

IDENTITY DOSSIER

created for
Downtown Vancouver, Washington



CIVILIS CONSULTANTS
1310 NW Naito Pkwy, #303
Portland, OR 97209
503.867.8465
michele@civilisconsultants.com

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Acknowledgements

*This work was made possible through the sponsorship and wonderful support of **Vancouver's Downtown Association**. Additionally, there was fantastic participation and assistance on the part of Vancouverites and downtown business owners, property owners, and residents. A big and sincere thank you to all.*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Post WWII, the baby boom generation completely reshaped American cities, reorienting them toward the suburbs. Now, cities are in the process of undergoing another seismic shift, one that will have ramifications for decades to come. This time, instead of growing outward, cities are looking inward for success, toward their centers.

Which cities will survive and thrive in the decades to come? Those that offer walkability, are well connected with the rest of their region, and foster the type of work environment that contributes to the innovation economy.

Downtown Vancouver is uniquely poised, as a part of the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro Metropolitan Statistical Area, to offer superior amenities to people who want to live, work, and play in this new paradigm, a demographic that includes Generation Y. At 80 million strong, this up-and-coming segment of the population is larger than the postwar baby boom, and they will be impacting our built environment far into the future.

In order to help position downtown Vancouver to be thriving and economically successful, stakeholders recently collaborated on an identity building project to bring focus to the story that downtown is telling now, and to create an idea of the story it wants to tell in the future.

A brief overview of some of the key findings and recommendations for downtown Vancouver include:

Portland. Love it or hate it, Portland looms large on the psyche of Vancouverites, who usually describe their own city in terms of how it relates back to its southern neighbor. This association disappears when the focus is narrowed to the neighborhood level, indicating that people have a closer connection to their immediate local area, but lack an identity on a city-wide basis. It's hard to be the heart of a municipality that doesn't feel a cohesive city-wide identity. To begin broadening community connection, there should be expanded neighborhood association meetings for the groups and their leaders to cross their borders, share information, build vision, and receive technical assistance.

East/West Divide. There is almost a "Tale of Two Vancouvers" occurring in the city between the west-side core and the newer expansion to the east. This is both an emotional and geographic division that impacts downtown economically. A two-pronged approach should be taken to this issue. First, downtown should solidify its role as the heart of the I5 corridor. And second, it should begin making forays to better inform and engage the east-side about the downtown.

Experience District. Downtown's success can be linked to experience, because it can serve as a gateway for activities Vancouverites most like to pursue: walking, eating, cycling, boating, movies, outdoors, shopping, concerts, and sports. Since

downtown is on the border of a state with no sales tax, it cannot depend solely on retail/restaurant to build identity and activity.

Points of Intersection. The only point of intersection that resonated city-wide was Vancouver's unending pride and support for their schools. There was a second thread that was present though—one that relates to connection and community—and that was the perception that Vancouver was a great place to live because it was the perfect scale to have a positive impact on the community.

History. One of the oft-mentioned positive aspects of Vancouver as a whole, and downtown, specifically, was the city's rich and storied past. This is particularly relevant to downtown because it houses the architecture and cultural assets that hearken back to the founding of the city. These assets are what make downtown unique, unlike anywhere on earth, and they need to be further underscored by encouraging historic renovations, allowing new construction of a scale that suits historic infrastructure, and linking up the downtown with the incredible asset that is Fort Vancouver.



Dry Goods Store, Circa 1909, Vancouver, WA

Public/Private Collaboration. Private sector developers and investors like to see strong public/private partnerships and a unified vision about the future as they consider the potential upside for investment in an area. This was in evidence when the city renewed the area around Esther Short Park. Stakeholders present at the time of these projects speak fondly about the excitement and hope generated by clear vision and support for downtown from the public sector.

Leverage Downtown's Context. To be successful, downtown must take advantage of its context, which is scaled around an historic street grid. It cannot support the parking ratios, or the building form, found in arterial environments. Its greatest strength is the ability to easily create walkability and design/develop around multi-modal transportation. In fact, this gridded network in downtown, and in the entire city-center node, creates an important opportunity for differentiation, to tell a unique story by maximizing the contrast between downtown and the suburban environment in the rest of the city.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DOWNTOWN

Post WWII, the baby boom generation completely reshaped American cities, reorienting them toward the suburbs. Now, cities are in the process of undergoing another seismic shift, one that will have ramifications for decades to come. This time, instead of growing outward, cities are going to be looking inward for success, toward their centers.

This shift is occurring right now, and is evidenced in myriad ways, from the redistribution of the poor in metropolitan areas, to where new stadiums and ballparks are being constructed.

Income Demographics:

“The poor population in America’s suburbs — long a symbol of a stable and prosperous American middle class — rose by more than half after 2000. The increase in the suburbs was 53 percent, compared with 26 percent in cities. The recession accelerated the pace: two-thirds of the new suburban poor were added from 2007 to 2010. For the first time, more than half of the metropolitan poor live in suburban areas.” —NY Times, *Outside Cleveland, Snapshots of Poverty’s Surge in the Suburbs*, by Sabrina Tavernise, Published Oct. 24, 2011.

Stadium Construction:

“When the Dodgers left their Brooklyn bandbox 55 years ago for the vast parking lots of Chavez Ravine, the team ushered in a new era of stadium and arena building.

Inexpensive land, parking and freeway access became paramount — not proximity to decaying city centers. Stadiums and arenas were becoming sports fortresses surrounded by moats of parking, cut off from neighborhoods and city life.

In moving to San Francisco, the Warriors are following in the footsteps of nearly the entire NBA. Of the 22 NBA arenas built since 1992, 20 are in downtown areas, about half of which replaced arenas that were outside city centers.

Baseball has followed a similar trajectory, even though its stadiums require more seats and parking spaces. Since Baltimore’s Camden Yards ushered in the retro ballpark era in 1992, most of the 21 new baseball stadiums have been built in and around city centers.”

—Oakland Tribune, *Sports economics hinder Oakland; team’s primary stadium site not perceived to rival neighbors* by Matthew Artz, Published May 27, 2012.

What are the trends that are bringing about this reorientation toward the city core?

- Demographic Living Preferences of Baby Boomers and Generation Y
- Economic Shifts
- Street Infrastructure Expenses
- Reductions in Driving

Let's consider these in more detail individually.

Demographic Living Preferences

There are two demographic trends that are driving demand for walkable living infrastructure. The first is Generation Y's overwhelming preference for urban amenities, and the second will be the needs of baby boomers who want to age in place in their communities.

Generation Y is over 80 million strong and bigger than the postwar baby boom. This is a sizeable generation that will have a commensurately sizable impact on our built environment. Where do these young renters want to move if they could live anywhere? As was reported in the Las Vegas Sun by J. Patrick Coolican, Tuesday, Jan. 25, 2011:

“More than 80 percent said they would choose an urban area, or a suburban area that qualified as “urban lite,” such as Arlington, VA, or Bethesda, MD. These are suburbs that feature walkability and easy access to urban amenities.”

Baby Boomers also are considering walkability as they decide to downsize out of houses with big yards that require too much maintenance, or have too many stairs. Many want to age in place in their communities, but will have to move to housing that meets their physical constraints, their social desires, and that doesn't require a car to complete all errands.

According to real estate development advisors RCLCO, retiring Boomers will want:

Active lifestyles and social interaction; lifelong learning and cultural activities; proximity to shopping; closer-in village type neighborhoods in nature-oriented settings; homes that meet their new life stage (smaller with less maintenance) and safe urbanism.

It is possible to retrofit arterial patterns of development to make them more walkable. But, downtowns are the places where it is easiest and most affordable to create pedestrian-friendly infrastructure because they already have the scale of development, historic street grid, and the mixed-use amenities that Generation Y and downsizing Boomers want.

Economic Shifts

We are living in an era of transformation and dislocation that is similar to the Industrial Revolution. Who could have imagined a few decades ago that by 2012, newspapers would be going out of business, that employers would find their workers on a free online ad listing service called Craigslist, and that Kodak would be dismantled, filing for bankruptcy?

The manner in which people gather information, socialize, connect, work, build companies, and make money is changing rapidly.

The basis for this new economy is brainpower and innovation. More and more, the production of goods is being outsourced to machines and low-skilled, low-paying labor, as evidenced by proclamations from manufacturers such as this one from the iPad manufacturer: Foxconn announced their plans to rely more on robots, and hopes to introduce 1 million of them over the next three years.

The impact of this trend toward automation is being felt keenly in America as industrial capacity increases but employment decreases. For instance, over the past decade, the flow of goods emerging from U.S. factories has risen by about a third, but factory employment has fallen by roughly the same amount, as reported by The Atlantic in their January/February 2012 article, *Making It in America*.

In the future, this means that the most economically successful cities will be those that attract highly skilled workers that are the basis of the innovation economy. And the more of these prized workers a city attracts, the more that city will foster invention if they also encourage density and quality of connection between smart people. As you can see in the research below, the quality of social and professional engagement is the key to developing human intellectual capital. And downtowns are uniquely poised to both attract these employees and entrepreneurs, and then cultivate innovation.

“The geographic proximity of individuals possessing human capital, skills, expertise, or creative capabilities enables their interactions, and these interactions facilitate the spillovers necessary for innovation.” —*Beyond Spillovers: The Effects of Creative-Density on Innovation*, Brian Knudsen, Richard Florida, and Kevin Stolarick. September 2005, University of Toronto.

“Cities that have attempted to improve their lot by creating conditions for the “next Silicon Valley” have often had disappointing results. Our research suggests that certain intangible qualities of social dynamics—more than the development of material infrastructure—hold the key to generating virtuous cycles of innovation and creation of wealth.” —Scientific American, September 2011, *Bigger Cities Do More with Less*, by Luís M. A. Bettencourt and Geoffrey B. West.

Infrastructure Expenses

States, cities and counties presently do not have the funds to maintain the roads and bridges and highways that ribbon across our nation. In fact, the notion that automobile users fully pay for the road infrastructure that supports them is false, evidenced by the numbers shown below:

“Since 1947, the amount of money spent on highways, roads and streets has exceeded the amount raised through gasoline taxes and other so-called “user fees” by \$600 billion (2005 dollars), representing a massive transfer of general government funds to highways.

Highways “pay for themselves” less today than ever. Currently, highway “user fees” pay only about half the cost of building and maintaining the nation’s network of highways, roads and streets.”

— US Public Interest Research Group, “Do Roads Pay for Themselves? Setting the Record Straight on Transportation Funding.” By Tony Dutzik, Benjamin Davis, Phineas Baxandall, January 2011.

The basic maintenance of roads has become such a problem in the US, that representatives from the United States Conference of Mayors pressed the White House administration for something akin to a “Marshall Plan for infrastructure” in the summer of 2011 in order to address the fiscal crisis arising from our aging bridges, streets, and highways.



Road improvement and widening is cost prohibitive.

Over the next few decades, budget constraints are going to force cities to better leverage their existing road infrastructure, and not continue to expand their road network, adding to the mileage that needs to be maintained.

This will result in focused public sector investment in places with infrastructure that supports the most activity per square foot. That means networks with compact form and a variety of uses will be favored, the types of infrastructure found in downtowns, particularly those with a street grid of a more historic scale. Why? Because these grid networks are efficient for cars, offering many alternate routes. They support more employment and residents per square foot. They encourage multi-modal transportation. And, they happen to be the development environment most prized by Generation Y, as discussed previously.

The traditional block grid of America's historic downtowns will be one of the features that continue to drive city core revitalization.

The Center for Neighborhood Technology has created an interactive map showing the cost of transportation as a percent of household income. They estimate that many of the commuters in Clark County are spending from 25% to 35% of their annual household income on transportation, and the rest are somewhere between 15% and 25%. Please see the map below.



If the total amount to own, operate, maintain, and commute via car is combined with the expense of housing, it represents over 50% of income for many Clark County residents. Commuting is creating a significant drain on the spending power of SW Washington's residents, particularly during periods when wages are flat, or when gas prices increase.

This is of vital importance in communities such as Clark County, which exports over 60,000 of its workers elsewhere to regional employment every day.

These expenses are profound and represent part of the reason why Generation Y wants to find places where they can live/work/play in one district.

But, cost is only one part of the story.

In addition to the monetary impacts imposed by automobile commuting, there is a large demographic shift occurring with Generation Y. They don't want to buy cars. They don't care about cars. Getting a driver's license and owning a vehicle is not the rite of passage it was for generations past.

Look at some of these numbers:

"In a survey...Gartner found that 46 percent of people 18 to 24 would choose access to the Internet over access to their own car. Only 15 percent of the baby boom generation would say that, the survey found." —www.bits.blogs.nytimes.com, *Disruptions: For Teenagers, a Car or a Smartphone?*, by Nick Bilton, November 20, 2011.

"Statistics released by the Transportation Department note that in 1978, 50 percent of 16-year-olds in the United States obtained their first driver's license. In 2008, only 30 percent did." —www.bits.blogs.nytimes.com, *Disruptions: For Teenagers, a Car or a Smartphone?*, by Nick Bilton, November 20, 2011.

"...in California for example, only 13 percent of 16-year-olds have driver's licenses..." —Associated Press, *Curbs on Youngest Drivers May Have Bad Side Effects*, by Lindsey Tanner, September 14, 2011.

If one of the largest generations in our history—that is only just now starting to exert its influence and spending power—does not center itself around the automobile, then they will not choose to live in, to start companies in, or work in environments that require the use of a car. It doesn't mean the automobile goes away. It just means that multi-modal and mixed-use environments will be favored.

FUTURE SUCCESS

As our cities undergo these shifts, which cities will blossom and which will founder?

The answer is simple. The municipalities that will thrive in the future will offer walkability, will be well connected with their region, and will foster the type of work environment that contributes to the innovation economy. And remember, walkability can happen anywhere, it doesn't have to be in an urban core. For instance, in the Washington DC area, a large percentage of their walkable infrastructure resides in the suburbs.

Now let's consider an example of a conservative city in a conservative state reacting to these trends by leveraging their downtown to create economic success in a land-locked state: Oklahoma City.

In April of 2012, CEOs for Cities lauded the work done by Mayor Mick Cornett and Oklahoma City's Council for their innovative work in turning around their downtown.

Mayor Cornett understands that “the quality of life in the suburbs is directly related to the intensity of the core of the city,” so he is turning his once sprawling city around. By investing in transportation, schools, and amenities and pushing for smart growth strategies that prioritize health and job creation, Mayor Cornett is improving quality of life and quality of place in Oklahoma City. Mayor Cornett is energizing his constituents and his civic leaders to produce a thriving urban core through long-term investments.

But this tale of downtown revitalization starts back in 1991, when the city went all out to attract a huge United Airlines maintenance facility. They had the land, voters had approved a 1 cent sales tax to finance a building for them. But in the end, the airline turned them down and chose to locate in Indianapolis instead.

When asked why they rejected Oklahoma City, United executives didn't shy away from an honest answer. As reported in an October 2010 USA Today article, United executives said that they couldn't imagine forcing their people to live in such a dull, run-down city. Mayor Cornett said that it was a very difficult message to hear.

As USA today reported:

From that humbling experience Oklahoma City officials learned two things: Residents were willing to absorb tax increases to improve their city and attract employers, and Oklahoma City needed an overhaul — quick.



Bricktown Canal in Downtown Oklahoma City

From there, voters agreed to a series of targeted tax increases that supported a program for improving the core of the city called Metropolitan Area Projects. They took a 7 mile stretch of “river” that USA Today described as “little more than a weed-lined drainage ditch” in the downtown and turned it into a true waterway that is now an Olympic training site for kayaking, canoeing, and rowing.

They are introducing parks, school improvements, trails, and have completed new ballpark construction and attracted sports franchises.

Now, the state has reversed California migration, so more people are moving to Oklahoma from California than the reverse. And they have news stories like this:

The Oklahoma City Council on Tuesday will consider how to spend a projected surplus of \$1.3 million in fiscal year 2013. Possible choices include Sunday bus service, 20 new police officers or saving the money to guard against a possible economic slowdown. —The Oklahoman, *Oklahoma City Council faces choice with projected \$1.3 million surplus*, by Michael Kimball, June 18, 2012.

Oklahoma City is proof that having an amenity rich, livable city core is a powerful economic development tool. And as a result of their vision, hard work, and drive, they have weathered the recession with less dislocation than most other American cities.

TELLING DOWNTOWN'S STORY

- Why would a company want to locate in your town?
- Who might decide to come visit your city?
- How can you become a local hangout?
- Should a lender be willing to risk investing in new development in your city?
- Would a visitor be delighted to spend time in your downtown?

These questions cannot be answered about a place without understanding its story, *all* of the elements of the story that are communicated through buildings, roads, signs, traffic, businesses, events, relationships, and a city's context. Remember, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, places are telling stories, whether they mean to or not. Unfortunately, most places aren't intentionally considering, and actively telling, their stories.

What happens when you don't tell your own story? It gets told for you anyway, often in the form of negative stereotypes. To avoid that, the public sector, businesses, property owners and residents must work in concert to communicate a cohesive and consistent identity.

CORE STORY FRAMEWORK

How does a place start controlling its story? First, it must capture the following:

- A clear idea of what it is now.
- A clear idea of what it wants to be.
- A clear idea of its strengths.

Then, a narrative must be constructed that explains how these elements weave together to create the authentic story of a place, or its Civic Identity.

One of the most effective ways to quantify a place's Civic Identity is to use the CORE Story Framework— the same building blocks that improvisation artists and screenwriters use to create compelling stories. This framework is most powerful when it is populated with data garnered from extensive public outreach, so that a story emerges from the words of local residents, business owners, property owners, and public sector stakeholders.

STORY FRAMEWORK

Characterization

Objective

Relationship

Environment

The Story Framework is made up of four components: Characterization, Objective, Relationship, and Environment. These are the essential ingredients for every successful story, and cities are no exception. Below is a description of the four elements of the story framework and the types of things that are considered as data is gathered.

Characterization

Characterization refers to the part of a story that is told through the physical presence of a character, such as voice, attitude, energy, race, haircut, clothing, walk, etc. In animation, there is a saying that if you nail the walk, you nail the character, because a character's walk communicates so much about them. When we first encounter a character in life, or through a story, we go through our rolodex of stereotypes and pull out the stereotype that most closely matches this new character. If the character matches our stereotype, we are satisfied and then no longer need to engage. But, if there is some aspect of the character that is unexpected, that is where we engage, that's where story happens, the tension between the expected and the reality that is in front of us.

