Penn State has recently opened a major food service operation that made a noticeable difference in customer flow from campus into downtown establishments. Yet, not all the interventions by the universities proved to be negative to the host downtowns. Chapel Hill's largest and most prestigious hotel/conference center is a university owned facility, located in the downtown district. The University of Wisconsin chose to locate its large campus bookstore on the downtown transit mall. The bookstore provides a key anchor on the university end of the mall.

The impact of higher education on these cities and their downtown cannot be overstated. Without the presence of the campuses, the host cities and their downtowns would be substantially different economic entities. However, the impact of the institutions varied more than expected. In Charlottesville, the impact of the University of Virginia on downtown is considered modest. In Boulder, the impact of the University of Colorado, located 5-10 blocks away, is more significant. In Ann Arbor, State College, and Madison, the downtown and the campuses are virtually seamless, with downtowns and campuses abutting and blending into each other. In Wooster and Northampton, the impacts of these smaller college campuses are considered modest. Northampton reported that they receive more impact from the faculty and staff from other colleges in the Pioneer Valley (i.e. the University of Massachusetts) than from adjacent Smith College. Hence, while the impact of a university is significant, the magnitude of its impact can and does vary widely.

Beside higher education, the eleven "great downtown" communities share an expansive list of attractions and amenities that serve as pedestrian traffic generators. The average number of major traffic generators in each of the downtowns is seventeen (17). All are within walking distance of each other, creating tight and effective traffic generating zones. When combined with the universities, these attractions are crucial drivers of patron traffic for downtown and helped to explain the economic vibrancy of each downtown.

Cities and regions often make conscious decisions about where to locate their civic amenities. Theaters, museums, sports venues, public markets, and civic buildings of all sorts can be located in many different locations throughout the community. Concentrating and clustering them in downtown reflects the commitment and zeal of a community to support and build its downtown. In State College, a black box theater organized and run by Penn State selected a key downtown location. In Portland, the major public art museum chose a vacant department store for its expansion. In Charlottesville, the Children's Museum chose to open on the pedestrian mall. In Providence, their beloved Trinity Rep Theater located downtown and recently chose to further expand into another nearby building. In Madison, the Overture Center performing arts complex was built on and adjacent to the downtown transit mall. Such decisions by public and/or nonprofit organizations help create the traffic to support and sustain a downtown retail and restaurant economy. The cities represented in this sample all excelled at clustering traffic generators in their downtowns.

Some of the key traffic generators are private. In Charlottesville, a first run movie theater complex and a private ice rink were located on the pedestrian mall and served as crucial catalysts for downtown growth. In Wooster, the Everything Rubbermaid outlet store was located near the public square and serves as an important traffic anchor for the downtown. Until just recently, the Rubbermaid Corporation had been headquartered in Wooster. In Burlington and Providence, in-town regional shopping malls were located in the heart of downtown. Decisions by private investors to locate facilities in downtown are often encouraged by the public sector. Decisions to locate all the above facilities involved public sector collaboration and support.

Some respondents reported that much of the growth of key traffic generators appeared to be serendipitous and not planned. While there may have been no overt planning for such projects, it is likely that the environment created for downtown development and the community affection for downtown are key motivating factors to cause projects to site downtown.

Finding #3: These great downtowns are beloved by their citizenry.

- *They have regional significance.*
- *There is strong affection for the downtown.*
- *There is also controversy and debate, but always strong affection*

Community leaders in the eleven sample cities recognize and appreciate the value and significance of downtown to their communities. Civic leaders routinely reported that their communities harbor strong and intense affections for their downtowns. Words such as “beloved” and “cherished “are used to describe public feelings for their center cities. This strong affection for downtowns among the sample communities manifests itself in several different forms.

In nearly all of the sample cities, the downtown area appears to have regional significance. These downtowns regularly drew traffic from beyond their immediate neighborhoods. In Portland, residents from throughout southern Maine regarded the Old Port District as their entertainment center. In Boulder, people from the County and surrounding Front Range communities routinely patronized the many restaurants that clustered in the central core. Northampton reported drawing faculty and students from the other universities in the Pioneer Valley to their shops, restaurants, and galleries. Only downtown Chapel Hill, among the eleven sample cities, struggled to achieve regional significance. In Chapel Hill, the proliferation of rampant regional growth has kept downtown a relatively modest destination. Town planners, recognizing the need to capitalize on and attract some of that regional growth, have planned ambitious in-fill projects designed to add more critical mass to their downtown.

Downtown appears to be an integral part of community life in Boulder, Ann Arbor, Madison, Wooster, Northampton, Burlington, Charlottesville, and State College. Downtown Wooster serves as the venue of choice for many of the community’s public events and activities. No tourist visit to Ann Arbor, Boulder, Burlington or Madison would be considered complete without a visit to downtown.

In Providence, Portland, and Chapel Hill the scope of the surrounding metropolitan area provides competing activity centers that might diminish the appeal of the downtown as a central gathering place. In these communities, regional development may affect public perceptions of downtown as the dominant place for activity, gathering and commerce.

Even though affection may be strong, there is no shortage of controversy in these communities pertaining to downtown development and management. Affection is an emotion and the users of these downtowns have been very expressive in opinions about how their city centers should grow and develop. In Madison, debate about growth in the isthmus is a perennial community topic. In Burlington, the apparent growth of national retail tenants at the expense of local merchants remains an ongoing public dialogue. Controversy appears to be one consequence of strong affection, the price a downtown pays for public fidelity.

Finding #4:	Great downtowns are able to overcome challenges and obstacles.

