downtown strategies

DECEMBER
2021

Downtown Strategic Vision

Strictly Private & Confidential

Downtown Alvarado, TX



retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0386 | info@retailstrategies.com
2200 Magnolia Ave South, Suite 100 Birmingham, AL



LETTER TO OUR PARTNER



Dear Paul,

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

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

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

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

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

- **Market Analysis** to uncover and define the **economic potential** in your Downtown area
- **Policy & Administration** to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality by creating a strong foundation for a **sustainable revitalization effort**
- **Design** to support a **community's transformation** by enhancing the physical and visual assets that set the commercial district apart,
- **Tourism and Promotion** to position your downtown as the center of the community and **hub of economic activity**,
- **Economic Vitality** to assist new and existing businesses, **catalyze property development**, and create a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and innovators that drive local economies.



Jenn Gregory, President
Downtown Strategies
Retail Strategies

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

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Your Team



Jenn Gregory

President

Downtown Strategies

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

jgregory@retailstrategies.com | [662] 617-1711



Jeremy Murdock

Community Development Specialist

Downtown Strategies

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

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

jmurdock@retailstrategies.com| [662] 312-9243



Elliott Cook

Director of Real Estate

Downtown Strategies

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

elliott@retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0384



Laura Marinos

Director of Client Services

Downtown Strategies

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

laura.marinos@retailstrategies.com | [205] 314-0386



Charlene Capps

Director of Research

Retail Strategies

As a Director, Research & Analytics for Retail Strategies, Charlene increases efficiencies by creating standardized practices. She finds best ways to tell the story through numbers and data-driven insights that assist with deal making decisions.

ccapps@retailstrategies.com | [205] 905-5708



1

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MARKET ANALYSIS

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

MARKET ANALYSIS

Our Research

Memberships, Subscriptions & Customized Reports

Crittenden Research

Nation's Restaurant News

UberRetail

LANDVISION™ Real Estate Mapping Software

RLT RETAIL LEASE TRAC

salesgenie

SN SUPERMARKET NEWS

PlainVanillaShell

reonomy

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

MAIN STREET AMERICA® 2020 Allied Member

A PROUD MEMBER OF IDA INSPIRED LEADERS SHAPING CITIES

Research Partners & Geographic Information Systems

TETRAD sitewise

CCIM STDB

SitesUSA™

REGIS online

ChainXY Location Matters.

Our Research

Where does all this information come from?

Here are a few of the demographic data sources used:



































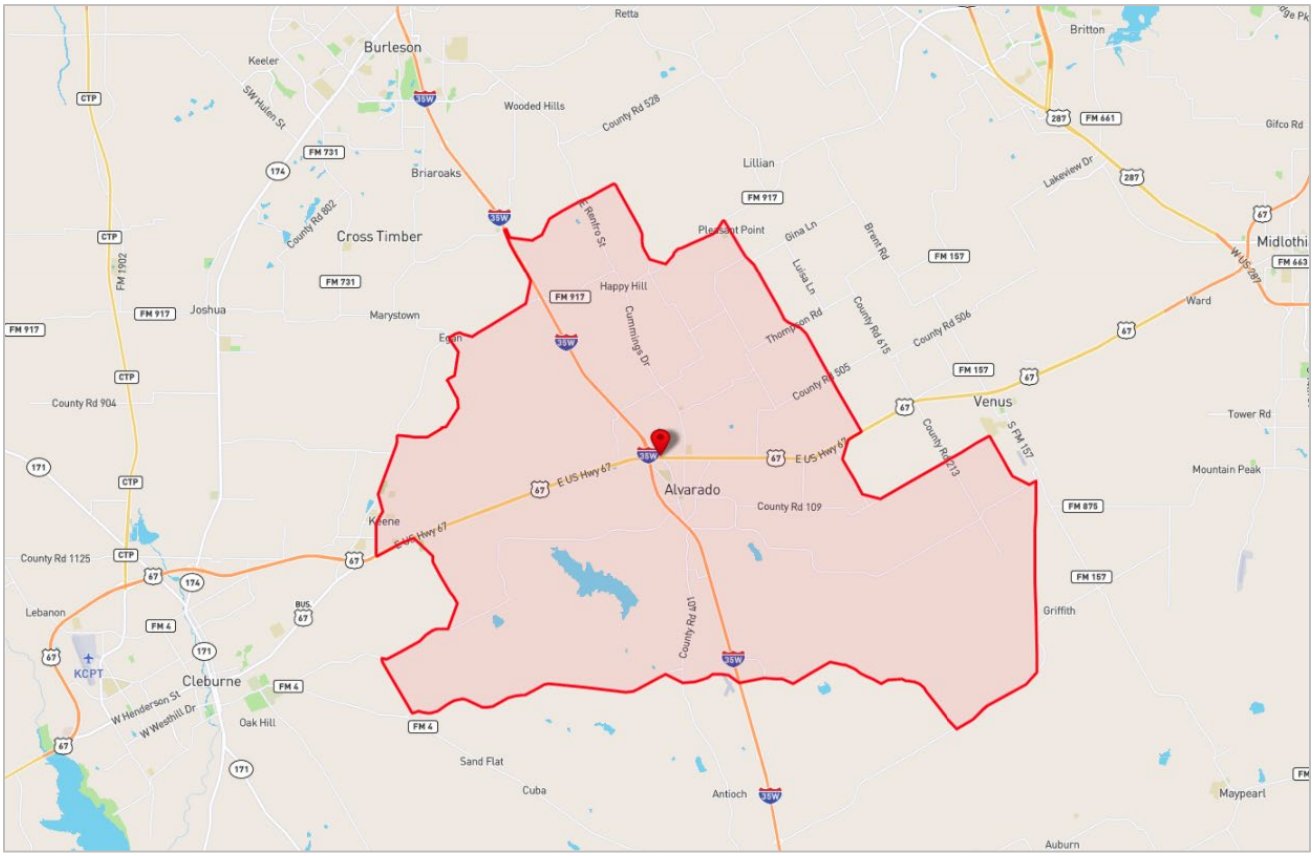






Our Research

CUSTOM TRADE AREA



Alvarado, TX Custom Trade Area

Population – 20,630

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

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

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

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

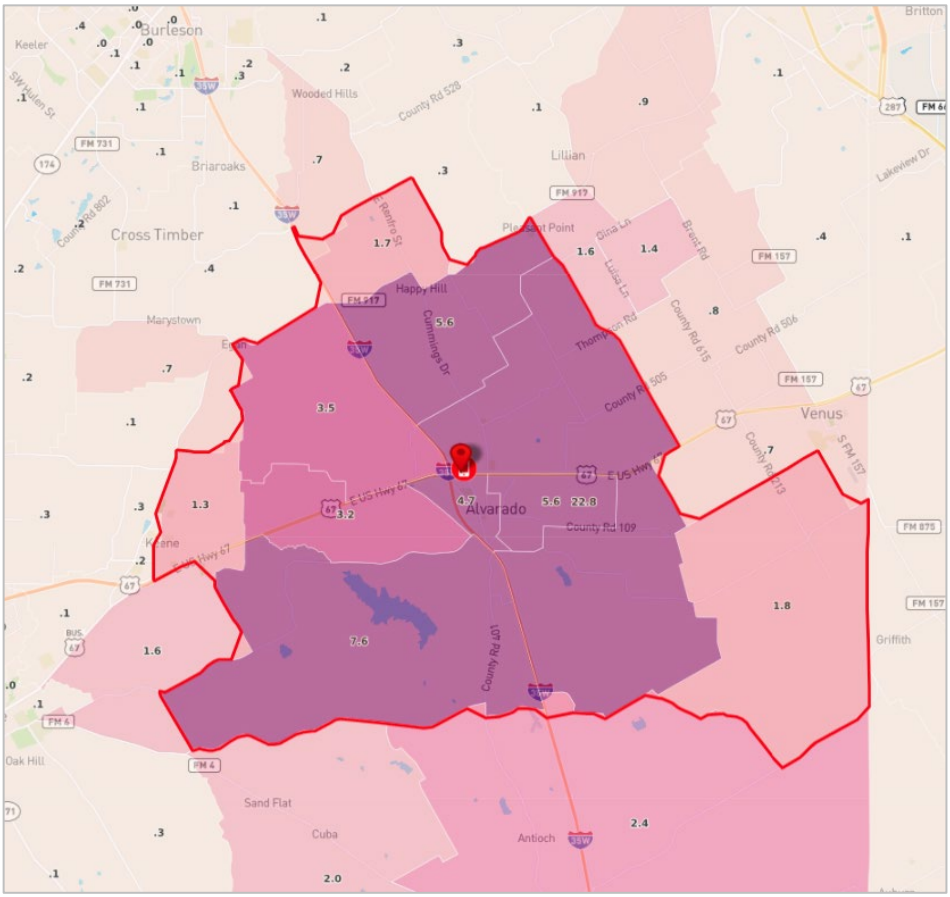
*The following demographics reflect the Custom Trade Area (CTA) and not geographic community boundaries.

Mobile Data Tracking

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

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

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

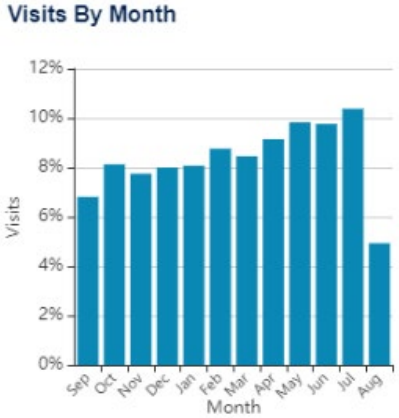


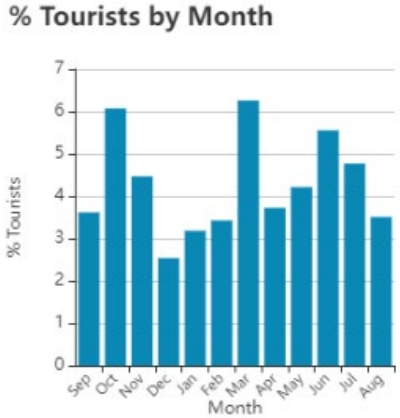
Brookshire's Grocery Company
1048 W Highway 67
Alvarado, 76009

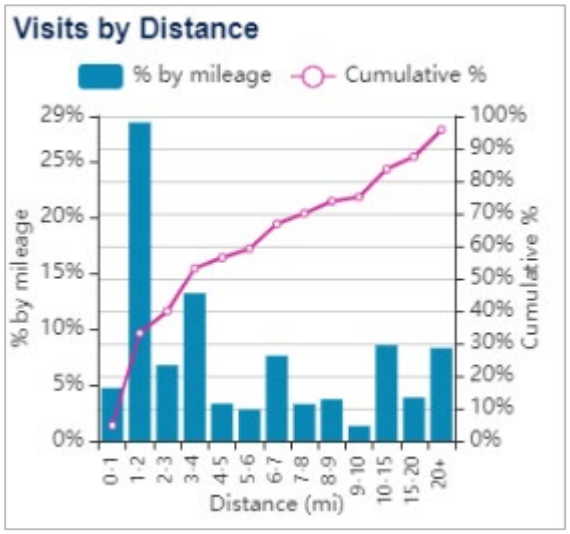
Brookshire's food & pharmacy

Details

Brand	Brookshire's Grocery Company
Top Category	Grocery Stores
Sub Category	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
Median Dwell Time	12.71 min
Median Distance from Home	4.1 miles
Annual Visits	12,308 visits
Monthly Visits	879
Monthly Visitors	568
Tourist Visits	4.3%







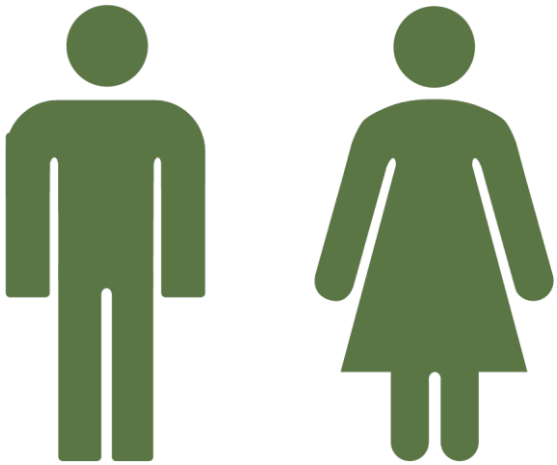
Our Research

POPULATION

20,630

2020 estimated population

21,074
projected 2025 population



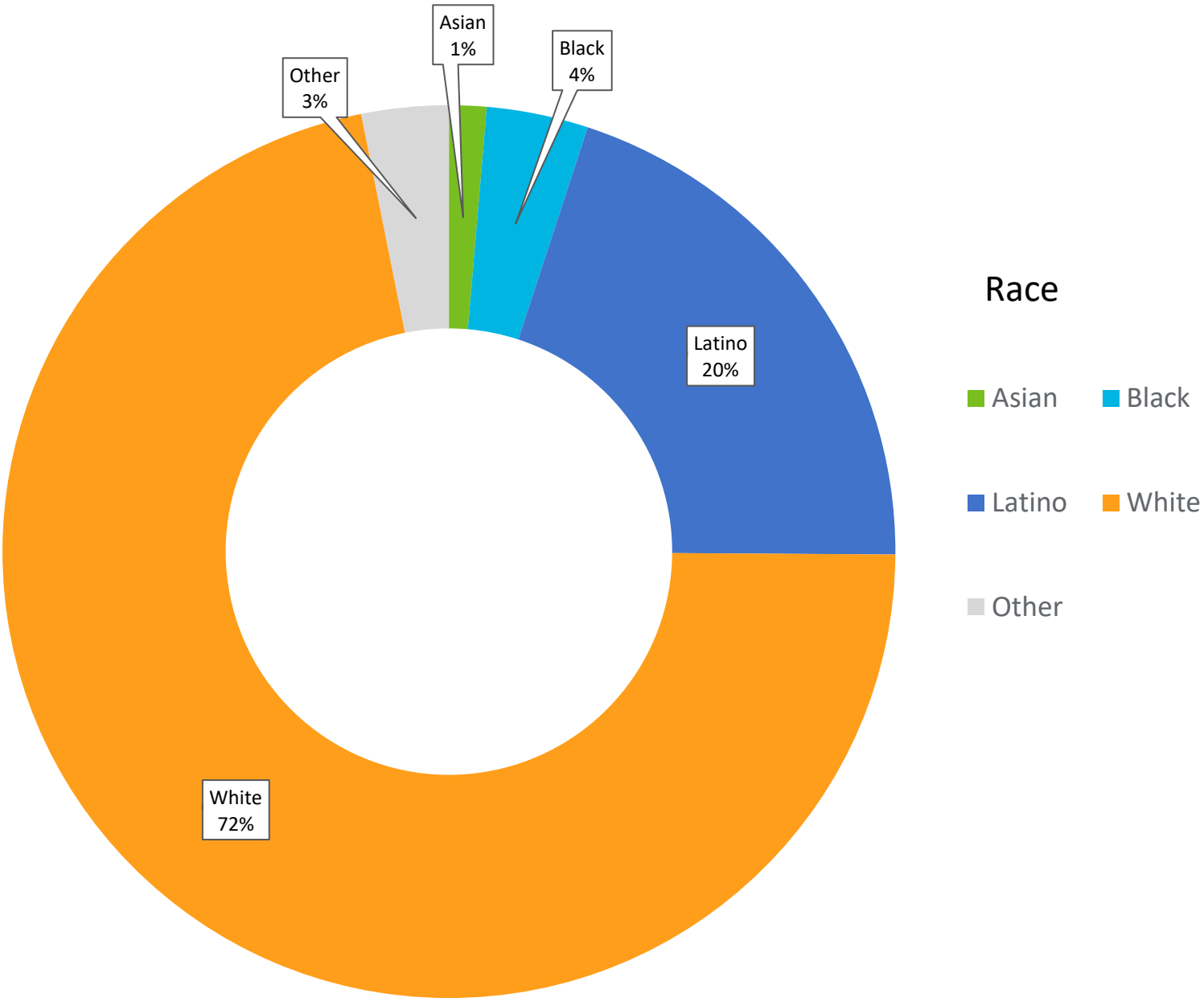
2.2%
projected growth rate
2019-2024

38
male avg. age

40
female avg. age

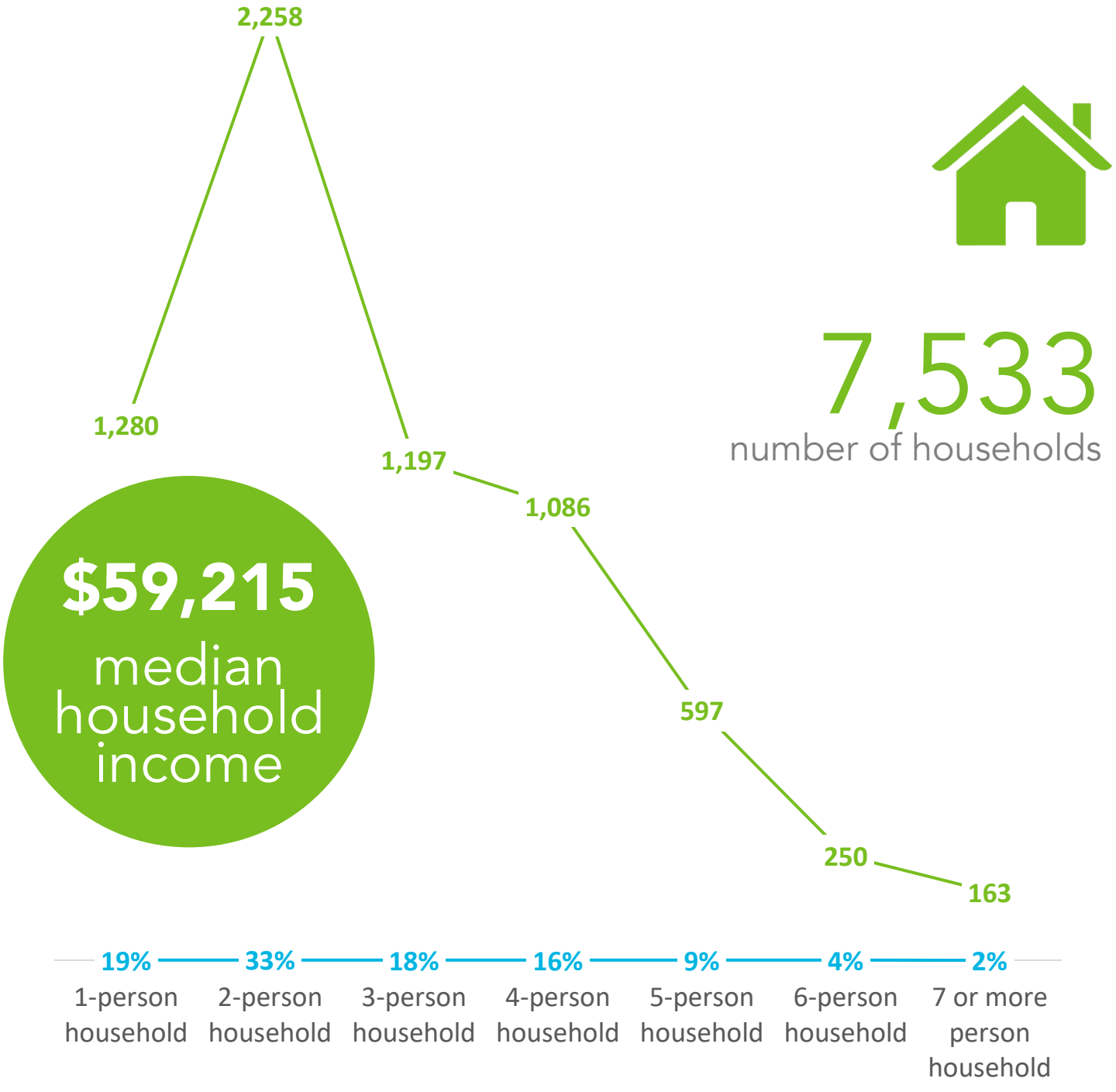
Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION BY RACE



Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE

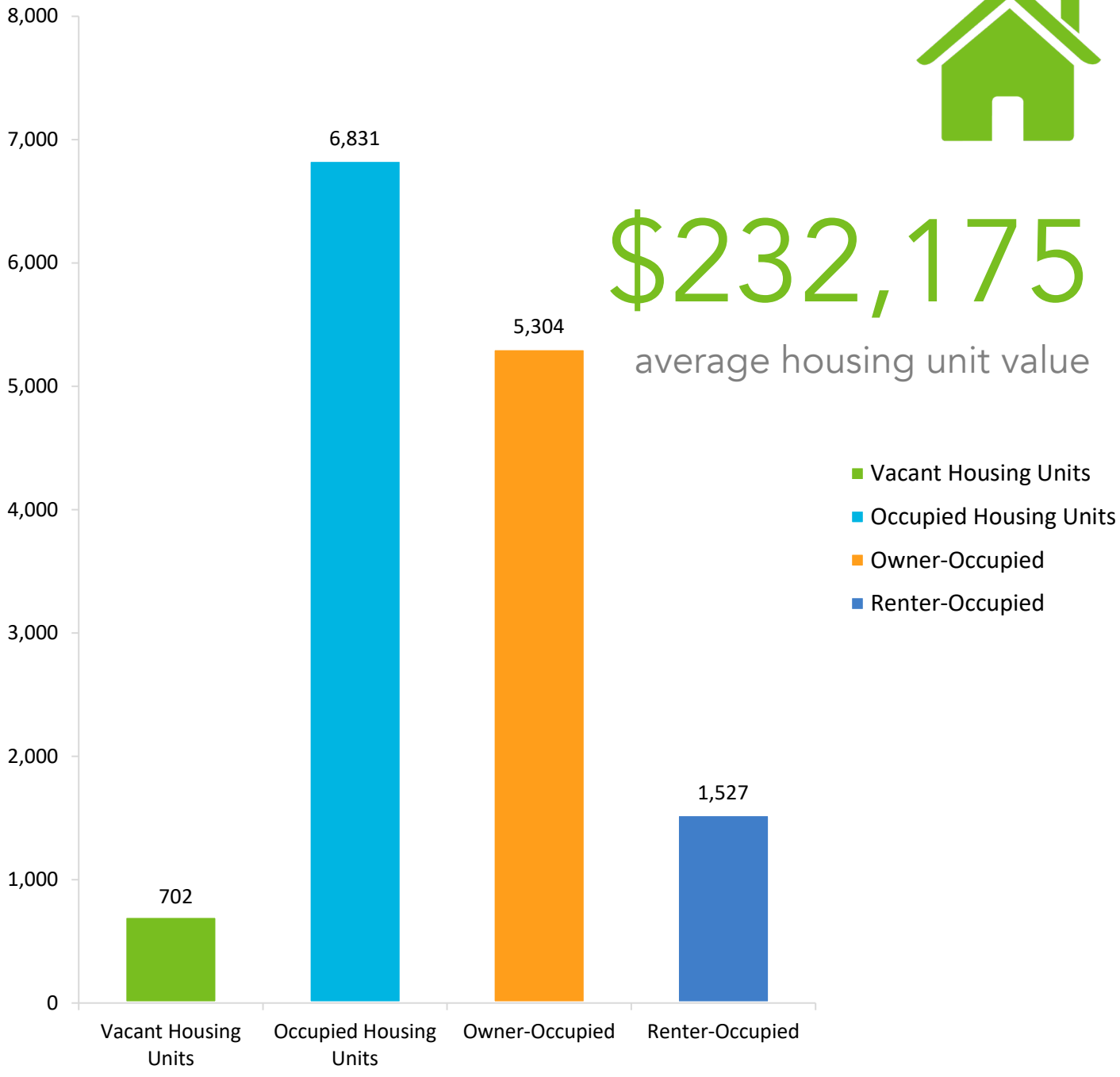


$59,215
median household income

7,533
number of households

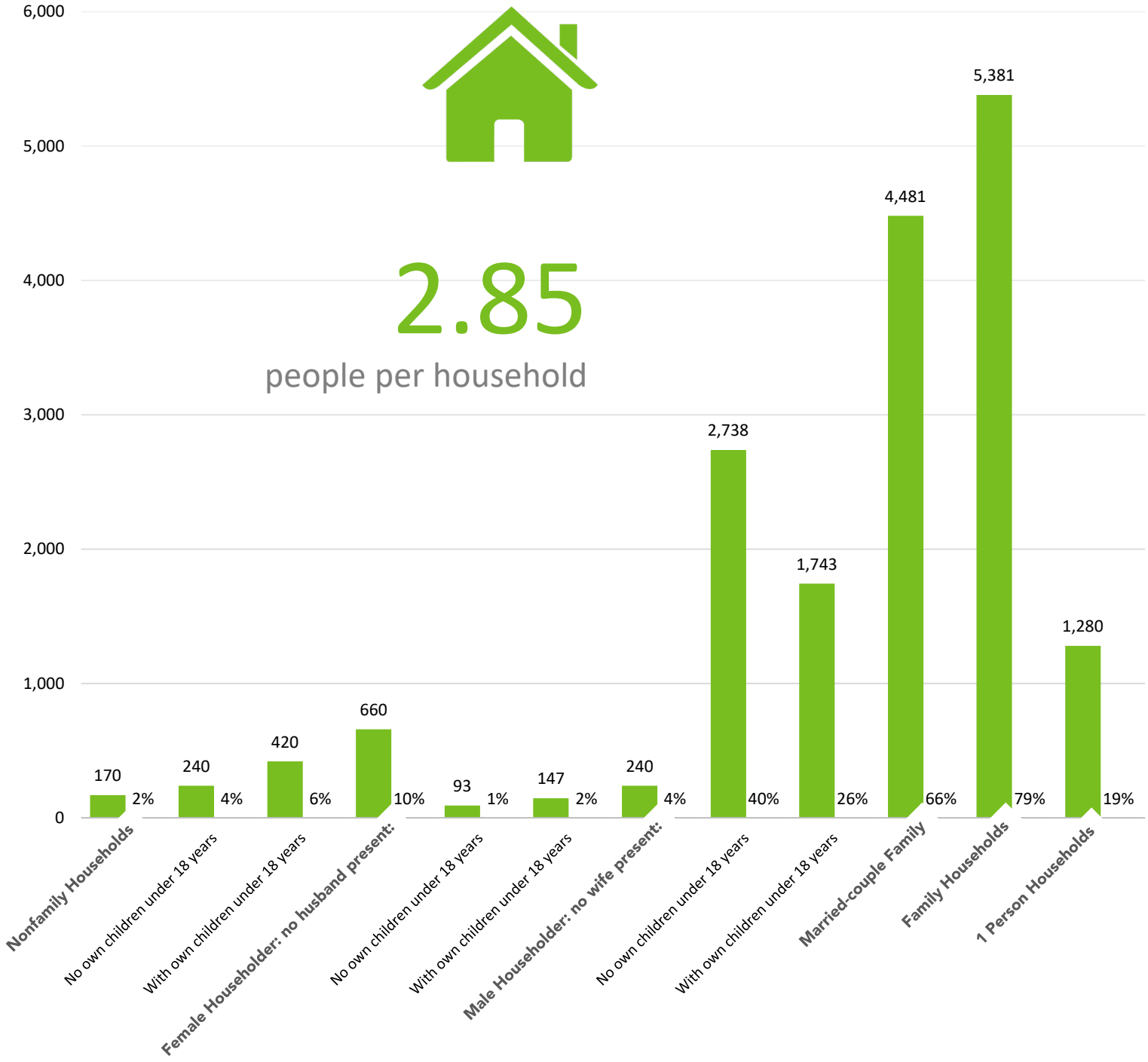
Our Research

2020 ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS BY TENURE



Our Research

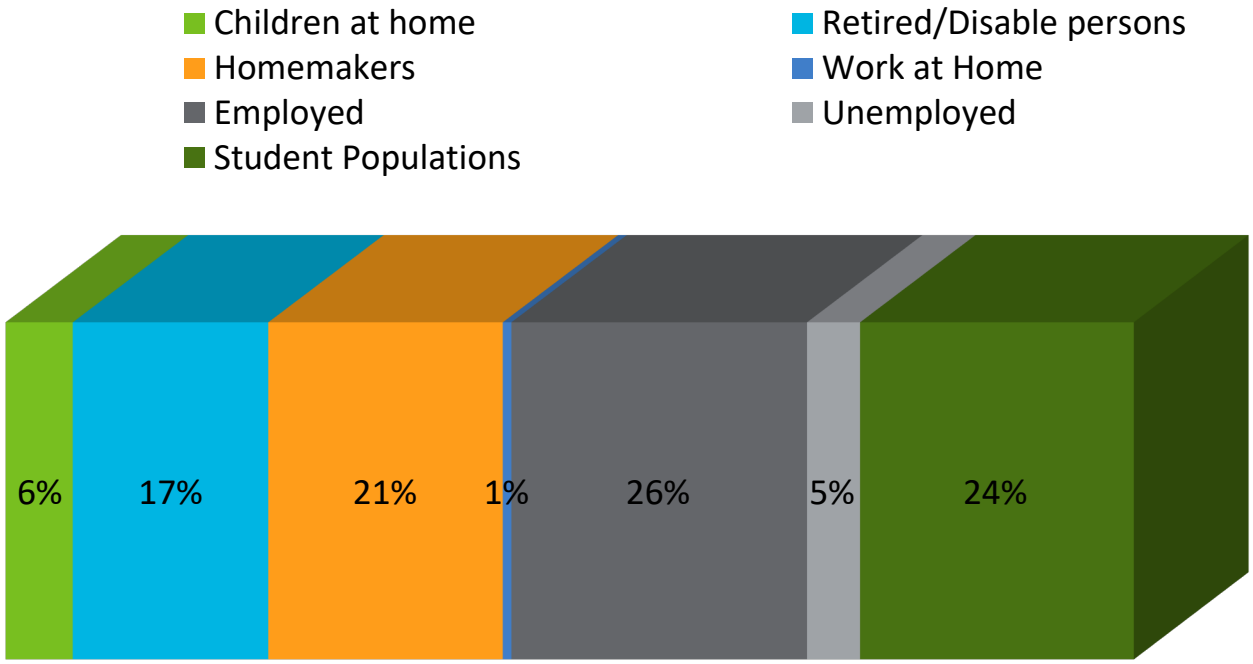
CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE



Our Research

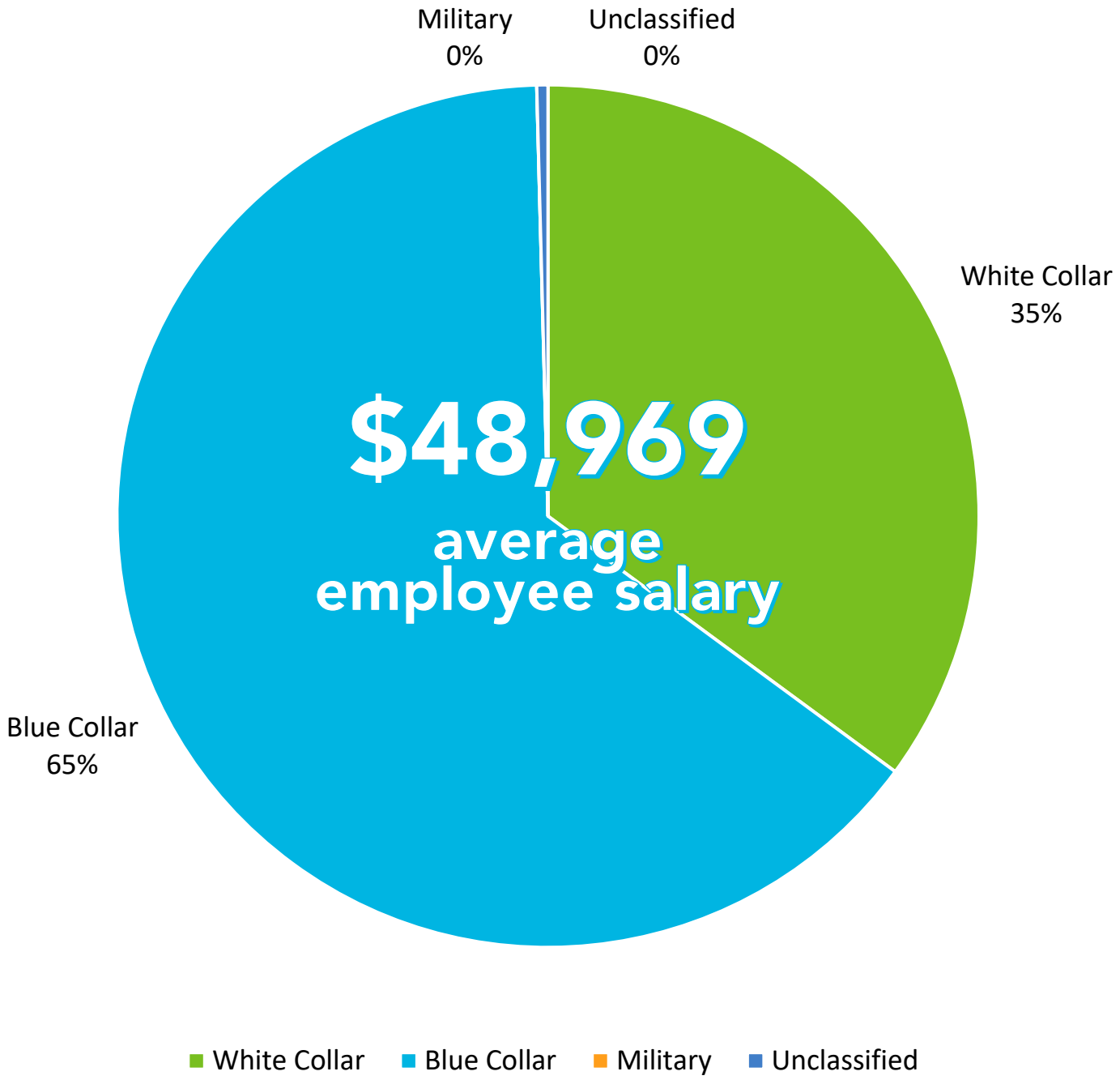
DAYTIME POPULATION

17,363 daytime population



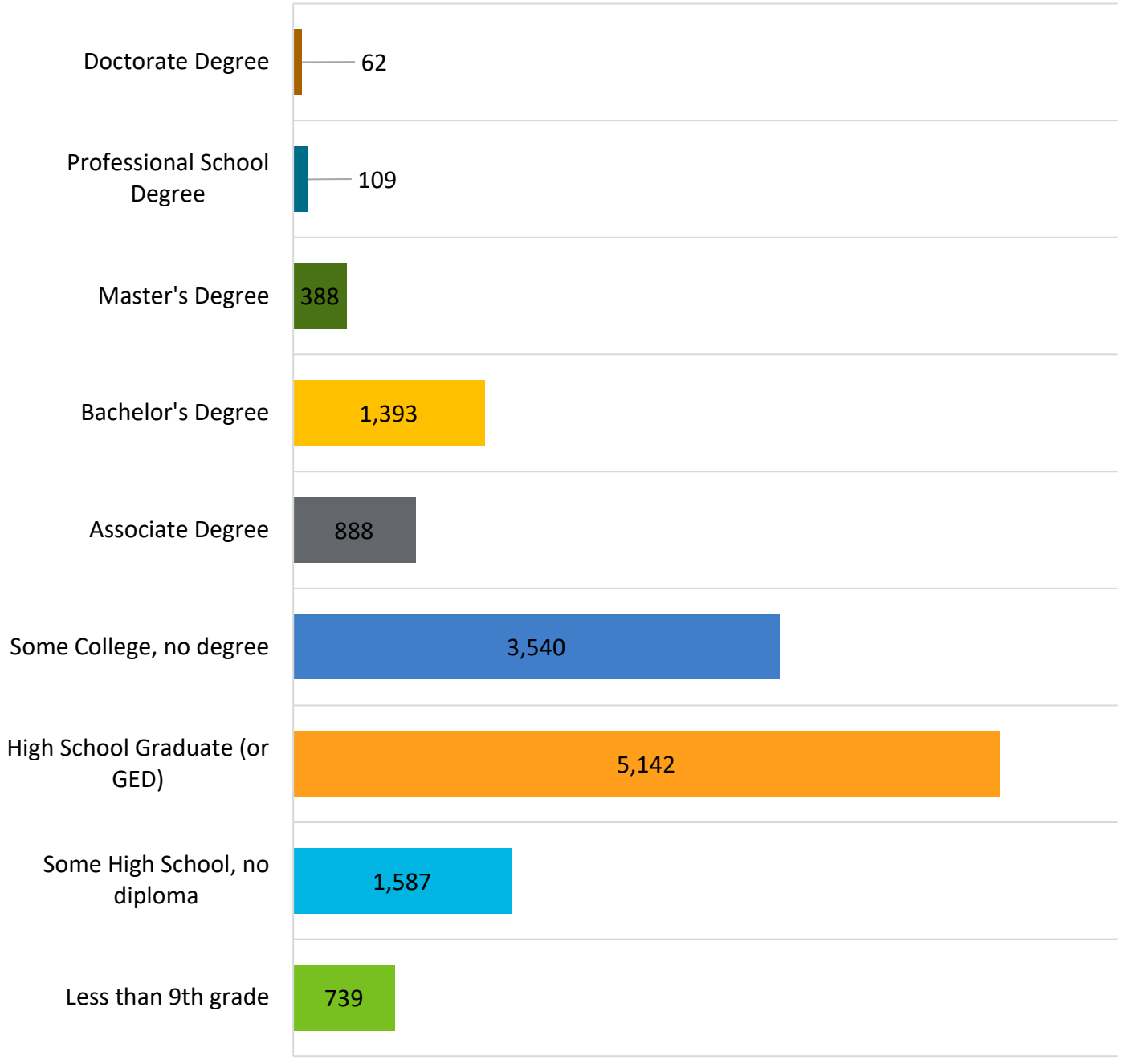
Our Research

EMPLOYMENT TYPE



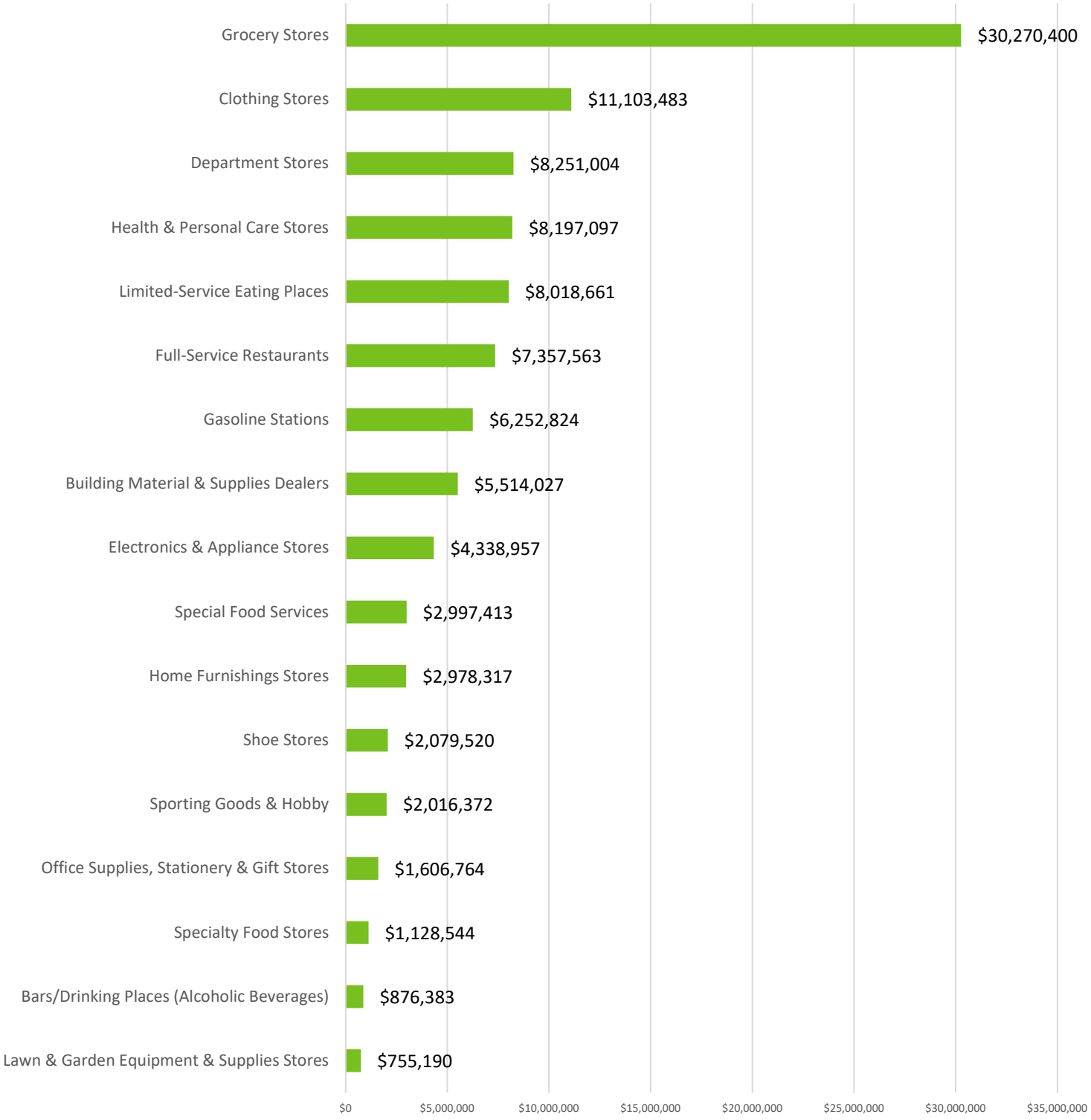
Our Research

CURRENT YEAR ESTIMATED POPULATION AGE 25+ BY EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT



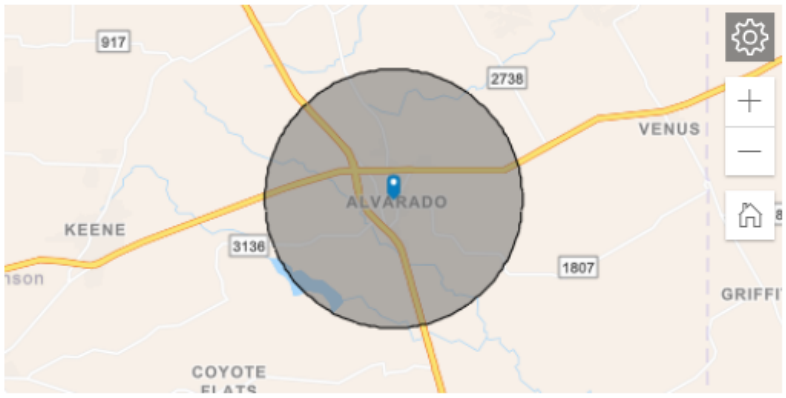
Our Research

OPPORTUNITY GAP & RETAIL PROSPECTS



Our Research

COMMUTE PROFILE: 3 MILES



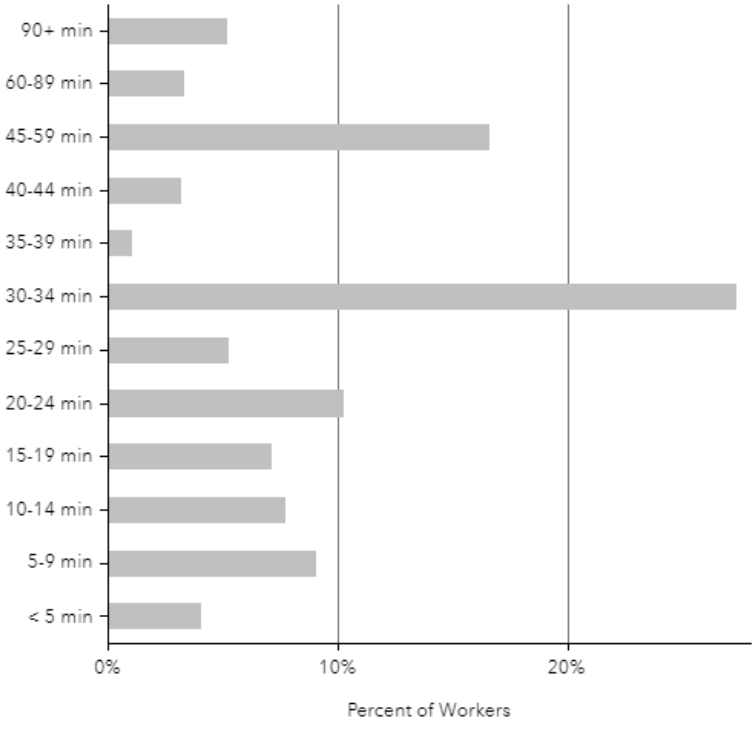
WORKERS

3,116	85.0%	33
ACS Workers Age 16+	Drove Alone to Work	2019 Workers 16+ Worked at Home (ACS 5-Yr)

TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

0.0%	8.8%
Took Public Transportation	Carpooled
3.5%	0.0%
Walked to Work	Bike to Work

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK



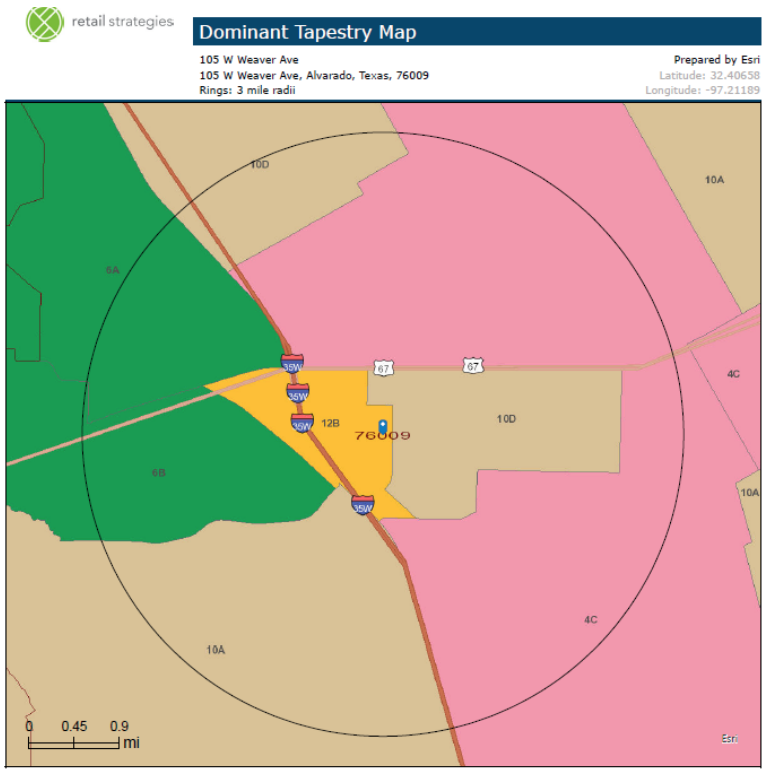
This infographic contains data provided by American Community Survey (ACS). The vintage of the data is 2015-2019.

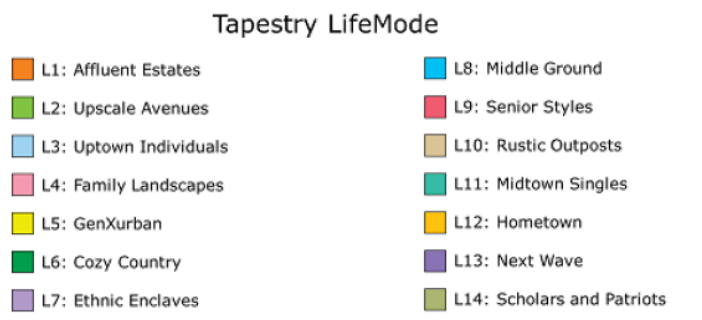
© 2020 Esri

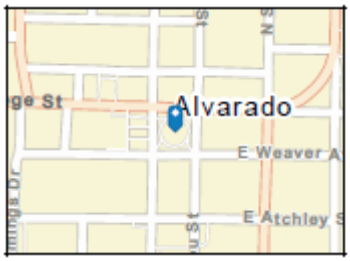
Tapestry Segmentation Profile

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

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









esri

Tapestry Segmentation Area Profile

105 W Weaver Ave
105 W Weaver Ave, Alvarado, Texas, 76009
Ring: 3 mile radius

Prepared by Esri
Latitude: 32.40658
Longitude: -97.21189

Top Twenty Tapestry Segments

		2021 Households		2021 U.S. Households		
Rank	Tapestry Segment	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent	Index
1	Middleburg (4C)	33.6%	33.6%	3.0%	3.0%	1130
2	Down the Road (10D)	21.4%	54.9%	1.2%	4.1%	1,837
3	Traditional Living (12B)	20.3%	75.3%	1.9%	6.0%	1,073
4	Green Acres (6A)	9.8%	85.1%	3.3%	9.3%	300
5	Southern Satellites (10A)	7.8%	92.9%	3.2%	12.5%	245
	Subtotal	**92.9%**		**12.6%**		

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Family Landscapes

Middleburg

4C

Households: 3,511,200

Average Household Size: 2.75

Median Age: 36.1

Median Household Income: $59,800

WHO ARE WE?

Middleburg neighborhoods transformed from the easy pace of country living to semirural subdivisions in the last decade, when the housing boom reached out. Residents are conservative, family-oriented consumers. Still more country than rock and roll, they are thrifty but willing to carry some debt and are already investing in their futures. They rely on their smartphones and mobile devices to stay in touch and pride themselves on their expertise. They prefer to buy American and travel in the US. This market is younger but growing in size and assets.

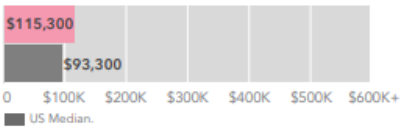
INCOME AND NET WORTH

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

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Semirural locales within metropolitan areas.
- Neighborhoods changed rapidly in the previous decade with the addition of new single-family homes.
- Include a number of mobile homes (Index 150).
- Affordable housing, median value of $175,000 (Index 84) with a low vacancy rate.
- Young couples, many with children; average household size is 2.75.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: 65% with a high school diploma or some college.
- Unemployment rate lower at 4.7% (Index 86).
- Labor force participation typical of a younger population at 66.7% (Index 107).
- Traditional values are the norm here—faith, country, and family.
- Prefer to buy American and for a good price.
- Comfortable with the latest in technology, for convenience (online banking or saving money on landlines) and entertainment.

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

- Residents are partial to domestic vehicles; they like to drive trucks, SUVs, or motorcycles.
- Entertainment is primarily family-oriented, TV and movie rentals or theme parks and family restaurants.
- Spending priorities also focus on family (children's toys and apparel) or home DIY projects.
- Sports include hunting, fishing, bowling, and baseball.
- TV and magazines provide entertainment and information.
- Media preferences include country and Christian channels.

by 100.

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

Down the Road

10D

Households: 1,406,700

Average Household Size: 2.76

Median Age: 35.0

Median Household Income: $38,700

WHO ARE WE?

Down the Road is a mix of low-density, semirural neighborhoods in large metropolitan areas; half are located in the South, with the rest chiefly in the West and Midwest. Almost half of householders live in mobile homes; more than two-fifths live in single-family homes. These are younger, diverse communities, with the highest proportion of American Indians of any segment. These family-oriented consumers value their traditions. Workers are in service, retail trade, manufacturing, and construction industries, with higher proportions in agriculture and mining, compared to the US. This market has higher unemployment, much lower median household income and home value, and more than a fifth of households with income below poverty level.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Nearly two-thirds of households are owned.
- Family market, primarily married couples or single-parent households (Index 145).
- Close to half of all households live in mobile homes (Index 780).
- Four-fifths of households were built in 1970 or later.
- About 32% of homes are valued under $50,000 (over 4 times the US percentage).

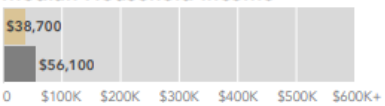
SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education completed: 36% with a high school diploma only, 41% with some college education or a degree.
- Unemployment rate is 7.8%, higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.0%, slightly lower than the US.
- Family-oriented, outgoing consumers; they place importance on preserving time-honored customs.
- They put a premium on convenience rather than health and nutrition.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

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

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



MARKET PROFILE

(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

- Purchased a used vehicle in the past year, likely maintaining the vehicle themselves.
- Routinely stop by the convenience store to purchase gas, lottery tickets, and snacks.
- Participate in fishing and hunting.
- Use the Internet to stay connected with friends and play online video games.
- Listen to the radio, especially at work, with a preference for rap, R&B, and country music.
- Enjoy programs on Investigation Discovery, CMT, and Hallmark, typically watching via satellite dish.
- Often prepare quick meals, using packaged or frozen dinner entrees.
- Favorite fast food: burgers and pizza.
- Frequent Walmart Supercenters, Walgreens, dollar stores, K-Marts, and Big Lots for all their shopping needs (groceries, clothing, pharmacy, etc.).

Tapestry Segmentation Profile





LifeMode Group: Hometown

Traditional Living

12B

Households: 2,395,200

Average Household Size: 2.51

Median Age: 35.5

Median Household Income: $39,300

WHO ARE WE?

Residents in this segment live primarily in low-density, settled neighborhoods in the Midwest. The households are a mix of married-couple families and singles. Many families encompass two generations who have lived and worked in the community; their children are likely to follow suit. The manufacturing, retail trade, and health care sectors are the primary sources of employment for these residents. This is a younger market—beginning householders who are juggling the responsibilities of living on their own or a new marriage, while retaining their youthful interests in style and fun.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

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

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Married couples are the dominant household type, but fewer than expected from the younger age profile and fewer with children (Index 79); however, there are higher proportions of single-parent (Index 146) and single-person households (Index 112).
- Average household size is slightly lower at 2.51.
- Homes are primarily single family or duplexes in older neighborhoods, built before 1940 (Index 228).
- Most neighborhoods are located in lower-density urban clusters of metro areas throughout the Midwest and South.
- Average commuting time to work is very short (Index 22).
- Households have one or two vehicles.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Over 70% have completed high school or some college.
- Unemployment is higher at 7.3% (Index 134); labor force participation is also a bit higher at 63.4%.
- Almost three quarters of households derive income from wages and salaries, augmented by Supplemental Security Income (Index 139) and public assistance (Index 152).
- Cost-conscious consumers that are comfortable with brand loyalty, unless the price is too high.
- Connected and comfortable with the Internet, they are more likely to participate in online gaming or posting pics on social media.
- TV is seen as the most trusted media.

MARKET PROFILE

(Consumer preferences are estimated from data by GfK MRI)

ed by 100.

- They shop for groceries at discount stores such as Walmart supercenters; Kmart is also a favorite for apparel and sundry household and personal care products.
- Convenience stores are commonly used for fuel or picking up incidentals like lottery tickets.
- They tend to carry credit card balances, have personal loans, and pay bills in person.
- Half of households have abandoned landlines for cell phones only.
- They watch their favorite channels including ABC Family, CMT, and Game Show Network.
- They're fast food devotees.
- They enjoy outdoor activities such as fishing and taking trips to the zoo.

Tapestry Segmentation Profile



LifeMode Group: Cozy Country Living

Green Acres

6A

Households: 3,923,400

Average Household Size: 2.70

Median Age: 43.9

Median Household Income: $76,800

WHO ARE WE?

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

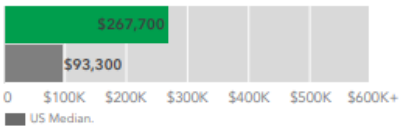
INCOME AND NET WORTH

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

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

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

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

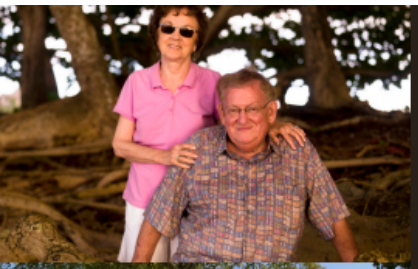
- Education: More than 60% are college educated.
- Unemployment is low at 3.8% (Index 70); labor force participation rate is high at 66.8% (Index 107).
- Income is derived not only from wages and salaries but also from self-employment (more than 13% of households), investments (27% of households), and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

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

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

Tapestry Segmentation Profile

downtown strategies





LifeMode Group: Rustic Outposts

Southern Satellites

10A

Households: 3,856,800

Average Household Size: 2.67

Median Age: 40.3

Median Household Income: $47,800

WHO ARE WE?

Southern Satellites is the second largest market found in rural settlements but within metropolitan areas located primarily in the South. This market is typically nondiverse, slightly older, settled married-couple families, who own their homes. Two-thirds of the homes are single-family structures; almost a third are mobile homes. Median household income and home value are below average. Workers are employed in a variety of industries, such as manufacturing, health care, retail trade, and construction, with higher proportions in mining and agriculture than the US. Residents enjoy country living, preferring outdoor activities and DIY home projects.

