



Strategic Planning Through Transformation Strategies

Main Street: Terra Haute, Indiana

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Introduction

The “Main Street Refresh” initiative aims to rethink the traditional Main Street model so the program is more responsive to economic context and its outcomes are directly measurable. Terre Haute Main Street is one of the first Main Street programs in the state of Indiana to undertake the development of Economic/Transformation Strategies, thanks in part to the Ford Family Foundation and the Indiana Main Street program, both partners in paying for this service.

Every community has a unique set of place-based assets, anchors, and consumer markets that help to define a healthy business district. Enhancing those efforts through a targeted economic development strategy requires a more thorough understanding of the marketplace. One of the best ways to help retain existing businesses and recruit new ones is by preparing information about the specific customers who are currently served or who could be served by your business district. The local commercial revitalization program provides a very important benefit by developing a comprehensive analysis of the district market that aligns vision and consumer data with transformation strategies that drive the organization’s revitalization programming. Most market analysis consultants perform their work and provide local community leaders simply with information. The Main Street approach is to work together with organization leaders to understand the market data and develop comprehensive and execution driven strategies to deliver economic development results. This approach accomplishes several goals.

- Builds local knowledge and understanding of your district’s economy to create a foundation for successful revitalization;
- Identifies current strengths of the business mix and existing business clusters
- Supplies relevant consumer data to the revitalization program so it can help existing businesses become stronger
- Identifies opportunities for future business attraction and business cluster expansion
- Builds a strategic framework for niche development, including real estate development, business development, promotions, marketing, branding, etc.

This philosophy is enveloped within the new Main Street refreshed Approach. At the core of the Main Street Approach are economically-grounded “Transformation Strategies.” These Strategies will serve as the foundation for the revitalization program’s work. Most of activities within the organization’s annual workplan as part of the 4-Point Approach should then be guided by the selected Transformation Strategies and aligned around an agreed direction and outcome. As part of the technical assistance, and as an aid to making the new format easier to adopt, the National Main Street Center developed nearly 20 “off-the-shelf” strategies that can be employed in a range of conditions seen across a variety of communities. These are, essentially, ready-made Transformation Strategies. They are a place to begin and can be customized along the way. We have called this initial set “Catalyst Strategies.” The goal of the provided service was to assist Terre Haute Main Street program to identify the strategies that work best for the commercial district by using information the Main Street already have in hand or that can be easily obtained through data and survey collection.



Executive Summary

January 10 – 11, 2019 the National Main Street Center and Indiana Main Street team conducted a Strategic Planning Transformation Strategy analysis and development technical assistance visit for the Terre Haute Main Street program. Team attendees included Mary Shaw, Paul Smith, Earnie Holtrey (Indiana Main Street), Lindsey Wallace, Dionne Baux (National Main Street Center), and Stephanie Pence (Downtown Terre Haute).

The team familiarized itself with Terre Haute Main Street by touring the district, reading background materials, evaluating key data sets (demographics, buying power, sales leakage, and business inventory), and data collected from a community survey administered to the community in advance of the visit. Findings from direct observation of the district, market data and community feedback informed the development of Transformation Strategies for Terre Haute Main Street.

The onsite visit provided the team an opportunity to meet with Downtown Terre Haute (DTH) board of directors, conduct focus group meetings with several key businesses, not for profits, and property owners in the district – we met with approximately two dozen individuals. Draft transformation strategies were presented at an evening public meeting to assess reaction and garner feedback. The public meeting was attended by approximately 75 community members.

This report summarizes the following:

- Potential Transformation Strategies
- Community Survey Results
- Basic demographic, psychographic and trade area characteristics
- Sales leakage
- Business Mix Characteristics
- Community Asset Identification

Analysis of the inputs (community survey; review of community and business assets, and market data) resulted in the development of two (2) recommended transformation strategies for consideration by Downtown Terre Haute and its key stakeholders. The recommended transformation strategies are as follows (please note they are explained in greater detail in the body of the report contained herein):

1. Arts and Culture
 1. Design Infrastructure
 2. Tourists
2. College Town

The transformation strategies are reflective of the following: 1) a key identified consumer group, or 2) business cluster that is already prevalent, can be further expanded and/or has potential, and will require more resources and capacity to fully establish. The next step the process is to align on a selected strategy(s) and begin the work planning process to incorporate strategy(s) into current work plans and new activities that better relate and move the transformation strategies forward. Indiana Main Street, and/or the National Main Street Center may be able to assist in this effort.