- *Just because the city has a great reputation for its downtown doesn't mean that it is exempt from challenge.*
- *These cities have found ways to meet their challenges*
- *Even today, these cities are preparing for their next set of challenges.*
- *Every downtown faces continual challenges. The great ones respond.*

It would be rational to assume that great downtowns would be more exempt from the challenges and obstacles that beset other less fortunate cities. This does not appear to be the case. The downtowns in the study all have been and are continuing to overcome serious challenges and obstacles. In fact, it can be suggested that these cities share an innate ability to respond to and overcome challenges. These successful downtowns have been able to find ways to meet their challenges. In this manner, they distinguish themselves from other cities that struggle with overcoming the obstacles of community life that regularly confront them.

Some of these "great" downtowns face new found challenges from recent suburban competition. For years, Burlington was a beneficiary of State land use policy that made it difficult for suburban sprawl to take hold. In recent years the guiding law, Act 250, has been reinterpreted and softened and the result has been new suburban growth. The head start granted to downtown Burlington has been substantial. Yet, today the downtown faces suburban retail competition unlike at any time in recent years.

In Boulder similar growth in competition challenges the primacy of downtown as the central retail center. A new lifestyle shopping center is being built several miles away within city limits. While the new mall will help retain retail sales within Boulder, it poses a real threat to traditional shopping patterns.

Not all challenges arise from suburban competition. In Providence, one the biggest challenges facing downtown is finding a way to better link the massive Providence Place shopping mall and entertainment center with the heart of downtown. Built two blocks from the State Capitol, Providence Place is separated from the traditional downtown center by a major arterial highway and highway on/off ramps. The very infrastructure that provides great access to downtown from across the state also serves as a barrier for pedestrians from the central core to access this important facility.

In Portland, development pressure is coming from the abutting industrial areas near to downtown, where major new developments are planned. How these developments get integrated into the fabric of downtown may determine the success of downtown Portland in the years to come.

In State College, the student population that sustains downtown is also a perceptual barrier for non-student housing. The downtown organization is working to convince developers that people over the age of 21 might also want to live in downtown. In Wooster, the sale of the Rubbermaid Corporation to an out-of-town buyer has caused angst over the future of the large “Everything Rubbermaid” store that anchors the downtown. Several cities, most notably Boulder, are faced with skyrocketing land and property costs that make new development difficult and financially challenging.

The future of retail is cited as a key challenge in five of the sample “great downtown” cities. While filling vacant storefronts is generally not a major problem, there appears to be a discernable trend toward food and beverage businesses replacing traditional retailers. Cities such as Boulder, Burlington and Northampton report that when a traditional retailer closed, it more often than not is replaced by a restaurant, bar, or other food and beverage operation. These businesses appear to be able to generate more revenues than traditional retailers and hence are able to afford higher rents.

The other prevalent challenge facing a majority of the “great” downtowns sampled is the issue of affordable housing. While most of the surveyed cities have established active downtown housing sectors, there is widespread concern about how to provide worker housing at affordable prices. Several cities have enacted policies requiring projects to include affordable housing components. Boulder, Madison and Chapel Hill all have robust downtown housing markets and require affordable unit set asides or payments to public pools to support the development of affordable housing. In Ann Arbor, a similar policy was enacted by the City Council but due a market that was less robust than predicted, has resulted in a slow down of downtown development activity. Affordable housing set-asides appear best suited to explosive markets where the extra cost can be readily absorbed.

Just like their sister cities around the country, these “great downtown” cities have faced and continue to confront their own obstacles and challenges. What is evident has been their ability to overcome obstacles throughout the years and their continued determination to tackle current problems. Rather than succumb to these issues, the great downtowns appear ready and willing to address these issues head-on with creative strategies and solutions.

Finding #5:	Great downtowns are walkable. They have pedestrian scale.

- *There was no single design model. They include pedestrian malls, linear main streets, public squares, and multi-zone downtowns.*
- *People expected and preferred to walk.*
- *There were numerous street level attractions to hold the attention of the pedestrian: architecture, storefronts, street amenities, art, and signs.*

The “outstanding” downtowns in this study share the common attribute of being walkable. They are all strong pedestrian oriented urban places that are well used by downtown patrons. They all possess street level pedestrian scale. One felt at ease walking the streets and plazas of these cities. Most are single node centers, with a central place, street, or pedestrian mall. Providence and Portland are more expansive multi-block downtowns with sub-districts, but are still served by many relatively narrow streets that aided pedestrian traffic. Madison has two distinct areas- the Capitol Square area and the State Street transit corridor.

While all eleven downtowns are pedestrian friendly, there is no single physical design. They include pedestrian malls, linear main streets, public squares, and multi-zone downtowns. Burlington, Boulder and Charlottesville have car-free pedestrian malls that defined their city centers. Madison has a car-free transit mall connecting the state capitol with the university. Wooster and Northampton both have traditional main streets with landmark public squares.

In these downtowns, people expect and seem to prefer to walk. Pedestrian trips are bolstered by active street levels. Walkers are rewarded with sensory experiences ranging from public art to active storefronts to attractive landscaping and sidewalk amenities. Decorative artistic benches in Chapel Hill turned ordinary sidewalk amenities into pieces of art. State College and Chapel Hill both feature elaborate wall murals that engage passers-by. In Charlottesville, the pedestrian mall is jammed full with cafes and outdoor dining tables, sidewalk merchandise displays and signs. The result requires the pedestrian to be alert but also very engaged. In Providence, the City created a river walk spine through the center of downtown. In Ann Arbor transparent history kiosks are placed on the sidewalks throughout the downtown district, lending character and interest to the street. In Boulder and Burlington the pedestrian malls are graced with large stone features and engaging representational public art. Portland has iconic sculptures of lighthouses. Hanging flower baskets are used in Wooster. Ornate street lamp poles and banners define the Madison transit mall.

