

EAST DEARBORN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Market Analysis – Strategic Recommendations

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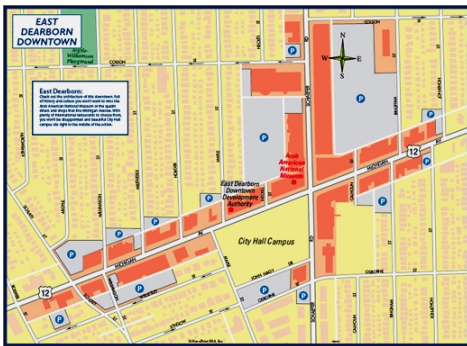
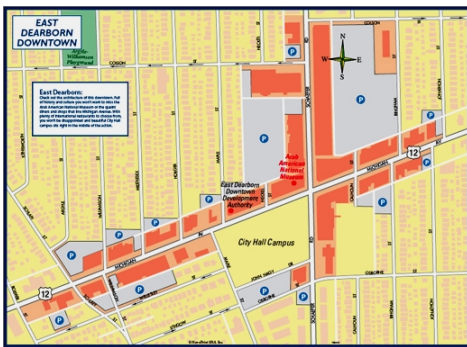


EAST DEARBORN DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Market Analysis – Strategic Recommendations

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**EAST DEARBORN
DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Market Analysis – Strategic Recommendations**

I. Introduction

Since the 1980s, downtowns around the nation have been making a remarkable comeback. Are they the centers of retailing and commerce that they were “in the day?” No. But the best of them have found *new* niches for their districts – niches that give them a competitive, sustainable economic position in the marketplace.

The goal is to identify those niches that best respond to consumer needs and build on the district’s assets. Trying to go head-to-head with shopping malls and big-box retailers is not the answer: successful downtowns add value to the commercial mix by using the traditional built environment in new ways.

The *EDDDA Market Analysis Strategic Recommendations* report is intended to assist the EDDDA board, staff, city government, and local business interests to better understand East Downtown’s market potential...and the ways EDDDA can help position the district for successful economic development.

The Team - The Urban Agenda, Inc. (TUA) – an urban development consulting firm based in Ann Arbor, Michigan – has been contracted by the EDDDA to provide a variety of services intended to build the organization’s capacity to undertake “Main Street revitalization.” For the purpose of conducting the research and creating the recommendations for *The EDDDA Market Analysis Strategic Recommendations* report, The Urban Agenda engaged the services of The Community Land Use Economics Group (CLUE Group), of Arlington, Virginia. The principals of both organizations have decades of experience in assisting communities to employ the Main Street Four-Point Approach to revitalization – a grass-roots economic development strategy developed by the National Trust National Main Street Center nearly 30 years ago. Josh Bloom, principal of CLUE Group, was lead consultant regarding survey research and data analysis; Betsy Jackson, president of TUA was lead consultant in formation of the recommendations and integration of the report into existing and future contract services.

The Process – The recommendations in this report are derived from the information created from the following services:

- Windshield surveys and key interviews – Conducted on September 7, the consultants toured the district and the commercial competition, and interviewed key economic development leaders in the community as a means to identify the issues and craft the next steps.
- Residents Survey – An online survey was distributed to a random sample of Dearborn residents in early 2008. The survey was designed to elicit information about residents’ shopping patters and preferences, and their familiarity with and opinion of East Downtown as a shopping district. Four hundred (400) responses were tabulated,

analyzed, and reported in *East Downtown Dearborn Market Study: resident survey summary report*, March 2008

- **Intercept Survey** – An intercept survey was conducted in the spring of 2008. The purpose of the survey was to interview current users of East Downtown, to determine their shopping patterns and preferences, and to establish the purposes and frequencies for being in the district. Four hundred thirty-two (432) people participated in the on-the-street interviews, the results of which appear in *East Dearborn Market Study: consumer intercept survey summary report*, August 2008.
- **Focus Groups** – The consultants conducted a series of seven roundtable discussions with key stakeholder groups in the district. The purpose was to uncover additional issues about the shopping district and opportunities for its improvements. Fifty-three (53) people participated and the results were reported in “Summary Report of Focus Group Meetings,” July 2008.
- **Census and other data review** – Demographic data on population, income, age, and race were reviewed. 2000 Census data on population, income, age, and race were compared to demographic projections to 2012. The U.S. Census is the source of the 2000 data; the projections are based on proprietary formulas generated by ESRI and compared to Census and ESRI data for the Metropolitan Statistical Area. (see *Appendix A – Census and Data Projections for Recommended Target Zip Codes and Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)*). 2000 Census figures were used rather than 2007 figures because the 2000 data is actual count data and the 2007 data was generated from ESRI’s projections. In short, 2000 data serves as a verifiable baseline from which to compare.

Structure of this Report

- **Recommendations** – The recommendations are organized as follows:
 - Geographical Target Areas – the recommended physical target area for EDDDA consumer attraction efforts
 - Priority Consumer Segments – which consumer segments have the greatest potential for the district
 - Priority Product/Service Clusters – the recommended *strategic combinations* of businesses already in the district
 - Business Retention & Enhancement – recommendations that are targeted to getting the most from your current business mix
 - Business Recruitment – recommendations for finding the businesses you need
 - Place-making – priorities for creating an inviting environment for commerce
 - Marketing & Communications – tools for adding value to business activity
- **Organizational Capacity** – There is a lot for EDDDA to do. What will it take in terms of staffing, board leadership, and resources to get the job done?
- **Next Steps** – There is a great deal to do. The consultant team suggests some timelines for implementation.
- **Conclusion**
- **Appendices & Attachments**

II. Recommendations

Creating the right business mix in a traditional downtown is considerably more difficult than creating the leasing strategy for a shopping mall. But some of the same tools apply, including the selection of a target area, the identification of target consumer groups, and the creation of the marketing messages that support the desired business mix. What makes downtown economic development harder is that, unlike the mall, there is no single form of ownership, no one individual or corporation to make all the decisions.

This section details the recommendations of the consultants, including details about ways to engage the legion of decision makers – property owners, business operators, customers, government – to move forward.

A. Geographic Target – Dearborn and contiguous Detroit zip codes.

Targeting the geographical area in which to concentrate the organization’s economic development activities is an important first step. Based on the outcomes of the Residents Survey, the Intercept Survey, and collected Census data, the consultant team recommends that EDDDA focus its efforts on the following zip codes: 48126 (East Downtown’s zip code); 48120, 48124, and 48128 (the remaining Dearborn zip codes); and 48228, 48204, and 48210 (the Detroit zip codes immediately adjacent to East Downtown). Figure 1 illustrates the location of these zip codes in relation to the East Downtown District.