Community Survey Results

For Terre Haute a community survey was employed to seek knowledge people possess about the downtown, and their attitudes toward the downtown. The community survey was open to anyone who might live, work or visit downtown Terre Haute. In total 491 community responses were collected using the online survey tool Survey Monkey.

Questions geared toward ascertaining attitudes about downtown, challenges and opportunities the downtown may have, past community participation in previous planning efforts and willingness to help revitalize downtown Terre Haute were obtained from a wide distribution of the community. The following represents a breakdown of those responses. Please reference the excel spreadsheet with complete survey responses (submitted to Downtown Terre Haute).

What three words come to mind when you think about downtown Terre Haute?



Analysis: The top words were: Potential, Empty, Historic, Art, and Boring. This shows that People recognize that the building block are in place - such as a historic downtown with a variety of arts-oriented events – but more residents and area students need to be informed of these activities and will be one of the chief priorities when attracting and retain businesses and talent.

Which businesses do you most often patronize in downtown Terre Haute?



Top Five Business Patronized	Number	Percent
Tacos and Tequila	82	16%
Gumbos	77	15%
Children’s Museum	67	13%
Saratoga	64	13%
Clabber Girl	59	12%

We asked the question **“Would you live in Downtown Terre Haute?”** Although most people responded that they would prefer not to live in downtown, over 30 percent of respondents said, “Yes or Maybe” to the question. This is a positive sign that downtown is a desirable place to live for some; with shopping, dining and other businesses being within walking distance. People who live in downtown, typically spend a greater portion of their disposable income – in downtown. So, increasing housing options (where allowed) is good a community. This might include upper story housing above existing storefronts, condos, lofts, apartments and even hotels and Airbnb’s. More residents in downtown would likely increase the need for shopping and entertainment beyond 5PM. Some businesses that close at 5PM, might consider extended hours as residential density increases. Public gathering places are also key to attracting downtown residents.

In a follow-up question, we asked, **“If you do not want to live in downtown, why not?”**

Some of the top responses were:

- Affordability
- Crime
- Children and access to schools
- Space constraints
- Fast pace of downtown and noise-levels

The last question asked in the community survey was **“In one sentence, describe your hope for the future of downtown.”** A wide variety of responses were gathered. Here is a short summary of those answers. The complete set of answers were provided to Terre Haute Main Street.



Community Survey Summary and Public Meeting Feedback

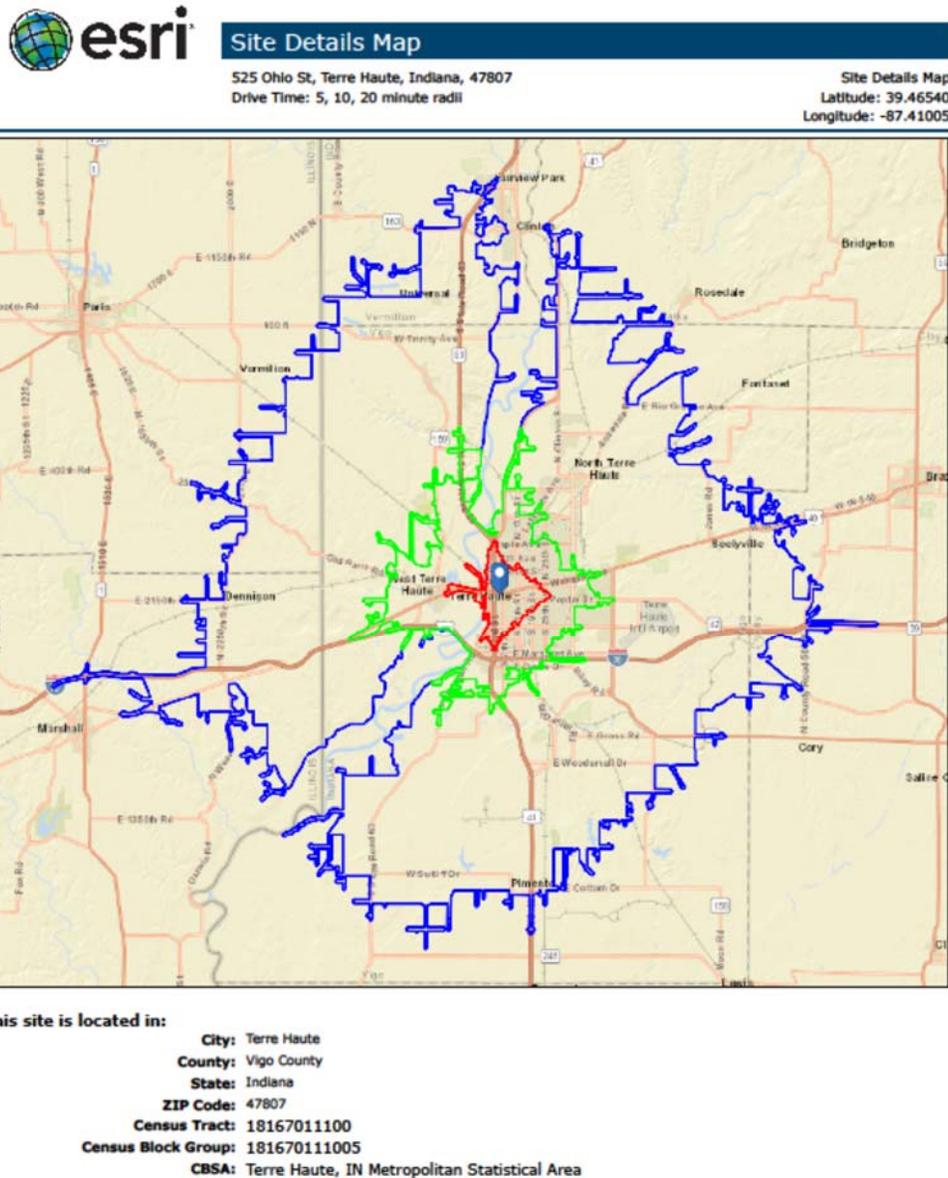
The following are some key take-aways from the review of the community survey and comments gathered at the public meeting on January 10th.