For a city, characterization is everything that your city presents to the world physically, such as streets, buildings, signage, lighting, homes, yards, parks, and natural environment. Physical communications also contribute to this element of story through brochures, billboards, print ads, and TV advertising. All of these things play a role in how downtown Vancouver represents itself. Examples of characterization in a city might be the things that communicate whether your city is dense, urban, blue-collar, wealthy, suburban, elite, rural, safe, dirty, bright, optimistic, abandoned, depressing, or hip.

The physical portion of a place's story is broadcasting itself 365 days a year and cannot really be "turned off." Happily, it can often be changed for the better pretty easily through techniques of changing color and improving facades.

Objective

Objective is the heart of story framework, and it involves understanding what a character's, or what a place's, motivation is.

Even though we don't do it consciously, we are always making assumptions about what everyone else's objectives are, and what is motivating them. We must have an idea of what someone's objective is if we want to engage with them, because we need to know what boundaries define our interactions.

In the absence of having a clear understanding of someone's objective, we assume the worst, because that is the safest assumption to make. Human beings feel

most comfortable with someone whose objective is clear, whether or not we would describe their motivation as good or bad. We are most uncomfortable with interactions where we don't know, or don't understand, the objective of the other parties.

This is true in places as well. We are most comfortable in places where we know what motivates them and what experience they want us to have. For instance, New York wants to feel important, and like the center of the financial world. Cannon Beach wants to feel like a relaxed, but still upscale, beach town. We feel those things very clearly when we are there. We know where we stand.

For a downtown, objective refers to understanding the experience that downtown intends to provide and the role that downtown plays in the city as a whole. What does a place stand for? What is it about? What motivates it? These things should be clear when spending time in a downtown.

Relationship

You can tell a lot about a person by the relationships they maintain, and the same can be said for cities. What are your most popular events? The most beloved businesses? Who in the community connects with downtown? These ties are areas of strength that should be further engaged and linked together because ultimately, a downtown should reflect the fabric of the community in which it resides, and this comes from relationship. The human experience should be palpable in a downtown and you begin with who already has a strong feeling of kinship to the core.

We are also interested in who doesn't relate to downtown, because these groups represent opportunities to forge new connections and build new markets.

Environment

Environment is just as important as the other elements in the story framework. We all know the expression that context is everything. Well, its true. Context is everything. And, you can't change a place's "where," so understanding it and leveraging it, are paramount for planning and economic success.

In considering environment, we want to think about these questions: What is the setting for your city? What is special about it? How does it relate to neighboring environments? Is it a commercial area, residential, or mixed-use? What type of land-use toolkits are being applied to this environment?

It is common for stakeholders to bemoan their environment, particularly in cities along the edges of Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), rather than ponder and

take advantage of their context. For instance, Spokane is a city on the edge of a coastal state that is closer to Canada, Montana and Idaho than it is to Seattle. Yet, it built much of its economic development policy around competing with its Western cousins instead of leveraging its position as the capital of the Inland Empire and its geography as a gateway to major national parks, ski resorts and countless lakes and golf courses.

UTILIZING THE STORY FRAMEWORK

Once the story framework is populated, it can be wielded for economic development, land-use, policy and marketing purposes. But before we begin considering the framework, it is necessary to understand the fundamentals of good storytelling for places:

- Marketing is not bragging.
- Always consider your audience.
- To be effective, a story must be authentic.
- Conflict and tension are the heart of memorable stories.

It is human nature to want to talk about why a place or a product is superior to all others, but it is not effective storytelling because it is off-putting.

In order to build an effective identity that resonates with different groups, you have to consider your audience. For places, I generally assume there are four rings of consumers: local, city-wide, regional, and national. It's important to think about who you are marketing to, in order to achieve maximum impact.

Any piece of marketing collateral, any story you tell, must be authentic to gain traction. It is essential. For instance, if the city of Beverly Hills wanted to position itself as a great place for a rodeo and a center of Western wear, that would be inauthentic, and also incredibly unsuccessful.

Compelling and memorable stories have tension, which can be in the form of humor. There is a tendency to avoid conflict in marketing, but that is a mistake. Consider the Nike ad campaign, "Just Do It." People who are sitting on their couches watching television, the very picture of inactivity, are watching hyper fit people achieving their sporting goals through hard work and dedication. The juxtaposition is striking. Then, Nike essentially tells viewers to get their lazy bums off their couches and get out there too. No excuses. No complaining. It doesn't matter if it's hard. There is some real tension there.

The fundamentals of good storytelling have a wide variety of applications, which are explored in more detail below.

Marketing Is Not Bragging

It is tempting when marketing anything, a product or a place, to believe the best plan of attack is to tell people how fantastic it is. This is not a good sales technique. Generally, as consumers, we want to decide for ourselves what is the most fantastic product or the most wonderful place: we don't want to be told.

This is a common problem with city taglines, illustrated by Spokane's, which is "Near Nature, Near Perfect." Or, the Corvallis tagline, which is "Most Innovative City in America."

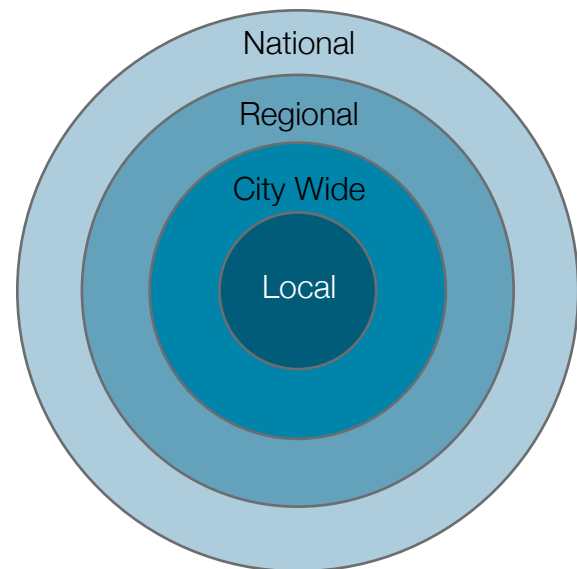
This technique of storytelling may not have the intended effect. Instead, it may provoke these types of reactions:

- ✦ Prove it!
- ✦ I want to judge for myself.
- ✦ This bragging better pan out.
- ✦ What am I going to have for dinner tonight? (Checking out.)
- ✦ I don't like them very much.

Audience

It is nearly impossible to develop campaigns that work for all audience rings: local, city-wide, regional, and national. For example, if Massachusetts were to launch a campaign touting themselves as a great destination for outdoor recreation, that's something that might work with the three innermost rings. But, it won't work with the fourth, the national audience. It is unlikely that outdoor enthusiasts from Montana, Colorado, or Oregon are going to trek to Massachusetts to go kayaking.

Indeed, it is often true that the way a place might be relevant to one ring, such as locals, is completely different than how it might be relevant to another ring, such as regional. As a general rule of thumb, it is best to focus first on the inner rings, stressing authenticity, and then work outward, unless tourism is a primary industry.



Authenticity

A place's genuine identity informs all aspects of its story and impacts everything from economic development to land-use.

Take the city of Las Vegas. This was a city founded by the Mafia to provide illicit entertainment for adults—gambling, the lounge scene, and vice. It thrived for quite some time. But, by the late 1980s, the entire gaming/hospitality industry was suffering, except for one hotel/casino, which was performing above all others: Circus Circus.

Because of the success of this family-friendly concept, many hotel-casinos on the Las Vegas Strip began implementing a kid-centric business model and, however improbable it may seem today, looked to parents and children as the growth market for their future. Roller coasters, arcades, and elaborate pools abounded. Despite these efforts, Las Vegas foundered even more through a large part of the 90s.

The next reinvention of Sin City was really a return to its authentic roots: adult entertainment. This time though, they expanded options for visitors beyond the illicit, adding classy, big name singing acts, Broadway shows, Cirque de Soleil, and actual nightclubs (following the death of the lounge scene) for younger and hipper tourists.

Following this return to their genuine beginnings, a brilliant tag line was developed, which nearly everyone knows: “What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas.” This resonates because it is authentic. It is authentic because it is true to both the past and present of the city, focusing on adult entertainment with a tinge of the illicit. And, it has boatloads of tension; there is a very strong implication that not all that happens may be good, which is what makes it interesting and memorable.

Tension/Conflict

What would you think if I told you this story: “A sleeping man woke up thirsty, got out of bed, obtained a drink of water, and returned to sleep.”

Not horribly interesting.

How can this story be more engaging? Create a conflict. Something that makes him unable to get up to get the water. Maybe his legs don't work, or he wakes up in a strange place and doesn't know where he is. Or perhaps his door is locked from the outside. The conflicts are what make the story interesting. Do not shy away from tension, conflict or humor in marketing.

As an example, take the “Don’t mess with Texas!” anti-litter campaign that was designed to motivate young males to stop throwing trash out of their cars on highways in the Lone Star State. It was fantastically effective, but it also grew into so much more, becoming literally the state motto, because it resonated with one commonality found in the heart of nearly every Texan, and that is a fanatically strong sense of pride in their state. So, it meets the authenticity test. And, if you notice, there’s a lot of tension here. It essentially says, we’re so proud of our State, we’ll give you a beat down in its name. There’s nothing perfect or pretty about it.

So let’s reevaluate the two tag lines that we mentioned previously with the four storytelling fundamentals: bragging, audience, authenticity, and conflict in mind.

Near Nature, Near Perfect. Spokane’s tagline is entirely true, in that it is a city with an abundance of natural beauty. However, the near perfect portion of the tagline makes it unsuccessful and not engaging. It sounds preachy... perhaps a bit full of itself. It doesn’t feel real. It’s like your idealized self on a first date, which is not your authentic self. And, who is this for? The intended audience is unclear. Is this designed to lure visitors, or make locals feel good about their city? What do they want it to do? It is more likely to do the latter than the former. Lastly, it offers no tension or conflict, nothing with which to connect.

Most Innovative City in America. It is fairly obvious that the Corvallis, OR tagline fails the bragging test. A reader’s first reaction is, “Prove it.” The line also fails the authenticity test, as it doesn’t appear to be a true reflection of the entire community. In fact, in the visitor’s guide you see here, they devote an entire sidebar to explaining their claim. A rule of thumb about taglines: if they require supporting documentation, they are probably not effective. And what about audience? This seems to be an economic development tagline,



Corvallis Visitor Guide Tagline Explanation

not something that really makes an emotional connection with a visitor. Perhaps it would be a good marketing approach for a regional or national tech or manufacturing company recruitment effort. But I don’t believe it belongs on a visitor guide, nor does it represent the ethos of the community as a whole.

IDENTITY FRAMEWORK FINDINGS

Through workshops, surveys, individual research, and small group interviews, the stakeholders of Vancouver's downtown, the city, and the region have contributed to populating the four areas of the CORE story framework.

The findings from this community outreach, and the resulting identity framework, are presented in this section of the Civic Dossier. (Raw data from the survey can be found in Appendix A to this report.)

In this section, downtown's story will first be viewed through the lens of Characterization, Objective, Relationship, and finally, Environment. And lastly, an identity summary for downtown will be presented.

CORE Story Framework

Characterization

The physical story that our cities tell are both powerful and enduring. This portion of a place's story is typically where many public sector agencies focus their efforts as the work and outcomes are tangible: roads, sidewalks, buildings, street lighting, parks, etc. And cities are smart to focus on this element of story since changes to the physical environment, such as introducing color and restoring historic facades, can transform a district's story in a very short period of time.

Descriptions of the City of Vancouver

In considering downtown Vancouver's physical story, I asked for participants to give me words that describe both the city as a whole, and just the downtown specifically. And, I also asked how Vancouver was perceived in the region.

The results were interesting. When asked to describe the city as a whole from various perspectives, one of the most dominant words in the responses was **Portland**. It was the 1st most frequent word when people were asked to describe Vancouver as if they were a visitor. It was 3rd when respondents were questioned about how the city might be described in its past. And it was the 4th most common word used when stakeholders were asked to ponder their city presently.

But, the most Portland-weighted response, shown on the next page, came in response to this question: "How is the City of Vancouver perceived in the region?" The results of which are shown in the word cloud below. (In a word cloud, the most frequently used words are the largest, and the least frequently used are the smallest.)

[illegible]

However, for downtown this was not true. When asked to characterize the city's core, Portland was sometimes mentioned, but with nowhere near the frequency.

Descriptions of Downtown Vancouver



The next step was to consider how downtown is perceived in the present. Below you can see that the **park** plays a big role, as does the farmer's **market** and **restaurants**. People see downtown as having **potential**, but still **needing** improvement. Downtown's transitional state is reflected in the contrasting words like **small** vs **big**, **vibrant** vs **struggling**, **better** vs **trying**, and **vacant** vs **fun**.

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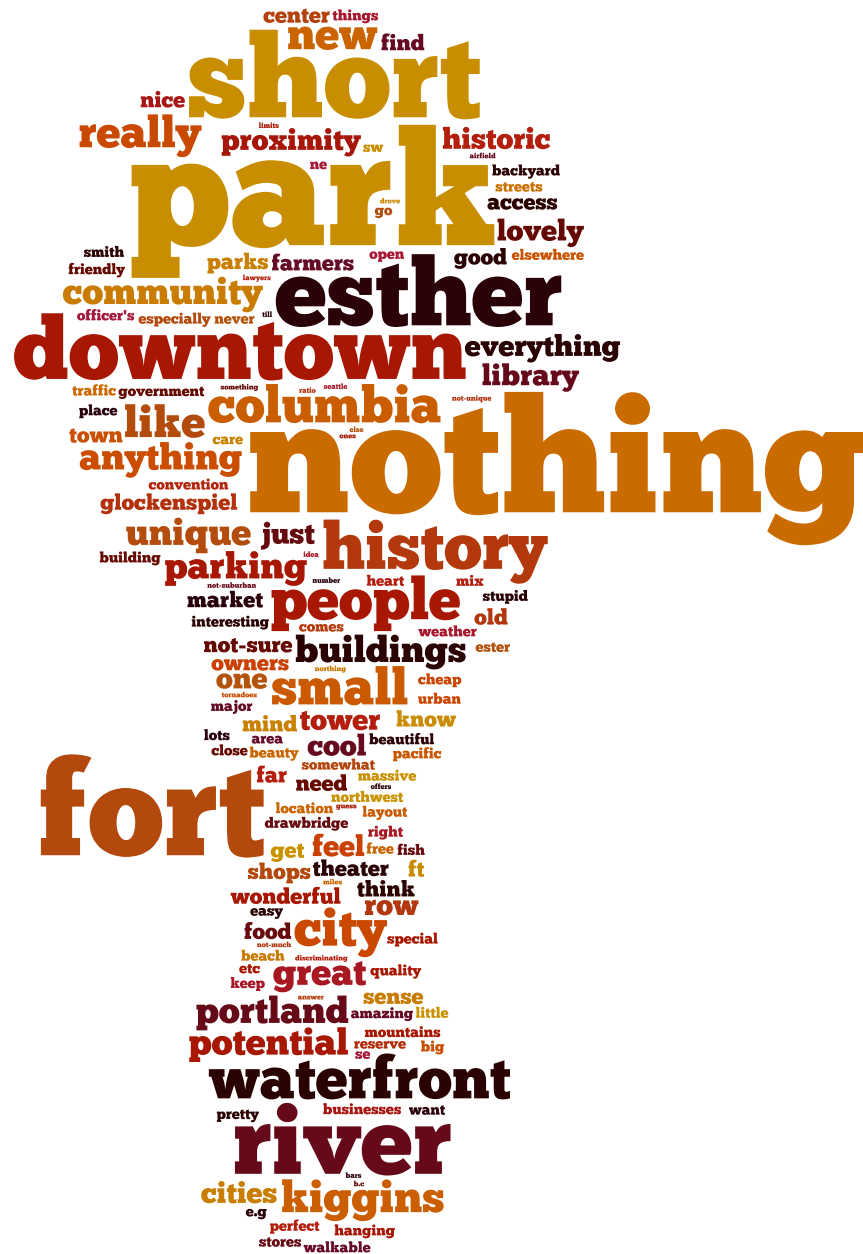
The rich historical fabric that underpins the city was often cited as a defining characteristic of the city that could be better leveraged during one-on-one discussions. Many felt that newer residents, particularly on the east-side, had less knowledge of, and connection to, the city's history. It also was noted in interviews, and throughout the survey, that, from the freeway, there is little to signify the presence of an historic commercial district, the Fort, or all of the events and activities happening downtown, making Vancouver a pass-through for Interstate 5 traffic.

During discussions, in the workshop, and in surveys there was a thread of concern about cleanliness, transients, and drug addicts downtown. These issues seem to loom larger for those who don't frequent downtown, but they are top of mind for many in the community when thinking of going downtown. This focus on safety and security was front and center when we asked, "What as a group do the people of Vancouver most want to feel?" The top word was safe, and the third word was

secure. When safety is a concern for a community in any area—economic, criminal, emotional—then security becomes an issue in all facets of their life. This highlights why there is perhaps a stronger focus on the perceived lack of safety downtown than it might deserve.

The last element we explored about downtown was to ask what people felt were the things that made downtown unique—what could you find downtown that you couldn't experience anywhere else? Below are the results.

WHAT DOES DOWNTOWN HAVE THAT YOU WON'T FIND ANYWHERE ELSE?



The singular offerings downtown included **Esther Short Park**, the mighty **Columbia**, the **Fort**, **History**, and the **Kiggins**, according to the people in the region and in Vancouver. Also, there was a sizable contingent that felt that there was **nothing** distinct about downtown.

It is clear though, in these word clouds, that there has been tremendous progress in the physical story that the downtown is telling, about which the city and its stakeholders should be proud. But, there continues to be room for improvement, which will be explored in more detail in the recommendation section of the Civic Dossier.



Objective

Objective, as we discussed earlier, gives us a sense of what a place's motivation might be, what experience it wants to provide, and the role it plays in a city or a region. Although Objective is the heart of the story framework, it often seems abstract when we begin tackling it from the perspective of a downtown or a neighborhood. But, it is essential to understand because it gets to the crux of how to approach revitalization and renewal efforts.