INCOME AND NET WORTH

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

Median Household Income



Median Net Worth



OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- About 78% of households are owned.
- Married couples with no children are the dominant household type, with a number of multigenerational households (Index 112).
- Most are single-family homes (67%), with a number of mobile homes (Index 509).
- Most housing units were built in 1970 or later.
- Most households own 1 or 2 vehicles, but owning 3+ vehicles is common (Index 144).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education: almost 40% have a high school diploma only (Index 140); 45% have college education (Index 73).
- Unemployment rate is 6%, slightly higher than the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is 59.1%, slightly lower than the US.
- These consumers are more concerned about cost rather than quality or brand loyalty.
- They tend to be somewhat late in adapting to technology.
- They obtain a disproportionate amount of their information from TV, compared to other media.

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

- Usually own a truck; likely to service it themselves.
- Frequent the convenience store, usually to fill up a vehicle with gas.
- Typical household has a satellite dish.
- Work on home improvement and remodeling projects.
- Own a pet, commonly a dog.
- Participate in fishing and hunting.
- Prefer to listen to country music and watch Country Music Television (CMT).
- Read fishing/hunting and home service magazines.
- Partial to eating at low-cost family restaurants and drive-ins.
- Use Walmart for all their shopping needs (groceries, clothing, pharmacy, etc.).

JS rate multiplied by 100.
ll.

MARKET ANALYSIS

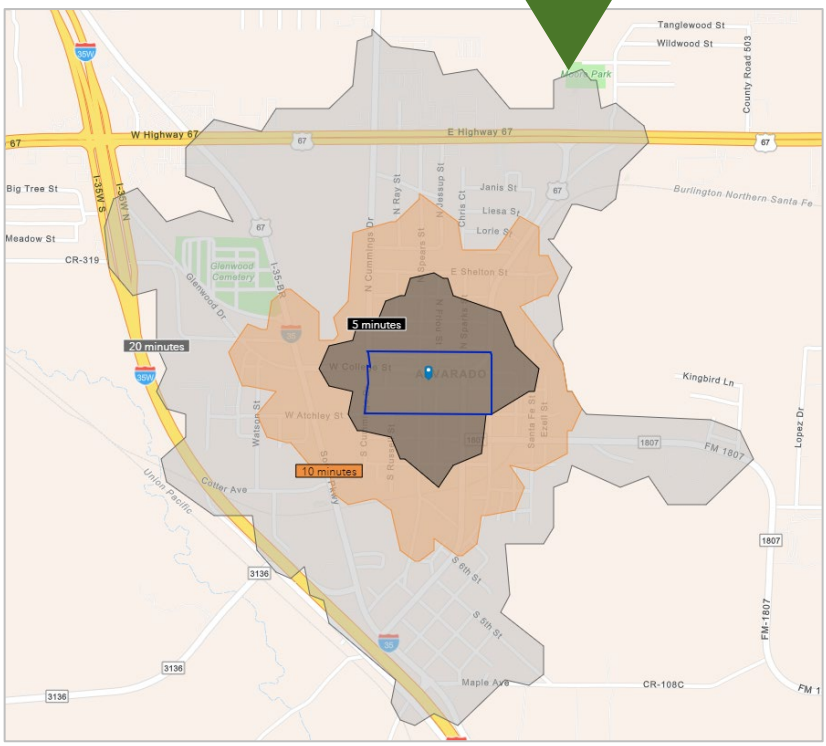
Walkability Assessment

48

What's your Community's Walk Score?

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

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



KEY FACTS

2,768	35.3	2.7
Population	Median Age	Average Household Size

INCOME

$49,654	$20,046	$60,117
Median Household Income	Per Capita Income	Median Net Worth

BUSINESSES

85	933
Total Businesses	Total Employees

EMPLOYMENT

White Collar	38%
Blue Collar	55%
Services	7%

14.1% Unemployment Rate

EDUCATION

29%	39%	21%	12%
No High School Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	Bachelor's/Grad/ Prof Degree

HOUSING STATS

$94,286	$6,371	$761
Median Home Value	Average Spent on Mortgage & Basics	Median Contract Rent

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

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

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

Walkability Assessment

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

1

Walkable Distance Between Boundaries

Downtown Alvarado's boundaries fall within a 0.25-mile radius and a less than 10-minute walk time from end to end of the area, which is considered extremely walkable from a distance perspective.

2

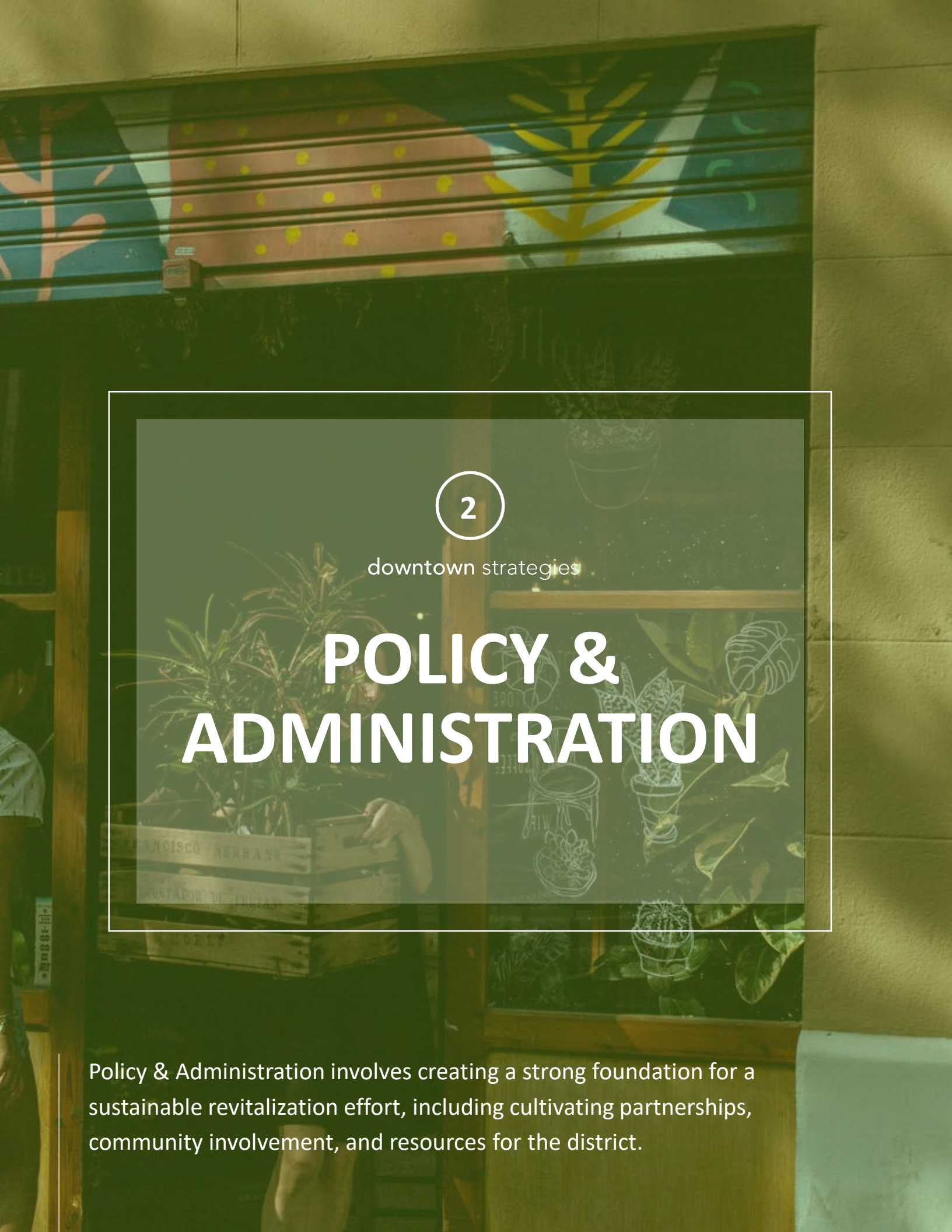
Presence of a Comprehensive Network of Pathways

While there are sidewalks on the main thoroughfare, priority should be given to expanding this by focusing on curb cuts, accessibility, clear crosswalks, and sidewalks on some of the secondary streets within Downtown Alvarado.

3

Variety of Restaurants, Retailers & Service Providers Present

The greatest amount of potential lies with identifying more qualified restaurant and retailer prospects and matching those with available real estate in the Downtown area to improve the business offerings. Downtown Alvarado has the potential to be even more of a true destination for residents and visitors.



2

downtown strategies

POLICY & ADMINISTRATION

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

Dedicated Staff Person & Funding for Downtown Development

Recommendation

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

Downtown Development Manager

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

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

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

Ultimately, this individual should be able to increase web traffic and customer engagement metrics aligned with broader marketing strategies that he/she develops.

Committees for Downtown Development

Recommendation

Establish a framework of committees under Downtown Development Staff tasked with recruiting volunteers and multi-disciplinary professionals to begin tackling specific programs and strategies within this plan, and to expand the network of downtown development supporters.

Purpose of Downtown Development Committees

Downtown Development Committees should be formed with the mission to rejuvenate the downtown, thereby creating a vibrant atmosphere for business and social activities.

Committees should work in conjunction with the City, Chamber, Director of Downtown Development, merchants, and asset owners in the community to identify areas of need and steps to take to move forward.

The committees should rely on recommendations and strategies within this plan as their work plans, meet regularly, encourage collaboration and diversity, and keep themselves accountable for realistic timing of implementation of their various work plans.

Communication with stakeholders is key, and notes and minutes should be kept for accountability and transparency.

The success of Downtown Development committees is based on its comprehensive nature. By carefully integrating volunteers and committee work into a practical downtown management strategy, a local program will produce fundamental changes in a community's economic base.

Committees for Downtown Development

Retail Promotion & Events

Retail Promotion & Events committee creates excitement downtown. Street festivals, parades, retail events, and image development campaigns are some of the ways this committee encourages customer traffic. This committee also focuses on promoting an enticing image to shoppers, investors, and visitors. Enhancing the attractiveness of the business district, historic building rehabilitation, street and alley clean-up, colorful banners, landscaping, and lighting all improve the physical image of the downtown as a quality place to shop, work, walk, invest in, and live which contributes to marketing efforts. These overall improvements result in a reinvestment of public and private dollars to downtown.

Real Estate & Redevelopment

The Real Estate & Redevelopment committee involves analyzing current market conditions to develop long-term solutions. Recruiting new businesses, creatively converting unused space for new uses, and developing strong relationships with existing property owners and potential investors will allow this committee to be proactive with potential opportunities. Understanding existing zoning and codes and mitigating barriers to investment is essential.

Business Development & Entrepreneurship Support

The Business Development & Entrepreneurship Support committee supports and promotes emerging businesses and entrepreneurs by providing programs that address the challenges of establishing, growing and scaling businesses. This committee also educates, promotes strategic alliances, addresses the concerns of these businesses and provides excellent networking opportunities. Additionally, the committee will focus on sharpening the competitiveness of existing traditional merchants.

Form Based Codes

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

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

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

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

Recommendation

Incorporate Form Based Codes into the Central Business District code to encourage proper urban style development as new projects come online.

Form Based Codes

Principles of Form Based Codes

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

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

Form Based Codes

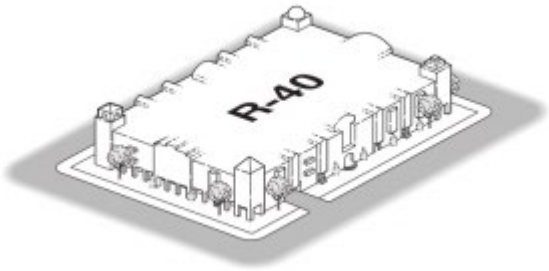
Conventional Zoning

Density use, FAR (floor area ratio), setbacks, parking requirements, maximum building heights specified



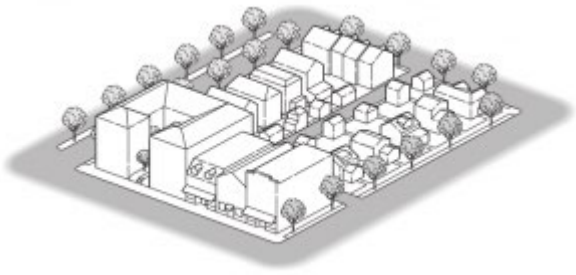
Zoning Design Guidelines

Conventional zoning requirements, plus frequency of openings and surface articulation specified



Form-Based Codes

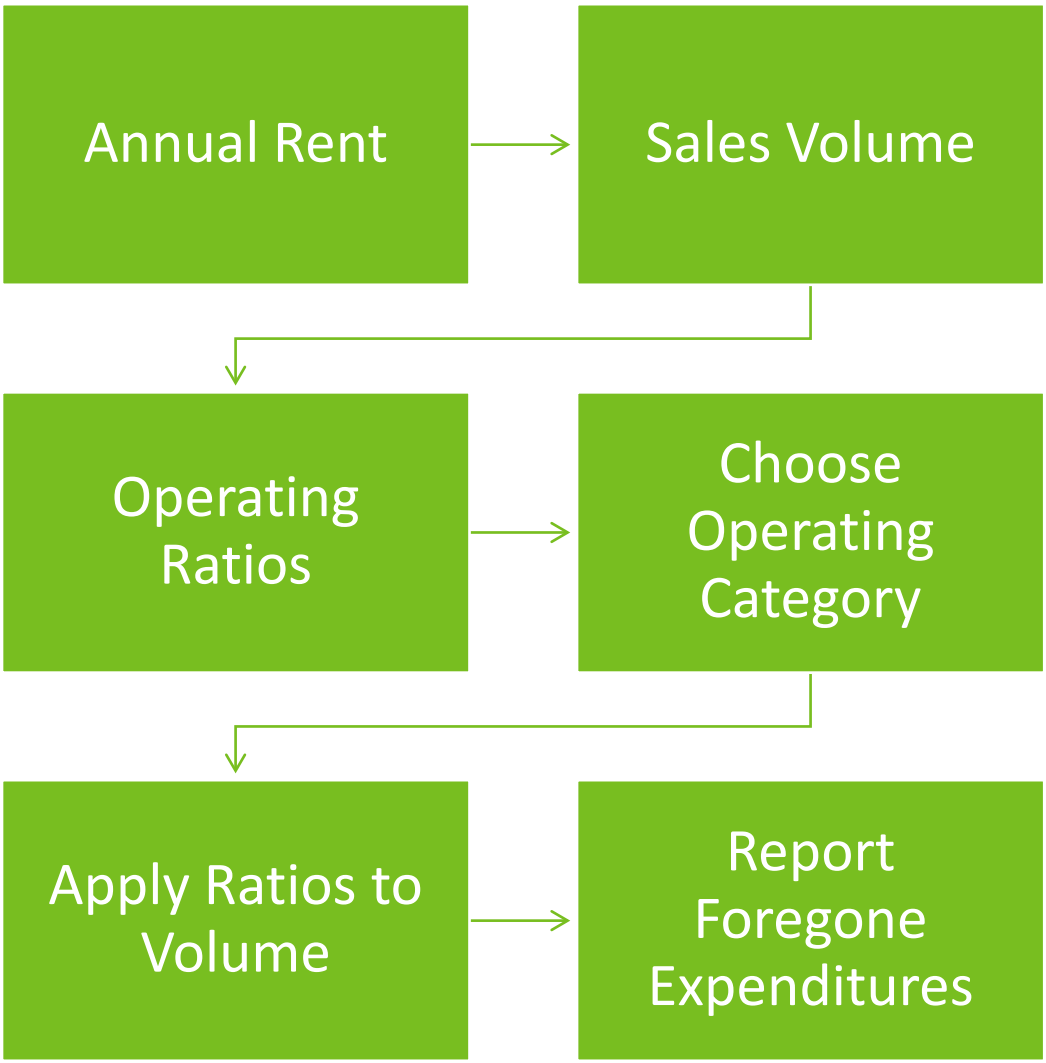
Street and building types (or mix of types), build-to lines, number of floors, and percentage of built site frontage specified.



Source: Form Based Code Institute

Economic Impact of Vacancy

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



Source: Donovan Rypkema

Economic Impact of Vacancy

Recommendation

Use the economic impact model accompanying your strategic plan to determine the impact of vacant buildings in Downtown Alvarado. Utilize these figures as you consider implementing a vacant storefront tax in the district or other policies.

Economic Impact Model

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

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

Source: Donovan Rypkema

Vacant Storefront Tax

Site-specific Causes for Vacancies

Knowledge gap

Smaller, independent property owners may lack an understanding of appropriate asking rents for a commercial tenant, the best way to market their space to prospective tenants, or how to assist tenants with occupying the space effectively. This is further exacerbated when property owners employ non-local real estate agents that may not be adept working within the market and are not privy to the unique character of each sub district and their respective customer bases. Still other property owners may not be able to afford traditional brokerage services and will attempt to go it alone instead.

Tax write-off

Institutional investors with large real estate portfolios may benefit from keeping certain commercial properties vacant as part of a larger strategy to claim tax write-offs on passive income. This scenario not only creates a disincentive to the owner to find a long-term tenant, but also temporary users like pop-ups.

Tenant attraction strategy

Property owners may have a deliberate plan to attract a specific tenant to complement the larger retail mix. In several instances, it was found that property owners had turned down offers from credit-worthy formula retail tenants offering more competitive rents and elected instead to wait for a particular operator perceived to better complement neighboring uses.

Vacant Storefront Tax

Site-specific Causes for Vacancies

Development/lease negotiation

Some vacancies are the result of owners seeking to develop or rehabilitate properties. During this period, the space may or may not have a committed tenant, though lease negotiation can also contribute to prolonged vacancy.

High asking rents

Property reappraisals may increase real estate tax obligations to property owners, wherein they pass the additional expense on to their tenants through higher rents, thereby contributing to turnover/vacancies.

Speculative rents

Property owners located in central locations of high-demand may feel justified holding out for high rents, believing the long-term benefit outweighs short term losses.

Disinterested owner

Property owners in peripheral commercial areas may be less beholden to the community or feel less compelled to activate their space than those located in areas like Harvard Square and Central Square.

Community opposition

In instances where a property owner procures a tenant, but the community opposes the use/operator, it can delay occupancy.

Vacant Storefront Tax

Recommendation

Implement a Vacant Storefront Tax program to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate, lease, or sell their buildings within the Downtown Alvarado area.

Vacant Storefront Tax Ordinances, implemented in numerous cities and towns across the country, requires that owners of vacant commercial properties submit information to a registry and pay an annual fee for each year that the property remains vacant.

In so doing, the municipality is able to track and monitor vacant properties, establish a dialogue with property owners to understand the nature of the vacancy, and develop strategies to help the owner either tenant the space, temporarily activate it, or else adhere to minimum standards for the appearance and maintenance of the property while vacant.

How is a vacancy typically defined?

Any property that is not legally occupied, is abandoned, or is not used for a period of at least 90 consecutive days or longer by occupants having custody or legal right of entry to such property; or is intermittently occupied by persons with legal right of entry, but exhibits in the opinion of the Building Inspector dilapidated walls, root or doors which fail to prevent the entry of a trespasser for a period of more than 7 days.

How is the registration fee determined/structured?

Initial and renewal registration fees are $400 per storefront annually (based on estimated cost to the city of $100 for quarterly inspections).

Vacant Storefront Tax

At what point must a vacancy be registered?