While each community approaches street character in its own way, all share the attribute of active, vibrant storefronts and cafes that engages the pedestrian. With only handful of exceptions (civic centers in Providence and Portland), streets with blank walls are not the norm. Shops and boutiques help define the character of downtown and engage the pedestrian.

Finding #6: These great downtowns have a commitment to mixed use development.

- *Uses are generally not geographically separated. When they are, they remain within walking distance of each other.*
- *New projects have mixed use orientations.*

The surveyed "great" downtowns, by and large, share a commitment to mixed-use development. Uses are generally not geographically separated in these downtowns. There are few examples of a government district, an office district, a retail district. Instead, the various uses tend to be integrated into the downtown fabric. Even when they are separated, they generally remain within walking distance of each other.

Burlington City Hall is located on the pedestrian mall, between the mall and a landmark park. Charlottesville City Hall is likewise located at one end of the pedestrian mall.

Historic theaters are interspersed throughout the downtown streetscape and not segregated to their own blocks and real estate. Boulder, Burlington, Providence, Charlottesville, Ann Arbor, and State College all have historic theaters located in the middle of retail and commercial blocks.

These downtowns also share an affinity toward mixed-use development for new projects. They recognized the importance of mixed use and their more recent projects tend to reflect that priority. The massive Providence Place mall is also an entertainment center with a multi-plex cinema, IMAX theater, Dave & Busters entertainment center, and a floor of thematic restaurants. In Wooster, the downtown Best Western Hotel along Main Street has ground floor wrapped retail. The evolving Burlington waterfront has a multitude of uses ranging from museums to housing to recreation and restaurants. Ann Arbor has a downtown farmers' market complex with offices, retail and restaurants.

While these cities do not appear to have formal policies mandating mixed-use development, they have an implicit understanding of the importance of the mixed use concept to urban life and design.

Finding #7:	There is broad public/private investment in the future of downtown.

- *These cities are planning for their futures.*
- *They are implementing new projects that broaden the appeal and scope of downtown.*
- *Many of these projects have public sector involvement.*
- *Cities tend to be pro-active in facilitating these projects.*

All of the "great downtowns" surveyed in the study are actively planning for the future. All exhibit broad public/private investment in their future growth and development. These are not static downtowns, content to live on their current status. They are implementing new projects that broaden the appeal and scope of their downtown. Many, but not all, of these projects have public sector involvement. In general, the host cities tend to be pro-active in facilitating this new generation of downtown projects.

State College is involved in an effort to build a downtown multiplex cinema as well as a new Children's Museum. The cinema will sit in a strategic block near the 100% retail block, supporting and building pedestrian traffic. Portland is engaged in the redevelopment of the Broadway industrial area immediately adjacent to their downtown. Plans call for a grocery store, more housing and amenity projects that will complement downtown. Charlottesville is completing a large covered outdoor amphitheater at the east end of their pedestrian mall. The amphitheater will be privately managed and serve as a key traffic generator for downtown. This project also is linked to a new inter-modal transportation center. Wooster is investing in new streetscape infrastructure that will ink downtown with the College of Wooster. The College is making a major financial contribution to the project, which could improve the likelihood of students patronizing downtown. Boulder recently opened a new high-end boutique hotel and will follow that with a conference center. Madison has been expanding the Overture Center, the community's major performing arts facility. Located mid-way between the Capitol and the university on the transit mall, the Center is slated to be a major traffic generator for the mid-mall area.

Economic markets in the various downtowns are in varying stages of maturity. Some markets require that their downtown projects rely on continued public involvement. State College, Portland, and Providence are all actively assisting their new downtown projects. Other downtowns have less or no need for public incentives. Markets in Boulder, Madison, Charlottesville, and Chapel Hill are all robust enough to not need direct City incentives. However, projects in these “hot” economic markets do continue to receive careful city planning and review.

Finding #8: The nature of downtown retailing appears to be in flux.

- *Food & beverage is replacing traditional retail.*
- *Local, independent retailers continue to dominate most downtowns.*
- *These downtowns are facing increasing competition. Some have been exempt from serious competition for a number of years.*

The nature of downtown retailing in these sample cities appears to be in flux. A number of downtown leaders are reporting a trend of food & beverage businesses replacing traditional retail businesses. As clothing or other traditional retailers close or choose to relocate, these cities report that the resulting vacant storefronts are being filled with restaurants, bars or other food & beverage oriented businesses able to pay higher rents. This trend was evident in even the most dynamic retail markets included in the study: Burlington and Boulder.

Local, independent retailers continue to be the dominate form of retailing in most of the sample downtowns. The prevalence of local, independent retailing may reflect the dominance of national retailing in suburban or strip centers elsewhere in the metropolitan markets, leaving downtown with a niche in specialty boutique, independent retailing. Burlington has a strong representation of national retail establishments on its Church Street pedestrian mall. It is the only city out of the eleven studied that was characterized as having a strong presence of national retailers. Two factors may contribute to this status: the existence of a strategically located regional shopping mall fronting on the Church Street mall and the historical state policies in Vermont that helped to restrict suburban commercial sprawl for a number of years. In most other cities in the sample, there are a limited number of national stores and a primary collection of local, independent stores.

These downtowns are facing increasing retail competition from outlying areas. Some have been exempt from serious competition for a number of years. Nearly all of the eleven downtowns report new retail competition in their metropolitan marketplaces that could seriously affect consumer shopping and spending patterns. These competitors will test the mettle of downtown retailing, forcing both individual retailers and their downtown organizations to respond in new and creative ways. The regional lifestyle center at 29th Street in Boulder has already affected location decisions by retailers, even before it has been built.