How Do the City and Downtown Feel?

First, we asked stakeholders how the city of Vancouver was feeling, as a whole. The responses are in the image below. The biggest words were **tired**, **confused**, **frustrated**, **lacking**, **old**, **little**, and also **hopeful** and **trying**.

IF VANCOUVER WERE A PERSON, WHAT WOULD IT BE FEELING RIGHT NOW?



IF DOWNTOWN WERE A PERSON, WHAT WOULD IT BE FEELING RIGHT NOW?



The more hopeful and positive sense of optimism that people perceived downtown as having versus the city as a whole reinforces the earlier finding that people feel more connection and engagement at the local neighborhood level than they do on a city-wide basis.

What Experience Should Downtown Provide?

Next, the experience Vancouverites might want to have in downtown was explored by probing about what the city's denizens like to do with their free time.

Below is a word cloud with answers to that exact question: **walking**, **hiking**, enjoying the **outdoors**, **sports**, **biking**, **eating** out, going to the **movies**, attending **events** and **activities**, going to **Portland**, **shopping**, hanging out with **family**, and **gardening** garnered the top votes.

WHAT DO VANCOUVERITES LIKE TO DO WITH THEIR FREE TIME?



These findings are very exciting for downtown because the heart of the city either provides, or can be a gateway, for nearly all of these activities. There is clearly a role for downtown to be the entertainment destination for the SW Washington region; a place for visitors to use as a home base, and from which they can enjoy all of the center city's offerings, from biking to dining out, from running trails to air museums, from canning classes at the Co-op to old fashioned baseball at the Fort.

Where Are There Points of Intersection in the City?

In order to build common ground between people in a community, it is necessary to figure out where the points of intersection are between stakeholders. One of the questions we ask to determine this is “What are the people of Vancouver passionate about?” The responses, in order of importance, were:

- ✦ Bridge
- ✦ Rail
- ✦ Portland
- ✦ Education
- ✦ Taxes
- ✦ Jobs
- ✦ Schools
- ✦ Family
- ✦ Safety

The mention of the CRC and Max shows what the hot button issues are for the community. People seemed to be split in their support for these projects, but most were tired of the whole thing and felt it was casting a pall over the city in many ways, particularly in dividing the community.

Portland being third shows again the impact that the largest economy in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA has upon Vancouver’s consciousness, for good or bad.

And if you combine the 4th and 7th most common responses, education and schools, you would have the number one answer about what Vancouver is most passionate about. In fact, I believe that pride in the school system and Vancouver’s ability to provide stable and consistent funding for education is the single biggest unifying factor across the entire city.

Additionally, respondents were polled about what they thought the residents of Vancouver most want to feel, and the top theme was security. This has direct implications for downtown. Concerns about safety and security overlap, whether they are emotional, economic or personal in nature. This, in part, explains the heightened concern about downtown’s safety, particularly by people who do not frequent the heart of the city on a regular basis.

Relationship

The ultimate goal with story is to build connection. In this case, our specific goal is to develop strong relationships between the region and downtown. In order to determine how best to do this, it is necessary to understand what about downtown people relate to, who is and isn't connecting with it, and how stakeholders in the city are presently working together.

What Do People Relate to Downtown?

WHAT BUSINESSES MOST DEFINE DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER?



[illegible]

In downtown Vancouver, there is not a lot of overlap between these two groups. Defining businesses that had no overlap with the beloved list included **banks, government, Hilton, and offices**. Those that were on both lists were **restaurants and shops**. Beloved businesses included the **Kiggins, theaters, galleries, farmer's market, the Burgerville, which was torn down, Tommy Os, Java House, the library, and coffee** in general.

When asked about the best events that were held downtown, people mentioned the following, in this order: the farmer's **market**, **concerts in the park**, the **wine and jazz festival**, and a distant fourth was **art walk**. You will notice that the big three events center around Esther Short Park.

To launch effective marketing efforts, both within and without your immediate region, it is important to understand who is and isn't relating to downtown. You want to take care of your best customers, giving them more of what they want. But also, the group that is not connecting is an untapped market that could require different messaging in order to reach.

When asked about who related best to downtown, there was a great cross section of responses, from **young** to **old** and from **businesspeople** to **residents**. Families were also frequently mentioned. The **homeless** population downtown made the list as well.

The answers to the question of who was not relating to downtown were more revealing. The top answers referred to those on the **east-side** or in the **suburbs**, or people from **Portland**. These answers correlated very closely between all of the outreach efforts: workshops, interviews, and the survey. The city's minority populations were also discussed as not being present in downtown, a place people expect to find cultural diversity.

Additionally, the way Portland perceived downtown was described in one of two fashions: 1) Vantucky or 2) Off-the-radar. The latter result came from people who have a foot in both Vancouver and Portland, most of whom said that many Portlanders have no real conception of Vancouver, good or bad. Vancouver was just completely off their radar in every way.

Another interesting finding that came from interviews of larger employers, professional employers, and creative employers was that most mentioned it was difficult to attract highly-educated and creative employees to live/work in Vancouver. Anecdotal stories included employers having to use recruiters to close the gap, to companies not receiving applications for posted jobs, and firms having employees threaten to quit if they are not transferred to the Portland office. Most agreed that employee retention was most closely tied to where employees were living. If workers live in SW Washington, they are most likely to stay in their positions and companies in the future. One employer did note that a move to downtown from a more suburban location in the region did help them recruit and retain younger professional employees.

A mixed-use district operates much like a store with departments. How those departments cooperate, how adjacencies are exploited for increased sales and how visitor experience is controlled is vital to create a thriving single store. The same is true for a downtown. Presently, many of the businesses that are the very linchpin of downtown's identity are operating as islands, without the benefit of the type of cooperation and collaboration that will bring success in the future.

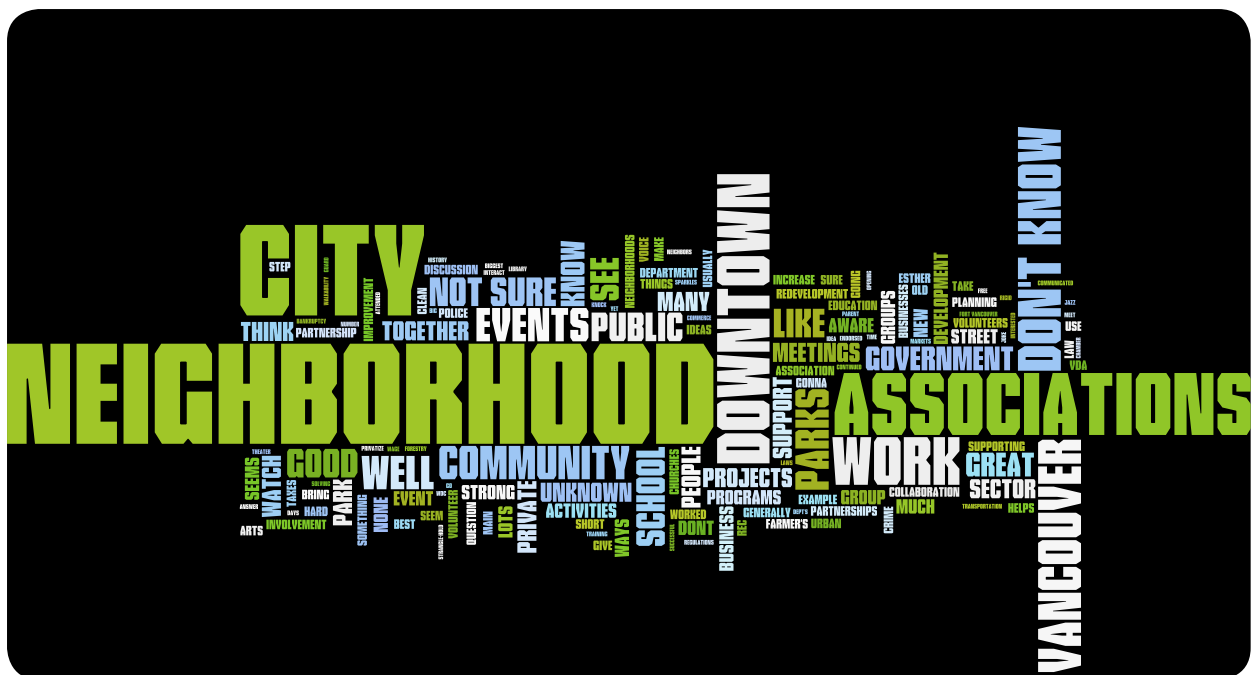
Relationship is probably the most overlooked element of the story framework, which is unfortunate because revitalization cannot happen without strong relationships between all stakeholder groups. At the end of the day, everything stems from people.

To explore the state of public/private relationships in both the city and downtown, stakeholders were asked for examples of collaboration between the two in the city as a whole, and in downtown.

In the image below, you can see the results to the question about cooperation between the public and private sector in the city as a whole. The biggest answer by far had to do with support for **neighborhoods**. Also mentioned were efforts **downtown** and in the **schools**. **Not sure** and **don't know** were also common responses.

There was a very positive recurring theme that resonated throughout the various outreach efforts about the city as a whole, which was that many identified Vancouver as a place where you can have a big impact on the community. The community's generosity of spirit and its philanthropic efforts that often seemed to belie the city's size were noted by participants.

WHAT ARE GOOD EXAMPLES OF CITY-WIDE PUBLIC/PRIVATE COLLABORATIONS?



Conspicuously absent from this list is Fort Vancouver.

[illegible]

civillis
CONSULTANTS

Environment

As explained earlier, the context for any story, including a downtown's, has tremendous influence on our perceptions of that story. Unfortunately, this idea of "where" is often overlooked, or only perceived negatively, in places that are struggling with a lack of identity.

To understand downtown's contexts, we explored the surrounding region, Clark County, the city as a whole, and downtown specifically.

Surrounding Contexts

WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE THE GREATER VANCOUVER-PORTLAND REGION?



There is a fairly large change of context as the surroundings narrow from the wider region to the county-wide level. In respondents' eyes, both geographic areas were beautiful and great places to live. But, there are dramatic shifts, such as from progressive to conservative, and to being a growing community that is characterized as being more rural and suburban.

[illegible]

City-Wide Contexts

To explore the “where” of the city as a whole, several areas were scrutinized in more detail, including which places were avoided in the city and which were considered the community living rooms for the city.

The results really speak to the nodal development that has happened in Vancouver, as mentioned previously. In terms of the areas that were avoided, east-siders usually mentioned **downtown**, and the city’s core residents usually said they abstained from traveling to the **east-side** and the **mall**. By far the most frequently avoided place in the city though was **4th Plain** boulevard. This result should not be a surprise as it is the neighborhood serving corridor that connects these opposite poles of the city: the east-side node and the city-center node. If the relationship between these nodes is suffering, then the area between them will suffer as well.

The divide between east and west was also evidenced in the inquiry about community living rooms. For the city-center node and for many others, **Esther Short Park** was the public place to call home. It was by far the most popular response. But, for the east-side node, **164th** and the **mall** were mentioned often as their community living room.

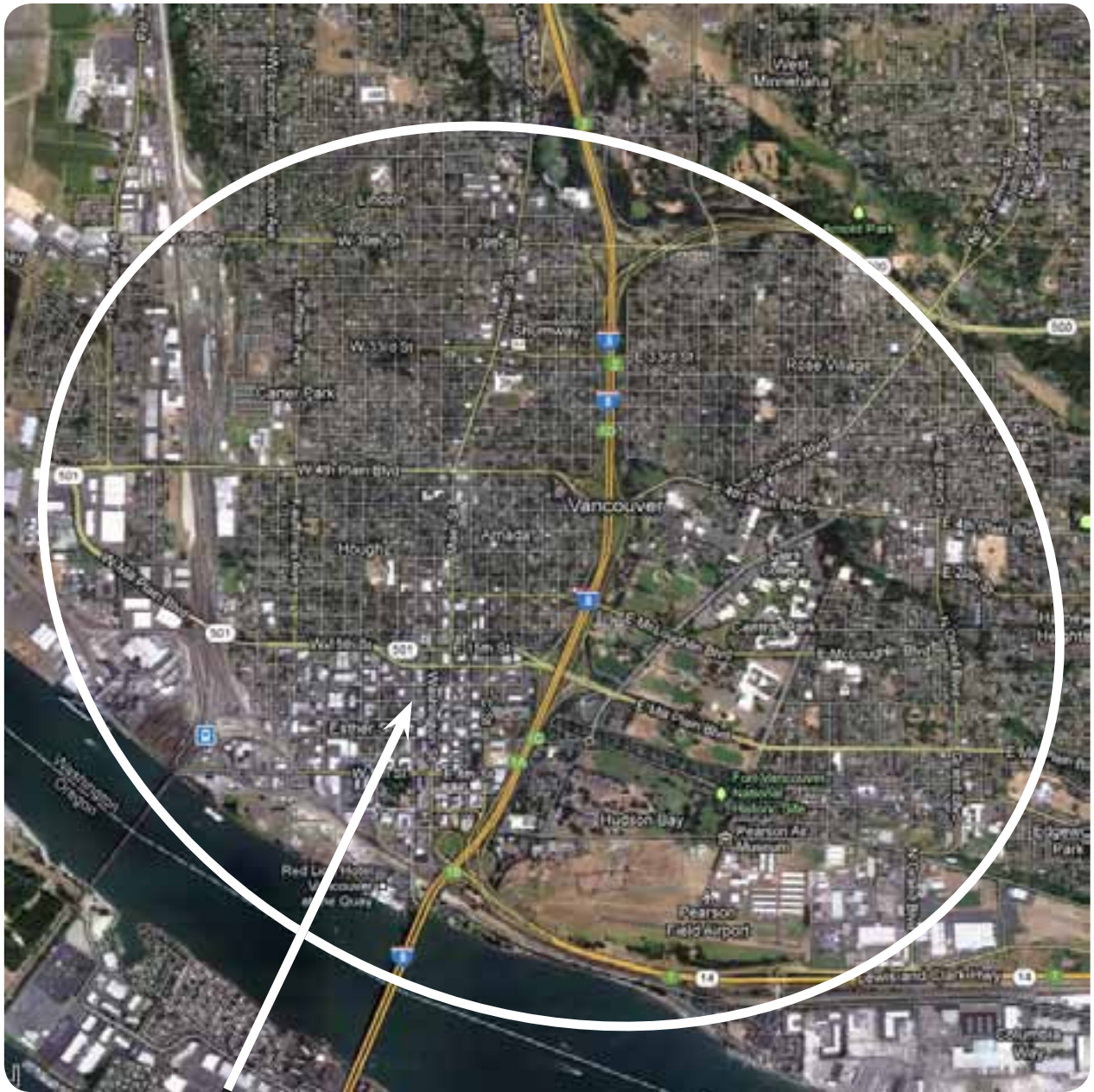
Downtown Contexts

Downtown is the heart of a traditionally gridded city core (the city-center node).

Blanks in the pedestrian environment downtown, especially barriers to draws such as the river and the Fort, are stymieing pedestrians from exploring and appreciating the full breadth of offerings available to them downtown presently.

The larger city-center node represents a complete ecosystem of residential, business, commercial, industrial, education, health and entertainment uses. Eventually this grid should support a much more dense and interconnected collection of infrastructure and amenities than it does now.

The map on the following page shows the area defined as the city-center node in this report. It generally follows the contours of the original historic grid that were severed in the middle of the century when Interstate 5 sliced through the core. The city-center node not only is home to the Port, but it also houses the in-city industrial district in Fruit Valley, many of whose businesses are located there because of easy proximity to the freeway and the central location of the district. The historic assets such as Pearson Air Museum and the Fort as well as the more traditional grid network east of Interstate 5 are a part of this area described as the city-center node.



City-Center Node

SUMMATION OF IDENTITY FINDINGS

CHARACTERIZATION

Portland. Love it or hate it, Portland looms large on the psyche of Vancouverites, who usually describe their own city in terms of how it relates back to their southern neighbor. This association disappears when the focus is narrowed to the neighborhood level, indicating that people have a closer connection to the immediate local area, but a lack of identity on a city-wide basis.

Improved. In looking at the downtown and how it has changed over time, the district was thought to have once been a vibrant center that declined to a state that was described as scary, old, dirty and empty. The good news is that nearly everyone sees downtown as being vastly improved from those darker days, and people now perceive it as being in transition, with roughly equal weight given to successes and areas to improve. In considering areas to improve, there was a particular emphasis on lower Main Street, managing parking, leveraging the Fort and downtown's history, wanting to reconnect with the river, and minimizing the impact of the transient population.

Best Features. The best and most unique features of downtown were listed as Esther Short Park, the Fort, the waterfront/river, Kiggins, and the library. These are the assets that should be leveraged as they are exclusive to the downtown experience. The top response for this section was "nothing," which indicates the dichotomy that exists in the SW Washington region between those who relate to downtown and those who don't. For those who don't, they saw nothing unique.

Future. Stakeholders want downtown to be a fun, vibrant, walkable, beautiful, safe, friendly shopping destination that celebrates history, community, business, and entertainment.

OBJECTIVE

What Experience Does Downtown Provide? In order to determine the type of experience a place is providing, we ask stakeholders how they would describe it feeling right now if it were a person. The results of this question are interesting because the way a place is described as feeling is exactly the experience it gives to those who are there. For the city of Vancouver as a whole, the top feeling word associated with the city was tired. Other top responses included confused, quiet, frustrated, trying, hopeful, old, and lacking. For downtown, the words old, tired and quiet were repeated, but were not nearly as prevalent. There were new words too, such as optimistic, energetic, and energy. With downtown, there was no mention of confusion.

The fact that confusion was present for the city but not for downtown partly reflects the lack of city-wide identity. In some ways, the city has almost developed into two Vancouvers. In this report, these nodes are described as the east-side node and the city-center node. The people in between these two nodes feel lost and forgotten, and it is no wonder, as they are situated between two portions of a municipality that don't relate well to one another. The fact that the confusion wanes when a more local angle is considered again shows that much of Vancouver's identity is tied to neighborhoods, or their nodes, and not to the city as a whole.