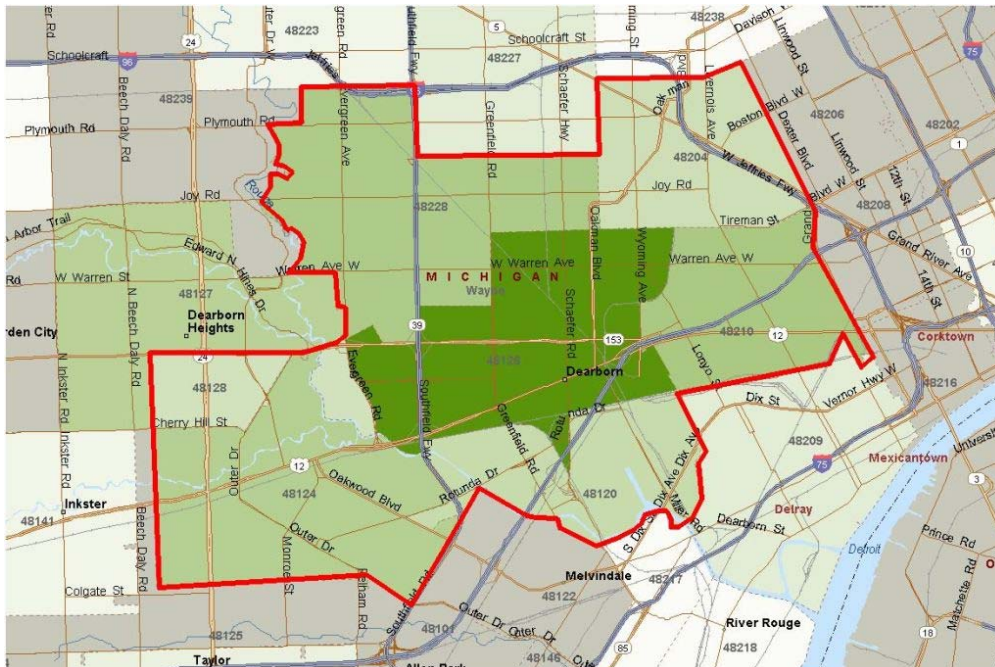


Figure 1: Proposed Target Market Area, CLUE Group

Rationale: Several factors point to this geographical target as your best option:

- The windshield surveys of the Dearborn area and beyond indicate that the strongest areas of commercial growth – and therefore competition – are occurring to the Northwest, West, and South of the city. The further that EDDDA attempts to penetrate outside of the city boundaries, particularly to the West, the more established competition it will face.
- The results of the Residents Survey indicated that respondents conducted, on average, almost 90% of their monthly shopping trips within the city limits (see page 8, “Table 3: Average number of shopping trips per month by Dearborn residents,” *East Dearborn Market Study: Residents survey summary report*). This suggests a preference to shop close to home – a preference that East Downtown should capitalize on.
- Nearby Detroit neighborhoods played a bigger role in the Intercept Survey than expected, with 14% of respondents indicating that they live in one of these three zip codes.¹ (See p. 9, “Table 3: Percent of East Downtown shoppers coming from adjacent zip codes,” *East Downtown Dearborn Market Study: Consumer Intercept Survey summary report*).
- Census data projections to (2000-2012) indicate shrinkage in the population (5.2% decrease in overall population, 6.7% loss of households), but solid increases in median household income (43.9% increase by 2012, to \$51,685).² Likewise, the projected median age in this target area remains lower than the region (33 years in the target area as compared to 38.8 in the Metropolitan Statistical Area). Finally, three key consumer age groups show either no change or projected growth: 0-19 year olds will remain level at 33% of the total population in the target area; 35-54 year olds will increase 3.1% to 26.6% of the population; and 55-74 year olds increase by 26.6%, to 15.2% of the target area population. ESRI makes these projections based on Census trends and ESRI’s proprietary formulas. Economic conditions, in Michigan and the country, have seen significant downward shifts in the last several months (since these projections were made), and we are cautious about ESRI’s predictions of income growth over the short term.

Note: The American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, will publish updated age and income data from 2006 by year’s end. EDDDA should retrieve this data and compare to the figures in the ESRI projections cited here.

¹ Detroit residents (from any Detroit zip code) accounted for 20% of all East Downtown Dearborn shoppers.

² ESRI makes these projections based on Census trends and ESRI’s proprietary formulas. Economic conditions in Michigan and the country have seen significant downward shifts in the last several months (since these projections were made), and we are cautious about ESRI’s predictions of income growth over the short term.

Within this geographic target area, the consultants believe that EDDDA should focus a greater amount of their attention on the following subsets:

- 48126 – Thirty-seven percent (37%) of the respondents to the Intercept Survey come from this zip code. And respondents to the Resident Survey from this zip code are, on average, at least twice as likely to shop in East Downtown as other residents of the city, making this zip code the highest priority area for building on existing interest in and patronage of East Downtown.
- 48228, 48210, and 48204 – These Detroit zip codes surround East Downtown on the North, Northeast and East represent 14% of all respondents in the Intercept Survey, making the residents of these zip codes significant existing consumers of goods and services in the district.

B. Consumer Targets – Reaching the best audiences.

Within the target area, (Figure 1), the EDDDA needs to further focus its efforts on those *consumer segments* that have the greatest potential to increase economic vitality in the district. The consultants recommend the following five consumer groups as top priorities for the DDA’s initiatives:

1. Current users of East Downtown – Not only the most “captive audience,” current users of the district – employees, shoppers and others – are also the most likely to combine their primary reasons for being in the district with additional shopping, visits to medical offices, and City Hall stops. They make more shopping trips to East Downtown than residents (3.7 per month versus 2.7 per month, respectively) and make more of their recent purchases – in more categories of goods and services – than residents by more than threefold (see Table 4, p.9 in *Residents Survey* and Table 6, p. 12 of *Intercept Survey*) .
2. Budget-conscious consumers – The Intercept Survey revealed that as many as 36% of respondents fall into this category – elderly (13%), unemployed (10%), students (9%), and full-time homemakers and care givers (4%) – and 52% of respondents reported household incomes of less than \$35,000 per year.³ Their goal with shopping is to keep costs down: value goods and the nearby proximity of East Downtown should be highly valued by these consumers.
3. Consumers of Middle Eastern descent – Sixteen percent (16%) of Resident Survey respondents, 20% of Intercept Survey respondents, and 30% of Dearborn residents in the 2000 Census identified themselves as of Middle Eastern descent, representing a significant existing and potential consumer market for East Downtown.
4. African-American Customers – Thirty-three percent (33%) of Intercept Survey respondents identified themselves as African-American, making them a significant consumer group with existing experience using East Downtown as a shopping district.

³ City wide, 33% of households report incomes of less than \$35,000 per year.

5. Young consumers – People age 35 or younger made up 43% of the Intercept Survey responses, 15% of the Resident Survey respondents, and more than 53.4% of the 2007 Census in the target zip codes.

C. Priority Product and Service Clusters – East Downtown’s strengths.

With a target area focused on the city of Dearborn and the nearby Detroit zip codes, and with five potential consumer groups identified, the next step is to identify the potential “clusters” of existing goods and services that East Downtown can currently market to these consumers.

A cluster is simply a group of businesses that sell goods or services that have some relationship to each other. Food and beverage is a common example. But for the purposes of creating a market position for East Downtown, the clusters need to be more defined and descriptive.

The consultants have reviewed the EDDDA online business directory, the responses in the Residents and Intercept Surveys, and the comments from the Focus Groups. All of these sources help to determine, not just which businesses support which cluster, but which businesses are already identified as destination or landmark operators in the district. These destination businesses will play a particularly important role in enriching and expanding the role clusters can play in the economic development of the district.

