

A QUICK GUIDE TO THE CATALYST STRATEGIES



AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>There are two Agriculture strategies, for two different types of communities in which food production is important or growing in importance:</p> <p>Districts that serve agricultural communities: These are communities in which agriculture is one of the leading economic drivers. They are usually rural communities, and most are small towns. In agricultural communities, an Agriculture strategy focuses on better meeting residents' shopping, service, and entertainment needs and on finding new uses for vacant downtown buildings.</p> <p>Districts that support home food production: These are districts in communities for which agriculture is not a leading economic driver, but where there is strong or growing interest in backyard and patio (and even balcony) gardening, locally-sourced food, and environmental sustainability. They might be the downtowns of small or mid-sized cities or neighborhood commercial corridors in larger cities.</p> <p>Both types of districts are deeply interested in food production. Some of their commercial interests overlap, and some diverge.</p>	<p>In districts that serve agricultural communities, the primary customers are the people who live in and near the community. They represent a captive market for basic goods and services, as well as a market interested in specialized agriculture-related goods and services.</p> <p>There are some obstacles in recapturing locals' purchases of basic goods and services downtown. When shopping for everyday staples and routine purchases, shoppers would generally prefer not to travel a long distance. But, of course, price also plays into their decision. Some small towns have succeeded in creating community-owned variety stores or small department stores that provide a variety of goods and services and that can generally sell things at relatively low prices (particularly when consumers factor in the costs of driving relatively long distances to shop in a big-box store). And, some of these community-owned stores have then catalyzed development of additional downtown businesses.</p> <p>In districts that support home food production, the primary customers are those who are interested in growing their own food or who are interested in buying locally-sourced food. In these districts, these potential customers are likely to be people living in urban neighborhoods or in suburbs. They therefore most likely do not have room for large gardens. They are also likely to have full- or part-time jobs, shopping primarily after work and on weekends.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Design and install an urban orchard in a vacant parcel between storefront buildings. ▸ Add fresh herbs to planter boxes throughout the district and encourage shoppers to take home a handful. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Invite someone involved in rural economics to serve on a task force or committee ▸ Explore potential grant opportunities to support food production, distribution, and marketing. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Organize an annual food festival. ▸ Organize a farmers' market. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Conduct a survey of area households to find out what products and services they would shop for locally, if they were available. ▸ Launch a community-owned variety store or small department store. ▸ Develop or recruit a restaurant that grows some or all of its produce on-site (on a nearby lot).

APPAREL

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Many people would like to have more apparel stores in their downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts. In main street surveys, apparel stores are almost always one of the business categories most frequently requested by residents.</p> <p>Because regional malls dominate the retail apparel industry, they make it very challenging to build a successful concentration of apparel businesses in an older or historic commercial district. It helps to differentiate the district’s apparel businesses from other apparel offerings within the region – in essence, creating a cluster of apparel businesses that are unique enough that they can, together, function as a regional destination.</p> <p>Fortunately, there are ways in which independently owned main street apparel businesses can differentiate themselves from national apparel chains. While the “Apparel” category might initially seem straightforward, the category actually includes hundreds of product and service lines – uniforms, special clothing sizes, dry cleaning, tailoring services, fabric and sewing notions – that national chains rarely offer and that can therefore provide special opportunities for main street businesses. Independently owned apparel businesses also offer the flexibility of serving customers of varying demographic characteristics, something that is usually difficult for chain retailers to do.</p>	<p>Everyone buys apparel. But:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ The majority of clothing purchases are still made by women. ▸ For a variety of reasons (convenience, greater selection, etc.), a growing number of people buy clothes online. With an online storefront, an apparel or apparel-related business can potentially reach customers not present in the district. <p>When people shop for apparel (particularly clothing, shoes, and jewelry), they usually like to visit several stores and compare products and prices before making decisions about what to buy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Apparel stores need good street visibility. ▸ They also need to be near other apparel stores. ▸ Apparel stores have widely varying space needs, but they are usually in the 800-2000 square foot range. ▸ More than many other types of stores, apparel stores rely heavily on the quality of their storefront window displays. <p>An Apparel strategy can be difficult – but, if successful, it can position the district as a regional destination, benefitting other, non-apparel businesses in the district.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Offer visual merchandising and store design workshops and hands-on assistance for apparel-related businesses. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Invite several people who are representative of the types of customers you hope to attract to the district’s apparel stores to serve on a committee or task force to provide guidance and feedback. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Offer lunchtime and after-work fashion shows featuring merchandise from district apparel stores when new apparel merchandise arrives each season – cruisewear, summer, back-to-school, winter holidays, etc. ▸ Create a pre-Christmas or pre-Valentine’s promotional event specifically for men, to help them shop for the women (or men) in their lives. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Identify ideal locations for businesses that might comprise a cluster of apparel shops and apparel service-related businesses, taking into consideration each building’s rental or sale status, its size, its street visibility, and its proximity to any existing apparel-related businesses in the district.