Within 90 days of last legal occupancy. Fees are due at time of registration. Registration requires a statement by the owner reflecting their efforts to regain occupancy.

Under what conditions can an owner seek a waiver/exemption?

Demonstration of financial hardship, or by agreeing in writing to display public art for a period of up to one year and subject to the availability of public art. Demonstration of financial hardship is subject to a 30-day review period and is reevaluated on a quarterly basis until property is leased or sold.

How must the owner/property manager maintain a registered vacancy?

Vacant buildings must be maintained in accordance with all applicable local and state Sanitary Codes, Building Codes and Fire Codes; must promptly repair all broken windows, doors, other openings; boarding up is only permitted as temporary measure unless the Building Inspector determines otherwise, in which case boards or coverings must be colored to blend with the existing building color scheme. The building shall be maintained so as to appear not to be vacant. Advertising materials must be approved by the Planning Director or comparable position.

What is the fine structure for failure to register and/or additional violations?

Failure to register or other infractions are fined at $100 per day in total. Failure to pay registration or fines will result in a lien against the property.

Customized Toolkit of Incentives

Consider implementing the following list of incentives to publicly re-invest in the Downtown area and to foster and support private investment in vacant or deteriorating structures.

The following districts, incentives, ordinances, and programs have been selected as successful tools for revitalizing Downtown Alvarado. Further information and details regarding each incentive and program follow within the plan:

Local Policies

- Façade Grant Improvement Program

Local Districts

- National Register District

Local Incentives

- Property Tax Abatement
- Façade Grant Improvement Program
- Historic Tax Credits (National Register of Historic Places)
- Lease Assistance Incentive for New Businesses
- Local Tax Increment Financing

Local Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Local Tax Increment Financing (Local TIF) permits the use of a portion of local property and sales taxes to assist funding the redevelopment of certain designated areas within your community. Areas eligible for Local TIF must contain property classified as a "Blighted", as defined by Texas Statutes.

Purpose

Local Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a tool for financing improvements in a downtown area designed to assist in the elimination of blight in economically distressed areas in Texas cities and counties. TIFs provide opportunities for cities to invest in blighted, distressed areas, and utilize the property tax increases occasioned by those investments to reinvest and reinvigorate the target area.

Typical Budget Items

TIF may be used to pay certain costs incurred with a redevelopment project. Such costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Professional services such as studies, surveys, plans, financial management, legal counsel;
- Land acquisition and demolition of structures;
- Rehabilitating, repairing existing buildings on site;
- Building necessary new infrastructure in the project area such as streets, sewers, parking, lighting; and
- Relocation of resident and business occupants located in the project area.

Supported by Local TIF Revenues

The idea behind Local TIF is the assumption that property and/or local sales taxes (depending upon the type of redevelopment project) will increase in the designated area after redevelopment, and a portion of the increase of these taxes collected in the future may be allocated by the municipality to help pay the certain project costs, partially listed above.

Property Tax Abatement

A tax abatement is a local agreement between a taxpayer and a taxing unit that exempts all or part of the increase in the value of the real property and/or tangible personal property from taxation for a period not to exceed 10 years.

What is Property Tax Abatement?

Tax abatements are an economic development tool available to cities, counties and special districts to attract new industries and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses through property tax exemptions or reductions. School districts may not enter into abatement agreements.

Local governments often use property tax abatements to attract new industry and commercial enterprises and to encourage the retention and development of existing businesses. Incorporated cities, counties and special districts are allowed to enter into tax abatement agreements. School districts cannot enter tax abatement agreements. While tax abatements are short-lived, they can have a significant future impact.

New Abatement Legislation Notice for Local Governments

Recently enacted House Bill 3143, which went into effect Sept. 1, 2019, added additional public notice, hearing and reporting requirements for certain tax abatement agreements.

Recommendation

Offer property tax abatement to property owners that invest a minimum amount of funds into revitalizing their properties, in accordance with Central Business District code and suggested colors finishes.

Lease Assistance Incentive for New Businesses

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

Purpose of Lease Assistance Incentive

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

Creating a Niche Marketplace

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

Recommendation

Determine funding capabilities for a Lease Assistance Incentive program for new businesses in the Downtown Alvarado area.

American Rescue Plan

Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund

Development/lease negotiation

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

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

Johnson County Allocation: approximately $34,098,624

- Metropolitan cities will receive $45.57 billion in payments.

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

Alvarado Allocation: approximately $987,716

Recommendation

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

American Rescue Plan

How Can Funds be Used?

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

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

When will Funds be Available?

- For localities with populations over 50,000, funds should be available within 60 days. For localities with populations under 50,000, funds will be passed through their applicable state and will be made available to the locality within 90 days. States have no authority to withhold or place restrictions on funds that are passed through them to non-entitlement localities.
- Governments will receive first tranche of funds (equal to 50% of funds within 60-90 days of bill being signed; with second tranche being allocated 12 months later.
- Localities also must make periodic reports to the Treasury Department to account for funds expended.
- Funds must be used by Dec. 31, 2026.

3

downtown strategies

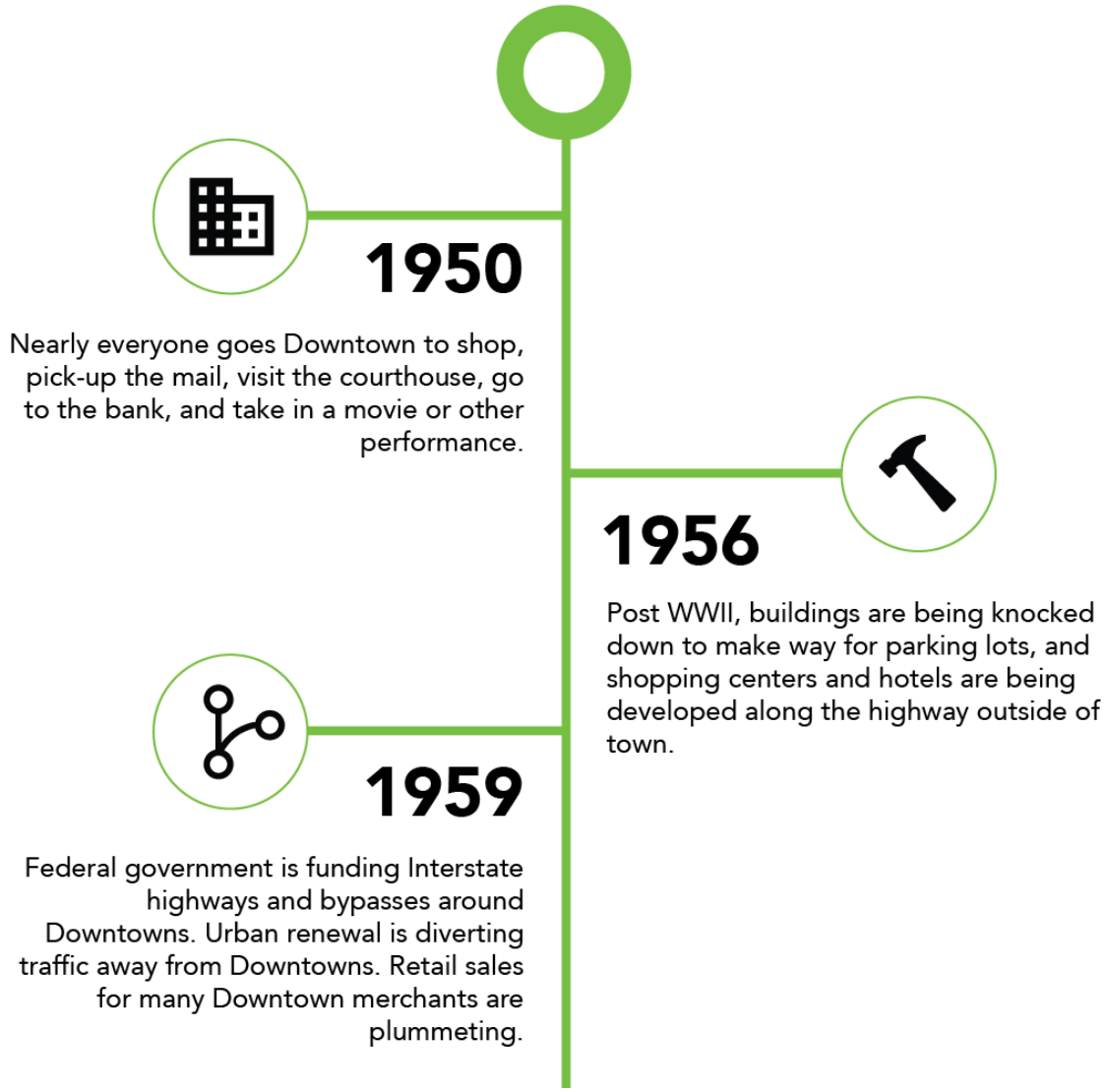
DESIGN



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

History of America's Downtowns

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



History of America's Downtowns

1965

Sprawl hastens the abandonment of Downtowns with their small-scale, personal, and diverse retail and commercial offerings. This lasts 30 years.

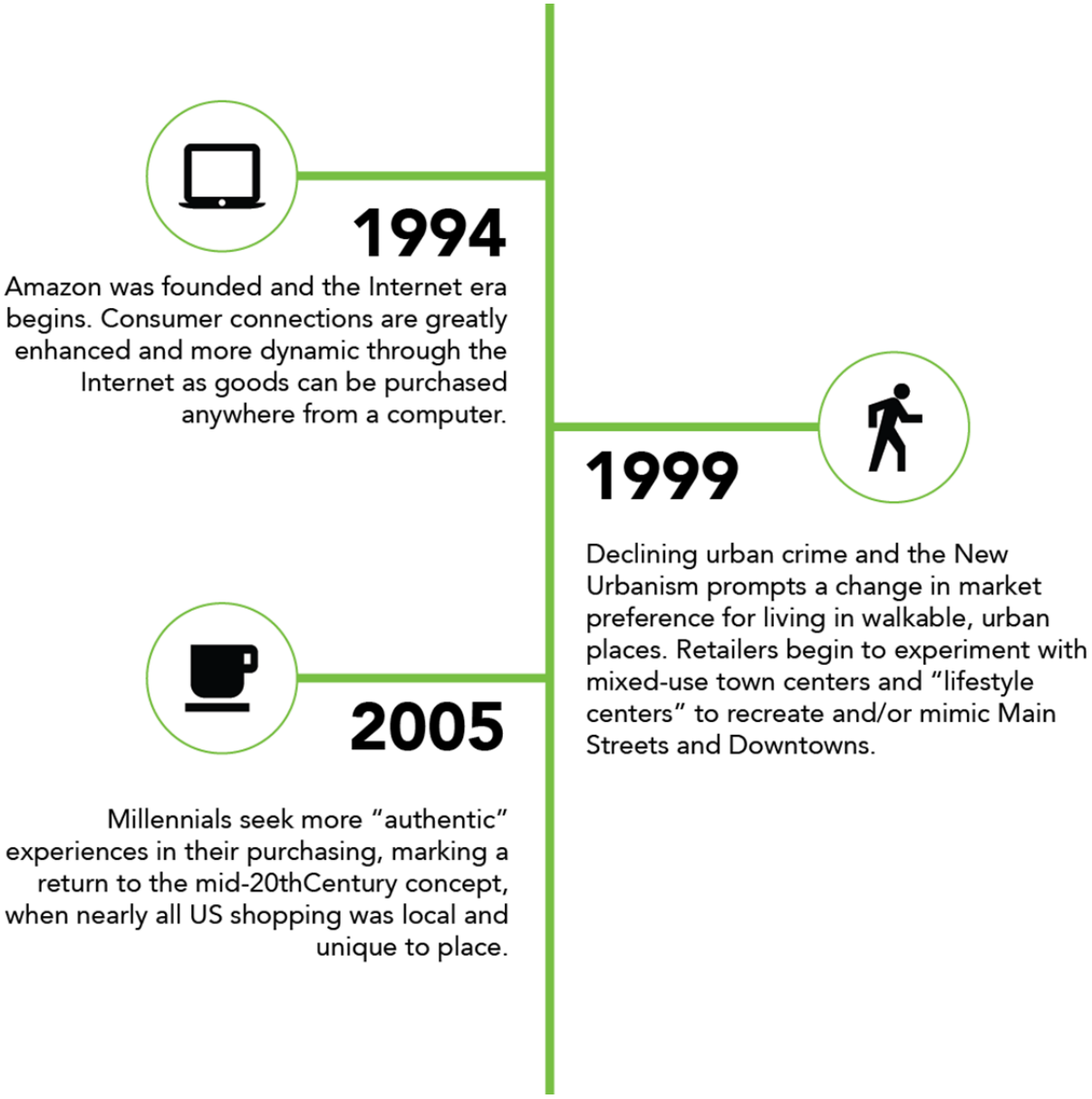
1977

Total retail market share of American Downtowns drops by 77 percent and many Downtowns lose 90% of their business.

1990

The 1990s are the peak era for constructing automobile-oriented retail in the US. In 1990, the US already had more per-capita retail space than any other nation in the world.

History of America's Downtowns



downtown strategies

History of America's Downtowns

2008

Nation's economy goes into a tailspin and banks stop lending for new construction. Consumers change their shopping patterns and take pride in finding bargains and being "thrifty."

2015

E-commerce amounts to 7% of total retail sales and is increasing. Value shopping is the new norm rather than the exception, and many national brands that overbuilt in the 21st century are closing stores.

2019

Consumers expect convenience, Millennials still seek experiential retail and authenticity and prioritize walkability and connectivity, and retiring Boomers with buying power are moving back to city cores, paving the way for Downtowns to support independent retailers and take back market share.

Gateways & Corridors

Enhancing Downtown Gateways

Gateways define the edge and entryways into a city or Downtown and create a theme or signature element to notify travelers of this change.

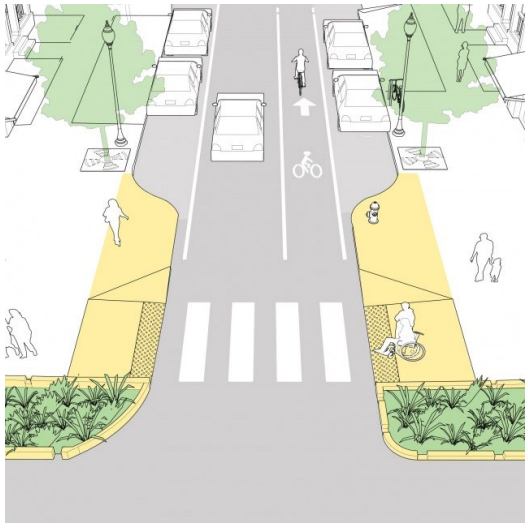
Gateway elements should **identify key entries into the Downtown**, convey a sense of identity for the community, and provide information to the public.

Gateway treatments can be provided in a variety of styles and can vary at each entry point. **Large monuments or signage** can be used to indicate entry into the Downtown, or treatments as simple as signage or **changes to the roadbed**, such as stained and stamped crosswalks, street art, or a road diet.

Landscaping and plantings, structures, or lighting can also be used to provide visual transition points within the Downtown as well as with adjacent or interior districts.







Recommendation

Utilizing gateway design treatments, begin to position gateways into Downtown Alvarado as distinct, unique areas with specific entry points and specific characteristics. Gateways should have branded signage and an obvious transition from existing design conditions into Downtown specific design conditions.

Streetscapes

A well-designed streetscape is one of the things that attracts shoppers to downtown retail areas. Streetscapes not only create an ambiance, they provide a context and an identity for an area. They create places to pause and linger and provide safe and pleasant environments for walking and strolling.

Streetscape is a term that is used to describe the natural and built fabric of the street, and defined as the design quality of the street and its visual effect. **The concept recognizes that a street is a public place where people are able to engage in various activities.** Streetscapes and their visual experience largely influences public places where people interact, and it ultimately helps define a community's aesthetic quality, economic activity, health, and sustainability.



Aspects of a Streetscape

A successful streetscape has multiple aspects. Because all roads have multiple users and serve many functions, each streetscape design must be context-sensitive.

A streetscape needs to have boundaries to ensure safe travel for all roadway users. Signs, curbs, fences and landscaping can effectively create an inclusive, yet safe environment that provides a sense of physical comfort for diverse users and activities.

The aesthetic appeal elements of beautification initiatives, attractive lighting, street furniture, clean streets, and outdoor dining contribute to a town's sense of place. **Amenities should be designed to get people out of their cars to socialize, interact with their environment, and discover other mobility options.**

Streetscapes

Case Study: Ennis, TX

In anticipation of its future growth, the City of Ennis developed a Downtown Strategic Plan to serve as a road map for future development and economic revitalization, which identified the need for an improved pedestrian experience promoting walkability and connectivity to the downtown core; thereby capturing the economic benefit of a growing population.

Design details of the new streetscape include a ground plane with a mix of brick paving, weathered concrete, and cast iron details honoring the downtowns late 19th century heritage. Among other treatments, a key feature are elm trees lining the street, providing a corridor of shade in the hot summer months, and allowing warm sunlight through in the cool winter months.



Designed by Mesa Design Group

Recommendation

Hire a design firm to redesign the streetscapes of Downtown Alvarado, prioritizing the pedestrian experience, reducing paved material, and increasing plant material and shade.

Vacant Lots & Parking Lots

Short-term Repair Strategies

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

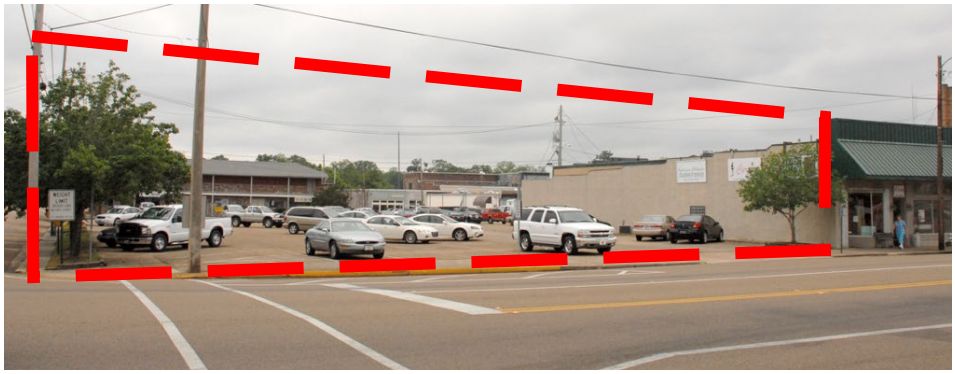
The Impact of "Missing Teeth"

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

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

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

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



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

Vacant Lots & Parking Lots

Short-term repair strategies

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

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



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



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



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



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

Recommendation

Utilize short-term repair strategies to mitigate the negative impact of vacant lots and parking lots along major corridors in the downtown area, such as the grocery parking lot and others on secondary streets.

DESIGN

Curb Extensions

Intersection Enhancement Strategies

Many downtowns have an excessive amount of hardscape and pavement, which has created a very harsh and unattractive environment for pedestrians. While completely redesigning the entire streetscape is likely a long-term strategy, certain areas should be prioritized in the short-term.