Finding #9: Entertainment is a driving market segment.

- *Anchor projects help (movie theaters, performance halls, proximity to university facilities)*
- *All have been able to extend the life of downtown beyond 5:00 pm.*
- *All have strong and growing restaurant sectors.*

While retail appears to be shifting, nearly all of the sample cities report growth in the area of entertainment. According to downtown and city leaders, entertainment is a driving market segment in these downtowns.

Nearly all of the “great downtowns” boast strong and growing restaurant sectors. Only Wooster is relatively stable in restaurant growth. Restaurants are leading traffic generators for downtowns and to be independent and one of a kind. Variety was the norm. Ethnic and thematic restaurants are common in these successful downtowns. Downtown Portland, for example, is regarded as the leading restaurant destination cluster in the region, attracting patrons from throughout southern Maine.

Entertainment anchor projects are also evident in these successful downtowns. Movie theaters, performing arts centers, historic theaters, and brew pubs are the most frequently encountered entertainment venues. Two cities, Providence and Charlottesville, have skating rinks. Several cities, including Northampton and Charlottesville, have multi-purpose visual arts centers.

According to downtown leaders, the role of entertainment in driving downtown traffic is strong and growing. In Charlottesville, the pedestrian mall was languishing with high vacancies and little traffic until a private entrepreneur opened a six-plex movie theater ten years ago. City, merchant and downtown leaders all agree that the opening of this theater complex marked the turnaround of the pedestrian mall. The theaters brought new faces and more traffic to downtown, which in turn stimulated the launching of a number of new restaurants. The combination of new restaurants and the movie theaters was a major reason for the resurgence of downtown Charlottesville.

Much of the downtown Providence traffic is likewise driven by a variety of entertainment venues. Downtown Providence is home to the Trinity Repertory Theater, an off-Broadway regional theater. Joining Trinity are the Providence Civic Center, a Black Theater company, the historic Providence Theater, and the new facilities such as the adult oriented Dave & Busters entertainment center, first run cinemas, and IMAX theater in the Providence Place mall. These venues are crucial to the bringing neighborhood and suburban people back into the city.

Finding #10: There was a prevalence of strong, adjacent residential neighborhoods that are within walking distance of downtown.

- *Many of these neighborhoods were upscale, with some of the higher priced housing in the city.*
- *This was not necessarily student housing.*
- *These neighborhoods provided a key base of patrons for downtown.*

The downtowns represented in this study all share the presence of strong, adjacent residential neighborhoods within walking distance of downtown. Nearly all of these in-town neighborhoods are upscale, with some containing the higher priced housing of the city. They are not necessarily places for student housing. These neighborhoods provide a key base of patrons for downtown.

In many communities not included in this study, residential neighborhoods are beyond walking distance of downtown. This is not the case in all of the sample cities. Their downtowns and in-town neighborhoods often blended one into one the other. Residents appear to place a premium on living within an easy walk of downtown and all the amenities it has to offer.

Five of the sample cities appear to be experiencing high levels of gentrification in their in-town neighborhoods. In this instance gentrification refers to escalating residential sale and rental prices that are among the most robust in the community, hence limiting the affordability of units. In Providence, Boulder, Portland, Madison and Ann Arbor these neighborhoods are among the wealthiest in the city.

The ability of the downtown and its surrounding walkable neighborhoods to work and co-exist together appear to strengthen both entities. The neighborhoods benefited from the ready source of dining, shopping and entertainment options, all within easy walking distance. The downtowns benefit from the additional daily flow of traffic provided by these neighborhood residents.

Finding #11: Downtown (CBD) housing was either prevalent or underway. The market for housing in downtown was strong and growing.

- *Affordability was a major issue faced by many of the communities.*
- *Downtown residents were invaluable to the downtown retail economy.*

The presence of downtown housing within the CBD is another shared attribute of our sample of "great downtowns". Nearly all of the cities studied exhibit strong or growing downtown housing markets. People want to live downtown in these exciting, dynamic urban places and developers are working hard to satisfy that need. Only Wooster is rated as a modest housing market. Yet, even in Wooster, plans are underway for additional upper story units to supplement the small number of successful residences already created.

In Burlington, Portland, Chapel Hill, Madison and Boulder the downtown housing markets are well established and booming. These cities have a record of successful condominium sales and re-sales. Downtown units are commanding strong prices relative to the rest of the marketplace. Developers are also focusing on condominium sales, given the established for-sale markets.

Several cities, such as State College and Northampton, are in early stage development of a downtown housing market. Their regional prospects for housing are strong and efforts are just getting underway within the downtown core. In State College, civic leaders are wrestling over how to convince developers to tackle non-student housing. Much of downtown State College contains student apartments and leaders are looking to broaden the base of the CBD resident population.

These downtown residents provide key activity and life to shops, restaurants and entertainment venues. Their presence helps to strengthen their downtown marketplaces.

Affordability is clearly emerging as a significant issue facing the downtown housing market. In the established market cities, affordability is seen as a priority community concern. Several cities, such as Boulder and Chapel Hill, have enacted policies requiring new downtown projects to either build a percentage of affordable units or donate to a regional fund that is used for the creation of affordable housing. These set-aside policies appear to work best with for-sale properties where the price of several units can simply be reduced. Rental projects are much more cumbersome to convert to affordable status. Regardless, the numbers of affordable units built remains small and the issue continues to confront civic leaders.

Summary and Future Research Needs

Based on this study of eleven cities with regional or national reputations for downtown excellence, it appears that there is no single factor that is responsible for the success of great downtowns. Instead, this research supports findings from previous studies that identify a variety of attributes that converge together. If enough of these positive attributes can cluster together, there will be a successful, great downtown.