ARTS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>“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. In essence, it involves all <i>creative industries</i>.</p> <p>“Arts” and “entertainment” are often grouped together – and, while there are some areas of overlap, they are different industries and therefore need different strategies. In essence, “arts” involve creating products and services, while “entertainment” involves engaging people in something fun. Entertainment includes looking at or experiencing art – but it includes many other things, also, like playing games, watching and participating in sports, and touring historic places.</p>	<p>People who work in arts disciplines and in arts-related businesses are likely to have fairly specific space requirements and to have specialized equipment needs. A furniture maker might need large space with a loading dock and with fairly hefty electrical service, for instance, while a painter might need a smaller space with lots of natural daylight. Some arts-related businesses depend on walk-by traffic and will need storefront space (art galleries, for example), while others prefer to be tucked away out of public view. Many people who work in arts disciplines are drawn to older and historic commercial districts, though – they like the one-of-a-kind spaces and unique architecture. And they like working around other creative people.</p> <p>To maximize this strategy’s success, you will need to learn about the types of work places that artists want, about the types of services and amenities they want and need nearby, and about how they currently exhibit or distribute their work. You will also need to learn something about the people who are likely to support their work – the people who buy their work, who distribute it, and who simply enjoy it. 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 centers within the region.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Pair district artists with retailers to design unique storefront window displays. ▸ Review the city’s zoning laws to ensure that they do not inadvertently discourage development and growth of creative-sector businesses. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Actively engage artists in the revitalization initiative’s planning activities. ▸ Encourage collaboration between artists and other district businesses for cross-merchandising and marketing. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Launch an annual tour of artists’ studios, galleries, and other creative-industry work spaces in the district. ▸ Exhibit artists’ works in district businesses and display windows. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Create and offer incentives to encourage artists to live in and near the district. ▸ Put together and implement a development strategy to create a small hotel or inn within the district to support evening arts-related activities like theatre and music.

COLLEGE TOWN

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>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.</p> <p>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 subtler.</p>	<p>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 strengthen 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.</p> <p>Customers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › 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 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Install college flags, pennants, or banners on downtown businesses and light poles. › If the university has a fine arts program, involve students in mural arts or interactive art installations in the commercial district. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establish a direct administrative liaison at the university for addressing issues in the commercial district. › Invite one or two students to serve on the revitalization program’s board. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Host a university day in the commercial district. › Set up a loyalty card (honored by participating businesses) for university students, faculty, and staff. › Offer very-late-night food delivery services to dormitories. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Conduct a survey of key university customer segments to learn more about their customer profiles, shopping preferences and habits.