Entertainment. When asked what Vancouver likes to do with its free time, it was clear that downtown's success can be linked to entertainment, because most of the top activities listed as Vancouver favorites are items for which downtown can serve as a gateway: walking, eating, cycling, boating, movies, outdoors, shopping, concerts, and sports.

Points of Intersection. Vancouver indicated passion about many things in the identity building process. The hot button issues of the day: the CRC and light rail came up frequently. Although people were split in terms of support (somewhat more in favor), there was a universal feeling of exhaustion related to the never-ending feeling of limbo induced by the projects. Portland was mentioned third. The fourth response was education and the seventh was schools. If you combine these two, they would be the most popular response, and indeed, schools are the single positive feature around which the entire city of Vancouver feels proud.

Respondents were also asked what the people of Vancouver most want to feel, and the top theme was safety and security. If people feel unsafe in any way, they feel unsafe in all ways: economically, emotionally, or physically. In low income neighborhoods, for instance, there is a heightened awareness of criminal safety fed by the sense of economic insecurity. One of the most frequently mentioned concerns by those who did not relate to downtown was personal safety while there.

RELATIONSHIP

What do People Relate To Downtown? Downtown is strongly defined as a business district, but most citizens don't have a strong sense of connection to the larger vertical markets found in the downtown, such as banks, government services, the Hilton, and office users. The beloved businesses that create identity and connection were mostly ground floor, locally-owned places such as Kiggins, Tommy Os, restaurants, the farmer's market, coffee houses, and small shops.

In terms of best events, there were three clear favorites: the farmer's market, concerts in the park, and the wine and jazz festival. The art walk was a distant fourth. The three most popular events are centered around Esther Short Park.

Who Is and Isn't Relating to Downtown? Oftentimes in identifying which groups clearly relate to a place and which don't, we find clear demographic demarcations of preference. In downtown Vancouver, it was interesting that a wide variety of demographic groups were listed as relating best to downtown, including families, the young, the old, businesspeople, and residents. This is positive for the downtown because it indicates they have penetrated equally with a wide variety range of demographic profiles. The relation obstacles that remain are more geographic and emotional.

This geographic-emotional divide was highlighted by who was listed as not relating to downtown. The two biggest groups identified as not connecting to downtown were people from Portland and suburbanites/east-siders. On the former, there were many interesting discussions about how the citizens of Portland routinely labeled Vancouver negatively as Vantucky. But, for people with a foot on both sides of the state line, there was a clear indication that Portlanders, for the most part, aren't running around with either good or bad impressions. Instead, they have no impression.

This invisibility manifests itself for downtown firms attempting to recruit employees from across the river, which professional and creative employers said was nearly impossible. Employee retention for many firms required hiring from SW Washington. Locating in downtown Vancouver though was seen as a draw for hiring younger professionals who live in SW Washington and was considered the most likely place in Vancouver that someone from Portland might want to work.

In terms of interrelation downtown, retailers noted that coordination and collaboration between the shops and restaurants in the core had waned from the days of the horse-drawn carriage transporting Christmas shoppers to various stores to do their holiday purchasing. Increased collaboration and knowledge of how to exploit adjacencies could improve local businesses significantly.

The last group identified as not having a presence in downtown were the region's minority populations, particularly striking as downtowns are usually places we expect to experience some cultural diversity.

Public/Private Collaboration. Private sector developers and investors like to see strong public/private partnerships and a unified vision about the future as they consider the potential upside for investment in an area. This was in evidence when the city renewed the area around Esther Short Park. Stakeholders present at the time of these projects speak about the sense of excitement and hope very nostalgically. Examples cited as positive cooperation downtown include the park, the library, the Hilton, and City Hall. In terms of collaboration across the city as a whole, people mentioned downtown generally, and neighborhood associations specifically, as good examples of this type of alliance.

The public sector must also apply the correct policy toolkit to the correct environment. Downtowns require different strategies for success than arterial development.

ENVIRONMENT

Regional Context. The larger Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA was described as being great, beautiful, green, and progressive. As the focus narrowed to Clark County, new words were introduced, such as conservative, sprawl, rural, and growing. This is a pretty big shift, and shows some of the ways that Vancouver feels dislocated and different from the rest of the region.

City-Wide Context. The bifurcated nature of the city was clearly in evidence when asked to discuss where the city's living room was located. People in the east-side node considered 164th and the Mall to be the centers of their community. They chose downtown as the spot they were least likely to go to in the city. The exact opposite occurred for downtown residents, who believed Esther Short Park to be the community living room, and the east-side as the place they avoided most frequently.

When specifically asked to share the area most avoided in the city as a whole, 4th Plain was the inordinate response. This is not a surprise as it is a neighborhood serving corridor that connects two portions of the city that are not relating to each other. It has become a pass through place that was abandoned to build the next new thing.

Lastly, there was a general reluctance for those who commute to downtown for work to return to the city core for recreation and leisure if they live outside of the center city because it felt too much like going back to the office. In fact, the high number of commuter miles logged within the SW region generally resulted in people being less willing to drive great distances for recreation in their free time unless they were going to be offered a really fantastic experience.

Downtown Context. To be successful, downtown must take advantage of its context, which is scaled around an historic street grid. It cannot support the parking ratios or the building form found in arterial environments. Its greatest strength is the ability to easily create walkability and the ability to design/develop around multi-modal transportation.

In fact, this gridded network in downtown, and in the entire city-center node, creates an important opportunity for differentiation, to tell a unique story by maximizing the contrast between downtown and the suburban environment in the rest of the city. The downtown core, which has seen a resurgence in popularity among residents and office users evidenced by lower vacancy rates in those markets, is the only area in the city with an easy-to-navigate traditional street grid and a place to build side-by-side buildings, constructed to the sidewalk, with outward facing architecture, and a mix of uses.

If downtown is somewhere in-between—part downtown, part suburb, it will never wholly be anything, and it will not be the fun, thriving entertainment district Vancouver wants it to be.

IDENTITY FRAMEWORK RECOMMENDATIONS

Faced with the challenge of fostering revitalization, stakeholders often focus exclusively on Characterization—the physical manifestation of story. Characterization is important, but a vibrant mixed-use district typically has a more complete story. Great districts are built on compelling and shared visions about all elements of the CORE framework—the concrete and tangible, as well as the less visible, but equally essential, relationships between stakeholders, marketing with clear objectives, and leveraging environmental strengths.

This section of the dossier contains recommendations for improving all areas of downtown Vancouver's story framework. These ideas, designed to bring positive change to the core of the city, are informed by the workshop, the time spent together one-on-one with stakeholders, research, and the survey.

With a strong idea of the story downtown Vancouver is telling now, and a clear sense of what story downtown might want to advance in the future, downtown stakeholders can formulate an integrated plan of action by taking these strategies and making them their own.

When, in what order, and by whom, these recommendations are implemented will be a function of where there is passion, funds, and capacity. Generally though, it is best to tackle short-term projects first in order to build a thirst for victory built from early success.

CHARACTERIZATION

Tell a More Vibrant Story with Buildings

Each and every building needs to tell an engaging story of vibrancy and excitement, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Vibrancy was a key word stakeholders wanted to hear describe their downtown. You can't achieve this if downtown looks dull and run-down, because then it feels dull and run-down, and visitors aren't encouraged to stay and participate in all of the offerings available. To bring people back time and again, downtown will need to improve its physical environment so it is compelling and unique to visitors, employees, and customers alike.

Buildings are what make a first impression on every visitor. Improving this one single area of a downtown's story can dramatically change its course for the better, as downtown Vancouver has seen with past improvements. The institution of the recent storefront improvement program downtown and the myriad of fantastic changes occurring are harbingers of a brighter future. And, this work should continue.

When considering this idea of the physical story buildings are telling, keep in mind that everything needs to be designed for three miles per hour. Why is that? Because, as Allan

B. Jacobs notes in the book *Great Streets*, three miles per hour is the speed that people move when on foot. The level of detail a pedestrian absorbs is much greater than a driver in a car, even if a vehicle is traveling slowly at 25 or 30 miles per hour. Great walking districts call for more detail, more color, more contrast, more activity...more to delight all of the senses.

This is vitally important to downtown's economic health because sales in downtowns are generated by pedestrian traffic and the cross-pollination that happens between businesses and their customers who are on foot.

CHARACTERIZATION RECOMMENDATION

Do Not Legislate Temporary Finishes

The public sector should not legislate temporary finishes to buildings, including governing color and requiring awnings. Guidelines should encourage three color paint schemes, but there should be no oversight of color on the part of the city or a review board.

Additionally, awnings should not be a building requirement either, particularly for existing structures. Awnings are a case where form should follow function.

If a business is not going to use the space under their awning to create an outdoor room that is an extension of their store or restaurant to the sidewalk, then they shouldn't install an awning. If an awning is not being used to create an environment that contributes to street level dialog, as shown below, then it is typically impacting the street scene negatively and shouldn't be on the building.



This canvas awning has a low profile that does not disrupt the look and feel of the historic building to which it attaches. The restaurant uses it to create an outdoor room that adds to sidewalk ambiance and street-level dialog.



One of the unintended consequences of requiring awnings is that those who don't want them, or don't use them, do not maintain them. Furthermore, they are prevented from removing canopies that are an eyesore because they would have to pay to replace something they do not use in the first place.

CHARACTERIZATION RECOMMENDATION

Focus on Historic Renovations and Restorations

Downtown Vancouver has incredible historic infrastructure, which ties into its rich past, something that stakeholders are passionate about and want to see highlighted more downtown.

Much of the downtown's original architecture is still intact and needs only a face lift. But, a few buildings received unfortunate mid-century makeovers that have not stood the test of time. The city and the VDA should be ready to take advantage of state and Federal restoration grant programs as they arise by:

- Developing relationships with the owners of these structures;
- Collaborate on a plan of action should matching funds become available; and,
- Create a pool of local money to contribute to the matching grant program.

Presently, the city of Astoria (population ~10,000) implemented just such a program to take advantage of an Oregon State preservation grant and they are uncovering architectural gems on their Main Street that have been trapped behind 60's era finishes for so long, no one remembered what the original buildings looked like.

CHARACTERIZATION

Ramp Up the Street Dialog

Everyone loves the farmer's market. It was a frequently mentioned favorite with stakeholders. Why is that? How do they accomplish this devotion using a bunch of inexpensive tents and wobbly, beat up banquet tables?

The answer: street level dialog.



Streets & sidewalks are a stage for commerce.

The farmer's market attracts people to mingle, to see and be seen outside. Attendees rub shoulders with their fellow citizens.

Engaged walkers are what drive sales per square foot in downtowns. People on foot will not explore unless they are invited to participate in a conversation at street level. Every business with a ground-floor use, whether it is retail or not, should be considering how to better interact with pedestrians.

CHARACTERIZATION RECOMMENDATION

All Businesses Should Physically Interact with Pedestrians

The fact that people will flock to downtown for the farmer's market proves they will visit. If they don't return during other times of the week, it means downtown is not giving them the experience that they want.

What can be learned from their behavior?

People want to spend time in downtowns that are teeming with life, that have activity spilling out into the streets—exactly the type of environment provided by the markets.

The streets and sidewalks of downtown Vancouver are public spaces that should be the stage upon which Vancouver shows its wares.

Therefore, everyone should be looking for opportunities to introduce more sidewalk tables, planter boxes, merchandise on the sidewalks, exterior lights on buildings, storefronts that are engaging at night (even when retailers are closed)—anything that visitors can appreciate at three miles per hour! Especially the types of businesses identified in the workshop as being beloved: restaurants, small shops, and the Kiggins.

These are the things that generate positive experience, and bring people back to places again and again.

It is important in transitional retail districts that the public sector not over legislate the use of outdoor sidewalks for product and table display. In a retail district that is still finding its legs, any barriers to street-level dialog, no matter how small, will have a negative economic impact on the downtown. Therefore, I do not recommend requiring permitting or creating dimensional restrictions, for outdoor displays and tables.

Do not solve problems before you have them. In downtown Vancouver, the issue is not an overabundance of sidewalk life, but a lack of it. If downtown develops so much street life that it becomes a pernicious problem for walkers, then solutions should be explored. Until then, language similar to this is recommended:

In the Downtown Retail Core, the sidewalks shall retain their role as the primary pedestrian system. The intent of any permitted encroachments in the Downtown Retail Core shall be the promotion of retail growth, development, retention and stability so as to enable the retail core to become and remain regionally competitive. Improvements that are not substantially consistent with the intent of these goals should be accommodated outside the public right-of-way so as to not adversely impact the sidewalk's role as the primary pedestrian system.

Below are examples of good street level dialog that engages the senses, both during the day, when stores are open, and at night, when they are closed. Remember, a downtown tells a story 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its businesses, its buildings, its streets, its public art, its sidewalks, and its landscaping should be saying something exciting at all times.



OBJECTIVE

Become the Heart of the City-Center Node

The Identity Findings were very clear that there is presently a geographic and emotional east-west divide in the city of Vancouver. Neither side of the city is really relating strongly to the other. That rift needs to begin healing, and one of the ways for that to happen is for each node to develop a sort of parity in terms of economic health and community spirit. For downtown, in the short-term, that means becoming the heart of what is its natural constituency.

OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Focus on Being Heart of N/S I5 Corridor

Downtowns are centers. And downtown Vancouver needs to focus on what type of center it is.

It is not the geographic center of the city, rather it is on its western edge. It also is not the economic center of its MSA; that role belongs to Portland. Additionally, the overall city lacks a solid identity and the unifying themes that could connect both the east-side node and the city-center node, so for the time being, it will be very difficult to become the emotional center of Vancouver, which is somewhat fractured.

First, downtown should become the heart of where it has a natural constituency, and that is the north/south I5 corridor. For closer neighborhoods, downtown is a day-to-day center. And, for communities further away, like Longview, it is an overnight or weekend option for those who want a bit of an urban downtown experience without going into Portland.

Eventually, it could become the true emotional center of the entire city. But, it will take time to integrate disparate parts of Vancouver under mutual umbrellas of identity. In the short-term, while Vancouver's downtown is strengthening its role as an authentic center for the west-side, it should be working to forge new and better connections with the east-side.

Strong emotional and geographic divisions in a city are not uncommon. Let's consider Portland's revitalization over the last 2 decades as an example. It is not so long ago that the east and west side of that city were diametrically opposed to one another, to the point where western residents loathed to cross bridges to the eastern half of the city.

Now, there is much more articulation between the two halves of Portland, and the rivalry between the no armpit-shaving, crunchy east-siders and the uptight, talking on their cell while driving west-siders is much friendlier! (Alas, stereotypes live on.)

Because Portland's geographic dynamic has improved, stakeholders now carry around multiple layers of local/regional identity. A SE Portlander might first identify as living in the Hawthorne commercial district, and next as a resident of the Sunnyside neighborhood, which transitions to being a hard core east-sider, and then a die hard in-city Portlander, and finally perhaps an Oregonian.

Identity is additive, not mutually exclusive, and the ability to relate from the state level through multiple layers to the neighborhood level is the goal in a city.

OBJECTIVE

Provide a Memorable Experience

Downtown Vancouver needs to actively demonstrate to the world who they are, what downtown stands for, and why it's special. For Vancouver as a whole, and for downtown, words like tired, old and quiet were feeling-words consistently used to describe both places, which reflects the way the city is sometimes leaving stakeholders feeling.

OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Downtown Needs to Become an Entertainment District

Typically, retail and restaurant are the two drivers that build ethos in mixed-use districts. However, Vancouver is in a sales tax state, immediately adjacent to a large region filled with fantastic shopping options in which Vancouver residents do not have to pay sales tax. This presents unique challenges to revitalization and identity building because downtown cannot depend upon retail exclusively.

Therefore, downtown should also position itself as a gateway to activity. A district where people come, not to a specific business, but to the general area to determine what they should be doing next! At any given time, there are a ton of activities to partake in downtown, and the city-center node, but no central place to really process ALL of the options each day.

There are movie theaters, live theatres, programming in various parks, classes at places like the Co-op and the Fort, events in individual businesses, live music at various venues, fitness classes, etc. Visitors can walk on the waterfront, rent a bike, ride to the wildlife sanctuary in Fruit Valley and go bird watching...the possibilities are pretty impressive.

- Downtown should quantify the scheduled entertainment options as well as the always available recreation options first, for the downtown, and then eventually, for the city-center node. Outsource the work, have it available in a digitally easy-to-parse format and post it on the VDA site, the Visit Vancouver site, the Fort site,

etc. Ideally, there would be screen(s) with the same up-to-date information on what is happening at the Hilton, at Esther Short Park, the downtown library, and somewhere in a window downtown, perhaps at the VDA office or the Vancouver USA regional tourism office. These screens are not only informational, they reinforce for everyone the idea that there is always something happening in the city-center node.

- In downtown Seattle at the Pike Place Market, there was a tiny Ticket/Ticket booth that offered same-day discounts to performances, events, classes throughout the city. Citizens and tourists alike used it as a same-day, impromptu planning device: show up and figure out what you are going to be doing later that evening. That sort of idea might be valuable for the city-center node, based out of downtown.
- Phase in a bike-share program that could be used for nearby cycling recreation opportunities as well as inter city-center node travel. It could start with a single kiosk location at the park, and would only support round trips. Eventually though, you could add one-way drop off stations throughout the city-center node, which is very bikeable.
- River activities. How can downtown offer opportunities to actually interact with the water on the Columbia River from downtown?

OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Engage All of the Senses

The filing system for our brains is regulated by emotion. Without emotion, we are incapable of making choices because we have no way of categorizing our options. The more ways in which we involve people's senses, the more emotionally attached they become, and the more lasting an impression is made.

Smells, sounds, tastes, and touches...we want it all, and we want to experience it in downtown. Smells are connected strongly to memory, and sound is connected to mood. The impacts can be profound.

Consider this experiment, reported by Martin Lindstrom in *Brand Sense*:

Two identical pairs of Nike Shoes were placed in two separate, but identical, rooms. One room was infused with a mixed floral scent. The other wasn't. The test subjects inspected the shoes in each room before answering a questionnaire. Overwhelmingly consumers—by a startling margin of 84 percent — preferred the shoes displayed in the room with the fragrance. What's more, these consumers estimated the value of the 'scented' shoes on average to be \$10.33 higher than the pair in the unscented room.

