Portland: A Downtown Market Study

Portland, Michigan holds the distinction as Michigan’s first downtown to garner both the Michigan Main Street designation and the Michigan Cool Cities designation. As such, the community takes tremendous pride in its downtown and all of the economic and social benefits that it has to offer, and is excited to capitalize on emerging opportunities in order to maintain the success that the downtown has enjoyed in the past.

Portland’s most recent Market Plan (2000) has outlined two goals that pull directly to the downtown and require a Market Study in order to be even thought about or come to completion. The first goal is to remain much of the tax base that may currently be lost to surrounding communities. This goal was highlighted by the stock market in the case of Bedrock, Inc, and as mentioned in the previous Market Plan, the group from Bedrock viewed not only a website and password, but the full plan as a climate and culture of Portland.

Portland has also seen growth in recent years, which has not only brought in new businesses, but also new living opportunities. The second goal is to continue the rejuvenation of downtown development by surrounding communities and on the outskirts of Portland itself. Both goals call to “formulate a comprehensive economic development strategy based on an accurate market analysis.”

The information and direction gained from this Portland Market Study will play an integral role in future development and redevelopment efforts within the downtown area, as well as lending direction to future decisions regarding the type and number of commercial establishments that the city needs in order to be successful.

The Downtown

Portland is a quiet, commercial center open to the city. The city is currently not used as an attractive space with commercialized space and opportunities. This area is more likely to be developed by the downtown and River Trail areas. The downtown area’s best opportunities include the potential for new and old businesses. The downtown area’s best opportunities can include the potential for new and old businesses. Also, Portland should be able to be relatively self-sufficient not only as a website and password, but the full plan as a climate and culture of Portland.

Good geographical location

Businesses close early

River Trail

Bedroom Community

Methods & Findings

The Downtown Portland Market Study was commissioned to facilitate this market study for Downtown Portland. The study was organized to:

- Define Downtown Portland’s primary and secondary trade areas from which it draws the majority of its customers.
- Engage community members and business owners in conversation regarding the potential directions for Downtown to pursue in the future.
- Determine the existing buildings stock, including its commercial and residential spaces.
- Identify population and market trends within the above-defined trade areas.

Project Methodology

The completion of this market study was predicated on the engagement of community members, business owners, and community leaders in the exploration of opportunities for the future development of Downtown Portland. Key steps taken in this analysis include:

- Site evaluation assessment
- A written survey distributed to businesses within the downtown area
- A focus group to understand the community’s perspective
- The procurement of ESRD data that explores trade area demographics, lifestyle, and economic data
- The collection and review of background materials

Methods & Findings

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Market Capture through Extended Business Hours

*Important to the community of Portland is the ability to maintain interest and the businesses that currently downtown downtown to be open for an extra hour or two each day, even if it is for a short time.

Important locations in the downtown area that are open for extended business hours should be captured accurately. This data will be used to help the city center become more successful.

Increased Recreation and Entertainment Options

*Currently, the area is lacking in establishments that are attractive to active families and young professionals that are looking for recreational opportunities in the downtown.

*Upgrading the spaces in downtown provides an amenity that is not normally found in communities such as Portland. According to a Portland Opera House Feasibility Study conducted in 2009, at the time the opera house was in a state of disrepair; however, because of the opera house’s historic architecture and history; it may be worthwhile to salvage the building.

*Because recreation is a strong point in both the Tapestry Segmentation and Consumer Spending data, Portland should also make much more sense to promote recreation activities in the downtown.

*Portland should consider conducting a study of the rivers and their banks. This study should analyze many different aspects of the looking Glass River and Grand River, such as their width, number of fish species, and pollution.

Study Objectives

- To identify the downtown Portland’s primary and secondary trade areas from which it draws the majority of its customers.
- To engage community members and business owners in conversation regarding the potential directions for Downtown to pursue in the future.
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Recommended Actions

Several data gathering techniques have been used throughout this market analysis in order to develop an understanding of possible market expansion possibilities in Portland’s downtown. These methods included conducting a focus group to develop a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis based on citizens’ responses, creation of a business survey, analyzing Census data, and conducting a gap analysis of sales leakage/surplus based on ESRD data. When combined, the results of these methods showed strong evidence of the things that downtown Portland is doing well, in addition to the things that could help the city center become more successful.

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