From these materials and their visits to the district, the consultants recommend that EDDDA consider developing and promoting the following seven business clusters in the district:

- Arts & Fashion – At the moment, arts businesses or fashion businesses alone are not plentiful enough in the district; but combined, you can identify dozens of goods and services sold in the district right now that could contribute to an Arts and Fashion cluster, including:

Clothing

Beauty services and products

Art supplies

Museum exhibits and activities

Cosmetic medical services

Music

Books and comics

Among the “anchors” for an arts and fashion cluster are:

Blick Art Materials

Wonderland Music

Hewitt’s Music

Stormy Records

Green Brain Comics
Al Wissam
Arab-American National Museum

And a review of the business directory suggests that there could be as many as 38 businesses contributing to an Arts and Fashion cluster.

- Cooking & Noshing – East Dearborn does have a lot of restaurants, but it also can boast stores and shops with convenience and specialty foods. There are countless ways to create events and marketing programs around the Great American Pastime – eating! Businesses that could be cluster members include:
Tablecloth restaurants
Diners and cafés
Bars
Coffee shops
Specialty foods (bakeries, butchers, etc.)
Ethnic food shops
Convenience and grocery stores
Food-related services (Meals-on-Wheels)
Culinary programs in public schools, community college, trade schools

Among the oft-repeated business names that could anchor this cluster are:

Amani's Restaurant
M&M Café
Noah's Deli (not in district)
Lile's Ham Sandwich Shop
The Fish Market
Starbucks (outside of the DDA district)
Alcamo's
Joe's Top Dog Coney Island & Bar
Dmitri's on the Avenue
Red Star Restaurant
Peacock Restaurant (outside the DDA district)

The EDDDA business directory identifies as many as 33 businesses that could participate in this cluster.

- After Hours – This may not be the best title for this cluster as it could invoke the strip-club atmosphere that the district would like to leave behind. But the idea is to create a cluster that promotes the after-work opportunities in the district. This is perhaps the weakest cluster at the moment, but is bound to have assets that are hidden to those of us not using them. Business categories would include:
Restaurants
Coffee establishments

Clubs
Rental Halls
Bookstores with evening hours
Lecture and performance halls
Programmed public spaces
Billiards halls
Bowling alleys
Arab American National Museum (evening programs)

The survey responses did not single out any particular businesses as good evening operations, but several of the focus groups – young people, business owners, and residents – all mentioned the desire for things to do in the evening and for businesses to stay open longer. And from a review of the business directory, it appears that the district has perhaps ten businesses (if you include the ‘gentlemen’s clubs’) that could fit the bill, and many more, if retail stores and certain services (like hair salons) could be persuaded to stay open longer.

- Here to Help – This services cluster is by far the largest cluster in the district, as it is in many ‘Main Street’ downtowns. Service businesses make up the vast majority of small businesses in the U.S., so a cluster like “Here to Help” is really a cluster with many subsets, including but not limited to the following: (number in parentheses is the number of businesses listed in the business directory)
Legal and accounting (15)
Medical and dental (26)
Beauty (11)
Financial and insurance (14)
Social support (including employment, social service, immigration services, social clubs, etc.) (16)
Recreation (gyms, sports training, classes, etc.) (4)
Design, construction, and engineering (7)
Digital/tech services (6)
Real estate and property management (5)

Service businesses are notoriously difficult to promote and market. But given the recommended focus on city residents, and given the needs and consumer potential of the five target audiences, East Downtown should make every effort to create marketing messages – and when appropriate, events – that promote the district’s community-focused service firms. After all, there are in excess of 100 businesses that could fill the bill.

- International Crossroads – Over and over again, survey results and focus group comments point to the district’s strength as a center of Arab-American businesses. On closer inspection, the district actually has a strong cluster of businesses representing a variety of nationalities and regions, including Indian, Italian,

Eastern European, Asian, and Middle Eastern. Businesses in the district that could contribute to this cluster cross almost every category to include:

Clothing and accessories
Home furnishings and gifts
Eat-in dining
Take-away and informal dining
Grocery goods
Specialty foods (like pastries)
Salons
Social services

Survey respondents and focus group members were quick to name a number of businesses that fit the international theme, including:

Alcamo's
Amani's Restaurant
Peacock Restaurant (not in district)
Noah's Deli (not in district)
Dmitri's on the Avenue

And, with service businesses, the district can boast at least 28 businesses that could be clustered and promoted as the community's International Crossroads.

- Life-long Learning – Like the “After Hours” cluster, an educational cluster may not be strong at the moment, but some existing service businesses and cultural institutions can help build the brand for East Downtown as a place to learn new things. Certainly among those businesses are:
Arab-American National Museum (lectures, children's programs, etc.)
Green Brain Comics (author lectures, readings, workshops, etc.)
Sports and fitness studios (Tae Kwon Do, Karate, Yoga, etc.)
Dance studios
Blick Art Materials (demonstrations, art classes, etc.)
Driving school

Seven businesses are listed in the directory that could fit this cluster. And the offerings can be expanded by partnering with the Dearborn Public Schools, Henry Ford Community College, U-M Dearborn, the Center for Creative Studies, Wayne State University, Lawrence Tech, and trade schools in the metro region by to design learning events, identify and secure teaching space, and jointly promote the offerings. Lastly, the EDDDA can help other businesses in the district promote themselves by offering learning events. For instance, beauty salons can offer make-up demonstrations, tailors and dry cleaners can teach basic sewing and clothing repairs, and restaurants and specialty food purveyors can offer cooking classes. Being seen as a diverse center for learning is a niche that no one else in the city is currently offering.

- Hearth and Home – So many businesses can fall under the category of home improvements, home furnishings, and home environment, including:
 - Furniture
 - Accessories
 - Antiques
 - Electronics
 - Home improvement materials (curtains, shades, flooring, windows, roofing, paint, etc.)
 - Architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design
 - Home security
 - Gardening supplies

Currently, none of the people surveyed or interviewed pointed out specific businesses as destinations in this cluster, but as many as 28 businesses in the directory could contribute to this category. If the EDDDA pursues a market identity for the district that is hometown and community-centric, as recommended in this report, then this cluster will have significant promise in the future.

These recommendations are not meant to suggest that every business in the district is ready to make a positive contribution to the development of these clusters. Many are not and will require help from the EDDDA to:

- (1) better understand the potential for these targeted consumer markets to support their business;
- (2) improve one or more aspects of their business behavior (hours, product mix, merchandising, service quality, promotion, and interaction with the rest of the district, for example); and
- (3) make the commitment to work *in cooperation* with their colleagues and the EDDDA.

The EDDDA needs to establish priorities for these clusters and start with those that have the most immediate potential. Likewise, the organization should look out for *additional cluster ideas* – like Health & Wellness, for example – that could be pursued.

These are critical first steps in business retention and expansion and will be reiterated in the recommendations in the next session.

Ultimately, creating *geographic* clusters will be another potential tool for economic development of the district. Geographic clusters are those that find (or place) businesses with shared goods and services, and shared customers, *in proximity to each other*. “Antiques Row” and “Restaurant Row” are common examples, but others are emerging as downtowns redefine themselves. East Downtown needs to focus on

enhancing the operations and marketing of its existing clusters before it undertakes the more aggressive process of engineering geographic clusters within the district.