Success for downtown Terre Haute includes the following:

- Increased foot traffic (more people)
- Incentives from the City to increase business recruitment and retention
- Engaged and diverse leadership representing volunteering on the district
- Better connections to Indiana State University staff and students
- More family-friendly businesses (places for children) and outdoor space
- More collaboration amongst non-profits in Terre Haute to see greater impact
- Intentional connectivity and linkage to existing comprehensive plans:
 - Convention Center Project (2018)
 - Downtown Parking and Pedestrian Study (2014)
 - ISU Master Plan (2018)
 - Turn to the River (2018)
 - Riverscapes Project (2018)

Market Overview

The market overview section evaluates the market based on trying to ascertain the inherent competitive advantages of downtown Terre Haute. Balanced with input from the community, as well as current place-based assets and anchors we can develop Transformation Strategies. The following represents summary charts of collected market data based on a series of 3 drive times (5 min, 10 min, and 20 min). All data was provided to the local program. Below is the trade area map for which data was extracted.



September 26, 2018

Demographic and Psychographic Characteristics Summary

The following represents a summary of key points that contribute to the development of the transformation strategies from demographics and psychographics review:

Psychographics is the study of personality, values, opinions, attitudes, interests, and lifestyles. Psychographic studies of individuals or communities can be valuable in the fields of marketing, demographics, opinion research, prediction, and social research in general. They can be contrasted with demographic variables (such as age and gender), behavioral variables (such as usage rate or loyalty), and organizational demographic variables (sometimes called firmographic variables), such as industry, number of employees and functional area. When a relatively complete profile of a person or group’s psychographic make-up is constructed, this is called a “psychographic profile.” Psychographic profiles are used in market segmentation, as well as in advertising. Some categories of psychographic factors used in market segmentation include:

- Activity, interest, opinion (AIOs)
- Attitudes
- Values
- Behavior

Tapestry psychographic data helps communities and businesses understand consumer lifestyle choices, what they buy, and how they spend their free time. Tapestry classifies US residential neighborhoods into 67 unique segments based on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. The top psychographic profiles for Terre Haute, Indiana are used to gauge possible shopping characteristics of downtown’s largest potential shopping demographic. The following outlines the top five groups, which shows 57.4% percent of the population falling within the “Traditional Living”, “Hardscrabble Road” and “College Towns” segments. While the remaining 42% of the population falling into twelve tapestry segmentations.

Top Tapestry Segment (s)	Percent
Traditional Living	28.9%
Hardscrabble Road	17.6%
College Towns	10.9%
Midlife Constraints	7.6%
Old and Newcomers	6.7%

Demographic Summary (Vigo County)	2018
Population	55,923
Households	22,249
Median Age	33.9
Median Household Income	\$36,119

For the top three categories herein (in the 10-mile radius), the report are the segments as described by ESRI. Full descriptions of each tapestry segment can be found in the appendix section of this report.