Studies have shown that our mood can improve by 40% just by being exposed to a pleasant fragrance, especially if it invokes a positive memory.

Contemplate a periodic free food sample event outside restaurants at lunch or happy hour in the summer, oh the taste and the smell! One of the reasons street dialog is so important is not just how it looks, but that it gives pedestrians something to touch. Or, the Kiggins could implement this idea from a Chicago movie theater, reported in the book Brand Sense:

A cinema owner in Chicago installed vents to the street outside his theater, and he would pipe the smell of popcorn out onto the sidewalk half an hour before the movie, the theater would fill in a matter of minutes.

People provide one of our most important sensory stimuli in downtowns. Human beings are hard-wired to want to go, see, and do whatever they observe crowds of other people doing. This is one of the reasons street dialog is so important, it attracts people to stop and be seen looking at merchandise on the street. Their very presence, in turn, attracts even more people. This effect is so powerful, that some stores create it artificially.

Consider this approach by Abercrombie and Fitch, reported in the book Buyology:

Abercrombie and Fitch hires actual models to hang out in front of the store in groups. Between the posters of beautiful young people and the real-life models attired in their clothes, people stop and want to linger, hang out with, be a part of, and be associated with this beauty. At their Fifth Avenue Store in New York, you'll notice that tens if not hundreds of pedestrians will slow down to linger in their vicinity.

Possible ideas include:

- Derek T. Chisholm at Parametrix suggested a grant program to street performers. The VDA could enter into a contract with five “art brokers,” (regionally connected artists) who would be responsible for hiring seven performers that would create some street life and entertainment throughout the summer (ensuring the performances wouldn’t be intrusive, inappropriate, or block traffic).
- Turtle Place is pretty darn spectacular at night with its dramatic lighting. Since the district is really hopping on Friday and Saturday night with the bar scene, why not have a DJ playing early on Friday/Saturday evening in the summer to encourage people to congregate, dance, and have a good time?

Sensory input can be negative, such as the train whistle mentioned in association with downtown. Exploring the extension of any quiet zones would have a positive impact.

OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Show, Don't Tell

All creative writing classes recommend storytellers show what a character is feeling, rather than describe what they are feeling. In other words, don't say a character is frustrated, show they are by having them pick up an ashtray and throw it across the room.

This advice carries over directly to place. It is common to become solely focused upon traditional marketing—signs, collateral, email, and ads—and not think about the other ways you are communicating with people about who and what you are.

So, pretend for a while that no business downtown can have a sign on their building, or put an ad in the paper, send an email, or sign up for social media. How would they tell their story?

- Can you glance at a store and tell what they sell in a second or two? That is typically all of the time a driver has to process a business, so people should be able to glance at a store and know what their business is in a moment. Very few people actually process signs.
- Does the outside of a store express and reflect the taste, style, and personality of the person who owns it?
- Does the business offer the same experience from the sidewalk that it offers inside the store? If not, why would anyone go inside?
- How can a more inward facing use, like a bank, outwardly express their personality? A small local bank once implemented a promotion where they sponsored a local dessert maker to offer a small free sample ware to local theatergoers at intermission. It was a completely delightful and unexpected surprise that endeared the brand strongly to everyone attending performances.
- From Interstate 5 and Highway 14, there are fleeting glimpses of I5, downtown, the Fort, and the Air Museum, yet there is nothing that really represents what is truly there. It just feels like the back of something. These are important visual gateways that should be telling a positive story to the astronomical traffic counts passing by.
- Since safety was a big issue for Vancouverites, think about how to make downtown feel safe. It is the perception of safety that matters, not the reality.



Not A Visual that Encourages City Center Exiting

Many very safe districts and neighborhoods suffer from a perceived lack of security that damages their economic health. What is one of the most important visual cues that makes us feel secure? People on the street. Another? Building-lighting and bright active storefronts when businesses are closed.

- History is important, as was stated repeatedly during public outreach efforts. Perhaps each building's visual and written past could be captured and displayed prominently in every location for all to see. Oregon City undertook and implemented such a project throughout their historic downtown.

OBJECTIVE

Tenant for Value

Districts take their identity from ground floor businesses, as was illustrated by the establishments that stakeholders identified as being beloved in downtown. The common element found in most of these businesses is that they are local, active, outward facing and on the ground floor. This is the key to building long-term value and economic success in a downtown district—tenant with businesses that engage in street level dialog. Anything that helps to build the community fabric is welcome, since that is the draw for downtown.

OBJECTIVE RECOMMENDATION

Focus on Local Destination Businesses that Provide Experience

Downtown is going to have to be a specialty retail district in the beginning, offering products and service that you cannot get at a mall or a big box store. Wherever possible, downtown should highlight artisanal products from small shops and local producers, accentuating the one-of-a-kind nature of the items provided, a strategy that plays to the strengths of downtown and fulfills the authentic requirements for a unique shopping experience that local citizens require to lure them away from chain stores or trips to Portland. Two examples of small stores that combine sensory experience, art, and local craft are highlighted below.

R Blooms illustrates this intersection well. They sell and arrange fresh flowers, an art unto itself. These flowers are delightful to touch, to smell, and to see, stimulating all of the senses. They also carry a wide variety of local and artisan made products. One of my favorite local companies that they represent transfers images to wooden planks that can be hung as outdoor art (the grape painting on the following page, second row left, was created by a Hillsboro company). R Blooms also offers one-of-a-kind consignment items they brand as *The Vault*.



R BLOOMS MIX OF CRAFT, LOCAL, AND CONSIGNMENT PRODUCTS



Accessories from the Heart is another store in a small regional downtown that exists at the crossroads between the unique and the accessible. One of the most artistic and unique themes in the store are the dresses on mannequins, both large and small, made by the boutique's long-time merchandiser Sarah, with found materials, mostly papers and ribbons. There is a life size dress in the front store window that people sometimes stop and ask to buy, not realizing it is composed of nothing but disposable materials. These are the types of one-of-a-kind experiences only downtown can offer.

Over time, if downtown Vancouver creates enough local energy and small scale retail excitement, the more traditional retail sector and private sector development will follow. There is a good example of this on North Williams Avenue in Portland—which was a troubled, high-crime, one-way couplet—that has experienced an incredible renewal through two avenues. The first was the renovation of several existing mid-century warehouses and ten-anting those with very active and passionate local businesses. The second was the rise of



Betty the Mannequin Showcases Original Designs

the arterial as a top bike commuting corridor in Portland. These two factors have brought two new residential construction projects in the recession as well as the announcement of a New Seasons on the way.

To attract and inspire these talented local tenants, landlords need to highlight original features in buildings and provide the experience people expect to have in a small, historic downtown environment: high ceilings, copious natural light with generous storefront windows, and features of the original building exposed, such as wood floors and brick walls. (False ceilings and carpeting are not finishes visitors find desirable in a village environment.)

A truly successful mixed-use district has a complementary array of active uses at the street level. And anything can be active, even a gas station, as the cutest, most pedestrian-friendly gas station in the Pacific Northwest aptly demonstrates in the photos below!



RELATIONSHIP

Impact the Community

The single biggest unifying theme found in the city of Vancouver was pride in the schools. The second most common thread identified was a belief that Vancouver was a great place to live because it was the perfect scale to have a positive impact on the community. Not too small, so it has the resources to get things done, but not so big that it's hard to get involved and make a difference. This is a strong ethos that can be built upon.

RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATION

Bring Back Vancouver Sons and Daughters

Why is one of the largest refrigerated salad dressing manufacturers in the country located in tiny Sandpoint, Idaho? Why is Funnelbox, one of the fastest growing companies in the region located in downtown Oregon City? Because that is where the founders of those companies were from. Robb Crocker, the owner of Funnelbox, used to have his creative services firm in the Pearl. But he moved back to downtown Oregon City and has purchased and renovated downtown buildings, expanded his company, attracted other creative firms, and is very active in their Main Street organization.

Find successful Vancouverites throughout the country and incentivize them to come home and set up shop in downtown. This was part of the strategy for turning around the California migration in Oklahoma; they set out to get their native sons and daughters to return to their home state, and it was successful.

RELATIONSHIP

Bring On the Activity!!

The more connected downtown businesses can be with one another, the more successful the district will become, because it will have a network of relationships already established. Downtown should be a place where a visitor experiences the authentic fabric of a community; in fact, it is what people expect to find in a charming, quaint downtown. Throughout the workshop, it was clear that a strong sense of community was of vital importance to the people of Vancouver. But, before you can build a bridge to surrounding city dwellers, you must first create ties among downtown stakeholders.

RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATION

Better Connect Downtown Ground Floor Businesses

Economically successful downtowns are environments that, in total, are much greater than the sum of their parts. Each visitor that comes to downtown Vancouver for a particular business or event, should be enticed to stay, explore other businesses, and return.

- Explore adjacencies. Downtown retailers and restaurateurs should share information and explore buying-patterns. What stores, services, and restaurants do people usually pair together when downtown? How can those services co-market and combine brands to further strengthen ties and increase sales? This data can contribute to an understanding of what businesses should be recruited to downtown.
- The Hilton is a huge gatekeeper to downtown. A single word from a hotel staffer to a visitor is enough to send someone off to explore and buy. Create a show/training/meet & greet event for employees so they can learn about, and sample from, downtown's offerings. A one-one-one with a business owner will help them make more informed decisions about where to send people. Word of mouth is that powerful. With central 800 number call centers for large hotel chains, managers from individual hotels in markets with competing properties will send staff to ply phone operators with gifts and information about their hotels so the call center employees will say a good word about them when people call to make reservations.
- Wayfinding. Downtown is presently a bit toothy, meaning there are blanks in the pedestrian environment and missing physical cues to tell us that there is a river nearby, a trail just around the corner, a Main Street two blocks away, a library just up the road, or an amazing historical site down the way. Think wayfinding, and I don't just mean traditional signs. Embrace the concept of "Show, don't tell" and think about clues that might take someone on foot to the fort. Maybe cast shapes of Fort artifacts embedded into the sidewalk in a trail that leads a pedestrian from downtown to the Fort. Or, a birdhouse honoring-system lending library, pictured here, with signs that point toward the library.
- Build VDA Membership. A thriving downtown association lobbies on behalf of the small business and property owners that are common in mixed-use environments, keeps the agenda for downtown front and center in the community, and provides resources that would not be available otherwise.



*Small Lending Library and Wayfinding Library Sign
(Courtesy of little free library dot org)*

RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATION

Leverage Strengths to Build Relationships to Downtown

In underperforming districts, it is important for everyone to remember that it is first the job of stakeholders to bring people to downtown, then businesses can focus on the selling them food, clothes, antiques, or a cup of coffee!

Concentrate on three major areas: 1) Leverage existing events; 2) Explore and reinforce the natural themes that exist between downtown businesses; and 3) Consider who is not relating to downtown to start healing those broken relationships.

Leverage Existing Events

Workshop participants identified top events in downtown as being the Wine and Jazz festival, the Farmer's Market, and the concerts in the park. What's interesting though, is that many do not necessarily take that positive brand association and apply it to the downtown in general.

The Farmer's Market is a good example. Visitors are making an emotional connection with the market, but that is not carrying to downtown as much as it should. So essentially, a ton of people come to the core for these events, but downtown's brand identity doesn't benefit.

This informs the first order of business: build positive associations with what is already successful in downtown.

- It is not uncommon to hear a local business say that on Farmer's Market day, people park in the district and walk through to the market, but don't participate in what is on offer locally, in buildings. So bring it out to the sidewalk! Every business should participate in the type of street dialog that the market creates, and at a minimum put out tables and merchandise to visually fashion a festival atmosphere throughout downtown, and to encourage people to explore. Here is a quote from the Metro newsfeed about this strategy in action implemented by R Blooms, the floral and homewares shop mentioned previously:

"By moving locations where our storefront is highly visible and adding sidewalk interest with an antique flower cart and spillover product, we've probably increased our walk-in business by 40 to 50 percent," said Richard Bloom. On Saturdays, he converts several of the customer parking spots next to his building into an outdoor market to take advantage of Lake Oswego's farmers market crowd. "Saturdays used to mean a skeleton crew and closing early," says Bloom. "Now it's one of our busiest days."

- Consider taking some on-street parking spaces in front of buildings on Farmer's Market day, and turn them into small parklets with music, food, and ply passersby with products and activities.
- If the market closes in the early afternoon, offer events, classes, and outdoor activities that begin as the market closes to retain people downtown. Have areas, perhaps in flat lots that create pedestrian blanks, where outside vendors can sell wares that stress the cultural and artistic brand of downtown. Or, bring in a craft brewer for an enclosed beer garden.
- Be creative about how non-retail uses can participate in these festive events. Perhaps a soapbox with college philosophy students expounding on political theory in front of City Hall!
- Wine and jazz hearkens back to another era, a theme that could be explored in downtown during this event. Fashion oriented boutiques could feature retro clothing and jewelry. A mini film festival could be held at the Kiggins. Restaurants could get into the act as well.

Build Upon Existing Themes

Not all events must be large, district-wide affairs. Philip Stanton at Mississippi Pizza in Portland brings approximately 175,000 to 200,000 people a year through his restaurant with the programming he has in his pizzeria: music, spelling bees, trivia, bingo, and kid's entertainment.

This restaurant is now one of the top volume pizza venues in the city of Portland, and they do not offer delivery. They achieve their volume purely through event planning.

Not only is this good for Philip's individual business, but it brings people to the street who have never been there and creates a positive experience that they then associate with the area.

So, let's consider the layout of downtown Downtown and then ponder how to better exploit some of the themes that exist there.

Downtown is rather large for the number of existing retail purveyors, and they are somewhat disconnected, so it is difficult to offer a singular experience for like-minded shoppers who might get overwhelmed trying to piece it together. So help them.



Mississippi Pizza Brings Boatloads of Visitors

Food

In the outreach results, there was a positive connection between stakeholders and downtown's restaurants and food outlets. There are food options throughout and they are fairly spread out.



People Dining Outdoors Lends an Air of Vibrancy

- Install more outdoor tables and sidewalk accoutrement on the exterior of restaurants. It's difficult to tell how many dining and food establishments there are in downtown Vancouver because there aren't the same fabulous visual cues that are found in other restaurant districts. Tables are the best sign to tell people there is a restaurant there, even if no one ever sits at them!
- Heavily market to, and reward, nearby residents and employers. People love discounts, even if they are nominal, because it makes them feel special. As one restaurateur said to me recently, someone will drive across town to come to my place for a free coke.
- Market downtown as a restaurant district.
- Pair up with local events: arty hors d'oeuvres during art walk, dinner before a show, etc.
- Provide entertainment in restaurants, perhaps partnering with regional groups who can lend improvisation artists, comedians, and drama.

Arts, Crafts, and Culture

Downtown has the best collection of cultural assets in Vancouver, and this identity could be exploited much more successfully, incorporating it into the brand of downtown. This should be part of what people come to experience when they choose downtown as an entertainment district:

- Promote the heck out of existing classes, readings, and lectures, performances, and musical events. A postcard that went to East Vancouver and North Portland, places with low awareness about downtown offerings, would help change their perceptions about downtown even if they never came, because of its cultural focus.

➤ Have quarterly “Meet the Artist” events. This could include mini lectures by various chefs, bakers, jewelry makers, artists, wine makers, local vendors who sell stuff in stores, etc. Classes, music, and other ancillary events could be included. This would further cement the unique artisanal downtown brand and stress culture and entertainment as well.

➤ Workshop participants were passionate about education, so create a lecture series that is held downtown. Partner with local colleges to build bridges with these institutions. Partner with the county extension office to have gardening lectures. Always look for opportunities to build relationships and strengthen the fabric of downtown.

➤ Take advantage of the gazebos at the Fort and the Park and partner with regional colleges, dance troupes, theaters, and have them do rehearsals in the spaces when they are empty during the summer so that there is something captivating, fun, free and entertaining happening every day at lunch and in the evenings that connects the community. This would further cement the entertainment district identity.

➤ Tango in the Park. Regionally there are very large tango communities, and dances in parks with gazebos is very Buenos Aires.

➤ Consider an exchange between a small theater/comedy troupe in North Portland and one in downtown Vancouver. Or co-sponsor a film festival in North Portland and downtown Vancouver.



Downtown has a strong artisanal connection.

Ladies Shopping

Downtown has a wonderful collection of boutiques and services that are great for browsing when shopping as an activity, just for the sheer joy of it. Because there isn't physical connectivity between all of these types of merchants in downtown, create events to connect them emotionally.

- A ladies night out event involving clothing boutiques, jewelry, art, salons, antiques, homewares, spas, and exercise studios.
- Couple these types of events with goodies from local area restaurants and food producers.
- Curate shopping trip exploration between like-minded shops and offer promotional materials throughout these stores and at the Hilton.

History/Fort

The Fort was considered the single biggest underutilized asset in downtown according to nearly everyone who participated in this identity building project. Leveraging history as a regional draw and using it as a focal point to build city-wide pride and connection were cited as prime missed opportunities.



Underutilized Greenspace on a Gorgeous Day

- The Fort was perceived as being too focused on academic research and not enough on being a community amenity, or a history-buff tourist draw. Most locals indicated their use of the Fort was restricted to the 4th of July, or when they took a field trip there in school. The Hilton did try to market Fort packages, but they were not well subscribed.
- Prioritize event planning and marketing to the east side, where there are newer residents with less connection to the history of the city.
- Market aggressively to regional parent publications and home school bloggers/social media outlets about activities and opportunities there.

Target Those Who Don't Relate Downtown

The groups most often mentioned as not relating to downtown included east-siders and Portlanders. These two segments of the population represent an opportunity to increase downtown's profile and improve market share for entertainment and retail.

Word of mouth is incredibly effective as a means of advertising because the brain treats this information differently than that from traditional advertising. In effect, the rational part of your brain shuts down and the area responsible for social emotions kicks in. As relayed

in the book *Brandwashed*, word of mouth recommendations stays in our minds for weeks and stimulates areas of the brain also associated with craving.

When a stakeholder in downtown has a great experience in the city-center node, they should take the time to relay that sincerely and authentically to friends, especially those that do not relate to downtown.