D. Business Retention & Enhancement

No matter how much you want to recruit that new Ben & Jerry's or Sephora, it is always best to *begin with what you have*. Public and private-sector leaders simply can not successfully recruit new businesses if they don't have a core of healthy, competitive businesses to help make the case.

For East Downtown Dearborn, there is a second reason to focus your efforts on retention and enhancement first: the district needs to be prepared for the customer (and future business) potential that will come from the employees, customers, and residents of the recently announced Dearborn Town Center development.

The consultants have outlined in some detail five major recommendations for business retention and enhancement:

1. Additional information gathering is needed...now and in the future – Even with the results of the Residents and Intercept Surveys, the focus group observations, Census data and projections, and business information, there will always be a need to know more. Now that the EDDDA is equipped with recommendations for the optimum target area, consumer markets, and existing business clusters, the organization needs to collect and understand the following information:

- *Create a thorough and comprehensive property and business database.* The organization already has a start on this effort, but to be useful for business retention and enhancement – indeed to be useful for future business recruitment and commercial development – this database needs to include dozens of pieces of information, including:

For the Building

Property description & ownership information
Age of building
Assessed value
Tax status (including liens, foreclosures, etc.)
Gross & leasable square footage
Parking facts (if on-site)
Property condition (outside & inside)
Digital photos (inside, outside, above)

For the Business

Business name
Name of owner
Name of manager
Business contact info
Website URL
Products/services
Profile of customer
Hours of operation
Sales figures
Advertising budget
Number of employees
Product lines (by NAICS code)

The database should also include an indication of relevant cluster or clusters that each business.

This information is not found from one source, but many sources. And the more you want to know about a business – its customers, sales figures, advertising strategy – the more you will have to ask the business owner for it.

To make this database accurate and meaningful, you will have to mount a business visitation program to meet the owner, listen to their concerns, and glean the information you need. Certainly business and marketing students from Henry Ford Community College or U-M Dearborn can help, but these *visits* need to be conducted by the executive director and members of the board. Otherwise, many business owners will simply disregard the request for information.

- *Assess commercial competition in adjacent Detroit neighborhoods.* EDDDA staff should make a thorough inventory of the existing shopping and service businesses within these zip codes, in order to assess the depth and breadth of competition for the shopping dollars coming from these neighborhoods.
- *Regularly scheduled Roundtable Discussions.* EDDDA should host quarterly roundtable discussions of existing and potential customers, starting with the five consumer groups recommended in *Item II.B – Consumer Targets*. These informal focus groups should delve more deeply into the outcomes from the Resident and Intercept Surveys; ‘test drive’ business cluster ideas; brainstorm ways to reach other potential customers; and identify ways that existing East Downtown businesses could be doing better business. Over time, these roundtable participants can become “advisors” to the EDDDA on matters that affect consumers.

The EDDDA should also create a roundtable group composed of stakeholders in the newly announced Dearborn Town Center. Leasing agents, major tenants, and employees being transferred to the center can advise the organization about their needs and expectations, and EDDDA can let them know that the organization is here to help...and to listen.

- *Leakage Analysis.* A sales void (or leakage) analysis measures the difference (the “void”) between the total amount of money people spend on retail goods and services and the amount of money that is captured by the community’s businesses. If community residents are spending more money than local businesses capture, it means that they are probably shopping outside the community, and the community has a sales “leakage.” If, on the other hand, local businesses are selling more than community residents are spending, the community has a sales “surplus.”

The data in *Appendix B - "Retail MarketPlace Profile" (ESRI)* created for the seven target zip codes indicates an *overall* sales surplus, rather than a sales leakage, meaning that sales dollars are coming into these zip codes rather than being leaked out of them. However, there are categories of sales in which leakage is taking place. Those of the most concern (or opportunity) to East Downtown are:

Furniture and home furnishings
Lawn and garden products
Food and beverage and grocery stores
General merchandise and department stores
Office supplies and stationery
Florists
Full-service restaurants
Specialty food services
Miscellaneous retailers

The good news is that East Downtown has some existing or emerging business clusters in these categories. It is the opinion of the consulting team that EDDDA does not need to conduct additional sales leakage analysis, but should direct its efforts to capturing more local sales in the above categories and redirecting more *in-town consumer spending* to East Downtown.

- *Updated demographic data and projections* - The American Community Survey, conducted by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, will publish updated age and income data from 2006 by the end of 2008. EDDDA should retrieve this data and compare to the figures in the ESRI projections cited in Item II.A above.
2. Create projects and programs that help businesses capture more shoppers from these target markets – Just knowing about these five consumer targets isn't enough; businesses are going to need to know to reach them, how to attract them, and how to sell to them. The EDDDA needs to do the following:
- *See what shoppers see.* The organization should create a "secret shopper" program to send customers to existing businesses and see what they think. Secret shoppers could be selected from the roundtable discussion group members and then assigned to visit businesses that could, but do not typically market to them. Arab-American shoppers could visit non-Arab businesses, and young customers could shop older businesses. The goal is to learn how customers are treated and whether there are any goods or services that appeal to the secret shopper's consumer niche...and then communicate that information *back* to the business owners. The secret shopper information

provides more information for developing business services and cluster marketing.

- *Offer a wide range of training and consulting services to East Downtown businesses.* Armed with information about what target consumers want, and knowing more about how businesses are currently performing, the organization can begin to design assistance that helps bridge the gaps. Typical business assistance programs include:

Merchandising

Window display design

Storefront and signage improvements

Advice on creating value-added services

Advertising and marketing

Customer service training

Business assistance programs are offered either in regularly scheduled workshops or as one-on-one consultations. They will require some ‘selling’ in order to get businesses to take advantage of them. Be prepared to go door-to-door to drum up participation. And the more you can provide good basic information in writing and in advance (“Ten Tips for Successful Window Displays”), the more likely you are to get businesses to respond.

- *Promote business cluster ideas to district businesses first.* Before EDDDA can promote the idea of the business clusters recommended in Item II.A, they need to sell the businesses on it. To do that, the organization needs to:
 - Bring businesses together to introduce the cluster marketing idea and unveil the seven proposed cluster groups. Letters, emails, and after-work receptions can be used to explain the advantages of cooperative marketing around targeted “themes.”
 - Create specialty business directories, based on the seven cluster groups, and distribute to local businesses. These specialized directories will serve two purposes: (1) they will remind the business owner of the other businesses in the cluster; and (2) they can be a customer service giveaway to shoppers that then may patronize other businesses in the district.
 - Host “get to know each other” meetings (with snacks and beverages) that introduce businesses within a cluster to each other. These get-togethers could be held in participating businesses’ shops as a means to get owners in and out of each others’ operations. Such get-togethers also provide a venue for introducing new marketing ideas, discussing business assistance programs, or acknowledging successful new business strategies.
 - Help identify and even set up cross-merchandising between businesses within the cluster. For instance, Blick Art Materials could create window displays with Al Wissam (both members of the Arts and Fashion cluster) that show artists creating the colorful fashions. Or Stormy Records could serve as guest DJ at an event at the Arab American National Museum, or

Starbucks could feature a selection of “pastries of the month” from local shops.