CONVENIENCE GOODS + SERVICES

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>The Convenience Goods and Services strategy pursues a cluster of retail and retail-service businesses that fulfill day-to-day needs of nearby shoppers. This typically includes grocery purchases, laundry and dry cleaning, drug store purchases, flowers, hardware, and similar items that people tend to buy close to home or work. Districts with a dominant convenience component tend to have relatively small trade areas since shoppers tend to go to the nearest location.</p> <p>Historically, most traditional business districts excelled at meeting the needs of nearby shoppers. Today, because many convenience-type purchases have been consolidated in big-box stores and their smaller siblings (like chain drug stores), it has become unusual for a district to offer a complete range of convenience products and services. Still, a district with a full complement of convenience offerings is often highly desired by local residents.</p> <p>The goods and services sold in a convenience-oriented district are often undifferentiated from those sold in other convenience-oriented districts, but the places may be differentiated in other ways (such as attractiveness, historic setting, or customer service).</p>	<p>Customers for the Convenience Goods and Services strategy live or work nearby, or may be passing through your district on their commute. The goods and services they buy are commodities and, ordinarily, commodities tend to be price-sensitive (e.g., you might be able to drive a mile or two and find the exact same toothpaste at a cheaper price). However, the nature of convenience-oriented purchases (strongly influenced by a shopper’s desire not to travel) means that customers tend to be less price-sensitive than when buying more occasional items.</p> <p>The Convenience strategy offers what many people – especially residents – often say they want to be able to purchase in their own commercial district or downtown. The strategy helps to create a “full-service neighborhood.”</p> <p>The main trade-off to the Convenience Goods and Services strategy is that it may offer a generic business mix and therefore may not be unique enough to draw customers from outside the local geography. In addition to the challenge of differentiation, certain systemic changes in retailing – especially the consolidation into larger general merchandise stores, drug stores, and supermarkets – have changed the nature of convenience-oriented districts which, historically, involved purchases made at a handful of small, independent shops.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Conduct a parking survey to determine if the distribution of short-term spaces to support errand-type shopping trips. ▸ Install bicycle racks to encourage nearby residents to pedal instead of drive. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Host a community meeting to solicit input on which products and services the community feels are most needed. ▸ Set up a local listserv or e-newsletter to keep people informed of events or special programs in the commercial district. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Produce a community oriented event designed to attract residents and not necessarily people from further afield. ▸ Help businesses establish loyalty programs (e.g., buy 10 sandwiches, coffees, etc. and get the next one free). <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Identify specific products or services that businesses could make convenience offerings more comprehensive. ▸ Help businesses create in-store kiosks to add missing products or amenities.

DISTRICT WORKERS + RESIDENTS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>People who work in a commercial district are likely to need a variety of convenience items, from groceries to carry-out meals and from small hardware items to greeting cards. They also need easy access to personal and professional services, such as hair care, daycare, and medical services. And, they are most likely to need things before work, at lunchtime, and immediately after work as they are leaving for home. People who live in and near the district need very similar products and services – but they are more likely to shop in the evenings and on weekends.</p> <p>The Workers + Residents Starter Strategy helps your revitalization program capitalize on these two important “captive” customer groups – and helps you meet more of their needs, making the district an even more appealing place for people to live and work.</p> <p>To maximize this strategy’s success, you will need to learn a bit about the characteristics and work and shopping habits of the district’s workers and residents. Marketing activities will then need to be geared towards their needs and interests and scheduled during times that work best for them. And, the range of products and services that are available in the district should be expanded, either by adding new product lines to existing businesses or by developing new businesses (or both).</p>	<p>People who work and live in and near the district are likely to encompass a very wide range of demographic characteristics – different ages, different household incomes, different education levels, different ethnicities – and to represent a wide range of shopping habits and preferences. But they almost always share a desire to have convenient access to daily staples, to have comfortable and convenient places to dine with friends and family, and to feel comfortable in and proud of the district in which they spend so much time. Just as customer profiles vary, the price points of the products and services they purchase can vary widely, too – though most businesses that offer convenience products and services to workers and residents fall into a middle price-point range.</p> <p>Tapping into the district’s “captive market” of potential customers and expanding sales and services for them helps create a self-sustaining economic ecosystem in the district. It often generates new demand for housing in and near the district, as workers increasingly see benefits in living within easy walking distance of their work places. And, because workers and residents are a captive market, they do not require extra parking spaces.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Create comfortable public lunchtime and weekend gathering places. ▸ Change storefront window displays monthly. The people who live and work near the district see its window displays almost every day. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Include one or more district workers and residents on the revitalization organization’s board of directors and in its committees. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Schedule promotional activities during lunchtime and immediately after work, when the district’s workers are most likely to be available. ▸ Offer delivery services. ▸ Offer a district-wide customer loyalty program for workers and residents. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Create and offer incentives to encourage district property owners to convert unused or underused upper-floor space to apartments or condominiums. ▸ Periodically survey district workers and residents and/or conduct focus groups with them to learn about their shopping habits.