While many of the sample cities were university communities, the presence of an institution of higher education does not by itself appear to be the deciding factor in determining downtown excellence. There is no question that the proximity of a university to downtown provides a ready source of patrons, from students and/or faculty/staff. Yet there is considerable variation within the sample communities regarding the impact of the universities on the downtown. In some communities, that impact is extensive and pervasive; in others weak. Regardless of the magnitude of impact, these institutions are traffic generators for the downtown in some form.

Several of the identified attributes contribute to pedestrian traffic. This presence of ample pedestrian traffic is a key benchmark of successful downtowns. City centers exist to be used as places of commerce, as social gathering places, as places to live, and as destinations for retail shopping, entertainment and dining. Street level uses in particular help define and shape the character of a place and great urban places have memorable streets. The businesses that populate these downtowns, whether they are retail, dining or entertainment, all require pedestrian traffic to thrive. By sharing such attributes as nearby residential neighborhoods, thriving downtown housing, a large assortment of traffic producing projects and attractive entertainment venues, these downtown businesses are sustained and contribute to the perceived greatness of these downtowns.

But traffic alone was not the only shared attribute of great small city downtowns. These communities also shared an ability to deliver needed downtown services, albeit in diverse ways. They share a community affection and spirit for downtown that translates into community decision-making that helps to locate key facilities and traffic generators into the central core. This spirit or élan helps to make downtown a regional destination that is able to stake a claim to a portion of the metropolitan marketplace, sometimes in the face of strong suburban pressures.

As a research exercise, this study also intended to identify questions for further, more intensive examination. A case study approach serves more like a focus group, highlighting areas or topics that deserve further investigation. Among the issues that should be reviewed further are:

- The impact of adjacent neighborhoods on downtown success… Do downtowns with adjoining walkable neighborhoods fare better than downtowns without them?

- Is there a traffic threshold that downtowns must sustain to be viable and successful? How many traffic generators and how much pedestrian traffic is needed?

- How important are universities to downtown success? Do cities that are homes to universities have an advantage over communities that are not?

- How do downtowns obtain the affection of their communities? Can affection be earned or is it a resident emotion?

- Is food & beverage actually replacing traditional retail in the downtown centers of small city America, as suggested by this survey of eleven cities?

- What is the minimum service delivery package that communities must provide to their downtowns to assure success?

- This research showed that there are a number of different model of downtown service delivery. Is there a better service delivery model, one that is best at assuring successful downtown revitalization and management?

APPENDIX A

CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL DOWNTOWNS:
SHARED ATTRIBUTES OF OUTSTANDING
SMALL & MID-SIZED DOWNTOWNS

SUMMARY FINDINGS

1. **No Single Organizational Model Exists**
- Contrary to expectations, there is no single way cities with great downtowns deliver their downtown services.
- Instead, these cities have found varying ways to provide needed services.
- Each model reflects the institutional strengths present in the community.

2. **These downtowns tended to have multiple traffic generators that supplemented the presence of a larger institution(s), all within short walking distance.**
- Many, but not all of these traffic generators were purposely strategically located.
- Serendipity had as much to do with some locations decisions as careful planning.

3. **These great downtowns are beloved by citizenry.**
- They have regional significance.
- There is strong affection for the downtown.
- There is also controversy and debate, but always strong affection

4. **These downtown have been and are continuing to overcome challenges and obstacles.**
- Just because the city has a great reputation for its downtown doesn't mean that it is exempt from challenge.
- These cities have found ways to meet their challenges
- Even today, these cities are preparing for their next set of challenges.
- Every downtown faces continual challenges. The great ones respond.

5. **These downtowns are walkable. They have pedestrian scale.**
- There was no single model. They include pedestrian malls, linear main streets, public squares, and multi-zone downtowns.
- People expected and preferred to walk.
- There were numerous street level attractions to hold the attention of the pedestrian: architecture, storefronts, street amenities, art, and signs.

6. **These downtowns, by and large, had a commitment to mixed use development**.
- Uses are generally not geographically separated. When they are, they remain within walking distance of each other.
- New projects have mixed use orientations.

7. There is broad public/private investment in the future of downtown.

- These cities are planning for their futures.
- They are implementing new projects that broaden the appeal and scope of downtown.
- Many of these projects have public sector involvement.
- Cities tend to be pro-active in facilitating these projects.

8. The nature of downtown retailing appears to be in flux.

- Food & beverage is replacing traditional retail.
- Local, independent retailers continue to dominate most downtowns.
- These downtowns are facing increasing competition. Some have been exempt from serious competition for a number of years.

9. Entertainment is a driving market segment.

- Anchor projects help (movie theaters, performance halls, proximity to university facilities)
- All have been able to extend the life of downtown beyond 5:00 pm.
- All have strong and growing restaurant sectors.

10. There was a prevalence of strong, adjacent residential neighborhoods that are within walking distance of downtown.

- Many of these neighborhoods were upscale, with some of the higher priced housing in the city.
- This was not necessarily student housing.
- These neighborhoods provided a key base of patrons for downtown.

11. Downtown (CBD) housing was either prevalent or underway. The market for housing in downtown was strong and growing.

- Affordability was a major issue faced by many of the communities.
- Downtown residents were likewise invaluable to the downtown retail economy.