- Encourage cross promotion between service businesses. EDDDA should encourage professional and other service businesses to use the information in the specialized business directories to cross-refer between service professionals. Accountants can refer to attorneys, physicians to pharmacies, fitness clubs to physical therapists; the list can go on and on.
- *Promote target clusters to customers.* Once district businesses are on board with the cluster idea, the EDDDA can assist by promoting the clusters to the target area. Promotional activities could include:
 - Specialty directories (accompanied by the complete East Downtown Directory) direct mailed to targeted zip codes. Consider creating Arabic versions of the specialty directories as well.
 - Specialty directories online at EDDDA web site, with links to all web sites of businesses listed in a particular cluster. Consider creating Arabic versions of the specialty directories here as well.
 - Quarterly advertising of a “featured cluster.” It is important to target the media ad buys based on the cluster and the intended target markets.
 - Create cluster “events.” Most of these clusters will require the creation of events to help connect businesses in the cluster to their potential customers.
 - Types of cluster events could include:
 - “Taste of E-Town” – to promote the Cooking & Noshing cluster
 - “Here to Help Community Fair” – to promote the service business cluster
 - “East Dearborn International Festival” – to promote the International Crossroads cluster
 - “Hearth & Home Business and Downtown Living Tour” – to promote the home furnishings and home-related services and offer tours of downtown living options.

Some of these events should be held in one location – like the “Here to Help Community Fair.” Others could be in one location or spread throughout participating businesses – like “Taste of E-Town.” And others are strictly in-house in each participating business – like the “Hearth & Home Tour” idea.

3. Create and promote financial assistance programs and incentives to get businesses and property owners to make strategic improvements – Most businesses in the district will need to make some sort of improvement in order to better serve existing customers and attract new ones. The EDDDA can be instrumental in designing and promoting a variety of financial programs, including:

- Loans or lines of credit for purchase of inventory or creation of new services
- Loans or matching grants for interior, exterior, sign, and lighting improvements
- Loans or matching grants for building façade improvements

Needless to say, financial assistance will require partnerships with the City, local banks, County and State financing programs, and specialty partners like ACCESS or the Arab-American Chamber of Commerce. The EDDDA needs to take the lead on creating the programs that best suit the needs of the businesses, rather than trying to make the business needs somehow fit the assistance programs currently being offered. Armed with what you will know about the marketplace and the business climate, the EDDDA will be the best advocate for customized financial programs.

4. Take lead on improving/streamlining/reforming the environment for business development. – Again, if EDDDA does its homework, it will be the best organization to suggest improvements to the licensing, permitting, inspection, enforcement and other regulatory controls. No one knows at this point which types of improvements will be necessary, but it is clear that businesses in the district are frustrated with the pace and perceived equity of the decision-making process at City Hall.
5. Establish a role for EDDDA in public parking maintenance and marketing – Parking supply was not identified as a problem in either of the survey documents or focus group meetings, but the condition of public parking, navigation to parking lots, and signage was identified more than once. EDDDA should consider partnering with the City to provide enhanced maintenance services, create a wayfinding and signage system for the parking inventory, and establish marketing tools to promote the parking supply.

For additional information about business retention, please see “10 Steps to a Comprehensive Business Retention Program,” Valecia Crisafulli, *Main Street News*, Vol. 193, January 2003 (National Trust for Historic Preservation), www.mainstreet.org.

E. Business Recruitment Strategies

New business development does not necessarily translate into “business recruitment” as the immediate next step. Oftentimes, the most effective course to developing new businesses downtown is for a successful *existing retailer* to establish new, additional stores in the district. Typically, business development happens in one of five ways. From easiest to hardest, these include:

- An existing East Downtown business adds a new product line(s) to their existing business
- An existing East Downtown business (or other Dearborn business) opens a new store
- A business in the region adds a location in East Downtown
- A business in region relocates to East Downtown
- A local entrepreneur opens a new business

Before you can recruit businesses to your district, you need to:

1. Have your existing businesses on board and participating in the retention and enhancement strategies described above.
2. Identify key gaps in the product mix. Review the current product mix in the district and identify the gaps or weaknesses in each business type. Look at Table 4 in the Resident's Survey (p.9) and Table 6 in Intercept Survey (p.12) to identify business categories where there is potential to recapture purchases currently made in competing business areas.

From the research, the consultants recommend that EDDDA focus its future recruitment efforts as follows:

- *Focus on value-oriented businesses that serve a lower-to-middle income price point.* Shooting for upscale businesses ignores the strongest consumer targets and puts you in competition with districts with a proven track record and a market.
 - *Focus on convenience goods that appeal to downtown employees and nearby residents.* Restaurants, cafes, take-away food, cards and gifts, small hardware items, photocopying and photo processing, mail services, cleaners, and coffee shops should all be considered.
 - *Identify existing business operators in the region that run successful businesses that* (1) already appeal to your target consumers and (2) fill a gap or enhance your existing product mix. "Operators" can be either owners who may be interested in expansion into another physical area, or experienced managers of successful businesses who may be interested in owning their own business. For example, you may identify a business in the Metro area that sells Middle Eastern imports and shares your customers. Or you may find successful operators of businesses that already attract consumers you want to keep – Internet cafes, for example, that appeal to young shoppers.
3. Use the property/business database to identify key locations for recruitment of business prospects. Recruitment isn't strategic – or ultimately successful – if key businesses aren't directed to the best locations.

4. Look ‘local’ first. As mentioned earlier, there are very likely successful local businesses and entrepreneurs that may be poised to take on the operation of new businesses types. A specialty grocer may be ready to open a dessert bar. Or an ethnic restaurant may want to serve the same market segment with a music store or foreign-language bookstore.
5. Create additional incentives targeted to new development. The portfolio of business assistance programs may meet the need, but the EDDDA should listen to potential investors and design new assistance programs if needed.
6. Use the EDDDA web site to promote sites, incentives, market data, and priority business targets. Investors are always looking for opportunities; you don’t want them to hear about your district and not be able to find information on their own.

Now you’re ready to recruit new businesses!

7. Establish a *customized and comprehensive recruitment program*. Successful recruitment programs share the following characteristics:
 - *A top-notch recruitment team is established* – The team should include EDDDA staff, a lead board member or members, successful local business owners (called upon when their business type intersects with the recruit’s business), a local banker, and a liaison from the city’s Community and Economic Development Department. *This is a team:* they will need to know everything about the key recruiting targets; be familiar with the data, incentives, and priority sites; and participate in all aspects of the recruitment process.
 - *A “hit list” of key recruitment prospects is created* – Beginning with a list of business types, EDDDA should create a list of *specific* businesses that fit the type and serve the target consumer groups. For instance, if the business type is “restaurant,” hit-list businesses could include chains like Applebees and local operators like the diner in the next county. Once identified, EDDDA needs to collect all possible information on the hit-list business, including ownership, current locations, operational strengths, and arguments to be used to recruit them. In essence, you will be creating dossiers on each priority recruit.
 - *A map of the strategic sites to offer to potential recruits* – The map should be keyed to which recruit is optimal for which site, and should include all relevant back-up data about the site (drawn from the oft-updated property and business database described in Item II.D.1 above).