East-siders

Look for ways to create connection, with schools being a positive point of intersection between both east and west.

- Poetry slams for middle and high schoolers. As reported in *Portland Monthly*, a recently started series of middle school poetry slam competitions has been taking off and will culminate in a large event at the Mission Theater.
- Coordinate with student drama programs so that high school and college students can perform short one- and two-man plays for dinner theater evenings at local restaurants on slower nights, or populate gazebos with rehearsals from drama club, dance team, etc.
- Partner with high schools and colleges to create internship programs with downtown professionals. To be successful, these programs have to teach real skills, and have real responsibilities. It is not just a matter of job shadowing. But, they would create deep ties between downtown and young people, particularly on the east-side.
- Submit a “downtown package” for sale at east-side school auctions.
- Do not create Buy Local campaigns for this group. For suburban dwellers, these campaigns feel like a value judgement and they are generally unsuccessful. (Buy Local works well for people who already do that as a matter of course because it is serving as a reminder about something they do anyway.) Instead, stress the experience, one-of-a-kind expertise, and product mix available downtown. That is where downtown differentiates itself from the mall.
- Improve communications and marketing in general. There was strong feedback that people outside the core don’t really have a sense of all the offerings downtown, and



More!

many say they don't hear about events and lectures until they are over. Perhaps distribute some posters and postcards to the east-side to dovetail with the identity as an activity gateway.

Portlanders

- Focus on north Portland, the people for whom it's closer to go to Vancouver than downtown Stumptown.
- A Columbia River bridge bike crossing event. Many recreational bikers and people with kids do not realize you can cycle across the Columbia. What better way to introduce them to your downtown than to have them bike across.
- Develop relationships with Metro, the group in Portland most focused on the importance of creating strong centers throughout the greater MSA, not just in Portland.
- Help create and participate in an event that celebrates our MSA regional centers. Something that is special—a street fair on steroids — maybe occurring twice a year, rotating between all of our downtowns in the region. One of our greatest strengths is the wide variety of downtown walkable infrastructure we have, in nearly every type of setting. The city-center node, and downtown Vancouver, offer the only complete downtown ecosystem with a community-focused, smaller town feel in the MSA. And, it has some of the best access: the river, I5, the airport, and hopefully Max soon.

RELATIONSHIP

Show Me the Vision!



Vision and Public/Private Collaboration

In Oklahoma City, the council and the Mayor played a key role in repositioning the downtown as a crown jewel among the assets of the city. As did the public sector in the successful redevelopment in downtown Vancouver that occurred around Esther Short Park. Great places evidence powerful public/private collaboration, with the public sector marshalling support, convening stakeholder groups, and coalescing stakeholders around a vision.

RELATIONSHIP RECOMMENDATION

Build City-Center Node Identity

To tackle the two Vancouvers, the two nodes need to become equally strong in their sense of identity and perceptions about themselves, and then reconciliation and points of intersect between the two will emerge more naturally.

- Neighborhood Associations were regarded as a successful city-wide public/private endeavor. For the city-center node, begin having them meet quarterly to share information, brainstorm strategies for interconnecting, and begin cementing a greater emotional identity around the core. Have guest speakers from large businesses or institutions in the city-center node.
- Create a semi-annual meeting between neighborhood association group leaders throughout the city for technical assistance and information sharing.
- Work together with these groups to construct a process for creating a city-wide vision for the future.

ENVIRONMENT

Portland's Not Going Away, and Neither is BC

Portland is the dominant economy in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro MSA. Vancouver is located geographically very close to Portland. Vancouver BC is a huge city with tremendous international name recognition. These are facts that will not be changing anytime soon. So own them. Use them to make Vancouver more successful.

Support Max. Interconnected centers are typically higher performing economically. The more types of connection, the better. As examples, consider how many more conventions would be likely to locate in Vancouver if conventioners could take light rail to downtown from PDX. Another illustration of the power of connectivity comes from Forest Grove, which would love to have light rail. They watched Pacific University move their entire medical graduate program from their historic traditional campus in Forest Grove to new buildings right on the Max line in Hillsboro.

Promote Livability. Regional cities with industrial land say off the record that one of their biggest selling points when recruiting companies is nearby Portland's livability and popularity with employers. Not only can Vancouver offer that as well because it's one of the closest of the regional centers to downtown, but Vancouver also has the entire downtown/core ecosystem and could offer the same amenity on a more accessible scale. But, it will require some improvement and more residential density.

Take on Stereotypes Directly. If people use nicknames that have wide regional recognition, make them your own. It's always easier to build brand around something that people use widely than to create it from scratch. And, it has a basis in authenticity, which is important. "The Couve" is a name that is definitely trending positive, and could be incredibly cool, but still authentic to the accessible community Vancouver wants to be.

Regarding the confusion between Vancouver BC and Vancouver USA, use this conflict to raise name recognition in the region. Have hapless world travelers end up in Vancouver, WA instead of BC, and follow them on their adventures, sharing with people what is special about Vancouver USA. This uses authentic tension and conflict in a funny, memorable way.

ENVIRONMENT

The Great Divide

Presently, Vancouver has its own version of a Tale of Two Cities happening between the city-center node and the east-side node. This needs to improve in order to begin fostering a positive city-wide identity. One place to focus is to think about what connects the two physically.

When asked where people avoided in the city of Vancouver, 4th Plain was the big winner. The health of this corridor is incredibly important to the future of the city because it is the commercial core for the network of neighborhoods that interconnect the two nodes.

Vancouver has two east-west highways that were designed to quickly funnel cars between the two nodes, essentially bypassing all of the offerings in between: SR 500 and Highway 14. Now, 4th Plain is essentially a third bypass.

Frankly, the community does not need another fast moving, high traffic arterial moving people through. It needs to be a street taking people *to*—to stores, to businesses, to homes, to live.



Business on 4th Plain Boulevard

Unfortunately, the BRT is focused on strengthening this pass-through. It takes out stops and makes it harder for people in the neighborhood who access public transportation to live their daily lives, for the sake of commuters.

Instead, I would suggest something bold, taking a page from the North Williams playbook. As discussed previously, the street overcame the difficult retail and resi-

dential environment created by high crime and busy one-way traffic, in part, by becoming one of the highest trafficked bike corridors in the city of Portland.

Rather than introduce BRT, the city should pursue federal bike infrastructure funds and install the region's first barrier-protected bike lanes along the entire length of the street. Also, use paint to narrow the lanes and slow traffic down to the posted speed limits in the 30s, rather than the speeds actually traveled: upward of 45 to 50 miles per hour.



Protected Bike Lanes Could Transform 4th Plain

Without a community with strong identity connecting the two nodes, city-wide identity will be harder to attain. And the 4th Plain corridor is not going to revitalize around what is essentially a freeway.

ENVIRONMENT

It's a Downtown, Make It Look Like One!

Thriving mixed use districts have several things in common regarding their environments: buildings that are constructed up to the sidewalk, few pedestrian blanks, calmed traffic, and a wide variety of stakeholders living, working and playing in the district.

In order to actively and positively differentiate downtown from the rest of the city, it has to play to its strengths. One of those strengths is offering an environment that is completely and utterly different than the rest of the suburban and arterial form that surrounds it.

ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATION

Eliminate Ground Floor Parking Minimums, Add Benefit District

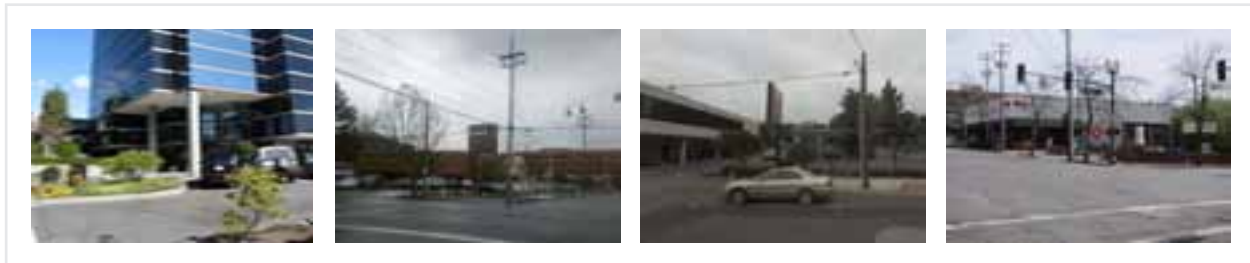
Downtown Vancouver presently has a lot of space devoted to the storage of cars, rather than to providing a great experience for people. It presently has a parking problem...but it's not that there is too little parking!

The reality is that downtowns have a constrained real estate environment and cannot come close to matching suburban parking ratios. And they shouldn't even try. Many in downtown Vancouver believe if they had more parking, their businesses would do better, but the opposite is actually true. More parking would introduce more pedestrian blanks, which

would make people spend less time walking, and decrease cross-pollination between businesses, thereby lowering retail sales per square foot throughout.

And for those who say that people in Vancouver won't pay for parking, or won't hunt for parking in constrained environments, remember, most of those who participated in the identity building work took their retail dollars straight into Portland's more expensive and more constrained parking environments. Why? Because they are compensated by having a great pedestrian experience once they get out of the car.

More and more cities are moving toward a model of removing ground floor commercial parking minimums in their downtowns for all buildings, old and new, in order to foster more activity and more development. This is happening in places like downtown Gresham, downtown Tacoma, downtown Nashville, downtown Hillsboro, and downtown Forest Grove. Not having commercial minimums fosters infill development and eliminates pedestrian blanks, two key elements needed in downtown Vancouver.



PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE IN DOWNTOWN VANCOUVER, WASHINGTON



Parking minimums that require ground floor uses to provide off-street spaces create several problems that can be crippling for downtowns. Examples of the unintended consequences are listed below.

- Parking minimums discourage active ground floor uses, the very businesses that bring life to a community, because the more active the use, the more parking is needed, and downtown environments just do not have that much square footage to devote to parking.
- Every flat parking lot in the downtown, some of which are pictured above, is creating an ugly pedestrian blank that no one wants to walk past. Downtowns make

their money off of foot traffic, so anything that impedes the pedestrian experience is stopping exploration and creating a dead center.

- Established minimums can impede the ability of businesses and property owners to share parking, which is disastrous. Every downtown should look at parking as a shared resource, because the more land that can be devoted to buildings, businesses, and people, the more vibrant the place, and the more economically successful it will be.
- Parking minimums make new development more expensive and they discourage great small projects. All of downtown's parking lots are ripe for infill, but the parking minimums literally make it harder to design a gem of a 5,000 square foot building that will be attractive, contributing, and marketable. (On a side note, removing minimums does not mean that every project will be built without parking, it merely ensures that only the minimum amount of parking a developer feels is needed to successfully sell/lease a space will be created.)
- Downtowns with a lot of flat lot parking result in many curb cuts in the sidewalk. This sends a powerful message for people on the sidewalk that this environment is really for the ingress and egress of cars, not to support their enjoyment of the downtown experience.

Parking is a difficult asset to manage effectively in a downtown because there are many misnomers about how parking actually works in a mixed-use district. A several step process should be instituted toward crafting a parking policy that is beneficial to the entire downtown organism.

- Start with education and community outreach to downtown business owners, property owners, and residents. Do not shortcut this process. It could take a year. But work at it until everyone has a shared vocabulary and understanding of how parking functions downtown. It is impossible to engage in a productive conversation about how to manage parking resources without first sharing knowledge about this complicated element in the downtown ecosystem.
- Create a parking plan to manage the on-street spaces as the valuable resource they are. Retail life is a key to the health of a downtown. Parking turnover is important for retail health. The entire identity of the district and resulting building and property values are tied to retail health. Meters are a necessity to ensure this when you are dealing with a constrained parking environment, so there is parking turnover. But, to be effective, those meters should eliminate the 20 minutes free, should perhaps charge more, and the money should be returned to the district to improve itself with a parking benefit district. Then, parking becomes an asset that helps everyone in downtown.
- Work on, and enforce, employee parking away from the retail areas.

ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATION

Use Your Downtown Toolkit

To be a successful mixed-use district, downtown is going to have to make sure it is developed in such a way that growth is contributing toward all of the elements that make a great mixed-use place. Connectivity. Visual interest for pedestrians. A variety of uses.

- Connectivity is king in downtowns. Do not allow superblocks. Points of exchange should never be eliminated in a downtown, such as intersections, without exceptional reasons.
- Concentrate retail. Retail is the core of what activates mixed-use districts, gives them identity, and brings value. Retail is a precious commodity and the zoning for such should be wielded with this in mind within a city, particularly one such as Vancouver with the challenging nature of sales tax/border geographies that export retail dollars to Portland. If a city allows unchecked expansion of retail, and there is no corresponding unchecked increase in spending power to accompany it, then it is essentially sanctioning the abandonment of existing retail infrastructure for new, leaving the old to become vacant or under invested. The city needs to think strategically about managing its entire existing retail inventory for success.
- Engage the sidewalk. No structure should be allowed to metaphorically turn its shoulder or its back to the street. Even residential spaces can do this successfully, as shown in the pictures below. It can be in the form of live/work spaces, or traditional brownstone stair entries, or creating compelling settings with patios.



GROUND FLOOR RESIDENTIAL OR LIVE/WORK OPENING TO THE PEDESTRIAN RIGHT OF WAY

ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATION

Visual, Emotional, and Physical Interconnections

There are many ways we expect to find connectivity in a downtown. We want to be emotionally engaged, we want to feel visually stimulated, and of course, we don't want physical blanks in the environment. Previous sections have talked about visual and emotional connections, so here we want to consider how to physically interconnect the downtown with its surrounding environment more successfully.

Possible strategies include:

- Support as much new residential construction as possible to physically interconnect the buildings in the core, eliminating pedestrian blanks. More people living in downtown will drive more retail and more life.
- Install successful wayfinding, as discussed previously.
- Create better gateways. The views from the freeway and Hwy 14 can be improved. The experience when you enter the Fort from the land bridge should be more interactive; as it is now, walkers disembark from the bridge and are left adrift. There could be clearer signs on I5 indicating how to get to big amenities like the Fort and the river. And lastly, the entrance to the Renaissance Trail from downtown should be spectacular.
- Explore a trolley bus circulator. This adorable electric trolley, pictured to the right, is now in service in Wenatchee, WA. Something like this could do a lap around the city-center node, making it an easier place to live/work/play, connecting all of the amenities in the node. The more ways the city-center node is interconnected, the more successful it will be, and the less parking will be an issue.



Wenatchee Trolley, Courtesy of chelanpud.org

CONCLUSION

Great downtowns are always great places for people, not necessarily great places for cars—either those driving through, or those being stored (parking).

Economically successful downtowns cannot mirror arterial-style development, which is automobile centered. There is not the land, or the parking infrastructure, to allow a small downtown to emulate suburban retail form. If you try to model a small downtown in this mold—arterials, parking minimums, landscaping requirements, setbacks—then you will relegate your city's core to being an unsuccessful, in-between place. Not quite a downtown. Not quite a mall or big-box center. And, most importantly, if you try to compete on this level, your downtown will be economically underperforming because you won't be leveraging the strengths of the downtown environment.

Thriving mixed-use districts are always designed for, and are especially appealing to, people on foot. The entire environment should be human-scaled.

Every design decision, land-use decision, and transportation decision in a downtown should be made first and foremost with the pedestrian in mind. Why? Because people walking in a downtown district are the key to driving sales per square foot and to creating identity and vibrancy.

Who is more likely to stop and get a cup of coffee, someone in a car or someone walking? Who is more likely to buy a new pair of shoes or a pair of pants, someone who is walking or someone who is driving? You can't buy most things when you are in your car!

In a mall, visitors have to get out of their car and walk around to shop in stores because that's how best to drive economic activity—by encasing shoppers in a building and delivering a pleasant, engaging, and entertaining pedestrian experience throughout. To succeed, downtown Vancouver will need to do the same thing. The path to accomplish this includes the following:

- **Tell a More Vibrant Story with Buildings.** Don't legislate temporary finishes, restore historic buildings, introduce color and dramatic building lighting, and tenant with active, outward facing uses that reinforce the downtown's brand. Secondly, focus on tenants that bring entertainment, experience, and excellent customer service. In doing so, they will build district identity and reap the benefits in the form of higher property values and increased sales. The interior of the buildings should reflect original features and charm.
- **Ramp Up the Street Dialog.** Everyone loves a farmer's market. Why? Because it engages all of the senses and spills out onto the sidewalk. Vancouver's ground floor businesses need to engage the pedestrian in much the same way, contributing to a fantastic walking experience. All the senses should be stimulated as well:

music, smelling good food, products to touch. We make the strongest connections to brands and places that fully engage our faculties.

- **Weave an Authentic Story.** Downtown should consider Audience, Authenticity, and Conflict as it communicates with prospective visitors. It is difficult to create marketing campaigns for small downtowns that are all things to all people, so the focus should first be on creating a faithful local and city-center brand before extending it to the city as a whole. Improved communication between east-west should be established, and small forays to build relationship should be introduced to begin healing the two-cities syndrome that plagues Vancouver's city-wide identity.
- **Bring on the Activity.** The best way to build lasting connections, and to tell a place's story, is through events and experience. Focus on a) better leveraging existing events for brand spillover; b) building upon existing themes; and, c) targeting those who are currently not relating to downtown—the burbs and Portlanders.
- **It's a Downtown, Make It Look Like One.** A successful downtown cannot be built with a suburban toolkit. Differentiate downtown Vancouver from the suburban environment by managing parking effectively, encouraging dense compact building form, introducing "Show, Don't Tell" wayfinding, improving gateways, and thinking about creative ways to bring community, not cars, back to 4th Plain.

Remember, successful foot traffic districts can rival, or surpass, automobile-centered districts in terms of economic output, but they have to be fun, vibrant, exciting, dense, connected, and achieve a critical mass of active ground floor uses and walkers. If downtown Vancouver can accomplish this, then it will be an economically vibrant place that reflects the unique fabric of the city's community.

APPENDIX A—SURVEY DATA

Raw data for each survey question is included in this appendix in the following format:

QUESTION

All Word Count

Unique Word Count

Response rate

[Words listed in order of frequency, not including frequently used words or words mentioned less than 5 times.]