12. Universities help but are not the sole answer.

- Several cities reported low use of downtown by students (Northampton, Wooster, Charlottesville)
- One city had a small downtown despite a location abutting the campus (Chapel Hill)
- One city had no major university (Portland)

Gary Ferguson
Executive Director
Ithaca Downtown Partnership
gary@downtownithaca.com
(607) 277-8679

APPENDIX B: TABLES FOR FINDINGS

Tables for Finding #1

How Services Get Delivered by the Primary Downtown Organization

City	Image Marketing	Events	Retail Promot-ion	Land-scaping	Clean-Maint.	Safety	Project Facilitat-ion	Business Recruit-ment	Strategic Planning
State College, PA	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Burlington, VT	X	X	X	X	X	X			
Providence, RI							X	X	X
Northampton,MA	X	X	X						
Portland, ME	X	X	X		X	X			
Wooster, OH	X	X	X	X			X	X	X
Charlottesville,VA	X	X	X						
Chapel Hill, NC							X		X
Madison, WI	X	X	X				X		
Ann Arbor, MI							X	X	X
Boulder, CO	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X

Who Delivers Downtown Services?

City	Chamber or Found.	City Planning or ED	City DPW	City Parks /Other	LDC	Member Org.	DDA	BID	Merchant Assoc.
State College, PA		X	X					XX	
Burlington, VT		X		XX				X	X
Providence, RI	X	X	X						
NorthamptonMA	XX	X	X						
Portland, ME		X	X					XX	X
Wooster, OH		X	X			XX			
Charlottesville,VA		XX		X					X
Chapel Hill, NC		X	X		XX				X
Madison, WI		X		X		XX			
Ann Arbor, MI		X	X				XX		X
Boulder, CO		X		X				XX	

XX – Denotes primary downtown service provider organization

Table Finding #2
List of Traffic Generators

Traffic Generator	State College	Burlington	Providence	Northampton	Portland	Wooster	Charlottes-ville	Chapel Hill	Madison	Ann Arbor	Boulder
First Run Movie Theaters	P	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	
Art Cinemas		X		X	X		X				
Black box theater	X		X	X	X				X		
Performing Arts Center or larger Live Theater		X	X	X	X			N	X	X	X
Children's Museums	P						X		X	X	
History Museums			X						X		
Art Museum				N	X			X		N	
Art Galleries	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
Other Museums		X							X		
Department Store		X*	X*			X					
Unique Retail Store						X			X		
University/College	X	N	X, N	X		N	N	X	X	X	N
Professional/trade school		X	X								
Park		X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X
Bus terminal/hub			X		X						
Major Hotel(s)		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Waterfront		X	X		X				X		X
Grocery Store		X				X					X
Night club(s)	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X
State Capital/offices			X						X		

Traffic Generator	**State College**	**Burlington**	**Providence**	**Northampton**	**Portland**	**Wooster**	**Charlottes-ville**	**Chapel Hill**	**Madison**	**Ann Arbor**	**Boulder**
County Court/office		X		X		X	X		X	X	X
Post Office			X	X	X	X					
City Hall		X	X	X	X	X	X	N	X	X	X
Public Market/Farmers' Market			X		X				X		
Sports venue	N	N	X		X			N	N	N	N
Major Library		X			X	X					
Restaurant cluster	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Churches		X		X		X		X		X	X
Skating rink			X				X				
Historical sites		X	X				X				
Amphitheater/outdoor concerts			X				P				X
Brew Pub(s)	X	X		X	X			X	X	X	X
Public art/displays	X	X	X				X	X		X	X
Pedestrian Mall		X					X				
Craft Center		X									
In-town mall		X	X								
In-town mini-mall		X	X	X			X				

* Found in a downtown shopping mall
X- Existing Facility
P- Planned Facility
N- Not Downtown, But Nearby

Table for Finding #3
What Makes Downtown Beloved?

City	
State College, PA	The place to eat, drink and find entertainment; connected to the university
Burlington, VT	Regional mall; pedestrian mall is a major attraction; waterfront has become a major attraction
Providence, RI	New regional mall- largest in RI; waterfront project received national recognition; key arts venues located in downtown
Northampton, MA	Commercial center for the Pioneer Valley; place to go for the five colleges of the region; center for the arts
Portland, ME	Maine's largest city; Old Port is an entertainment/dining destination; more people choosing to live in or near downtown
Wooster, OH	Won Great American Main Street City award; strong corporate support from Rubbermaid Corp and former CEO; hub for community pride
Charlottesville, VA	Seven block pedestrian mall a major attraction; restaurants and movies have become key draws
Chapel Hill, NC	Connected to the university; lives off the university; growing downtown housing
Madison, WI	Transit mall connects Capitol with University; University abuts; the downtown is located in the isthmus, the key growth area of the community and the hottest place to live; the place to go for entertainment and dining
Ann Arbor, MI	Downtown abuts the university and one side of downtown is completely student oriented; restaurant center for the community; entertainment on campus spills over into downtown
Boulder, CO	Pedestrian mall a major attraction for the community; center for restaurants and entertainment; downtown an integral part of community life.

Table for Finding #4
Key Downtown Issues & Controversies Faced

State College, PA	Compatibility between students and other users; transition of retail; Downtown non-student housing; building a new multi-screen movie theater
Burlington, VT	National chains squeezing out local independent merchants; growth of suburban competition; affordable housing
Providence, RI	Linking various parts of downtown (esp. Providence Place); clean & safe; City budget; affordable housing
Northampton, MA	Competition from suburban centers and retail erosion; changing nature of retail
Portland, ME	Jump starting the Arts District; development projects adjacent to downtown (Broadway and waterfront); affordable housing
Wooster, OH	Future of Rubbermaid Store
Charlottesville, VA	Organization for downtown; competition with other retail districts; attracting locals
Chapel Hill, NC	Role of downtown in regional economy; competition with other retail areas; broadening beyond a university district; affordable housing; in-fill development
Madison, WI	Affordable housing and development
Ann Arbor, MI	Affordable housing
Boulder, CO	Affordable housing; development costs; changing nature of retail