- *Reconnaissance visits to “scope out” potential recruits* – The recruitment team needs to go shopping – literally – to get to know the businesses that may form the key priority targets for expansion in East Downtown. These are unannounced visits to see the operation, look at the product mix, chat with fellow customers and get a feel for the quality of the business. Team members should go out in pairs, so as not to draw attention, but to still get more than one assessment.
- *Formal visit to the potential recruit* – The team needs to go back to the top-priority businesses, ask for an appointment, and explain their interest. Again, the whole team probably shouldn’t descend on the owner, but the team should be hand-picked to best address any questions the potential recruit may have and assess the recruit’s interest and capabilities.
- *Host the recruit’s visit to East Downtown* – If the out-of-town visit is promising, then the targeted recruit should be formally invited to visit East Downtown. The EDDDA should “pull out all the stops” by giving a tour of the district (and the community, if the recruit is unfamiliar with Dearborn); meeting with the Mayor; touring potential sites; reviewing costs and incentives; visiting with strategically selected business owners; and meeting the business community at a hosted reception. The goal? The recruit leaves believing that his or her business is a slam-dunk for East Downtown Dearborn.
- *Follow up and serve as step-by-step liaison* – The EDDDA staff and recruitment team will need to step in and provide all follow-up tasks required to turn the recruit into a new East Downtown business.
- *Keep in touch* – Business recruitment prospects are typically cultivated over a period of a year or more *before any announcements are even made*. Your timing for recruitment may not correspond to your recruit’s strategic plans. But stay in touch; send updates about your progress, new (supportive) market data, newsletters, etc. Your recruit may be ready to make a move later on.
- *Promote the new business throughout the development process* – From the moment that it is announced to the ribbon cutting and beyond, the EDDDA should be promoting the new business to the media, the East Downtown business community, and the new business’ key consumer markets.

The consultants recommend that EDDDA do the design and roll-out for the recruitment program to coincide with the opening of Dearborn Town Center (projected for June 2010). That will, however, require the EDDDA to begin *immediately* on (1) completion of the property and business database and (2) the creation of business retention and enhancement activities.

The National Trust Main Street Center is about to release its new version of *Revitalizing Downtown*; visit www.mainstreet.org for more information on business recruitment.

F. Place Making

At every turn, in the survey results, the focus groups, and individual conversations, the importance of *improving the environment* of East Downtown was emphasized. Intercept respondents referred to correcting the appearance and condition of buildings, addressing storefront vacancies, and improving the condition of streets, parking, and traffic. Residents agreed that vacancies are a problem, but added that security and policing were also issues. And focus group participants had the most to say, mentioning storefronts, lighting, cleanliness, street furniture, crosswalks and walkability among items that need attention.

All of these are issues are outside of the businesses, literally and figuratively. The problems exist outside of the shop, restaurant, or office. And the *power* to correct them lies outside the ability of any individual business owner. But the impact of problems in the perceived public space affects how well the place functions as a *shopping district*, as an *economic unit*.

The consultants recommend that EDDDA embrace “place making” as not only a visual, aesthetic goal, but as a *key economic development strategy*. To do so, the organization needs to choose place-making projects that help business and property owners enhance their performance *and* address what target consumer groups want to see in an improved environment. And whatever the outcomes of place making, they should all contribute to differentiating East Downtown from West Downtown. Nine opportunities to improve place – in no particular order of priority – follow:

1. Get involved in parking maintenance and marketing. See Item II.D.5 above.
2. Conduct an evening/nighttime lighting analysis and plan. How the district “feels” at night is significantly different than during the day. And with very few businesses open at night, even ambient light from the shops is missing. EDDDA should do an inventory of existing lighting, including type, placement and condition, and make recommendations to the city and the property owners regarding practical and long-range lighting improvements. EDDDA will probably require the assistance of a lighting consultant to complete this project.

3. Conduct a pedestrian safety audit and create a walkability plan for the district. EDDDA needs to take the lead in bringing the decision makers together to improve pedestrian mobility in the district. Looking at crosswalks, posted speeds, signal timing, and traffic calming options will inform a plan that recommends changes that (1) increase the pedestrian friendliness on Schaefer and (2) re-establish the balance between cars and people on Michigan Avenue. The Project for Public Spaces – www.pps.org – is probably the best source of information and technical assistance on the subject.
4. Mitigate the effects of vacant storefronts. Many downtown organizations coordinate ways to use vacant storefronts. Art exhibits, cross-merchandising displays, community service programs, and displays that explain the projects of the EDDDA are all ways that vacant storefronts can be given some purpose until the space is leased and active. Of course, using vacant storefronts requires the permission of the property owner; but getting to know these owners *now* will help open doors when EDDDA wants to talk to them about business recruitment and economic development opportunities.
5. Conduct a storefront conditions inventory. This data should be gathered as part of the property and business database recommended in Item II.D.1. It becomes useful as a *place-making* tool when the organization goes to (1) create incentives and financial assistance for building improvements and (2) to help rank properties as priority locations for business recruitment.
6. Research potential for a downtown sidewalk café/merchandising ordinance. EDDDA should take the lead to determine the best options for businesses to use the space outside their storefronts. Sidewalk cafes, book stalls and newsstands, flower carts, all are options that help soften the sometimes sterile feeling of the sidewalk. But care must be taken not to confound another important goal – safe pedestrian mobility.
7. Conduct a sidewalk and street bed conditions analysis and make recommendations to the city. Curb cuts have been an issue, but respondents also mentioned that road conditions are a hazard. EDDDA should keep an inventory of these conditions and create a strategy to help the city (and the State, as it regards Michigan Avenue) stay ahead of problems.
8. Analyze City Hall Park and propose a place-making plan. City Hall Park is the district’s premier opportunity for creating a sense of place. EDDDA needs to take the lead in assessing its current design and function and then prepare recommendations for capital improvements, maintenance, and programming. EDDDA should consider offering to manage the park on behalf of the city, including repairs, maintenance, furnishings, and programming.

9. Create an enhancements plan. Respondents always point to the little things that they believe will “spruce up” a district. Banners, hanging pots, information kiosks can all play a role. The EDDDA has been involved in the streetscape improvements of the past few years; now the organization can establish a plan for the additional elements that take the spirit of the streetscape plan and move it throughout the district.

Most of these nine suggestions make up the elements of a *comprehensive public space plan* for a district. Improvements to Michigan Avenue aside, the community and the business owners see a need to do more. These activities can help create a program for the public realm that builds off recent capital improvements and increases the users’ sense of place.

G. Marketing & Communications

Long before the first business is recruited, and concurrent with all the hard work of business retention and enhancement, downtown organizations must help attract people to the district and *tell the story of downtown* now and in the future. Marketing and communications are critical elements of downtown economic development. Nine recommendations follow:

Marketing

1. Animate the district. EDDDA needs to invite the five target consumer groups to visit East Downtown more often and stay longer. The best way to do that is to offer a full schedule of activities, with tie-ins to the businesses in the district positioned to benefit.

City Hall Park should become the ‘community stage’ for most of these activities. And not every event should be expected to attract all five consumer targets; consider the following ideas for events and how they can be designed to target different consumers:

- **“Here to Help Fair”**

Target business cluster: East Downtown’s service businesses

Target consumer groups: the budget-conscious, people of Middle Eastern descent, African-Americans – in short, groups for whom services already exist in the district.

Event details: Held in one location, with booths, lectures, individual appointments, and refreshments and entertainment to keep the event lively.