Excessive Pavement

Street intersections often represent key nodes for activity in a downtown district. From a safety standpoint, intersections are where pedestrians and cars interact, which can create some concerns. Intersections also present a tremendous opportunity to create a sense of arrival into the downtown area.

While redesigning a street can take careful engineering, interventions for intersections oftentimes involves reclaiming unused space and converting it into planters for landscaping. Curb extensions, sometimes referred to as bulb outs, are landscape planters installed at the corners of intersections. They extend the curb into the street to provide space for softscape elements and street trees.

Curb extensions provide a wide variety of advantages, which include:

- Providing areas for adding green space and landscaping into the downtown area
- Calming and slowing automobile traffic creating a safer environment for pedestrians
- Shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians
- Providing visual cues for drivers to signal the arrival into a special district

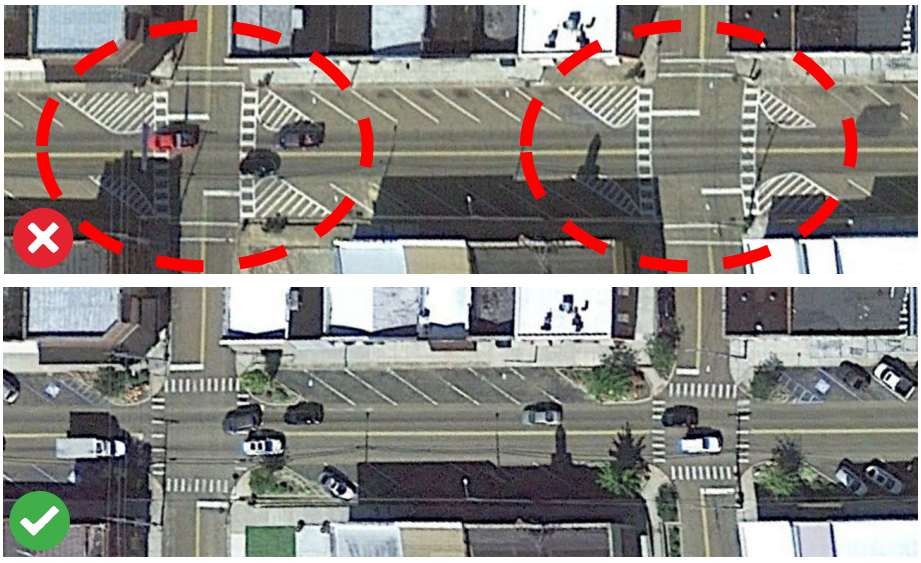
The long list of long-term streetscape modifications needed in a downtown can be daunting, but addressing the wasted, unused space at the intersections is a great starting point. The installation of curb extensions should be a prioritized as one of the first modifications to the streets.



Hint: Look for areas of the street that are striped off to limit automobile access or not intended to be used by drivers. These areas are found at intersections and at the end of parking rows.

Curb Extensions

Intersection Enhancement Strategies



Senatobia, Mississippi, like many downtowns, had a tremendous amount of excess pavement. Large amounts of pavement near the intersections were striped not to be used for any purpose. This wasted space served no purpose and created a harsh environment in the downtown area.

The striped areas were converted into curb extensions which provided space for landscaping and street trees, while calming vehicular traffic and shortening the crossing distance for pedestrians.



Before (top): The excessive amount of pavement, lack of landscaping and street trees created a harsh environment.

After (bottom): Removing the unused areas of pavement near the intersections provided space for landscaping and street trees. The curb extensions provide visual cues to drivers as they approach the intersections and create a gateway into the downtown area.



By recapturing unused space at the intersection, Downtown Gulfport, Mississippi was able to add furnishings such as benches, bike racks, and trash receptacles in the area provided by the curb extensions. This additional area for amenities and landscaping can be extremely helpful in downtowns with narrow sidewalks and limited space.

Recommendation

Incrementally reclaim areas with excess, unused pavement by adding curb extensions with green space and softscape. Installing curb extensions at key intersections should be prioritized in order to reduce the crossing distance for pedestrians, calm vehicular traffic, and create spaces for landscaping and street trees. This is a strategy that can be implemented prior to a complete infrastructure overhaul.

Street Trees

Street trees are a crucial streetscape element in downtown districts and serve a multitude of purposes. Most importantly they provide shade during the summer months and soften the appearance of urban areas.

Street Tree Characteristics

In addition to shade, visually street trees provide a vertical element which helps create a sense of enclosure for pedestrians. Other benefits include a reduction of stormwater runoff and the impact heat island effect in urban environments. It is critical that the correct species of street trees are selected so they do not negatively impact downtown businesses and pedestrians.

Characteristics of appropriate street trees include:

- *Once mature, canopies should remain above the storefronts*
- *Species should be medium/large-sized, single-trunk, and deciduous*
- *Should not produce undesirable fruit (Example: female Ginko)*
- *Mature canopies should not interfere with adjacent buildings, utility lines, lighting, etc.*
- *Some species can provide seasonal color through their foliage*



Mature street trees in Alexandria, Virginia tower above the storefronts to provide shade and a tremendous pedestrian-scale atmosphere in downtown area.

While the characteristics of appropriate street trees are universal, recommendations for specific species will vary depending on site conditions and the location within the hardiness zones. (USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map: https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov)

Street Trees

Appropriate vs Inappropriate Species





Inappropriate street tree species have low canopies that block views to storefronts and provide little or no shade for the area.



Appropriate species of street trees should have a mature canopy that rise above storefronts in order to provide shade to pedestrians and frame views to the buildings.



Certain tree species provide additional benefits of seasonal color through their foliage or flowers.



No matter what tree species is chosen, placing trees at regular intervals to create repetition is key to creating a place that is inviting for people.

Recommendation

Install street trees that will provide a canopy throughout the downtown streetscape. Trees should be placed at regular intervals to create repetition along the streets and sidewalks wherever possible. This could include the installation of new trees or replacing inappropriate species of trees with appropriate ones.

Street Trees

Case Study: Starkville, MS

In 2010, Downtown Starkville, Mississippi made the seemingly controversial decision to replace the undersized Holly trees with a more appropriate species of Maple. After over ten years of growth, the trees have grown to provide an attractive canopy and seasonal color which softens the large amount of hardscape in the area. While it was a difficult decision to remove established plant material, the long-term benefits of the appropriate replacement tree species outweighed the challenges.

The new species have a canopy that is above the storefronts, provide shade to the sidewalk and parking areas, and provide seasonal color through the foliage. Due to limitations with the existing planters, the trees must be replaced occasionally, but the results provide a positive return on that investment.



The Holly shrubs added much needed "green" to the downtown but provided no additional benefits to the district.



While still maturing, appropriate tree species offer a much larger canopy and provide numerous benefits to the streetscape.



In 2010, the mature Holly shrubs provided no visual impact or benefits to the downtown area.



After 10 years of growth, the new trees have grown to provide shade, overhead canopy, and a dramatic visual impact along Main Street.

Placemaking through Ambient Lighting

Appropriate ambient lighting enhances safety and visibility in a Downtown area but also provides a welcoming environment that attracts visitors and residents and begins to establish the area as a destination.

Process of installing ambient lighting

Typically, property owners must provide an easement, or sign a waiver, allowing the City or community organization access to their roof or fascia to install the equipment. LED lights are ideal, and metal brackets and clips can be fashioned for longevity to hold string lights. Lights should be tied into the street lighting system for automatic activation each evening.





Recommendation

Install ambient lighting in unique public spaces, alleys, and key focus areas, such as behind the dance studio, to enliven otherwise underutilized areas. Also outline building tops with lighting in the CBD.

Façade Improvement Program

Recommendation

Create a Façade Grant Improvement Program to incentivize property owners to improve the exterior of their buildings. A matching program is ideal, and require property owners to follow CBD code and design color scheme as presented in this plan.

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

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

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

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

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

downtown strategies

Façade Improvement Program

A façade improvement program is a financial incentive to inspire private property owners to upgrade the visible, corridor-facing components of their properties.

Property owners can upgrade properties without having to relocate, making a façade improvement program a business retention strategy. Typically, assistance is given as grants, rebates, or as low- or no interest loans.

1 Establish Design Parameters

To coordinate redevelopment and reap the greatest reward from the investment, start by determining what expenses are eligible (prioritizing those most visible to consumers,) and outlining the visual design requirements such as paint colors, sign and awning specifications, and preservation techniques.

2 Develop & Manage Application Process

Determine how the program will be financed and who will administer the loans and/or grants. Use this investment as a jumpstart to implementation of new overlay districts or refreshed policies and ordinances.

3 Evaluate & Monitor Program Success

Establishing benchmarks at the time of launching the program is useful in determining if a program is providing a return on resource investment for the administering organization. Planning to evaluate success at the one- and two-year marks is logical for pilot programs.

Façade Improvement Program

What can the program cover?

It is the administering organization's decision what to list as "eligible" and "ineligible." Some communities choose to separate a façade improvement program from other assistance programs—namely, an on-site improvement program. However, we organizations to streamline and combine incentive programs as much as possible. Standard lists of eligible and ineligible improvements are the following:

Typically **Eligible** Expenses

- Actual construction costs
- Application fees
- Architectural or engineering services
- Removal of inappropriate features
- Restoration of missing or altered features
- Replacement of private sidewalks when it improves pedestrian circulation
- Landscape improvements/restoration
- Parking lot improvements, especially where improvements lead to better compliance with local codes and improve safety and access
- Screening of service areas such as utilities and trash containers
- Installation/restoration of architectural features
- Installation of traditional awnings
- Masonry restoration or repair
- Painting, in conjunction with other restoration or rehabilitation
- Maintenance and preservation of historic signs
- Construction of accessibility improvements to the exterior
- Murals

Typically **Ineligible** Expenses

- Building permit fees (exception: Can be eligible, wholly or in part, if using the rebate structure)
- Extermination of insects, rodents, etc.
- Title reports and legal fees
- Repair or installation of elevators
- Interior floor or ceiling
- Plumbing and electrical equipment
- Sprinkler systems
- Working capital
- Mechanical equipment
- Flat roofs or other work not visible from public space
- Painting masonry that was not previously painted
- Refinancing existing debt
- Sweat equity
- Acquisition of land and/or buildings

Façade Improvement Program

Develop & Manage Application Process

Where does the funding come from for a Façade Improvement Program?

It is possible for funding to come from multiple sources or one. The source may already exist (for example, a tax increment financing district) or can be created for the purpose of funding the program.

Below is an example of a funding structure that features a maximum award based on property owner investment:

Investment			Award
Low		High	
$ 2,000.00	up to	$ 3,499.00	$ 1,000.00
$ 3,500.00	up to	$ 4,999.00	$ 1,750.00
$ 5,000.00	up to	$ 7,499.00	$ 2,500.00
$ 7,500.00	up to	$ 9,999.00	$ 3,750.00
$ 10,000.00	up to	$ 12,499.00	$ 5,000.00
$ 12,500.00	up to	$ 14,999.00	$ 6,250.00
$ 15,000.00	up to	$ 17,499.00	$ 7,500.00
$ 17,500.00	up to	$ 19,999.00	$ 8,750.00
$ 20,000.00	up to	$ 22,499.00	$10,000.00
$ 25,000.00	up to	$ 27,499.00	$12,500.00
$ 27,500.00	up to	$ 29,999.00	$13,750.00
$ 30,000.00	up to	+	$15,000.00

Typically, assistance is given as direct or matching grants, rebates, waivers of permit fees, and/or as low- or no-interest loans. Sometimes the administering organization is actually passing through funding from a larger entity. For example, a local government may use its allocation of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Façade Improvement Program

Storefront façade improvement enhances the image and overall economic viability of neighborhood business districts by improving the function and appearance of individual building facades; and by spurring new private investment in commercial properties in the same location and in adjacent commercial districts. Successful storefront improvement projects manifest readily observable outcomes that positively affect the community.

Establishing benchmarks at the time of launching the program is useful in determining if a program is providing a return on resource investment for the administering organization. Planning to evaluate success at the one- and two-year marks is logical for pilot programs. For ongoing, mature programs, a yearly memo that summarizes program's activity is recommended.

Participation is measured in two key ways:

1. Of the properties that could apply for assistance, what percent applies?
2. Of those that apply, what percent actually invest and install improvements to properties?

In addition, some communities and organizations track a "multiplier" to gauge if a façade improvement award inspires investment beyond what is covered in the program. Program administrators encourage recipients to track all of their property improvements that happen at the same time as eligible façade improvements, with cost amounts. A common instance is a business will make, for example, $50,000 in overall investment, but receive only $10,000 as part of the façade improvement award. The total investment figure divided by the amount of awards given out would be the multiplier and make either a strong or weak case for continuing the program.

A more qualitative approach is to record before-and-after project photographs for each award recipient property. These photographs can be compared with design guidelines.

Façade Improvement Program Exterior Paint Palette

Bunglehouse Blue SW 0048	Passive SW 7064	Canoe SW 7724	Antiquarian Brown SW 0045
Rustic Red SW 7593	Coffee Bean SW 6006	Totally Tan SW 6115	Bee's Wax SW 7682
Cut the Mustard SW 6384	Smokey Topaz SW 6117	Favorite Tan SW 6157	Creme SW 7556

Historic Preservation

Recommendation

List the Downtown Alvarado District on the National Register of Historic Places as a redevelopment tool. Invite professionals from the Texas Historical Commission to train property owners on benefits once it receives the designation. This is also an incentive for future property owners and developers.

Benefits of being listed in the National Register include:

- Potentially stopping the damage or destruction of registered places by requiring state or federally permitted/funded/licensed projects to examine alternatives
- Offering a federal income tax incentive for rehabilitating income-producing places.
- Offering a property tax assessment freeze incentive for rehabilitating single-family, owner-occupied residences
- Increasing awareness and appreciation of registered places

Being listed in the National Register DOES NOT:

- Require private property owners to obtain prior approval to change their property when using private, city or county funds
- Require private property owners to preserve or restore their registered place
- Block state or federally funded/permitted/licensed projects when these are desired by the owner and shown to be in the public interest

Rehabilitation Tax Credits are dollar-for-dollar reductions in income tax liability for taxpayers who rehabilitate historic buildings. Credits are available from the federal government. The amount of the credit is based on total rehabilitation costs. The federal credit is 20% of eligible rehabilitation expenses. **The state historic tax credit is worth 25% of eligible rehabilitation costs and is administered jointly by the Texas Historical Commission (THC) in cooperation with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts.**

Activating Vacancies with Art

Reimagining how vacant storefronts are viewed by the pedestrian, such as by installing public art in windows or painting boarded up windows with murals, residents and visitors begin to view the block or Downtown area as interesting, rather than dead.

Storefront Art Programs

During the Great Recession, as the U.S. retail economy suffered the effects of the market collapse and rising unemployment, public officials and arts administrators in cities around the country noticed a problem on their streets: empty storefronts. And many of those leaders, in an attempt to bring attention and activity to darkened windows and shuttered spaces, decided to fill the vacancies with art.

The concept wasn't new: **Retailers have always displayed their wares creatively in shop windows**, artists and arts organizations had used storefronts as their canvas in the past, and more commercially focused pop-up shops had been a trend for nearly a decade by the time the recession hit. Not all of the vacancies were new, either: Many storefront programs targeted spaces that had sat empty for years or even decades, in neighborhoods that had already been struggling before the economy dealt an additional blow. But fueled by the recession, art in storefronts proliferated in the late 2000s and early '10s, in cities big and small.





Activating Vacancies with Art

Recommendation

Engage local artisans to implement a storefront art initiative until vacancies are filled.



Unanticipated effects of a storefront art program is the **sense of community** created in the spaces where art is installed.

Projects such as this not only provide artists and other relative entrepreneurs with critical business and retail experience through public art and pop-ups, but the locations can become a 'hang out' space in the best sense of the phrase.



4

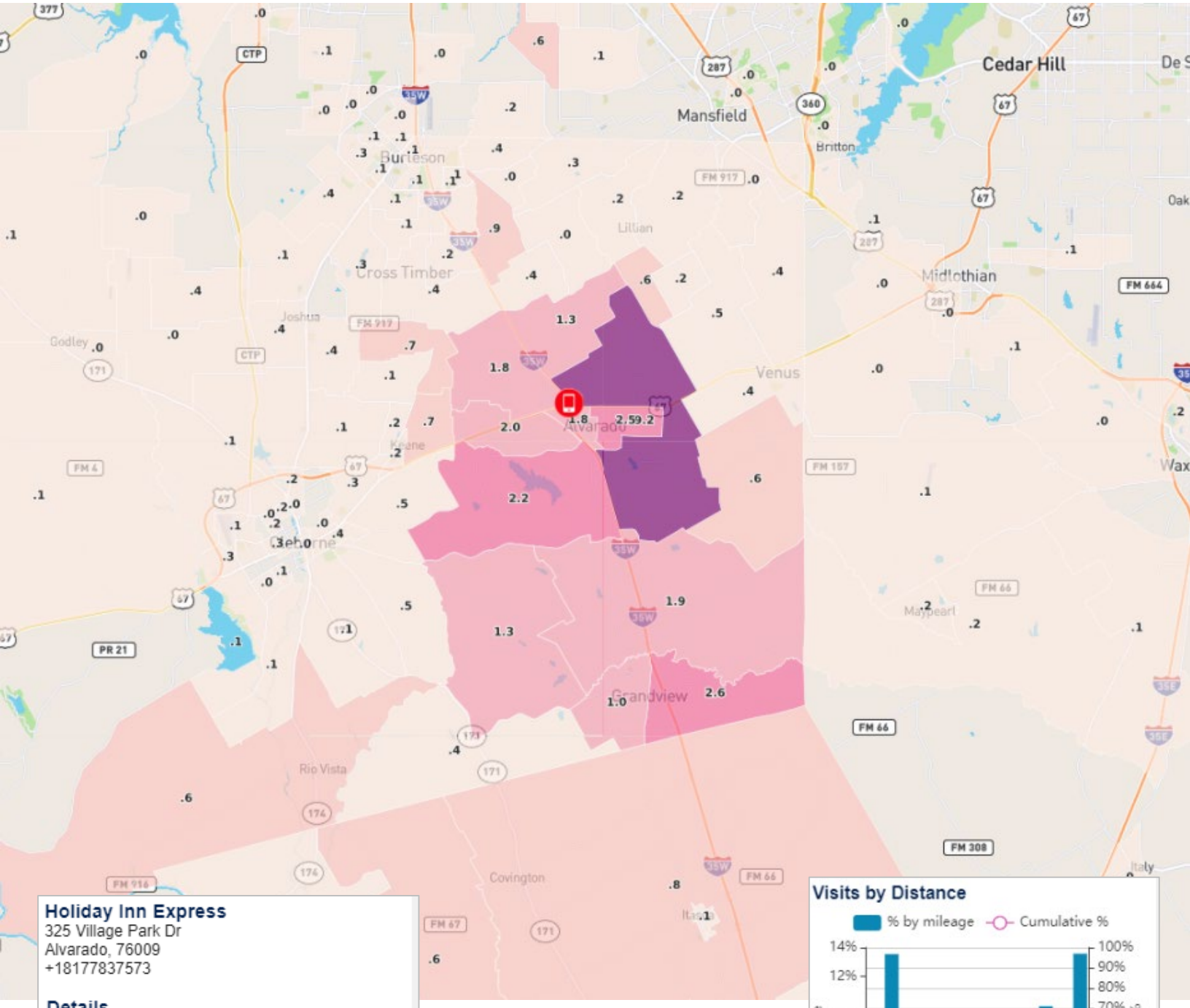
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TOURISM & PROMOTION