ELDER-FRIENDLY + AGING-IN-PLACE

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>An Elder-Friendly and Aging-In-Place strategy recognizes that people have different needs as they advance in age and life stage. An Elder-Friendly strategy helps people continue living independently for as long as possible by providing retail goods and services, medical and social services, and a safe, accommodating environment.</p> <p>The outward appearance of an Elder-Friendly strategy may not be apparent to the casual visitor, but may be reflected in physical aspects of the district (such as additional benches or longer crosswalk timers), or even some operational aspects of businesses (such as offering early dining specials, or selling groceries and household items in smaller packages). The strategy bridges, retail, healthcare, social services, environmental design, and other aspects of commercial district design.</p> <p>The range of businesses that can participate in an elder-friendly district is diverse. Often, the strategy can be incorporate many existing businesses by making operational adjustments to things like store hours, package or serving sizes, or offering home delivery. The Elder-Friendly strategy is usually pursued in tandem with one or more other, compatible strategies, rather than as a stand-alone approach.</p>	<p>Populations entering their later-middle-age and retirement years today are different from past generations. The Baby Boom generation is often physically active and may continue to work much later in their lives than their parents did.</p> <p>In general, elder households:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Are no longer raising families and may be considering downsizing their home. ▸ Include a greater proportion of single-person households. They are also likely to include more multi-generational households. ▸ Spend money on experiences more than retail products. These households have already accumulated all the things they need for living and are probably starting to give things away. ▸ Older households buy many of the staples of traditional business districts (like groceries, household supplies, restaurant meals, and prepared foods). They also purchase many health-and-wellness services (e.g., doctor visits, prescription drugs, vitamins, exercise classes, and medical equipment). They purchase travel-and-leisure items and equipment, and gifts for children and grandchildren. ▸ They purchase fewer durable goods (like furniture, appliances, building supplies) and they buy less apparel. 	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install improved sidewalk lighting. ▸ Develop a matching grant program to help businesses make their stores handicapped accessible. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Gather a focus group of elder residents to better understand their needs, including social and commercial. ▸ Invite elder residents to serve on the revitalization organization’s board. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Set up daily walking groups that include the commercial district as part of their route. ▸ Help businesses market to older households that may not be technologically savvy or participate in social media. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Help businesses coordinate home delivery services ▸ Work with businesses to comply with accessibility standards and identify funding opportunities or tax credits for accessibility improvements.