Goals: To reinforce East Downtown’s identity as a community-focused, caring commercial ‘neighborhood.’

- **Farmers Market**

Target business cluster: Cooking & Noshing, inasmuch as businesses in this cluster tie-in to the Farmers Market event.

Target consumer groups: ALL

Event details: Should be held in City Park Hall and scheduled – at least initially – on a weekday, from Noon-7:00 pm (if possible), in order to capture both downtown users (daytime) and nearby residents (after work). Over time, the market may grow to a weekday *and* a weekend schedule.

Goals: Animate the public space and highlight East Downtown’s Cooking & Noshing business cluster.

- **Musical Events**

Target business clusters: Arts & Fashion, Cooking & Noshing, Here to Help (e.g. businesses offering dance and music instruction), inasmuch as businesses in this cluster tie-in to the particular music offering that draws their potential customer. Cooking & Noshing should tie in to every music event by promoting a ‘come early or stay late and have a bite with us’ message.

Target consumer groups: Music can attract all of the targeted consumer groups, but don’t expect every event to attract everybody. Musical events should be offered that run the gamut of cultures and eras, in order to attract each target consumer group at least twice during the events season.

Event details: Music should be happening during the lunch hour on weekdays, to capture downtown users, and in the evenings – like the recently revived “Music under the Stars” – to attract residents and get employees to stay longer. And eventually, EDDDA may want to organize weekend music festivals that could draw from a regional audience. Targeted businesses should tie in.

Goals: Animate the district, encourage patrons to explore, help the businesses tap the captive audience.

These are just a few of the kinds of events that the EDDDA should organize to enliven the district and fill the gap between now and when business retention and enhancement begins to bear fruit. But remember: *animating the district is an on-going proposition*: the public’s expectation for these events – and more like them – will grow as your success grows.

2. Create mini-events that help flesh out targeted business clusters. Not everything is a major event in downtown, but as you begin to identify ways that businesses within a cluster can cross promote, the organization will need to “add value” by creating small events that help move people from one participating business to another.

For example, let's say that the Arts & Fashion cluster decides to do a Dearborn Fashion Week and all of the related businesses participate with special promotions, open houses, etc. As they develop *their* business promotions, the EDDDA could organize an East Downtown Fashion Show that highlights the fashion talent in the region, is held at the AANM or the Park, or is "progressive" – meaning that the fashion show is held at different business venues along the way. The show is the "connective tissue" that gets patrons to visit the various businesses and gives the event life outside of the individual shops' doors.

Another example? Coordinate with owners of vacant storefronts to use the space for events to highlight cluster businesses. For instance, a vacant restaurant could be used to host a weekend of cooking demonstrations by other restaurants and specialty grocers in the district.

3. Use consumer seasons to create events around business clusters. For instance:

- **“Home for the Holidays”** – a December event that could include the Hearth & Home cluster, the Arts & Fashion cluster, and the Cooking & Noshing cluster, by creating:
 - A progressive open house to participating businesses that serve treats and beverages supplied by local food shops and restaurants.
 - The sale/giveaway of “East Dearborn Treats” recipe cards of favorite items in local restaurants and food shops. The cards can be collected by visiting the businesses in question, can be purchased at all participating shops, or bought at the EDDDA office.
 - Santa Claus – this could be arranged to happen periodically over the holiday season, or as one element of another holiday activity. It could be held in the Park – which would make it more festive, but cold – or it could be held in one of the vacant storefronts, magically transformed (by local businesses or civic clubs) into Santa's Workshop.
 - Choir concerts, strolling carolers, all scheduled to coincide with the events that the participating merchants are planning.

- **“Prom Night”** – A Spring event that could include hair salons, clothing stores, limousine services, restaurants and non-alcoholic club nights, florists, and photographers. The youth consumer segment is the obvious target, but events could be designed to get families – especially budget-conscious families – involved as well. EDDDA could:
 - Host an after-Prom block party
 - Create a raffle for a complete Prom package for any prom-goers or parents who shop participating businesses and sign up for the raffle (this is a way to capture customer information as well).

- Offer a Prom photo event before the Prom, perhaps at City Hall Park, where teenagers and their parents can come for some entertainment and a free professional photograph of the happy prom-goers.
- **College “Welcome Back” Events** – With students nearby at Henry Ford Community College and U-M Dearborn, not to mention schools in the greater Detroit area, EDDDA could create a new tradition by welcoming them back to school...and into the district. Arts & Fashion, Hearth & Home, and Cooking & Noshing clusters could be involved, not to mention local banks and other service providers. And the youth target market would be the focus. EDDDA could sponsor:
 - A tailgate party in the Park or in one of the municipal parking lots, where local food purveyors set up booths, musical groups entertain, local businesses set up sales tables, and EDDDA gives away downtown gift certificates to participants who enter a raffle (again, customer information capture).
 - A block party that is strictly fun, but includes coupons, directories, and businesses open late hours to get students in.
 - A welcome-back goodie bag that is distributed to every student, either through their residence halls, or at the time of registration. This could also promote a raffle or giveaway that requires them to visit shops in the district by a certain date in order to qualify.

These are but three examples of ways to take advantage of established consumer ‘seasons’ to highlight your business clusters and enliven the district.

Communications

4. Get *internal* communications in place **first**. Before you can create marketing programs that help emerging business clusters promote themselves, you must have systems of communication in place with your businesses. E-mail blasts, a secure, “businesses only” page on the EDDDA website, inserts in your newsletter, and regularly scheduled social meetings are all tools for making sure that no one can say “I didn’t know this event/promotion/marketing opportunity was happening!” Item II.D.2 above outlines additional ways to communicate with the businesses...and get them to get to know each other.
5. Establish the overall Identity and Branding Program for the district. Armed with information about the target audiences and the potential business clusters in East Downtown, the EDDDA should move ahead with establishing a *clear identity* for the district and the *brand messages* it wishes to convey. The consultants believe that the identity/message should:

- *Emphasize community* – Your target area is the city and the surrounding Detroit neighborhoods. Your primary consumer groups are current users, nearby residents, budget-conscious households, and people of color. Your identity, therefore, should reflect – and be proud of – a commitment to enhancing the quality of life for the community.
- *Incorporate adjectives that address issues and attract patrons* – Creating brand messages that include words like “caring,” “safe,” “fun,” “diverse,” “welcoming,” and “convenient” all establish a commitment to delivering a certain quality of life for the Dearborn and neighboring community. Brand messages that use these descriptors will help to differentiate East Downtown from West. An example: “East Downtown: Serving Up Hospitality, Diversity, and Fun!”

The EDDDA contract with The Urban Agenda includes additional technical assistance in creating a branding and identity program for the district.

6. Begin to get the results of the market analysis out to the media. It is important that the public *sees* the EDDDA establishing an assertive direction for economic development. And while the elements of business retention, enhancement, recruitment, marketing, and place making are not yet selected, the EDDDA should let the public know what *direction* it is committing to. Create media releases, interviews, and materials that
 - Describe East Downtown’s trade area
 - Discuss who the district’s most loyal customers are and what they do
 - Introduce the district’s priority consumer groups
 - Outline the district’s business clusters

Getting this information out will go a long way to establishing the EDDDA’s role in downtown economic development and the direction in which it intends to take the district.