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

downtown strategies

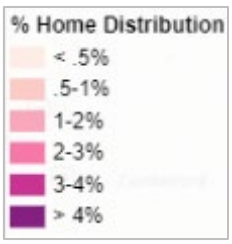
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



Holiday Inn Express
325 Village Park Dr
Alvarado, 76009
+18177837573

Details

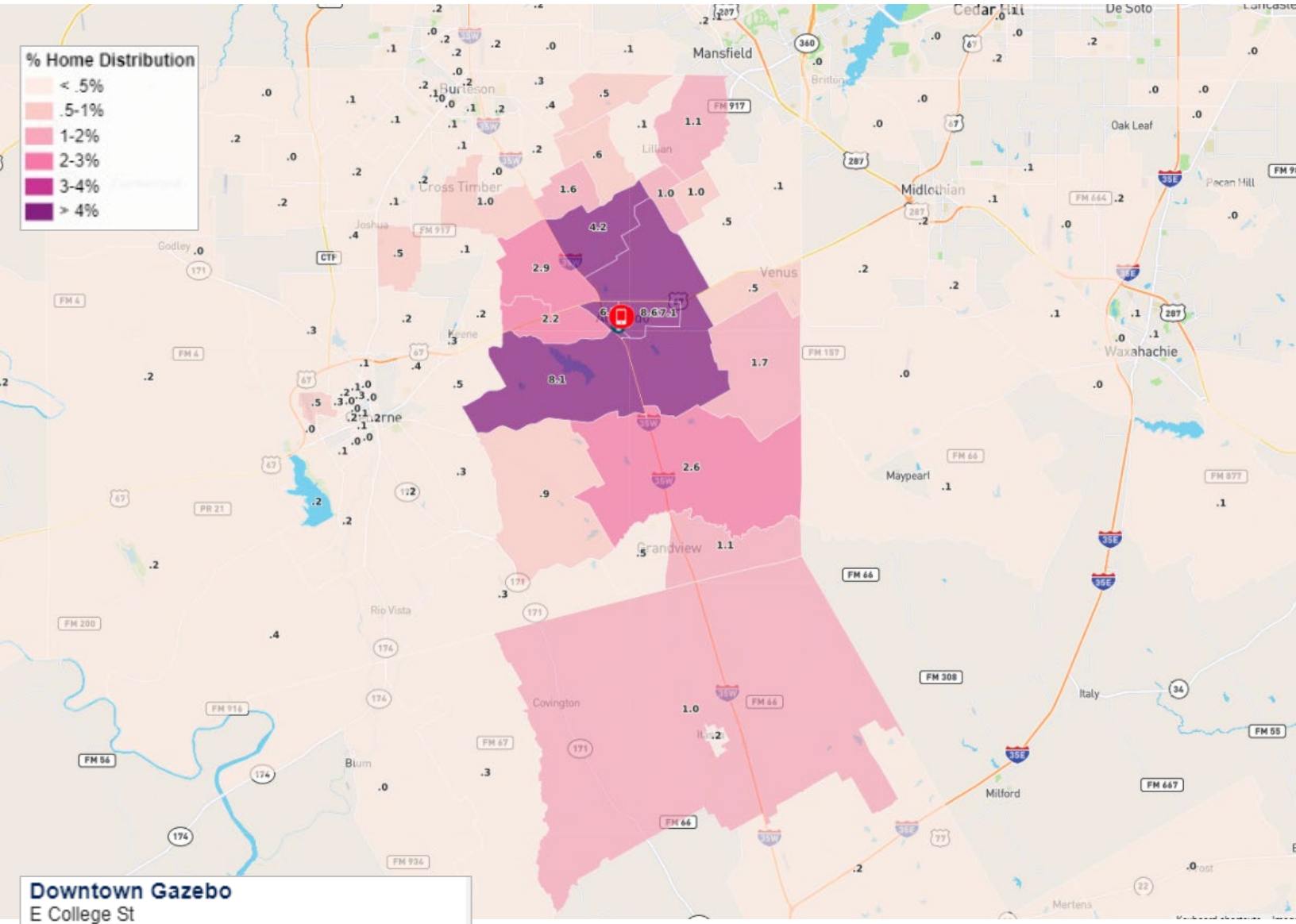
Brand	Holiday Inn Express
Top Category	Traveler Accommodation
Sub Category	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels
Median Dwell Time	88.5 min
Median Distance from Home	49.7 miles
Annual Visits	5,854 visits
Monthly Visits	418
Monthly Visitors	205
Tourist Visits	40.3%





downtown strategies

Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary

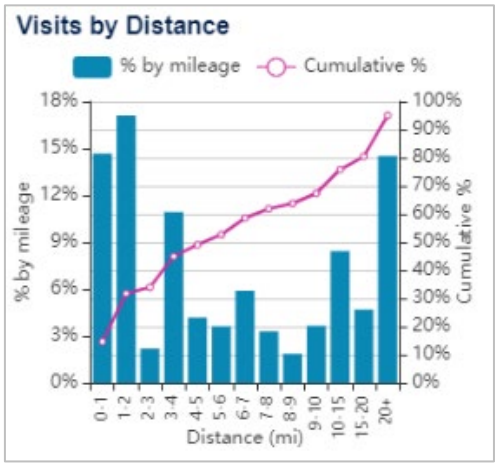


Downtown Gazebo
E College St
Alvarado, 76009

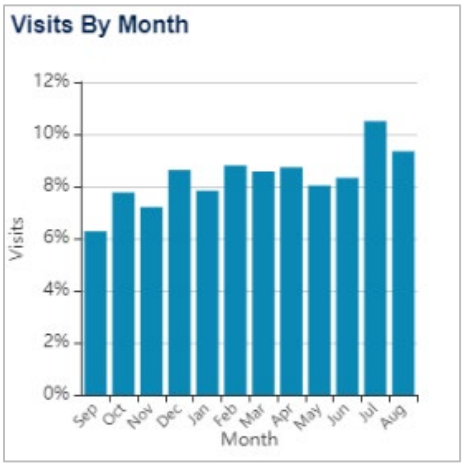
Details

Top Category	Museums, Historical Sites, and Similar Institutions
Sub Category	Nature Parks and Other Similar Institutions
Median Dwell Time	20.86 min
Median Distance from Home	4.4 miles
Annual Visits	6,590 visits
Monthly Visits	471
Monthly Visitors	258
Tourist Visits	5.3%

Visits by Distance

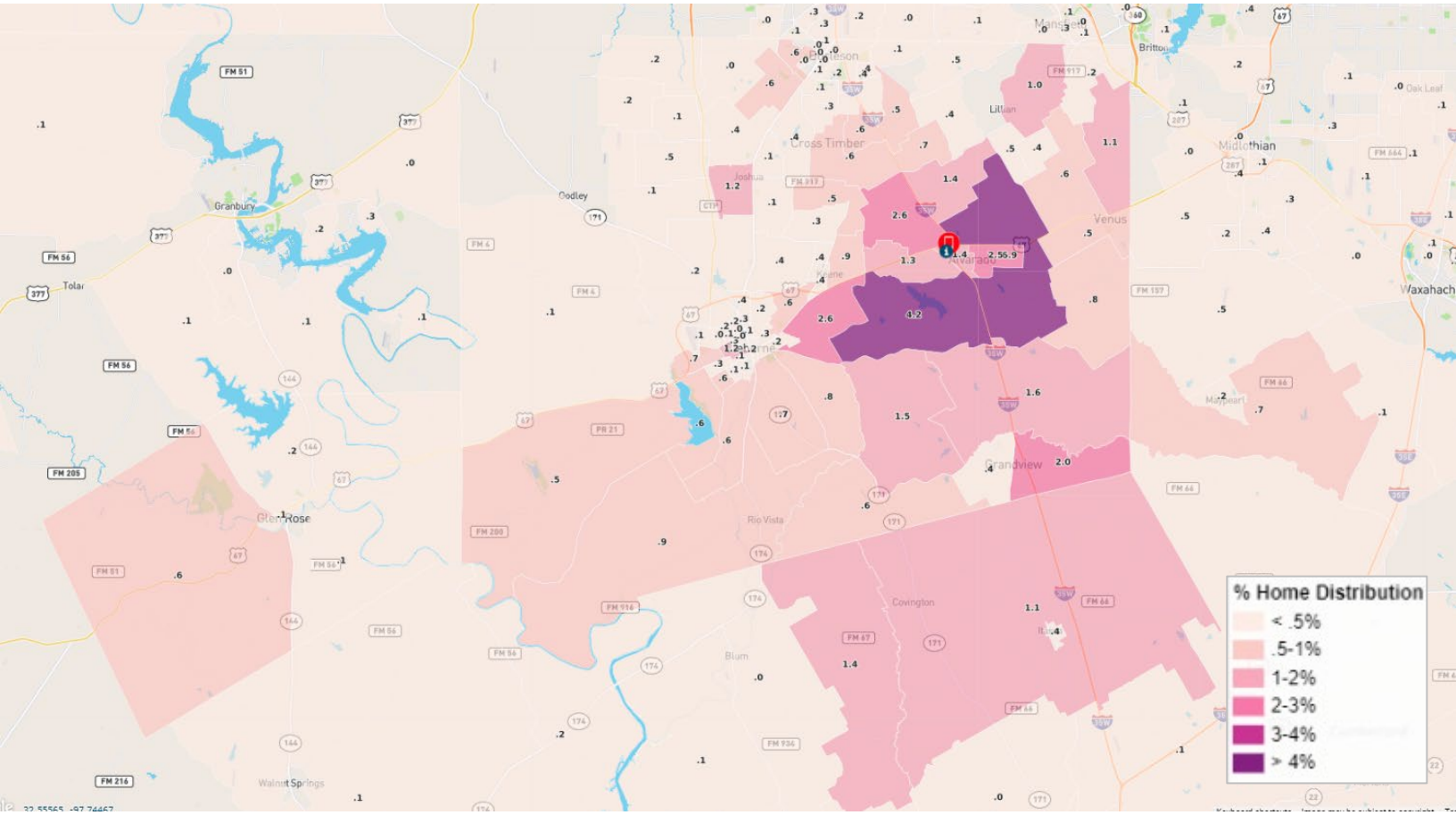


Visits By Month



downtown strategies

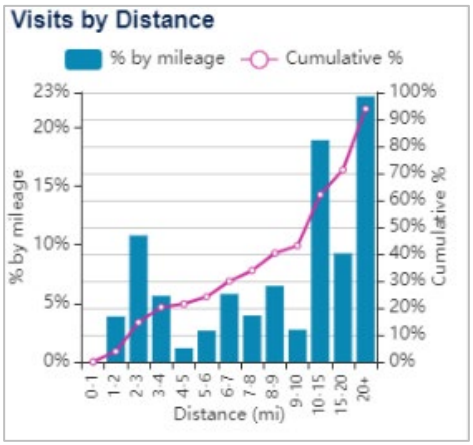
Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary

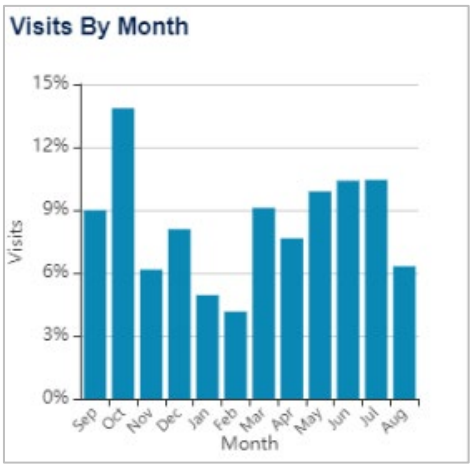


Cactus Jack's Boot Country
6921 E Highway 67
Alvarado, 76009
+18177902381

Details

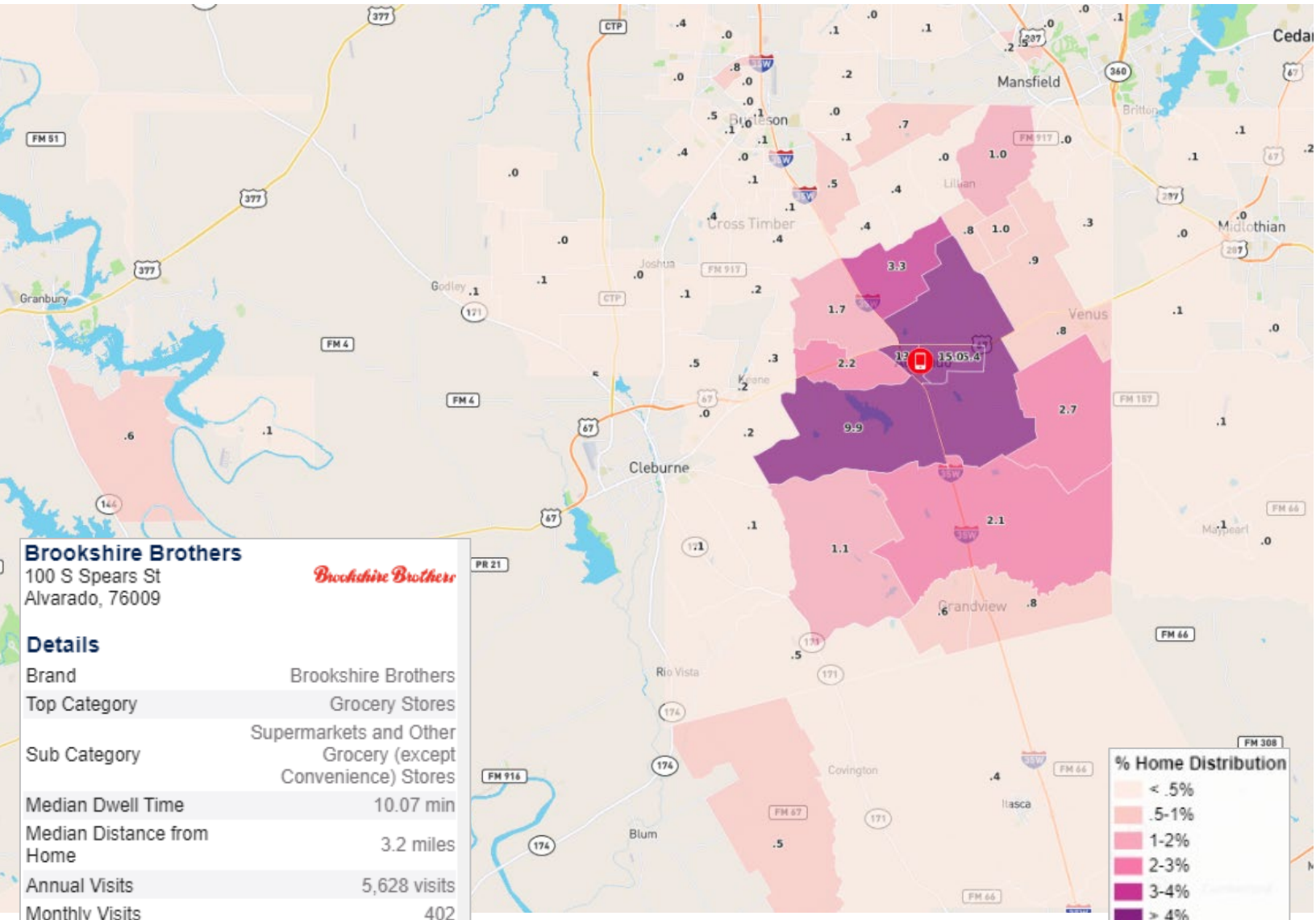
Top Category	Shoe Stores
Sub Category	Shoe Stores
Median Dwell Time	14.86 min
Median Distance from Home	10.6 miles
Annual Visits	3,063 visits
Monthly Visits	219
Monthly Visitors	170
Tourist Visits	6.5%





downtown strategies

Mobile Insights & Tourism Summary



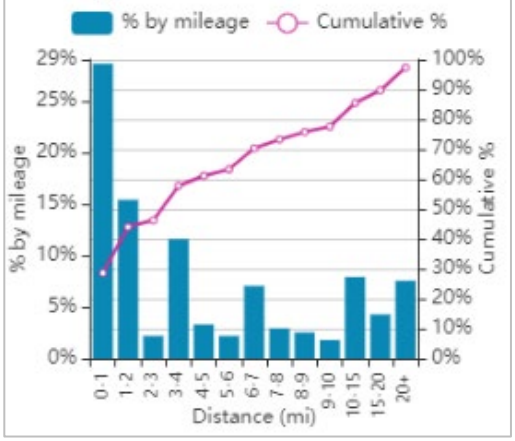
Brookshire Brothers
100 S Spears St
Alvarado, 76009

Brookshire Brothers

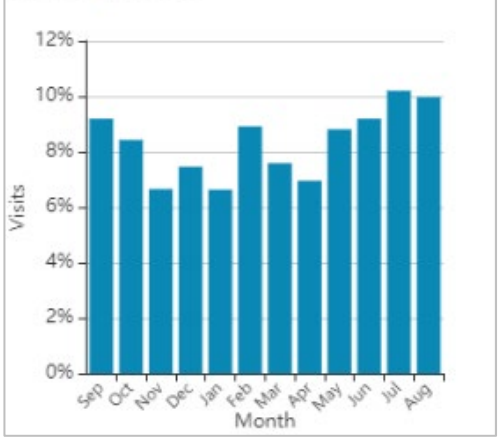
Details

Brand	Brookshire Brothers
Top Category	Grocery Stores
Sub Category	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
Median Dwell Time	10.07 min
Median Distance from Home	3.2 miles
Annual Visits	5,628 visits
Monthly Visits	402
Monthly Visitors	212
Tourist Visits	2.8%

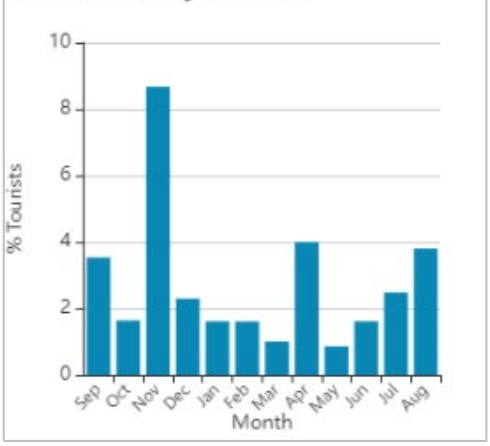
Visits by Distance



Visits By Month



% Tourists by Month



Wayfinding Signage

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

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

Wayfinding Signage Systems

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

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

Recommendation

In Alvarado, wayfinding signage should be strategically implemented to provide directional navigation to and from key destinations, utilizing strong brandmarks and logos.