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.

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.



Note: This index represents the rate of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are extrapolated from data by CRJ, INC.



LifeMode Group: Middle Ground

Hardscrabble Road

8G

Households: 1,507,700
 Average Household Size: 2.66
 Median Age: 32.4
 Median Household Income: \$28,200

WHO ARE WE?

Hardscrabble Road neighborhoods are in urbanized areas within central cities, with older housing, located chiefly in the Midwest and South. This slightly smaller market is primarily a family market, married couples (with and without children) and single parents. Younger, highly diverse (with higher proportions of black, multiracial, and Hispanic populations), and less educated, they work mainly in service, manufacturing, and retail trade industries. Unemployment is high (almost twice the US rate), and median household income is half the US median. Almost 1 in 3 households have income below the poverty level. 60% of householders are renters, living primarily in single-family homes, with a higher proportion of dwellings in 2-4 unit buildings. This market is struggling to get by.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- Renters: About three-fifths of households.
- Primarily family households, married couples with or without children, single parents (Index 203), and multigenerational households (Index 137).
- Primarily single-family homes (61%), with a higher proportion of dwellings in 2-4 unit buildings (Index 225).
- Older housing, built before 1940 (59%), with a higher proportion built in the 1940s (Index 215) or earlier (Index 257).
- Almost four-fifths of owned homes valued under \$100,000 (more than 3.5 times the US).
- Higher percentage of vacant housing units at 18% (Index 155).
- Most households with 1 or 2 vehicles (71%), but 19% have no vehicle (Index 204).

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Education completed: 38% with a high school diploma only (Index 137); 28% with some college or an associate's degree (Index 97).
- Unemployment rate is higher at 11.2%, almost twice the US rate.
- Labor force participation rate is lower at 57.1%.
- Wages and salaries are the primary source of income for 70% of households, with contributions from Supplemental Security Income for 12% (Index 232) and public assistance for 7% (Index 254).
- These cost-conscious consumers purchase sale items in bulk and buy generic over name brands.
- They tend to save money for a specific purpose.



Note: This index represents the rate of the segment rate to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are extrapolated from data by CRJ, INC.



LifeMode Group: Scholars and Patriots

College Towns

Households: 1,176,200
Average Household Size: 2.14
Median Age: 24.5
Median Household Income: \$32,200

14B

WHO ARE WE?

About half the residents of College Towns are enrolled in college, while the rest work for a college or the services that support it. Students have busy schedules, but make time between studying and part-time jobs for socializing and sports. Students that are new to managing their own finances tend to make impulse buys and splurge on the latest fashions. This digitally engaged group uses computers and cell phones for all aspects of life including shopping, school work, news, social media, and entertainment. College Towns are all about new experiences, and residents seek out variety and adventure in their lives.

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

- These are nonfamily households with many students living alone or with roommates for the first time.
- This segment is a mix of densely developed student housing and dorms with local residences.
- Off-campus, low rent apartments comprise half of the housing stock.
- Over three-quarters of the households are renter-occupied, with one in ten remaining vacant.
- One-third of homes are single family; mostly occupied by local residents who own their homes.
- This market is bike and pedestrian friendly.

SOCIOECONOMIC TRAITS

- Their limited incomes result in thrifty purchases.
- They do not eat the healthiest foods, nor do they see a doctor regularly.
- They dress to impress with the latest fashions of the season.
- They prefer environmentally friendly products and vehicles that get good gas mileage.
- They're heavily influenced by celebrity endorsements and trends in magazines.
- They feel anything that can be done online is easier than in person.
- They have liberal political views.



**TAPESTRY
SEGMENTATION**
estl.com/tapestry

Note: The index represents the ratio of the segment size to the US rate multiplied by 100. Consumer preferences are estimated from data by ORB MID.



Business District Characteristics (10 Minute Radius)

Sales Void Analysis

The Leakage/Surplus report provided for Terre Haute Main Street trade area measures the balance between the volume of retail sales (Supply) generated by retail businesses and the volume of retail potential (Demand) produced by households within the trade area spending on goods and services.

Leakage: Leakage in a trade area represents a condition where demand exceeds supply. In other words, retailers outside the trade area are fulfilling the demand for retail products at a greater rate than those within the trade area, therefore, demand is “Leaking” out of the trade area. Such a condition can on one hand highlight a potential opportunity to recapture those “leaked” sales or suggests an inherent weakness within the trade area that may prove too difficult to pull back those “leaked” sales.