Tables for Finding #5
The Physical Layout of Downtowns

State College, PA	Two parallel commercial streets with connecting blocks; abuts campus
Burlington, VT	Pedestrian mall with in-town regional mall; several links to waterfront development area- 4-5 blocks away
Providence, RI	Large geographic area; waterfront/river spine created; capitol adjacent to downtown
Northampton, MA	One meandering main street with several side spurs; campus adjacent to downtown
Portland, ME	Large geographic area; two sub-districts- Old Port along the waterfront and the Arts District at Congress St.
Wooster, OH	Traditional linear main street with public square and courthouse
Charlottesville, VA	Pedestrian mall (7 blocks); historic courthouse area of downtown plus emerging warehouse area
Chapel Hill, NC	Linear main street wit several less intensively used parallel streets; abuts university
Madison, WI	Transit mall (8 blocks) connecting Capitol square with University
Ann Arbor, MI	Large geographic area; includes sub-district immediately abutting university and traditional main street dist.
Boulder, CO	Pedestrian mall (Pearl Street); new development to both the east and west of Pearl Street mall,

Street Level Amenities & Attractions

State College, PA	Public art sculpture & murals
Burlington, VT	Stones; sculpture; water features; storefronts
Providence, RI	Architecture; riverfront park; galleries; arcade
Northampton, MA	Storefronts; strategically placed garage
Portland, ME	Signs; storefronts; narrow streets in Old Port; icon sculptures
Wooster, OH	Flower baskets; public square; architecture; signs
Charlottesville, VA	Busy pedestrian mall; street/mall cafes; signs
Chapel Hill, NC	Architecture; decorative benches
Madison, WI	Lights, flowers and banners; storefronts; limited auto zone- transit mall
Ann Arbor, MI	History kiosks; banners
Boulder, CO	Pedestrian mall; signs; landscaping; storefronts; adjacent parks and trails

Table for Finding #6
Examples of Mixed-Use Development

State College, PA	Housing units with ground floor retail
Burlington, VT	Waterfront (housing; museums; recreation; restaurants)
Providence, RI	Providence Place (retail; restaurants; entertainment); Arcade (retail, service, office); Institutional (education with office and retail)
Northampton, MA	Mini-mall (retail, restaurants, office)
Portland, ME	Congress St (housing, museums, schools, retail, restaurants); Old Port (retail, restaurants, entertainment, working waterfront)
Wooster, OH	Hotel with retail on ground floor; upper story housing above retail; office and retail/service renovation
Charlottesville, VA	Bus terminal and amphitheater; in-fill development (housing, retail); renovations (housing, office, retail)
Chapel Hill, NC	New in-fill projects (housing, retail, office); renovations with entertainment, retail, restaurants
Madison, WI	Visitor attractions with retail and office; housing with retail
Ann Arbor, MI	Garages with retail; housing with retail and restaurants; farmers market with retail, housing & restaurants
Boulder, CO	In-fill projects w/housing, retail, office & restaurants; parking garage w/retail and office

Table for Finding #7
Planning for the Future

State College, PA	Multi-screen cinema-plex; children's museum
Burlington, VT	Continued waterfront development (housing)
Providence, RI	BID creation; housing development
Northampton, MA	Side street development
Portland, ME	Transportation links between baseball stadium and downtown, train station and core; Broadway industrial area development; waterfront redevelopment
Wooster, OH	Corridor reconstruction and redevelopment between downtown and college
Charlottesville, VA	Amphitheater and inter-modal transportation center; building redevelopments with developers and university
Chapel Hill, NC	Major In-fill projects on city owned property
Madison, WI	Completion of Performing Arts Center; continued housing development and planning
Ann Arbor, MI	Ongoing DDA planning and analysis
Boulder, CO	Recently opened hotel; planned downtown convention center

Table for Finding #8
The Role of Retail in Downtown

City	Retail Replacement Cited	Ratio of Local to National Stores	Increasing Competition Cited
State College, PA	N	Primarily Local; Several nationals	Y
Burlington, VT	Y	Numerous nationals (in-town regional mall w/ nationals)	Y
Providence, RI	N	Primarily local; several nationals; (in-town regional mall w/nationals)	N
Northampton, MA	Y	Primarily local; several nationals	Y
Portland, ME	N	Primarily local; several nationals	N
Wooster, OH	N	Nearly all local	N
Charlottesville, VA	Y	Primarily local; several nationals	Y
Chapel Hill, NC	N	Primarily local; several nationals	Y
Madison, WI	Y	Primarily local; several nationals	N
Ann Arbor, MI	N	Primarily local; several nationals	N
Boulder, CO	Y	Primarily local; several nationals	Y

Table for Finding #9
Entertainment in Downtown

City	Key Entertainment Projects	Restaurants as Major Activity Drivers
State College, PA	PSU downtown theater; visual arts center; proposed movie theater; historic State Theater renovation	Y
Burlington, VT	Flynn theater; movie theaters; music clubs; brew pub	Y
Providence, RI	Trinity Rep Theater; Performance theater; black theater; Prov. Civic Center; Dave & Busters; movie theaters; skating rink	N
Northampton, MA	Arts center (art films and black box theater); adjacent to College; brew pub	Y
Portland, ME	Old Port entertainment district; Portland Civic Center; movie theater	Y
Wooster, OH	Movie theater	N
Charlottesville, VA	Movie theater; art theater; skating rink; historic performance theater	Y
Chapel Hill, NC	Brew pub; art films; adjacent to campus and proposed arts quad with facilities	Y
Madison, WI	Major performing art center;	Y
Ann Arbor, MI	Several performance theaters; adjacent to campus live theaters; brew pub	Y
Boulder, CO	Boulder Theater (E-town); brew pub	Y