Comprehensive Wayfinding Signage

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

Example of well-designed Wayfinding System









Sign Consolidation

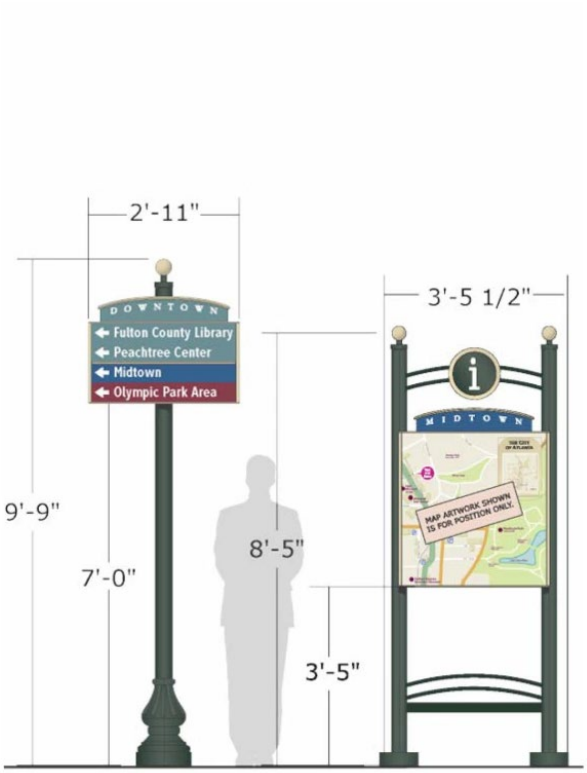
Recommendation

Consolidate existing and new signage for a more seamless visitor experience and a more aesthetically pleasing view of the Downtown.

Before



After







Retail Promotion Strategies

Recommendation

Incorporate retail promotion strategies into Downtown Alvarado's program of work to encourage activity throughout the day, especially in the evenings. Invite the community to participate in Downtown activities through social media and direct mail pieces. The Chamber of Commerce could be an asset in implementing these promotions.

After 5 Events

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

Mini Performance Hubs

Convert one or two parking spaces into mini performance 'amphitheaters' with a summer deck feel, complete with wood benches and plants. This can constitute a single amenity to add to existing events, or it can become a concert series in and of itself. Too often, parking spaces are converted to outdoor cafe spaces in the summer only, or as a response to COVID. But these are somewhat limited options for downtowns with few restaurants. Mini deck amphitheaters can add excitement and amenity to your downtown year-round and for multiple purposes.

Retail Promotion Strategies

Versatile Signage

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

Cooperative Promotion

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

Incorporate Public Wi-Fi Zone Downtown

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

Farmers Markets

Farmers markets allow consumers to have access to locally grown, farm fresh produce, enables farmers the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with their customers, and cultivate consumer loyalty with the farmers who grows the produce.

Vibrant Markets Strengthen Local Identity

The role markets play local economies contributes greatly to the sense of community ownership. At the end of World War II, there were significantly more independent farms than today. Modern day markets are intended to serve as hubs from which money in the community core is being channeled back into rural areas. In many cases, markets are also tied to food security.

Clustering of Activity Turns Markets into Community Hubs

Great markets are created through the clustering of activity. They require the intentional aggregation of local food production, but also of other services and functions. The food is the central reason for why people gather, and that gathering creates a hub for community life. Food will always be the core, but how you build off of that depends on local needs. Culinary demonstrations, children's art activities, and local plant sales are all ways to grow your market into a true community hub.

Markets Catalyze Neighborhood Development

Markets positioned properly can serve as business incubators, allowing bakers, artisans, and other makers to test the market for their products and offerings. These budding entrepreneurs can develop loyal followings at the weekly or bi-weekly markets, which affords them greater chances of success in the brick-and-mortar realm.

Recommendation

Partner with community organizations to develop a weekly Farmer's Market, located in the Downtown area. The gazebo is an ideal location to hold the market as it gets started. Retailers and restaurants should be sure to be open during the market to take advantage of foot traffic and shoppers.

Messaging & Branding

A strong place brand helps a place compete in the global marketplace. A business or a potential resident or a visitor can go anywhere they want today, so articulating differentiating and unique characteristics is important to attracting investment, people and capital to your place. A well-articulated place branding strategy strengthens a community's sense of place, because it creates alignment between the language and messages created for and by business, community and visitors. When those three are aligned, there's true resonance.

Here are seven ways to start to define your city's brand the right way and put it on the map:

Inventory Your Assets

What makes your city distinct from anywhere else? Assets span the gamut from signature foods like Chicago deep-dish pizza and Philly cheesesteak, to historical and cultural sites like the Alamo or Graceland, to major industries like the auto industry that gave rise to Detroit's nickname as the Motor City. Other important assets are unique annual events like Tampa's Gasparilla Pirate Festival, and even the vibe of your Downtown or entertainment district, such as Miami's famous South Beach.

Keep it Real

Branding is not about pretending to be something you're not. It's about revealing, packaging and promoting awareness about what you intrinsically are. Asheville and Santa Fe both have established their positions as cities with a thriving and unique arts scene. Austin has staked its reputation as the "Live Music Capital of the World," and its now-famous "Keep Austin Weird" slogan speaks to its eclectic mix of people, culture and entertainment. Don't try to be all things to all people. Put your city's real face forward, and those who want what you have to offer will be drawn in.

Messaging & Branding

Focus Your Message

Especially if you're a small city, focus your energies on a single reason to visit. It may be great hiking trails, a top bass fishing spot, the most authentic Southern greens and grits, or a famously good Bluegrass scene. This increases the chances that people who are interested in that find you in a Google search. Mount Dora, FL is a great example of a small city that draws visitors for its Craft Fair and then wins them over with its other local charms.

Create a Sense of Place

Innovative communities are using placemaking to reimagine public spaces in ways that promote cultural, social, behavioral and economic connections. Bourbon Street and Times Square are quintessential examples of placemaking, which help to define those cities' brands. But parks, town centers, outdoor markets, lakes and even streets can have a powerful, positive placemaking effect. In Florida, the branding of the City of Tavares as "America's Seaplane City" has been an economic and community-building success.

Deliver the Experience You Promise

Although a great slogan can help to focus and galvanize awareness of what makes a city unique and exceptional, it would be a mistake to think that branding is merely a slogan and a logo. Think of branding as a promise that you deliver through an experience. What is the experience of your city's brand? Friendly? Relaxed? Bike-friendly? Exciting? Eclectic? Easy to navigate? How can you add touch points that make that experience more reliable?

Messaging & Branding

Involve Your Community

A sustainable branding effort requires broad buy-in. Don't create your city's brand in a vacuum or a boardroom. Create a process to involve influential community leaders and residents at all levels, including small business owners, and they will become enthusiastic brand ambassadors. Look for and promote ways for all stakeholders to benefit from tying into the city brand.

Give it Legs

Once you define your city's brand, extend and support it with a comprehensive, ongoing and multi-faceted strategy. Dallas's "Big Things Happen Here" campaign is a good example of a branding effort with diverse and sustained components, from experiential elements that citizens and visitors can interact with (physical displays in which people form the "I" in "Big") to live events and heavy social media engagement to an online store that sells branded products to live events.

A strong brand identity can yield a big and long-term return on investment for a city. To ensure that kind of ROI, start by defining and refining what makes your city the special place it is.

Recommendation

Engage a consultant to facilitate a branding exercise for the City of Alvarado, establishing a strong, clear brand for the Downtown, City, and its path forward.

downtown strategies

Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

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

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

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

Create a Captivating Profile

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

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

Craft a Complete 'About' Page

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

Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Customize the 'Call to Action' Button on your Page

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

Know your Audience

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

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

Create Engaging Content

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

Optimizing your Downtown's Facebook Page

Don't Forget to Engage

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

Create a Balanced Posting Strategy

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

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

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

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

Mistakes to Avoid in Facebook Marketing

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

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

What Not to Do

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

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

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

Social Media Content Calendar

Recommendation

Using the template provided, create a weekly, monthly, quarterly, and/or annual content calendar to pre-plan social media posts and ensure topical and timely information is shared frequently enough to be maximally effective for your brand and efforts.

Organizing and managing a posting schedule

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

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

Facebook pages: 1-2 per day

Twitter: 3-10 times per day

Instagram: 1-3 times per day

Instagram Stories: 2-5 times per day

Pinterest: 3-20 times per day

LinkedIn: 1-2 times per week

Social Media Content Calendar

Tracking and analyzing your social media content calendar

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

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

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

Benefits of using a Social Media Content Calendar

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

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downtown strategies

ECONOMIC VITALITY

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

Downtown Real Estate Analysis



City Owned Site

107 E COLLEGE AVE ALVARADO, TX 76009

Parcel No. (APN) 126.2431.03960
Land Use COMMERCIAL, MISCELLANEOUS COMMERCIAL
Building Area 4,140 SF
Lot Area 7,362 SF (0.17 ACRES)
Adj. Lots Owned NONE
Owner (Assessor) CITY OF ALVARADO
Owner Address (Assessor) 104 W COLLEGE AVE ALVARADO, TX 76009
Last Market Sale 1/6/21
Total Assd. Value $128,550

Property Strategy:

- City-owned property.
- Formerly a surveying company, and most recently used as the temporary library location.
- Other than possibly getting refreshed wooden panels on the façade, it appears to be in good condition.
- The rear of the space is perfect for a restaurant use, with dedicated access to the back, dedicated space for a 4-8 yard dumpster, above ground grease trap, and two HVAC units.
- The lot in the back of the space could be used as parking for the employees of the building, customers, or could be designed to accommodate outdoor dining.
- There is a privately owned surface lot behind along Patton Avenue that is currently owned by Paula Rayburn Ministries.
- This area, if resurfaced would be great to accommodate parking for potential businesses along College and would help alleviate the noted concerns some mentioned about trying to cross College when parked on the square.
- The eastern adjacent lot still has the slab of the former building which could used as courtyard/patio dining or space for the tenant, if acquired.
- It was mentioned on multiple occasions, and we met the lady hoping to open an open-air Cajun restaurant on this lot.
- This would be a great use to get people back downtown to dine or spend time in the evening.

Downtown Real Estate Analysis



Alvarado Economic Development Owned Site

201 E COLLEGE AVE ALVARADO, TX 76009

Parcel No. (APN) 126.2431.04170
Land Use MISCELLANEOUS, MISCELLANEOUS, MISCELLANEOUS
Building Area 5,136 SF
Lot Area 15,838 SF (0.36 ACRES)
Adj. Lots Owned 7 (2.94 TOTAL ACRES)
Owner (Assessor) ALVARADO, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Owner Address (Assessor) 104 W COLLEGE AVE ALVARADO, TX 76009
Total Assd. Value $234,824

Property Strategy:

- The current Alvarado Senior Center is a Highest Best Use opportunity, that we feel, if activated by the proper user could be a quality sales tax generator and destination for downtown Alvarado.
- The 5,000 square feet building is unique to square in the sense that is has 21 dedicated parking spaces and a drive-thru.
- The building, formerly a bank, could be reimagined for multiple uses based off the drive-thru and its existing overhang.
- Albeit small, there are opportunities to expand the kitchen, and there are already male and female restrooms.
- Because the property is owned by Alvarado Economic Development, it is worth considering a use that generates funds back into the community.
- While we feel strongly that city should maintain a dedicated senior citizen facility, there seem to be multiple opportunities in proximity to its currently location that may be a more complimentary fit.

Downtown Real Estate Analysis



Vacant Land

108 E WEAVER AVE ALVARADO, TX 76009

Parcel No. (APN) 126.2431.06120
Land Use VACANT LAND, RESIDENTIAL
Lot Area 6,752 SF (0.15 ACRES)
Adj. Lots Owned 4 (0.38 TOTAL ACRES)
Owner (Assessor) G & L ENTERPRISES
Owner Address (Assessor) PO BOX 1829 ALVARADO, TX 76009
Last Market Sale 9/22/15 for $500
Total Assd. Value $20,000

Property Strategy:

- The hardware store owners also own the roughly half acre development lot next to the square.
- After an extensive conversation with both of them, this is a key space for the future of the development and revitalization of Downtown Alvarado.
- In the short term, this space could be used to host events on the square such a possible famer's market.
- In the long term, the property owners have discussed expanding their store, developing the property for a restaurant or other retail uses, and building second story residential lofts.
- It would be worth having further conversations to discuss a potential public private partnership to make this dream a reality.
- As the city's residential population rapidly expands and there is more interest in the square, this space needs to be developed in a way that maximizes use of the property and compliments the look of the square for generations to come.

Recruiting Retail Downtown

Retail leads can be broken down into four general categories:

1 Existing Businesses within or near the business district

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

2 Emerging Entrepreneurs

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

3 Existing Local or Regional Businesses

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

4 National Chains

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

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Recommendation

Work with property owners or utilize existing City owned space to encourage development of entrepreneur ready shell space in ground floor of vacant properties. Determine opportunity for local incentives from City of Alvarado to accompany this effort.

What is Shell Space?

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

Shell Condition Space Typically Does Not Include:

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

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

Supporting Entrepreneurship

Developing Shell Space in Vacant Ground floor Property



A typical example of what you can expect from shell space in a new development.

Downtown Retail Incubator

Launching a retail business in a downtown storefront is a capital and knowledge intensive endeavor. Equally, Downtowns across the country are struggling to retain and attract tenants, with each new empty window display threatening the economic health of the street as a whole. Here, we explore how retail incubators can bridge the gap between capital-strapped retailers and empty storefronts.

Retail-focused Incubator Models

Like tech and entrepreneurial incubators, the retail-focused model is designed to accelerate the growth and success of entrepreneurial companies through an array of business support resources and services that could include physical space, capital, coaching, common services, and networking connections. Local governments, non-profits and private businesses across the country are developing programs and spaces to seed downtown buildings with locally formed new businesses

Any retailer interested in opening a shop faces high costs. Capital is needed to cover a lease, inventory, location improvements, IT, staffing and marketing, among other expenses. Equally challenging can be maneuvering state and local requirements and building a customer base while managing the day-to-day of a business.

Program-based retail incubators help by providing technical assistance and mentorship as well as capital. These incubators are led primarily by downtown organizations or cities focused on nurturing and sustaining retail businesses for the overall economic health of the downtown core.

Downtown Retail Incubator

Case Study: Kalamazoo, MI

In 2009, downtown Kalamazoo, MI was fighting a battle to recruit and retain retailers. In a story familiar to many towns, the vibrancy of downtown was being challenged by recession and growing competition from big box retailers and lower-rent strip malls. Unable to convince established retailers to take the risk of opening an additional store in the evolving downtown, economic development officials turned to the promise of retail start-ups. But these start-ups, lacking the necessary resources and expertise, needed help.

The State of Michigan had passed an amendment to the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) Act in 2008 allowing DDAs to create, operate and fund retail business incubators. Downtown Kalamazoo Inc. (DKI) was the first to take advantage of the legislation that "targeted tenants who will provide goods or services that are not available or that are underserved in the downtown nearby" by establishing the Retail Incubation Program.

DKI's Business Recruitment & Retention Committee managed the program which provided the following support to retail start-ups in downtown:

- 18 months of subsidized rent, incrementally reduced from a maximum of 50% or up to $830 a month.
- Training in Merchandise Management, Marketing, Human Resources, Financial Management and Customer Service.
- Business mentoring from a successful downtown business.

Returns to the community were maximized by requiring that participants:

- Attend all of the training sessions.
- Obtain a bookkeeper or CPA deemed acceptable by the program.
- Provide sales, inventory and expense information to the program for macro tracking of downtown retail.
- Be open for business 6 days a week or 50 hours a week.

Downtown Retail Incubator

Case Study: Kalamazoo, MI (cont.)

The program was not tied to a single location but allowed a retailer to occupy any downtown space as long as the property owner agreed to the terms and conditions. Before store owners started out in one of the spaces, they received the types of assistance that have been proven to grow businesses — **training, mentors and money.**

In four years, the **street-level vacancy rate in Kalamazoo's downtown dropped from 20-percent to 2-percent.** As the program filled key locations with interesting, new retail concepts, business attitudes towards downtown changed.

Similar programs followed suit around Michigan and throughout the country and are still active today, including through the **Midland Michigan DDA and the Cudahy Wisconsin DDA.**

Program-based retail incubators have been effective, not necessarily because of specific subsidies, but because they coordinate financial support for new retailers with actions to address knowledge and networking gaps.

Further study is required to assess the long-term efficacy of the programs, which fortunately have been designed with the future in mind and are already collecting the data.

Recommendation

Create a Retail Incubator in Downtown Alvarado in a City owned or acquired building. Seek partnerships and establish a steering-committee to determine feasibility and to make a long-term plan. ARP Funds can be used for this.

Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

The good news about tough economic times is that they breed ingenuity. Property owners and City Leaders need to think "inside the box" –- the vacant storefront, the empty warehouse, or the small office building abandoned by the busted start-up firm.

By thinking short-term instead of long-term lease, entertainment instead of shopping, farmers market instead of vacant lot, that space –- particularly in well located areas –- may be suited to new opportunities.

Short-term Leases

A short-term lease program activates vacant properties by introducing new, creative, and temporary retail locations with visual aesthetic. These programs can create an environment that engages customers and authenticates downtown as a vibrant space, ready for long-term investment.

Pop-ups

One type of short-term lease is a pop-up, featuring leases that usually last between six weeks and a year, with many non-seasonal retailers willing to sign month-to-month leases that could result in long-term tenancy. Rents for pop-up shops tend to be less expensive than those secured by traditional leases, sometimes by as much as 50% below lease value.

Of course, this concept works best when there is little or no space modification necessary. Generally, just adding desks and chairs or some kind of display shelving or fixtures is all that's required. And, these simple additions/changes can be easily implemented or erected and then torn down. Modifications are usually not a stumbling block because the tenant wants an easy move-in/move-out phase, and the landlord wants little or no refit between tenants.

Creative Strategies for Backfilling Downtown Vacancies

Event Space

If the vacant space is located in a central area, property owners can rent the commercial space for private events, until a suitable more permanent tenant is located. In many communities, there's a consistent demand for well-appointed venues for parties and corporate events, and commercial space owners can meet that demand. From fundraisers to art sales to parties to corporate events, vacant commercial property landlords can market their space for a variety of purposes.

Subdividing Ground Floor Storefronts into Smaller Parcels

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly move inventory in and out of the store. It also ensures retailers keep their displays fresh and continually try new merchandising tactics. With an initial build-out investment, property owners can reimagine their existing storefront footprint, and subdivide into more, lower square footage spaces, increasing the vitality of the corridor, but also lessening the burden for entrepreneurs.

Reimagining Design of Vacant Space

A smaller retail space means lower overhead costs and allows retailers to quickly Walk-up window restaurants feature no indoor dining space and facilitate a pedestrian-focused grab-and-go style experience. Locating a walk-up window restaurant adjacent to a parklet or a shared outdoor dining space is ideal for using public space in a collaborative way. This technique also backfills vacant space on a micro-level, while preserving non-storefront space for office space or other uses.

Recommendation

Work with existing property owners with vacancies to explore these creative strategies for activating vacant space and supporting entrepreneurship.

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

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

Integrate customer offerings across channels through omnichannel retail strategies.

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

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

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

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

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

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

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

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

Strengthen brand engagement and build a base of loyal followers.

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

Trends in Successful Retail Businesses

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

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

Are strategic about innovating ways of doing business.

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

Recommendation

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



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