The frequently used words eliminated include the following:

i, me, my, myself, we, our, ours, ourselves, you, your, yours, yourself, yourselves, he, him, his, himself, she, her, hers, herself, it, its, itself, they, them, their, theirs, themselves, what, which, who, whom, this, that, these, those, am, is, are, was, were, be, been, being, have, has, had, having, do, does, did, doing, a, an, the, and, but, if, or, because, as, until, while, of, at, by, for, with, about, against, between, into, through, during, before, after, above, below, to, from, up, down, in, out, on, off, over, under, again, further, then, once, here, there, when, where, why, how, all, any, both, each, few, more, most, other, some, such, no, nor, not, only, own, same, so, than, too, very, s, t, can, will, just, don, should, now

To construct the word clouds used in the Dossier, a spell check is completed and an analysis is run to determine if any leading responses are multiple word phrases that must be kept together. Additionally, frequently used words like those listed above are eliminated, as are any words that are essentially repetitions of words contained in the question.

QUESTION 01

What words would you use to describe the city of Vancouver as a whole today? (Include both positive and negative please!)

All Word Count: 5232

Unique Word Count: 1421

Response rate: 98.92% (274/277)

city(58), downtown(41), community(36), portland(32), vancouver(32), people(31), great(30), growing(30), small(30), good(24), like(23), identity(21), town(21), friendly(20), place(20), live(19), potential(19), conservative(18), east(18), much(18), nice(17), many(16), side(16), sprawling(16), lacking(15), area(14), get(14), bad(13), better(13), family(13), getting(13), need(13), new(13), suburban(13), bedroom(12), feel(12), areas(11), business(11), businesses(11), diverse(11), suburb(11), big(10), dont(10), lack(10), still(10), would(10), cant(9), going(9), hard(9), historic(9), lot(9), needs(9), safe(9), trying(9), vibrant(9), coming(8), divided(8), improving(8), interesting(8), malls(8), old(8), really(8), sleepy(8), spread(8), struggling(8), things(8), think(8), west(8), always(7), arts(7), could(7), different(7), easy(7), go(7), know(7), park(7), positive(7), sprawl(7), use(7), around(6), beautiful(6), center(6), change(6), comfortable(6), creative(6), disjointed(6), fun(6), future(6), historical(6), history(6), home(6), leadership(6), little(6), lots(6), market(6), mix(6), neighborhoods(6), parking(6), parts(6), progressive(6), quaint(6), quiet(6), river(6), short(6), stores(6), time(6), want(6), way(6), years(6), art(5), box(5), changing(5), citizens(5), clean(5), close(5), diversity(5), eat(5), empty(5), esther(5), forward(5), growth(5), however(5), keep(5), kind(5), life(5), living(5), low(5), mall(5), media(5), one(5), places(5), planning(5), see(5), slow(5), slowly(5), tax(5), taxes(5), urban(5), work(5)

QUESTION 02

What words would you use to describe the city of Vancouver as a whole in the past? Historically? (Please be open about what was beloved as well as what wasn't so fabulous.)

All Word Count: 4070

Unique Word Count: 1102

Response rate: 90.97% (252/277)

vancouver(47), city(35), portland(34), history(31), small(26), fort(25), good(25), downtown(23), community(21), town(21), years(20), past(19), much(16), live(15), place(15), great(13), lived(13), back(12), rich(12), conservative(11), historically(11), old(11), rural(11), suburb(11), area(10), bedroom(10), blue(10), collar(10), park(10), really(10),

think(10), historic(9), identity(9), side(9), since(9), bay(8), change(8), dont(8), growth(8), like(8), long(8), well(8), center(7), east(7), historical(7), lack(7), moved(7), never(7), nice(7), still(7), strong(7), ago(6), always(6), building(6), core(6), hudsons(6), ive(6), lacking(6), little(6), lots(6), pearson(6), river(6), sleepy(6), way(6), areas(5), bad(5), beautiful(5), better(5), boring(5), came(5), cant(5), come(5), dirty(5), etc(5), except(5), families(5), feel(5), first(5), friendly(5), get(5), heard(5), important(5), kaiser(5), know(5), leadership(5), many(5), military(5), neighborhoods(5), new(5), officers(5), one(5), pdx(5), people(5), planning(5), portlands(5), quaint(5), quiet(5), row(5), schools(5), seems(5), shadow(5), short(5), sprawl(5), things(5), use(5), vibrant(5), wwii(5)

QUESTION 03

What words would you use to describe Vancouver's DOWNTOWN in the past? Historically? (Please include positive and negative descriptions.) Are these words different for downtown?

All Word Count: 3404

Unique Word Count: 980

Response rate: 89.89% (249/277)

downtown(66), past(22), park(18), scary(18), town(17), dirty(16), place(16), run(16), years(16), great(14), vibrant(14), much(13), old(13), small(13), area(12), center(12), empty(12), shops(12), store(12), vancouver(12), go(11), short(11), city(10), lots(10), one(10), people(10), time(10), community(9), homeless(9), many(9), pawn(9), retail(9), stores(9), buildings(8), esther(8), know(8), little(8), mall(8), see(8), tired(8), unsafe(8), businesses(7), card(7), crime(7), draw(7), friendly(7), good(7), lacking(7), moved(7), quaint(7), really(7), rooms(7), rundown(7), streets(7), thriving(7), 2(6), dark(6), dead(6), historic(6), historically(6), major(6), night(6), nothing(6), seedy(6), way(6), bad(5), boring(5), brewery(5), business(5), come(5), coming(5), destination(5), dont(5), industrial(5), ive(5), lived(5), main(5), neglected(5), shopping(5), things(5), think(5), unattractive(5), vacant(5)

QUESTION 04

What words would you use to describe Vancouver,Âs DOWNTOWN today? (Please include your positive and negative top of mind descriptions.) Again, are these the same words or different than ones you would use for the city as a whole?

All Word Count: 6535

Unique Word Count: 1496

Response rate: 96.75% (268/277)

downtown(104), park(42), still(40), city(35), great(33), new(33), area(32), good(32), people(28), place(25), like(23), shops(23), short(23), businesses(22), friendly(22), much(22), need(22), potential(22), vancouver(22), buildings(21), needs(21), parking(21), business(20), esther(20), market(20), restaurants(20), small(20), many(19), better(18), little(18), lots(18), farmers(17), old(17), vibrant(17), improving(16), around(15), art(15), big(15), growing(15), make(15), nice(15), trying(15), main(14), way(14), back(13), community(13), dont(13), events(13), fun(13), one(13), safe(13), see(13), well(13), live(12), love(12), think(12), arts(11), interesting(11), shopping(11), street(11), time(11), vision(11), work(11), years(11), bars(10), center(10), coming(10), growth(10), portland(10), retail(10), vacant(10), walk(10), beautiful(9), draw(9), feel(9), getting(9), go(9), going(9), help(9), identity(9), living(9), night(9), quaint(9), really(9), slowly(9), something(9), store(9), struggling(9), summer(9), things(9), whole(9), would(9), become(8), clean(8), day(8), emerging(8), empty(8), get(8), mix(8), places(8), positive(8), right(8), uptown(8), urban(8), activities(7), bad(7), could(7), historic(7), life(7), neighborhood(7), river(7), town(7), areas(6), best(6), bring(6), changing(6), different(6), easy(6), future(6), improved(6), lacking(6), library(6), meters(6), mind(6), open(6), pawn(6), quiet(6), residents(6), thing(6), us(6), working(6), building(5), busy(5), charm(5), dead(5), eat(5), enough(5), especially(5), evolving(5), food(5), galleries(5), government(5), homeless(5), ive(5), keep(5), kiggins(5), light(5), lot(5), money(5), moving(5), nightlife(5), office(5), opportunity(5), outside(5), owners(5), past(5), pretty(5), real(5), seems(5), sense(5), shop(5), side(5), stores(5), taking(5), traffic(5), unique(5), wish(5), wonderful(5)

QUESTION 05

If someone were visiting the city of Vancouver (considered as a whole) for the first time, what words do you think they would use to describe the city?

All Word Count: 2001

Unique Word Count: 577

Response rate: 83.39% (231/277)

portland(31), city(25), nice(23), town(21), suburban(20), small(19), east(16), downtown(15), historic(15), like(15), suburb(15), great(13), spread(13), boring(12), lots(12), pretty(12), sprawling(12), sprawl(11), would(11), community(10), dont(10), beautiful(9), green(9), quaint(9), vancouver(9), side(8), cute(7), friendly(7), much(7), place(7), think(7), center(6), confusing(6), convenient(6), live(6), many(6),

neighborhoods(6), one(6), quiet(6), strip(6), area(5), big(5), bigger(5), depends(5), different(5), etc(5), family(5), get(5), good(5), interesting(5), looks(5), lot(5), malls(5), needs(5), new(5), nothing(5), see(5), take(5), west(5)

QUESTION 06

If someone were visiting Vancouver's DOWNTOWN for the first time, what words do you think they would use to describe the downtown?

All Word Count: 2334

Unique Word Count: 654

Response rate: 84.12% (233/277)

nice(36), park(33), downtown(24), quaint(23), cute(17), great(17), small(16), interesting(15), short(15), esther(14), historic(14), old(14), restaurants(14), quiet(13), many(12), good(11), little(11), would(11), see(10), clean(9), market(9), new(9), one(9), people(9), shops(9), town(9), around(8), needs(8), night(8), place(8), pretty(8), street(8), beautiful(7), boring(7), businesses(7), charming(7), city(7), empty(7), farmers(7), fun(7), like(7), much(7), parking(7), potential(7), really(7), shopping(7), sleepy(7), area(6), building(6), lots(6), nothing(6), struggling(6), vancouver(6), visit(6), want(6), cool(5), dont(5), fort(5), friendly(5), library(5), mix(5), pleasant(5), seem(5), unique(5), uptown(5), walk(5), work(5)

QUESTION 07

What words would you use to describe the residents of Vancouver...the people of Vancouver as a whole? Has the populace of Vancouver changed over time? If so, in what ways?

All Word Count: 3734

Unique Word Count: 958

Response rate: 80.51% (223/277)

people(63), friendly(48), vancouver(43), conservative(34), city(32), diverse(26), community(20), portland(20), residents(18), changed(17), like(17), think(17), many(16), downtown(15), good(15), population(15), nice(14), seems(13), years(13), dont(12), change(11), east(11), educated(11), lot(11), much(11), yes(11), families(10), new(10), class(9), family(9), past(9), areas(8), great(8), place(8), side(8), still(8), tax(8), town(8), area(7), different(7), get(7), live(7), middle(7), populace(7), proud(7), time(7), want(7), west(7), white(7), always(6), becoming(6), caring(6), jobs(6), kind(6), little(6), moving(6), progressive(6), schools(6), seem(6), small(6), suburban(6), work(6), also(5), become(5), blue(5), collar(5), come(5), concerned(5), culture(5), due(5), folks(5), growth(5), income(5), last(5), looking(5),

mindful(5), mix(5), neighborhoods(5), number(5), oriented(5), poverty(5), support(5), welcoming(5), whole(5), working(5)

QUESTION 08

If you could makeover the city of Vancouver in any way, what would be the words that would make you the happiest/most proud to hear describe the city?

All Word Count: 3123

Unique Word Count: 898

Response rate: 77.62% (215/277)

friendly(36), great(31), community(30), downtown(28), city(27), vibrant(27), place(24), beautiful(20), would(20), progressive(19), people(17), vancouver(17), clean(16), safe(16), fun(14), good(14), cultural(13), like(13), lots(13), business(12), portland(12), arts(11), live(11), thriving(11), light(10), neighborhoods(10), small(10), destination(9), diverse(9), go(9), new(9), open(9), parks(9), places(9), rail(9), well(9), history(8), public(8), town(8), work(8), family(7), historic(7), innovative(7), life(7), need(7), area(6), businesses(6), housing(6), less(6), opportunities(6), parking(6), proud(6), schools(6), sense(6), unique(6), visit(6), want(6), welcoming(6), buildings(5), easy(5), forwardthinking(5), full(5), get(5), green(5), healthy(5), high(5), hip(5), interesting(5), land(5), living(5), make(5), many(5), mix(5), river(5), services(5), style(5), walkable(5), washington(5)

QUESTION 09

If DOWNTOWN Vancouver could be anything you wish, what would be the words that would make you the happiest to hear used to describe the city's DOWNTOWN?

All Word Count: 2585

Unique Word Count: 741

Response rate: 80.51% (223/277)

vibrant(39), great(36), fun(27), friendly(26), downtown(25), place(21), destination(20), city(19), safe(17), shops(17), clean(15), people(15), beautiful(14), businesses(14), shopping(14), diverse(13), historic(13), lots(13), restaurants(13), see(13), community(12), thriving(12), walkable(12), arts(11), business(11), new(11), vancouver(11), entertainment(10), like(10), portland(10), river(10), small(10), unique(10), cool(9), want(9), active(8), alive(8), family(8), live(8), 4(7), busy(7), food(7), go(7), interesting(7), places(7), buildings(6), exciting(6), good(6), hip(6), history(6), public(6), rail(6), things(6), town(6), would(6), accessible(5), activities(5), art(5), bustling(5), connected(5), cultural(5), day(5), district(5), easy(5), eat(5),

everyone(5), green(5), light(5), need(5), night(5), progressive(5), variety(5), work(5)

QUESTION 10

What words would you use to describe Clark County?

All Word Count: 2152

Unique Word Count: 737

Response rate: 76.90% (213/277)

rural(27), beautiful(25), conservative(22), county(19), growing(19), great(16), live(16), areas(14), city(14), place(14), suburban(14), diverse(12), good(12), sprawl(12), lots(11), portland(11), people(10), work(10), area(9), big(9), much(9), many(8), clark(7), community(7), large(7), like(7), family(6), new(6), sprawling(6), still(6), want(6), working(6), bedroom(5), country(5), grow(5), growth(5), lost(5), lovely(5), mix(5), old(5), spread(5), vancouver(5), way(5)

QUESTION 11

What words would you use to describe the greater Vancouver/Portland Metro region?

All Word Count: 2724

Unique Word Count: 844

Response rate: 77.98% (216/277)

portland(46), great(37), live(33), place(33), vancouver(31), beautiful(19), diverse(17), us(14), area(12), best(12), green(12), people(12), progressive(12), lots(11), get(10), metro(10), city(9), friendly(9), like(9), one(9), opportunities(9), region(9), interesting(8), small(8), better(7), community(7), culture(7), different(7), environment(7), good(7), mountains(7), natural(7), nice(7), potential(7), urban(7), beauty(6), country(6), everyone(6), food(6), fun(6), lot(6), many(6), places(6), proud(6), river(6), something(6), things(6), unique(6), vibrant(6), around(5), could(5), easy(5), etc(5), family(5), growing(5), history(5), liberal(5), little(5), livable(5), living(5), neighborhoods(5), northwest(5), outdoorsy(5), part(5), see(5), traffic(5), two(5), wonderful(5), worlds(5)

QUESTION 12

What are the leading industries in the city of Vancouver as a whole?

All Word Count: 1082

Unique Word Count: 340

Response rate: 67.15% (186/277)

port(66), tech(29), vancouver(27), health(25), manufacturing(24), government(22), high(22), care(15), medical(15), retail(15), healthcare(14), technology(14), service(12), education(11), schools(11), hospitals(10), seh(10), hp(9), banks(6), columbia(6), tourism(6), transportation(6), banking(5), businesses(5), companies(5), construction(5), dont(5), hightech(5), industrial(5), industries(5), know(5), lay(5), services(5), shipping(5)

QUESTION 13

What are the businesses that most define DOWNTOWN Vancouver...downtown's leading businesses?

All Word Count: 1442

Unique Word Count: 451

Response rate: 68.95% (191/277)

banks(52), hilton(31), restaurants(30), government(25), shops(25), small(23), city(19), offices(19), law(18), businesses(17), bars(15), vancouver(15), banking(12), business(12), downtown(12), firms(11), market(11), columbian(10), pawn(10), art(9), farmers(9), library(9), retail(9), think(9), dont(8), galleries(8), like(7), none(7), port(7), center(6), county(6), food(6), kiggins(6), os(6), starbucks(6), tommy(6), burgerville(5), coffee(5), convention(5), financial(5), hall(5), hotels(5), insurance(5), lawyers(5)

QUESTION 14

What are DOWNTOWN Vancouver's most beloved businesses? What kind of work do they do? Are they the same as the leading businesses?

All Word Count: 1563

Unique Word Count: 512

Response rate: 62.82% (174/277)

kiggins(24), downtown(20), house(19), shops(19), businesses(16), java(16), os(16), restaurants(16), tommy(16), beloved(15), dont(15), market(15), farmers(14), theater(14), business(13), know(12), burgerville(11), coffee(11), leading(10), galleries(9), library(9), vancouver(9), food(8), like(8), sure(8), art(7), great(7), stores(7), antique(6), bars(6), cream(6), hilton(6), small(6), banks(5), columbian(5), good(5), ice(5), locally(5), main(5), restaurant(5), retail(5), see(5), sparks(5), think(5), uptown(5)

QUESTION 15

What are DOWNTOWN Vancouver's leading non-profits. What kind of work do they do?

All Word Count: 1420
Unique Word Count: 456
Response rate: 59.21% (164/277)

share(33), house(30), homeless(23), vancouver(20), downtown(19),
foundation(17), know(16), dont(15), open(14), vda(14), childrens(13),
trust(13), community(12), clark(11), ywca(11), chamber(10), consign(10),
housing(10), services(10), food(9), library(9), ministries(9),
theater(8), center(7), historic(7), idea(7), many(7), people(7),
society(7), business(6), care(6), commerce(6), coop(6), county(6),
divine(6), friends(6), money(6), sure(6), devine(5), fort(5), health(5),
help(5), mental(5), murdock(5), national(5), need(5), reserve(5)

QUESTION 16

What are the best events held in DOWNTOWN Vancouver?