Surplus: Surplus in an area represents a condition where supply exceeds the area’s demand. Retailers are attracting shoppers that reside outside the trade area. The “Surplus” is in market supply. On one hand, there are many business clusters like Restaurants, Auto Dealers, etc., in which an over-supply can suggest a large strength that can continue to be enhanced.

The following graphic looks at leakages and surpluses for the downtown Terre Haute trade area based on the zip codes designing the primary trade area.

This example shows the ten-minute radius.





Market Data and Place-Based Asset Summary

In evaluating Transformation Strategies, market data never truly pinpoints the exact market or competitive advantages for downtown. However, when combined with a review of existing business and community assets within both the downtown and on a regional level in some cases, it can both support the Transformation Strategies, as well as provide themes that help define the unique market position. A complete set of the ESRI data has been provided to Downtown Terre Haute.

The following are highlights of the place-based assets, market data, and asset findings:

Market Summary – For Terre Haute Main Street and many other main streets and commercial districts across the country, market data for the trade area is limited to assessing a more localized consumer. In the case of this main street, based on interviews, business mix and key anchors. The primary market is local in scale, with a focus in the arts serving families, existing residents and Indiana State University students and tourists. Aligning the local brand and image of the downtown as a destination place for those seeking art related experiences through public art, gallery spaces and museums.

Place-Based Assets - The third area of focus in helping to clarify and define Transformation Strategies for your district is in evaluating your current place-based assets. These current assets directly demonstrate current traffic draws to the Main Street as well as market strengths.

Terre Haute Main Street

- Key Anchors – Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce, Indiana State University, Vigo County Public Library, Clabber Girl Corporation
- Historic building structures
- District opportunities – availability of space, resident diversity in age, ethnicities and socio-economic levels
- Arts and Culture - Terre Haute Children's Museum, Vigo County Historical Museum, Veterans Memorial Museum of Terre Haute, Swope Art Museum, Clabber Girl Museum, Eugene V Debs Museum, Fire – Police Museum



Draft Transformation Strategies

The draft Transformation Strategies recommendations are based on the existing business mix, building character, and infrastructure and competitive advantage, community feedback and survey input. Building on Terre Haute Main Street existing cultural anchors, and desire to attract more people to the downtown these strategies can help position downtown Terre Haute as a destination for residents and tourists alike.

1. Arts & Culture (with strong emphasis on Infrastructure design and Tourists):

Defined: "Arts" encompasses a very broad range of creative industry businesses, including design, performing, broadcast, and even culinary arts – film, music, dance, sculpture, painting, photography, architecture, live theatre, catering, printing, furniture making, and much more. It also encompasses many other arts-related education, production, and distribution businesses and activities. It involves all *creative industries*.

A Tourists and Tourism strategy addresses people who visit the district from elsewhere, usually to experience something unique to the place, such as history or architecture, arts and culture, or shopping. The strategy generally builds on something that is already associated with the place, whether the attraction is in the commercial district itself. The attraction could be small and discrete (such as a historic figure's birth home) or it might be more diffuse or regional (like a Route 66 trail or the wine country of Northern California).

Sometimes the commercial district itself is the draw, if it is noted for its atmosphere, museums, shops or restaurants. Districts with significant concentrations of arts-related businesses are likely to also have plenty of upper-floor housing and housing in nearby neighborhoods, as people who work in often live near where they work. These districts are likely to be active throughout the day and evening – in part because these types of businesses offer live performances (i.e. theatrical companies, jazz clubs and orchestras) which usually operate in the evening and weekends. These businesses can generate useful (and often essential) business for restaurants, Air B&B's, hotels, food and convenience stores. Virtually all commercial districts serving this type of customer base offer restaurant dining and some convenience items; many offer lodging options (if the destination typically involves an overnight stay). Because these districts may serve both residential, and non-resident populations, there is a greater need for clear way-finding signs to parking and attractions, and online and printed guides to local businesses for non-residents.

When working to increase foot traffic in the context of Main Street revitalization, *authenticity* is a market differentiator. In most cases, that implies a district where independent businesses are an important driver (if not the majority) of retail and dining activity – and, it follows, a district where chain businesses are not the focus. Even in places where "authenticity" might not be immediately apparent (places like Disney World in Orlando or the Las Vegas Strip, for example), there are often nearby historic business districts that would like to capture a portion of the tourism economy. Marketing activities and public space improvements can capitalize on the presence of arts to enliven the district, reinforcing its creative energy and distinguishing it from other commercial districts within the region.