Table for Finding #10
Housing in Downtown

City	Existence of Walkable Downtown Neighborhoods	Level of Gentrification
State College, PA	Y	Medium; students as well as locals
Burlington, VT	Y	Medium; students as well as locals
Providence, RI	Y	High; East side neighborhoods among the most expensive in the city
Northampton, MA	Y	Medium; housing costs relatively high throughout the city
Portland, ME	Y	High; downtown and abutting neighborhoods undergoing strong price increases
Wooster, OH	Y	Low
Charlottesville, VA	Y	Medium
Chapel Hill, NC	Y	Medium; housing costs high throughout the city
Madison, WI	Y	High; Isthmus area has highest prices and under going rapid increase in prices
Ann Arbor, MI	Y	High; students as well as locals
Boulder, CO	Y	High; housing costs high throughout city

Table for Finding #11

City	Is Affordability an Issue?	Is there a Growing or Established Housing Market?	Housing Issues; Comments
State College, PA	N	Early Stage	Student market in downtown; attempting to attract developers for non-student housing
Burlington, VT	Y	Established & Growing	Condo market strong
Providence, RI	N	Growing	Some projects done; others underway
Northampton, MA	N	Early Stage	Region has strong housing market; downtown yet to receive much of the housing
Portland, ME	Y	Established & Growing	Condo market strong
Wooster, OH	N	Modest	Several small upper story projects
Charlottesville,	N	Growing	Some projects underway and others planned; regional

VA			market is strong
Chapel Hill, NC	Y	Established and Growing	Condo market strong; hot regional market
Madison, WI	Y	Established and Growing	Condo market strong
Ann Arbor, MI	Y	Growing	Affordable set-aside slowed growth; regional market strong
Boulder, CO	Y	Established and Growing	Condo market strong; hot regional market

REFERENCES & SOURCES

Selected References

- Brindley, Tim, "The Social Dimension of the Urban Village: A Comparison of Models for Sustainable Urban Development", Urban Design International, (2003), 8, 53-65.
- Economic Research Associates, "University Town Case Studies", Report for the Town of Chapel Hill on Proposed Redevelopment of Lots 2 & 5, 2004.
- Hudnut, William H., Cities on the Rebound: A Vision for Urban America, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C., 1998.
- Moulton, Jennifer, "Ten Steps to a Living Downtown", Brookings Institution, Washington, D. C., October 1999.
- Murrian, Paul, "Understand Urbanism, & Get Off Its Back", Urban Design International, (2002), 7, 131-142.
- Progressive Urban Management Associates, "Downtown Boulder Sharpens Its Competitive Edge", newsletter, Denver, CO, Spring 2005.
- Robertson, Kent, "Downtown Development Principles for Small Cities", in Downtowns: Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities, Burayidi, Michael (ed), Routledge, New York, 2001.
- Robertson, Kent, "Downtown Redevelopment Strategies in the United States: An End of the Century Assessment", Journal of the American Planning Association, 61,4, September 22, 1995, 429-437.
- Tulsa Now, "Basic Principles for Creating a Viable Downtown", from Downtown Revitalization Planning Resource, Tulsa Urban Models Task Force, Tulsa, OK, 2002.
- Waits, Mary Jo, Doug Henton, and Chi Nguyen, "The Downtowns of the Future: Opportunities for Regional Stewards", Alliance for Regional Stewardship, Monograph Series, Mountain View, CA, August 2001.

Interviews

State College (9/24/04):

1. Teresa Sparacino, Executive Director, Downtown State College Improvement District
2. Thomas Fountaine, State College Borough Manager

Burlington (12/6/04):

1. Ron Redmond, Executive Director, Church Street marketplace Commission
2. Bruce Seifer, City of Burlington Department of Community and Economic Development

Providence (12/9/04):

1. Dan Baudouin, Executive Director, The Providence Foundation
2. Deborah Melino-Wender, Executive Director, The Capital Center Commission

Chapel Hill (4/25/05):

1. Nick Didow, Interim Executive Director, Chapel Hill Economic Development Corporation
2. Mary Joe Stone, President, Chapel Hill Downtown Commission (Merchant Association)
3. Roger Waldon, Planning Director, Town of Chapel Hill

Charlottesville (4/26/05):

1. Bob Stroh, Downtown Business Association of Charlottesville
2. Aubrey Watts, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer & Director of Economic Development, City of Charlottesville
3. Chris Engel, Economic Development Specialist, City of Charlottesville
4. Joan Fenton, merchant, President, Downtown Business Association of Charlottesville

Madison 3/11/05):

1. Susan Schmitz, Executive Director, Downtown Madison, Inc.
2. Katherine Neherney, Department of Planning, City of Madison

Ann Arbor (3/29/05):

1. Susan Pollay, Executive Director, Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority
2. Mark Lloyd, City Planning & Development Services Director, City of Ann Arbor

Boulder (3/23/05):

1. Jane Jenkins, Executive Director, Downtown Boulder, Inc.
2. Brad Power, Director, City of Boulder Redevelopment Authority
3. Chris Shears, architect and resident, Boulder

Portland (5/6/05):

1. Janis Beitzer, Executive Director, Portland Downtown District
2. Nelle Hanig,Department of Economic Development, City of Portland

Northampton (5/19/05):

1. Suzanne Beck, Executive Director, Northampton Chamber of Commerce
2. Wayne Feiden, Planning Director, City of Northampton

Wooster (7/8/05):

1. Sandra Hull, Main Street Manager, Main Street Wooster, Inc.
2. Michael Sigg, Director of Administration, City of Wooster