All Word Count: 1750
Unique Word Count: 309
Response rate: 68.95% (191/277)

market(94), farmers(85), park(75), concerts(61), jazz(54), festival(48),
wine(41), short(34), events(33), art(31), summer(30), esther(29),
first(21), fair(14), fest(14), friday(14), recycled(14), music(12),
july(11), sunset(11), arts(10), saturday(10), series(10), walk(10),
concert(9), walks(9), cruise(8), fridays(8), six(8), 4th(7),
downtown(7), gut(7), lighting(7), movies(7), street(7), tree(7),
uptown(7), vancouver(7), dont(6), free(6), heart(6), marathon(6),
ester(5), markets(5), recycling(5)

QUESTION 17

What do the citizens of the city of Vancouver like to do with their
leisure time?

All Word Count: 1363
Unique Word Count: 361
Response rate: 62.09% (172/277)

go(37), walk(27), movies(23), outdoor(23), portland(23), activities(20),
eat(19), sports(16), outdoors(14), shop(14), enjoy(12), hike(12),
bike(11), events(11), family(11), watch(11), like(10), shopping(10),
time(10), concerts(9), tv(9), walking(9), boating(8), ski(8), spend(8),
gardening(7), river(7), bicycle(6), drink(6), know(6), leave(6), lot(6),
music(6), park(6), parks(6), vancouver(6), waterfront(6), attend(5),
beach(5), biking(5), community(5), dining(5), dont(5), fish(5),
garden(5), get(5), play(5), recreation(5), run(5), use(5)

QUESTION 18

What have been some recent public sector/ city government funded or backed initiatives in DOWNTOWN Vancouver that you know about?

All Word Count: 1335

Unique Word Count: 445

Response rate: 57.76% (160/277)

city(24), new(24), library(23), park(22), short(20), esther(19), hilton(17), waterfront(17), dont(16), know(14), hall(13), crc(10), center(9), development(9), river(9), project(8), downtown(7), great(7), none(7), public(7), redevelopment(7), tax(7), tree(7), columbia(6), improvement(6), rail(6), street(6), sure(6), bridge(5), crossing(5), hotel(5), light(5), market(5), place(5), vancouver(5)

QUESTION 19

In what way do the city and the private sector/residents collaborate well together throughout Vancouver?

All Word Count: 1162

Unique Word Count: 428

Response rate: 52.35% (145/277)

neighborhood(21), city(20), dont(18), know(14), associations(12), downtown(11), work(10), sure(8), vancouver(8), community(7), events(7), parks(7), well(7), good(6), like(6), public(6), see(6), great(5)

QUESTION 20

What people/groups relate most or best to DOWNTOWN Vancouver and why?

All Word Count: 1990

Unique Word Count: 550

Response rate: 60.29% (167/277)

people(65), downtown(63), live(19), work(19), young(17), dont(15), families(14), like(14), business(13), park(13), know(12), residents(12), go(11), older(11), younger(10), businesses(9), homeless(9), market(9), small(9), want(9), area(8), farmers(8), art(7), city(7), employees(7), neighborhoods(7), vancouver(7), arts(6), come(6), esther(6), events(6), groups(6), owners(6), place(6), short(6), side(6), adults(5), folks(5), relate(5), think(5), town(5), urban(5), well(5), west(5)

QUESTION 21

What people/groups don't relate well or much at all to DOWNTOWN Vancouver?

All Word Count: 1619
Unique Word Count: 489
Response rate: 59.93% (166/277)

people(55), east(27), downtown(23), live(22), dont(21), residents(14), young(13), county(12), families(12), vancouver(12), portland(11), like(9), north(8), older(8), park(8), side(8), want(8), work(8), city(7), know(7), need(7), everyone(6), get(6), life(6), suburban(6), clark(5), enough(5), homeless(5), middle(5), outside(5), portlanders(5), professionals(5), younger(5)

QUESTION 22

What people/groups would you like to see more included in DOWNTOWN Vancouver?

All Word Count: 1757
Unique Word Count: 579
Response rate: 56.32% (156/277)

people(45), young(18), downtown(17), like(15), groups(14), families(13), business(12), events(11), see(11), age(9), vancouver(9), work(9), would(9), everyone(8), need(8), residents(8), restaurants(8), activities(7), areas(7), artists(7), community(7), creative(7), live(7), portland(6), spend(6), businesses(5), city(5), clark(5), county(5), dont(5), know(5), living(5), money(5), professionals(5), shops(5), want(5), youth(5)

QUESTION 23

If the city of Vancouver as a whole were a person, based on how it looks, acts, promotes itself and the experience it provides today, what would you say Vancouver feels right now? (We are looking for feeling words, like...tired/energetic or happy/sad, quiet/boisterous, etc.)

All Word Count: 1610
Unique Word Count: 655
Response rate: 60.29% (167/277)

tired(30), confused(14), quiet(13), like(10), trying(10), person(9), old(8), city(7), frustrated(7), hopeful(7), little(7), hard(6), lacking(6), new(6), portland(6), side(6), forward(5), get(5), good(5), growing(5), happy(5), struggling(5), vancouver(5)

QUESTION 24

If DOWNTOWN Vancouver were a person, based on how it looks, acts, promotes itself and the experience it provides today, what would you say

DOWNTOWN Vancouver feels right now? (We are looking for feeling words, like...tired/energetic or happy/sad, quiet/boisterous, etc.) How are these words different than how the city feels as a whole?

All Word Count: 1874

Unique Word Count: 674

Response rate: 59.57% (165/277)

trying(17), downtown(15), tired(15), new(13), old(13), energetic(11), hopeful(11), needs(10), quiet(9), go(8), like(8), city(7), energy(7), hard(7), optimistic(7), better(6), doesnt(6), great(6), life(6), things(6), would(6), bit(5), good(5), happy(5), looking(5), sad(5), something(5), still(5), vancouver(5), want(5)

QUESTION 25

What do you think Vancouver's driving motivation should be? What is most important to the city as a whole?

All Word Count: 3187

Unique Word Count: 929

Response rate: 58.12% (161/277)

people(36), downtown(25), place(21), vancouver(21), business(20), city(19), community(19), live(17), portland(17), jobs(15), make(15), work(15), think(14), businesses(13), residents(13), good(12), growth(12), area(11), need(11), bring(10), new(10), small(10), dont(9), education(9), get(9), life(9), services(9), around(8), could(8), family(8), great(8), needs(8), town(8), better(7), citizens(7), destination(7), economic(7), history(7), something(7), want(7), come(6), day(6), events(6), like(6), local(6), things(6), waterfront(6), way(6), best(5), care(5), clean(5), core(5), etc(5), first(5), fun(5), grow(5), healthy(5), identity(5), livability(5), lots(5), money(5), one(5), provide(5), quality(5), stop(5), together(5), would(5)

QUESTION 26

What issues are the people of Vancouver passionate about?

All Word Count: 1865

Unique Word Count: 596

Response rate: 52.71% (146/277)

bridge(22), rail(19), light(18), portland(17), education(15), taxes(15), people(14), jobs(13), schools(13), want(12), dont(10), family(10), safety(10), crc(9), work(9), environment(8), good(8), life(8), keeping(7), quality(7), families(6), go(6), healthy(6), know(6), livability(6), place(6), would(6), city(5), crossing(5), downtown(5),

government(5), identity(5), job(5), low(5), new(5), river(5),
seattle(5), things(5), think(5), vancouver(5)

QUESTION 27

What do you think, as a group, the people of Vancouver most want to feel?

All Word Count: 1297

Unique Word Count: 370

Response rate: 55.96% (155/277)

safe(26), community(19), secure(17), proud(16), city(13), people(13),
portland(13), feel(12), happy(12), want(10), good(9), like(9),
vancouver(9), pride(8), comfortable(7), dont(7), jobs(7), sense(7),
future(6), get(6), identity(6), know(6), live(6), place(6),
connected(5), right(5), things(5), vibrant(5)

QUESTION 28

Is there a DOWNTOWN in a city that you think embodies what DOWNTOWN Vancouver most aspires to be? That is seen as how DOWNTOWN Vancouver would most aspire to be seen? Or that has given you an experience as a visitor or resident that you would like DOWNTOWN Vancouver to give?

All Word Count: 2656

Unique Word Count: 841

Response rate: 53.07% (147/277)

downtown(47), vancouver(28), like(20), portland(18), city(16),
businesses(14), boise(12), river(12), would(12), area(11), think(11),
wa(11), bellingham(10), great(10), people(10), san(10), dont(9), one(8),
place(8), walla(8), ca(7), could(7), district(7), diverse(7), feel(7),
good(7), oregon(7), restaurants(7), seattle(7), shopping(7), small(7),
sure(7), tx(7), bc(6), etc(6), hood(6), market(6), much(6), old(6),
really(6), st(6), va(6), vibrant(6), activities(5), also(5), antonio(5),
around(5), aspire(5), austin(5), buildings(5), camas(5), food(5),
get(5), historic(5), know(5), modern(5), new(5), parts(5), pearl(5),
places(5), quaint(5), town(5), victoria(5), walk(5), well(5)

QUESTION 29

What is there for a visitor to do in Vancouver as a whole? What would be your top five destination recommendations?

All Word Count: 2283

Unique Word Count: 519

Response rate: 57.04% (158/277)

fort(83), vancouver(81), park(58), short(50), market(49), farmers(48), waterfront(45), esther(41), row(34), trail(31), river(29), officers(28), walk(27), pearson(22), lake(20), portland(20), columbia(19), downtown(19), library(18), go(15), historic(15), museum(15), bridge(14), air(12), creek(11), ft(11), along(10), main(10), street(10), visit(10), area(9), clark(9), new(9), st(9), uptown(9), village(9), burnt(8), cinetopia(8), kiggins(8), restaurants(8), als(7), bar(7), big(7), center(7), frenchmans(7), helens(7), much(7), parks(7), reserve(7), shops(7), trails(7), beaches(6), county(6), gorge(6), mt(6), riverfront(6), water(6), 1(5), 5(5), ester(5), like(5), really(5), summer(5), take(5), theater(5), wildlife(5), wineries(5), Ä(5)

QUESTION 30

Where is the community's living room now? What is the center of Vancouver?

All Word Count: 1073

Unique Word Count: 262

Response rate: 57.40% (159/277)

short(79), park(77), esther(68), downtown(20), vancouver(14), center(13), east(12), ester(12), dont(11), one(11), mall(10), 164th(9), area(9), say(9), main(7), would(7), room(6), central(5), isnt(5), living(5), people(5), waterfront(5)

QUESTION 31

Where do you spend a lot of time in Vancouver and why (work, play, family, etc.)?

All Word Count: 1745

Unique Word Count: 445

Response rate: 57.76% (160/277)

downtown(75), work(65), vancouver(31), live(24), family(17), home(17), play(17), time(16), restaurants(15), east(14), park(14), river(13), spend(13), short(12), area(11), side(11), uptown(11), waterfront(11), go(10), parks(10), walk(10), esther(9), portland(9), shopping(9), lake(8), mall(8), market(8), events(7), library(7), trails(7), village(7), west(7), enjoy(6), farmers(6), kids(6), place(6), shop(6), street(6), trail(6), walking(6), creek(5), food(5), friends(5), love(5), near(5), neighborhood(5), salmon(5), town(5)

QUESTION 32

Where are your favorite spots in the city of Vancouver and why?

All Word Count: 1900

Unique Word Count: 548

Response rate: 51.99% (144/277)

park(45), short(37), esther(31), waterfront(29), downtown(28),
vancouver(23), river(21), trail(20), good(15), market(15), lake(14),
along(13), beautiful(13), uptown(13), area(11), farmers(11), see(11),
columbia(10), officers(10), restaurants(10), row(10), fort(9), love(9),
main(9), ester(8), food(8), library(8), like(8), people(8), shops(8),
village(8), bar(7), bridge(7), creek(7), great(7), parks(7), place(7),
street(7), trails(7), walking(7), go(6), local(6), walk(6), beaches(5),
center(5), history(5), house(5), niche(5), pretty(5), shopping(5)

QUESTION 33

Where are your favorite spots in DOWNTOWN Vancouver and why?

All Word Count: 1590

Unique Word Count: 444

Response rate: 56.68% (157/277)

short(57), esther(53), park(50), market(30), farmers(27), great(20),
main(16), library(15), food(13), house(13), downtown(12), street(12),
restaurants(11), waterfront(11), java(10), kiggins(10), like(10),
niche(10), vancouver(10), place(9), see(9), theater(9), coffee(8),
love(8), os(8), tommy(8), uptown(8), go(7), good(7), new(7),
beautiful(6), city(6), concerts(6), people(6), row(6), village(6), 4(5),
bottle(5), cafe(5), ester(5), events(5), fun(5), la(5), little(5),
nice(5), none(5), officers(5), river(5), shops(5)

QUESTION 34

Where are your least favorite spots in the city of Vancouver and why?

What areas do you avoid and why?

All Word Count: 1943

Unique Word Count: 588

Response rate: 53.43% (148/277)

plain(51), east(29), fourth(23), 4th(20), area(19), mall(19),
vancouver(16), areas(15), avoid(15), like(15), downtown(12), park(12),
go(11), traffic(11), dont(10), run(10), street(10), dell(9), hazel(9),
mill(9), much(9), side(9), strip(9), ugly(9), stores(8), west(8),
164th(7), anything(7), county(7), lots(7), main(7), many(7), sprawl(7),
blvd(6), cascade(6), i5(6), pawn(6), really(6), shop(6), st(6), way(6),
99(5), anywhere(5), feel(5), looks(5)

QUESTION 35

What are the areas you avoid in DOWNTOWN Vancouver, and why?

All Word Count: 1549
Unique Word Count: 387
Response rate: 51.99% (144/277)

area(34), dont(22), none(22), main(21), avoid(19), downtown(19), street(18), areas(17), people(15), go(14), around(13), see(11), 6th(10), feel(10), south(9), broadway(8), 6(7), like(7), lower(7), mill(7), park(7), pawn(7), plain(7), short(7), bars(6), esther(6), nothing(6), reason(6), safe(6), streets(6), businesses(5), dark(5), evergreen(5), homeless(5), north(5), shops(5), st(5), unsafe(5), walk(5)

QUESTION 36

How is DOWNTOWN Vancouver perceived in the greater Vancouver area?

All Word Count: 1433
Unique Word Count: 407
Response rate: 51.62% (143/277)

dont(24), think(24), people(23), downtown(21), go(14), place(14), much(12), know(11), like(10), still(10), many(9), live(8), dead(7), east(7), good(7), old(7), area(6), better(6), nothing(6), sure(6), time(6), vancouver(6), well(6), boring(5), come(5), needs(5), scary(5), theres(5), unsafe(5)

QUESTION 37

How is your city as a whole perceived within the state of Washington?

All Word Count: 1267
Unique Word Count: 348
Response rate: 51.62% (143/277)

portland(49), vancouver(26), suburb(16), think(15), part(12), dont(11), seattle(11), bedroom(9), community(9), know(9), people(9), state(9), conservative(8), live(8), place(8), small(8), town(7), canada(6), city(6), much(6), oregon(6), washington(6), better(5), forgotten(5), growing(5), probably(5), us(5)

QUESTION 38

How is your city perceived within the Pacific Northwest region?

All Word Count: 964
Unique Word Count: 276
Response rate: 51.26% (142/277)

portland(43), vancouver(19), think(17), dont(14), city(13), suburb(12),

canada(11), know(11), bc(9), part(7), people(7), seattle(7), 9(6),
bedroom(6), doesnt(6), community(5), small(5)

QUESTION 39

If you had a magic wand and price was no object, what would you change about DOWNTOWN Vancouver and why?

All Word Count: 5413

Unique Word Count: 1346

Response rate: 59.57% (165/277)

would(78), downtown(58), make(34), parking(33), people(33), like(28),
shops(27), buildings(26), id(25), street(25), businesses(24),
restaurants(24), create(23), waterfront(22), area(21), build(21),
add(19), empty(19), get(19), store(19), art(17), building(17),
light(17), better(16), business(16), lots(16), main(16), park(16),
stores(16), bring(15), center(15), city(15), streets(15), arts(14),
retail(14), space(14), put(13), river(13), go(12), great(12), lot(12),
many(12), need(12), rail(12), small(12), also(11), move(11), new(11),
upscale(11), around(10), one(10), open(10), rid(10), activities(9),
areas(9), development(9), good(9), old(9), outdoor(9), plain(9),
shopping(9), use(9), back(8), clean(8), encourage(8), entertainment(8),
every(8), food(8), housing(8), port(8), spaces(8), want(8), along(7),
attract(7), could(7), develop(7), draw(7), esther(7), feel(7), fill(7),
portland(7), public(7), see(7), short(7), storefronts(7), think(7),
traffic(7), vancouver(7), walk(7), way(7), work(7), 10(6), access(6),
fort(6), give(6), grocery(6), know(6), living(6), local(6), owners(6),
pedestrian(6), places(6), residents(6), uptown(6), urban(6), walking(6),
well(6), 2(5), allow(5), bike(5), block(5), car(5), covered(5), fix(5),
free(5), fronts(5), fun(5), green(5), hall(5), high(5), huge(5), i5(5),
incentives(5), landscaping(5), mill(5), money(5), much(5), parks(5),
performing(5), remove(5), services(5), sidewalks(5), st(5), theater(5),
vacant(5), whole(5)

QUESTION 40

What does DOWNTOWN Vancouver have that you won't find anywhere else?

All Word Count: 1263

Unique Word Count: 430

Response rate: 53.07% (147/277)

park(22), nothing(21), vancouver(21), fort(18), short(16), esther(13),
river(13), downtown(12), history(9), people(8), waterfront(8), city(7),
columbia(7), small(7), kiggins(6), like(6), new(6), really(6),
unique(6), anything(5), buildings(5), community(5), great(5),
parking(5), portland(5)

QUESTION 41

What is DOWNTOWN Vancouver missing that it desperately needs?

All Word Count: 2149

Unique Word Count: 683

Response rate: 56.32% (156/277)

people(22), better(17), downtown(16), grocery(16), store(16),
vancouver(16), arts(13), restaurants(12), good(11), center(10),
need(10), shops(10), business(9), food(9), performing(9), shopping(9),
like(8), parking(8), see(8), stores(8), businesses(7), great(7),
live(7), needs(7), city(6), joes(6), light(6), money(6), new(6),
night(6), park(6), rail(6), residents(6), retail(6), small(6),
trader(6), would(6), come(5), find(5), go(5), living(5), options(5),
public(5), something(5), waterfront(5)