WHO ARE THE CUSTOMERS FOR THIS STRATEGY?

Customers in this strategy do not fit any one customer profile. Customers are generally demographically diverse (i.e. ethnicity, income-levels and age), visitors to historic places, cultural tourists, conventioners, business travelers, outdoors enthusiasts, and many others. When thinking of the arts remember that certain types of art are likely to appeal diverse populations. For example, certain exhibits or experienced may attract younger people, and families, while others may attract older people. Each of these types of customer can exist at varying price points. The customer base may be local, regional or international and their preferences and interests may vary widely. Some may be interested in going to a museum, engaging in public art, shopping and dining in a historic downtown and others may not. Articulating your visitors' typical demographic profile will help you to align your commercial district's offerings with what your customers want. The quality common to virtually most customers attracted to the district because of a destination(s) in that they may come from somewhere else. Therefore, they are probably less familiar with your commercial district than locals and they will benefit from information that helps them learn about its offerings.

BENEFITS AND TRADE-OFFS

A primary economic benefit of attracting a customer base from outside the community increases consumer spending to the community. These are "imported sales," over and above the buying power of households in the immediate trade area. As a result, commercial districts that attract customers from regional and international locations can often support more restaurants and retail than the local population could support on its own. Tourism can also be an important generator of local jobs and employment, both directly and indirectly related to the hospitality industry.

There can be a trade-off to attracting large numbers of tourists: Locals may not be happy about an increase in visitors if it makes the district feel "less local," if it gets crowded, if prices go up, if it becomes hard to find housing, if short-term rentals (like Airbnb) bring a transient character to neighborhoods, or if the influx spurs gentrification. In more extreme cases, the business mix may shift in ways that are not helpful to residents, such as an increase in stores selling t-shirts and souvenirs.

An Arts strategy alone can offer many benefits. For example, with the exceptions of arts-related retailers (like galleries and music stores), many creative industry businesses prefer upper-floor spaces and other peripheral spaces in the district (such as warehouses and garages) that might otherwise be difficult to rent. Because artists, designers, and others who create products often work late into the evening, the district is likely to look and feel livelier on a 24/7 basis. And, these businesses' creative energy often makes the district more attractive to other types of businesses and to residents, offering the potential to boost the district's occupancy.

There are not many trade-offs involved in an Arts strategy. The most significant drawback is that, because artists and other creative industry workers are often very price-sensitive, increasing rents can sometimes make the district unaffordable for them.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

Design		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Create a public art strategy for the district, tapping into the skills of the district’s creative-sector businesses.	
	Pair district artists with retailers to design unique storefront window displays.	
	Review Terre Haute’s zoning laws to ensure they do not inadvertently discourage development and growth in the artist-sector business.	
	Install way-finding signs and systems specifically geared toward those unfamiliar with the district.	
	Create public space where residents and visitors alike can enjoy sitting in the commercial district	
	Help businesses create outdoor café/dining spaces.	

Organization		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Convene regional tourism professionals (e.g. CVB) to identify shared or differentiated goals and target markets.	
	Work with managers/organizations with historic resources to develop a unified admission system.	
	Actively engage artists in revitalization planning activities.	
	Encourage collaboration between artists and other district art/culture related businesses for cross merchandising.	

Promotion		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Launch an annual tour of artists’ studios, galleries, and other creative-industry work spaces in the district.	
	Exhibit artists work in the district businesses and display windows.	
	Organize a culinary arts event, highlighting district restaurants.	
	Develop or promote an existing guide (website) to local businesses and attractions.	
	Cross-promote businesses with local attraction by placing brochures, coupons, or other promotional material at those attractions.	

Economic Vitality		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Set-up large format maps inside stores, museums and galleries and ask store owners or staff to have customers mark where they live on the map. This will help you identify your draw area as well as highlight differences in draw area among different types of businesses.	
	Create and offer incentives to encourage artists to live in and near the district.	
	Put together and implement a development strategy to create additional hotels or inns within the district to support overnight stays for evening arts-related activities like theatre and music.	
	Develop a co-working space for artists.	

POTENTIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

• Antique and vintage Apparel	• Hotels
• Art Centers	• Fabric stores
• Art Galleries	• Ice cream shops
• Art Supplies	• Jewelry stores
• Bike Rental	• Meals to go (e.g. boxed lunches)
• Bookstore	• Movie Theaters
• Cafes	• Musical Instruments and repair services
• Children’s activities businesses (mini-golf, pottery, crafts, etc.)	• Museums
• Costume rentals and sales	• Performing arts centers
• Dance costumes, shops and supplies	• Photographers and photography studios
• Dance studios	• Segway and alternative transportation rental (e.g. electric scooters, boats, etc.)

MEASURING PROGRESS

The following tools can be used to track your success in implementing the strategy and in measuring its impact on the commercial district as a whole:

- Conduct on-street surveys when you implement this strategy – then, conduct surveys one year, three years, and five years later, asking the same questions. Are more visitors patronizing the district? Are their impressions and perceptions of the district improving?

Your surveys should include questions in four specific categories:

- Attitudes and perceptions about the district
- Current shopping habits
- Additional products and services shoppers would like to be able to buy within the district
- Demographic characteristics of those participating in the survey, including home zip code



- Conduct pedestrian traffic counts at arts-related promotional events in the district and measure changes in traffic counts throughout the year and from year to year.
- Through periodic focus groups with a range of artists, business owners, residents, customers, and potential customers, gauge the level of awareness of the presence of arts and creative industries in the district.
- Track trends in the number of square feet of retail space devoted to visitor-related businesses. Track increases in number of hotel or bed-and-breakfast rooms and track any increases in the short-term rental market (like Airbnb).
- Ask the owners or managers of a representative sample of businesses to keep an informal tally of tourist-related foot traffic, average transaction amount, and gross sales. Interview the owners and managers at regular intervals and hold an annual focus group with them. Are the numbers increasing?
- Track the number of changes (in service offerings or product mix) that businesses have made to serve the visitor market.
- Choose several intersections or entry points in the district and count the number of people who walk by during 30 -minute intervals. Do this at two or three key points in the day (e.g., morning, noon, and evening – and at high and low visitor seasons). Are the numbers increasing?



2. College Town

Defined: The “College Town” (or “University Town”) strategy seeks to make strong, overt connections between a downtown or commercial district and a nearby educational institution. Strengthening the linkage between “town and gown” usually yields benefits that accrue to both: a thriving commercial district reflects well on the university; improves the quality of life for its core communities of students, faculty and staff; and helps district businesses connect with built-in customer segments.

The strategy will look different in different types of communities with different types of institutions, from large state schools to small liberal arts colleges, or from commuter schools (such as community colleges) to residential schools. In a small town where the college is the focus of community life and the local economy, the downtown may be almost exclusively oriented toward the institution. In an urban district, a local university’s influence may be subtle.

You may encounter two opposing aspects of this strategy: In some places, the ties between a commercial district and a nearby college may be very weak. In these cases, the challenge will be to build awareness and foster connections. In other places, the university-related uses in the commercial district may be too dominant or even unwelcome, requiring that your work strengthens the positive connections while mitigating nuisances (e.g., noise, drinking) that negatively affect community life. Some of these late-night problems have a potential silver lining: Because students tend to keep unusual hours, a College Town strategy can also bring the economic and public-perception benefits of a commercial district with 24-hour activity.

WHO ARE THE CUSTOMERS FOR THIS STRATEGY?

Core customer segments in college and university towns are students, faculty and staff. But there are often additional customer segments that may be present, especially at different times of year.

Customers may include:

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate and professional students
- Faculty (and their families)
- Staff (and their families)
- Continuing education students
- Commuting students
- Resident students (on or off-campus)
- Visiting parents (of students)
- Alumni (e.g., returning for reunions, sporting events, etc.)
- Tourists
- Prospective students and their families
- Conference goers
- Summer session students



BENEFITS AND TRADE-OFFS

As anchor institutions, colleges and universities can drive significant business and investment to their nearby commercial districts. These institutions are often among the largest and most stable employers in a community, and their students and visitors represent “imported” buying power, over and above the spending available from local households. Some of these segments (particularly undergraduates) can serve to increase customer traffic while having only nominal impact on parking demand. And since most colleges and universities are exempt from paying local real estate taxes, it makes good economic sense to capture locally as much institution-related spending as possible.