7. Start promoting the clusters. There is nothing preventing the EDDDA from letting the public know the breadth and depth of the district’s business offerings right now. By organizing the business inventory by the recommended clusters, you are telling existing and potential shoppers that “there’s more to East Downtown than you think.” Obvious first places to start include:
 - The EDDDA website
 - Direct mail of cluster directories and general business directory to the target area zip codes
 - Strategic advertising, based on the media preferences of the five target consumer groups

These are not one-time communications; they should be repeated at regular intervals. The web site should be updated as soon as businesses come and go from the cluster. Direct mail should be scheduled once a year. And strategic advertising should be planned based on the optimum frequency each medium offers.

8. Create strategic communications plans as cluster events are developed. Each cluster, each target consumer group, and each event will lend itself to a different communications approach. As the EDDDA develops these cluster events, it must develop the corollary communications strategy. For instance, a Prom event is primarily targeted to youth; as a result, electronic and “viral” marketing techniques should be employed. But an event like the “Here to Help Fair” might use more traditional means of communications, like radio and print advertising, and media coverage. Take the time to answer the question, “what are the best ways for us to reach the target audience?”...and then focus your time and money on only those communications tools.

III. Organizational Capacity

This report is anything but a “short list” of recommendations. But it shouldn’t be short. Given the market potential of East Downtown, and the more detailed focus that this report brings, the number of potentially successful projects may be limitless. What the consultants have included are what they believe are the essential steps and directions to take to capture the target audience and create economic vitality now and in the future.

This amount of work can not be tackled successfully under the current staff-leadership arrangement. So, to accomplish all this, the EDDDA needs to do the following:

1. Assess staff strengths and interests. There are so many different types of recommendations in this report, but one thing is certain: they will all require the time and talent of the EDDDA staff. Determining which staff members possess which strategic talents is the first step; but knowing which initiatives *interest them* may be just as important. The EDDDA needs to know the answer to both questions in order to assign staff, look for technical gaps, and supplement those gaps with some combination of additional staff, consultants, partnerships, and volunteers.
2. Assess EDDDA board leadership in the same vein. Economic development happens because *people encourage other people* to invest time and money to create new business opportunity. Period. Data is important, and knowing where you want to go is vital, but having the right people in the community make the effort to reach out – both to existing business operators and potential new investors – is the tipping point between progress and lethargy.

The EDDDA board – as a group and as a group of individuals – needs to examine its strengths and interest in moving the economic development agenda forward. As with staff, the board may need to supplement its roster with new or different skill sets, and *individual board members need to articulate precisely what role they want to play in the process.*

It is critical that individual board members – those with the skill *and* desire – step up to lead in the areas of marketing, retention, development of incentives, and eventually, recruitment.

3. Make choices. Not all business clusters can be pursued simultaneously. And all of these marketing and communications ideas may not have equal appeal. It is the job of the board – via the relevant committees – to make choices and set priorities.
4. Recruit exemplary business and property owners to aid in the process. Again, the one-on-one contact that comes with one business person reaching out to another can not be duplicated in a report or an event. Look for business people – in your district, in the city, and beyond – that you know are successful and ask them to help by being volunteer advisors to the EDDDA board, mentors to the district’s businesses, and trainers for specific elements of business enhancement and retention. You will be surprised how willing people can be when you ask them to lend their experience and expertise to the task.
5. Identify meaningful ways for others to volunteer. So many of the infinite number of tasks associated with these recommendations can be undertaken by smart, motivated volunteers who are supervised by staff and board leaders. As we have seen, students can gather data and create the necessary databases. Members of the target consumer groups can become “secret shoppers,” focus group members, even advisors to the board and committees. And people with specific talents – musicians, designers, chefs, virtually anyone – can share their skills as *part* of the events package. EDDDA needs to ask “where do we go for volunteers and what do we ask them to do?” for every recommendation in this report.
6. Spend money to make these recommendations happen. Beyond hiring consultants and making media buys, the EDDDA needs to be prepared to provide the “seed capital” to get many of these initiatives started. Hosting social meetings, buying banners, investing in street furniture, adding staff, underwriting the costs of recruitment visits, paying for raffle prizes, providing grant monies, supplementing business costs in return for participation, all of these (and more) are things that the EDDDA may have to pay for in order to get the ball rolling. And you are in an enviable position to do so; many, many downtown revitalization organizations do not have the fund balance that EDDDA enjoys.

7. Review the workplan and make adjustments – The workplan generated by the EDDDA board and staff in January 2007 identified many similar ideas. Now, with these recommendations, the board and staff should go back and provide more focus, direction, and project detail.

IV. Next Steps

To help the board and staff get started, the consultants offer the following timetable for consideration:

Recommendation	2008		2009			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1. Review and endorse/adjust target area, priority consumer groups, and business clusters	▪					
2. Focus on Business Retention & Enhancement	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Complete Additional Information Gathering (Item II.D.1)			▪			
Establish outreach systems to existing businesses and create projects to help them participate in clusters (Item II.D.2 and II.G.4)	▪	▪	▪			
Promote clusters to target consumer groups (Item II.D.2)				▪	▪	
Research and design business assistance programs (Item II.D.3). Launch deadline: Q3 2009.	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	
Research and recommend regulatory improvements (Item II.D.4)				▪		
Begin discussions with city about parking maintenance and marketing. Decision deadline: Q3 2009 (Item II.D.5)	▪	▪	▪	▪		
3. Begin place making activities (Item II.E)						
Prioritize recommendations (Item II.E.1-9)	▪					
Research and develop programs for first three priorities	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
4. Begin Marketing and Communications activities (Item II.G)	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
Identify three events to “animate the district” (Item II.G.1)	▪	▪				
Produce and promote these events (see Item II.G.8)			▪	▪	▪	▪
Identify three events to promote business clusters (Item II.G.2 & 3)	▪	▪				
Produce and promote these events (see Item II.G.8)			▪	▪	▪	▪
Design Identity and Branding messages (Item II.G.5) Launch deadline: Q3 2009	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	

Recommendation	2008		2009			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Promote results of market analysis to public (Item II.G.6 and 7) (on-going)	▪	▪				
5. Review organizational capacity and make adjustments (Item III.1-7). Adjustments in place or underway by Q1 2009	▪	▪	▪			
Recommendation	2009		2010			
	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6. Prepare business recruitment initiative (Item II.E) Goal: Have the recruitment strategy (and recruitment team ready to launch when Dearborn Town Center opens)	▪	▪	▪	▪		

V. Conclusion

Nothing about revitalizing downtown is easy. And business retention, enhancement, and recruitment are particularly time consuming. But there is no one else – no other *organization* – charged with the responsibility to development East Downtown Dearborn. In partnership with the city, the property owners, the business operators, and your residential community – and with the recommendations in this report – you have the leadership and the resources required to get the job done.

VI. Appendices and Attachments

Appendix A – Demographic and Income Profile (EDDDA target zip codes)
Demographic and Income Profile (Metropolitan Statistical Area)
Source: ESRI

Appendix B – Retail MarketPlace Profile (EDDDA target zip codes)
Source: ESRI

Appendix C – Related Articles

Attachments – East Downtown Dearborn Market Study: resident survey summary report
East Downtown Dearborn Market Study: intercept survey summary report
Summary Report of Focus Group Meetings