Trade-offs usually relate to long-standing “town vs. gown” issues, where university students are seen as rowdy by residents and where parties and group homes attract unwanted attention from administrators and law enforcement. On the retail supply side, you may also find your commercial district in competition with the college or university, as many schools seek to provide a greater number of retail, dining, and entertainment amenities on-campus.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES:

Design		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Install college flags, pennants, or banners on downtown businesses and light poles.	
	Landscape and beauty gateways connecting roads between the campus and downtown.	
	Produce fiberglass models of the university mascot to be painted and installed around the commercial district.	
	Involve students in the fine arts program in mural arts or interactive art installations in the district.	

Organization		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Establish a direct administrative liaison at the university for addressing issues in the commercial district.	
	Invite one or two students to serve on the Main Street board.	

Promotion		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Host a university day in the commercial district.	
	Set up a loyalty card (honored by participating businesses and local attractions) for university students, faculty and staff.	
	Work with restaurants and cafes, and the established university liaison, to offer space on commercial district for faculty meetings and small seminars, etc.	

Economic Vitality		
Status/Timeline	Activities	Partners
	Conduct a survey of key university customer segments to learn more about their customer profiles, shopping preferences and habits.	
	Involve students in revitalization work (as a learning experience). For example, students could serve as interns collecting intercept surveys of district customers.	
	Develop off-campus quality housing options for faculty and/or students, considering the needs of the different segments. Example includes short-term, furnished residences for visiting faculty, or “micro units” with shared amenities for students.	

POTENTIAL PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

University towns typically offer a mix of convenience-based retail; fashion and university-related retail; dining and entertainment; and “third places” for studying, meeting, and relaxing. Price points may vary by community, and some businesses will serve smaller segments within the university-affiliated community (like a high-end fashion shop that caters to faculty and visiting alumni). A few things are virtually universal in college towns, including cafes and inexpensive take-out food.

• Bakeries and fresh baked cookie stores	• Gym
• Barber Shops	• Higher-end apparel (for visiting alumni and parents)
• Bicycle and Mountain biking store or rentals	• Ice cream shops
• Bookstore café	• Inexpensive take-out food (pizza, burritos, etc.)
• Bookstores used and specialty (e.g. foreign language)	• Jewelry stores (for visiting alumni and parents)
• Cafes	• Laundromat
• Cell phone stores	• Lodging (e.g. hotels, Airbnb’s and bed and breakfasts)
• Coffee Kiosks	• Movie Theater
• Delis and Diners	• Music venues (small scale)
• Electronic repair (phone and computers)	• Packing and shipping services
• Ethnic restaurants	• Pop-up retail kiosks (especially at orientation and holidays)
• Fine dining restaurants (especially with meeting space)	• Printing and photocopying
• Pubs and taverns	• Vintage, thrift and used clothing stores



MEASURING PROGRESS

The following tools can be used to track your success in implementing the strategy and in measuring its impact on the commercial district as a whole:

- Conduct on-street and on-campus surveys when you implement this strategy – then, conduct surveys one year, three years, and five years later, asking the same questions. Are more university-affiliated people patronizing the district? Are their impressions and perceptions of the district improving?

Your surveys should include questions in four specific categories:

- Attitudes and perceptions about the district
 - Current shopping habits
 - Additional products and services shoppers would like to be able to buy within the district
 - Demographic characteristics of those participating in the survey, including home zip code
- Track trends in the number of square feet of retail space devoted to businesses serving the university markets.
 - Ask the owners or managers of a representative sample of businesses to keep an informal tally of foot traffic, average transaction amount, and gross sales. Interview the owners and managers at regular intervals and hold an annual focus group with them. Are the numbers increasing?
 - Track the number of changes (in service offerings or product mix) that businesses have made to serve the university market.
 - Choose several intersections or entry points in the district and count the number of people who walk by during 30-minute intervals. Do this at two or three key points in the day (e.g., morning, noon, and evening). Repeat the pedestrian counts at least twice a year, at the same times of day. Are the numbers increasing?



NEXT STEPS

- After you review the report and formalize the Transformation Strategies in a way that truly define the nuances of downtown Terre Haute, it is critical that the Board adopt the one or two to focus on in the immediate future.
- Indiana Main Street will follow-up to discuss any decisions by the board in terms of a focus area and discuss a process for work planning.
- With assistance from Indiana Main Street a facilitated work planning session could be scheduled to begin outlining the key goals and tactical elements within each of the Four Points that will implement the selected Transformation Strategy(s).
 - Align current projects with the strategies
 - Brainstorm new projects
 - Set measurable outcomes for every project.
 - Lastly, begin to outline who is responsible, budgets, and timelines.