ENTERTAINMENT + NIGHTLIFE

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Creating an “Entertainment and Nightlife” district is an evening-oriented strategy that addresses the things people do when they go out for enjoyment. For many districts, this strategy can be complementary to one or more daytime-oriented strategies. “Entertainment and Nightlife” is sometimes confused with an “Arts District” strategy – and there are some similarities between the two. An entertainment district usually includes a blend of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Restaurant dining › Drinking establishments › Music (from small jazz club to larger venues) › Performing arts › Visual arts are often part of the mix, but active engagement (eating, dancing, socializing) is the primary driver for customers. <p>Districts tend to have large trade areas (often regional) and they tend to function as destinations: The district is the draw, rather than an individual business.</p> <p>This can sometimes function as a “transitional strategy”, particularly for struggling districts: People may begin to come because it is seen as off-beat. That attention may be followed several years later by new residents and additional daytime retail uses. Historic buildings and an “urban” experience are often defining characters for Nightlife and Entertainment districts.</p>	<p>Customers for entertainment districts tend to be younger, though not universally so. They tend to be young couples or singles and they have disposable income. The customer for this strategy tends to be more adventurous and includes people who are interested in food (whether fine dining or unusual cuisines) and music. It can include urbanites, suburbanites, and rural or small-town residents whose common trait is to seek out an authentic, “urban-feeling” experience.</p> <p>Key benefits include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Longer business days with economic activity after many other traditional business districts have turned off the lights; › Parking demand at hours complementary to retail and office demand; › Strategy fits well with historic buildings and can make use of some larger spaces; and › Can function as a complement to a daytime-oriented strategy. <p>Trade-offs of this strategy include less activity during the day and the strategy can be associated with “quality of life” issues, including noise and drinking. Residents may object to the strategy and it will be particularly important to engage them in considering a nightlife focus. In addition, consumers’ tastes can be fickle, especially when it comes to entertainment districts: A place that is “hot” now may find itself out-of-favor in a few years.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Install improved sidewalk lighting to increase public safety at night. › Encourage retailers to create active window displays and to keep their windows lit until very late evening. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Engage residents before adopting the strategy to make sure they support it and to identify ways to mitigate adverse impacts. › Engage owners of entertainment businesses in a regular conversation of “responsible hospitality” so you can address problems quickly and as they arise. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Organize a “night market” with food truck vendors, retail pop-ups, and a “beer garden.” › Stage a play that takes place on the street or in a store window, at night. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Survey evening patrons in order to describe the customer profile and trade area. › Work with a few daytime retail businesses to create pop-up evening businesses within their stores.

ETHNIC SPECIALTIES

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>The Ethnic Specialties strategy pursues a cluster of retail and retail-service, entertainment, industrial, and wholesaling businesses that primarily serve the needs of a particular ethnic or cultural group, but may be patronized by any shopper. Often, ethnic specialties include foods, but they may also include apparel, books and magazines, and other retail goods. A cluster may also include various professional services (such as doctors, dentists, lawyers, and tax services), especially in districts where another language is commonly spoken.</p> <p>Commercial districts serving a particular cultural group have long existed. For example, Chinatowns exist in multiple US cities (and around the world), some of which date to the 19th century. And while there are other eponymously-named – Koreatown and Japantown in Los Angeles, for example – many are not. Many neighborhoods and business districts are known in their own regions for their strong cluster of Mexican-American, African American, Arab American, or other set of culturally-connected businesses. By consciously adding to and reinforcing a cluster, a district can become a “cultural village” both in its retail offerings and in its environment.</p>	<p>Rather than developing a Catalyst Strategy Brief for each of a dozen or more ethnicities or cultures, Ethnic Specialties is a broader category and one that requires articulating a focus based on the characteristics of the local population. For this strategy, the core customers provide the specificity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Ethnic districts tend to have a large draw area ▸ They attract others seeking out authentic cultural foods, products, or experiences ▸ More than other strategies, the customer defines the district ▸ Ethnic economies can be fairly self-contained and even insular ▸ Business mix can be very wide-ranging – manufacturing to galleries to restaurants ▸ Highly differentiated (does not typically compete with malls, chains) <p>A significant potential challenge is, the strategy may not be embraced by whole community, especially by those who are not members of the specific culture or group.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Encourage bilingual storefront signs ▸ Write design guidelines that encourage the use of design cultural elements (e.g., flag colors, or symbols). <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Recruit members of the target market to the board. ▸ Hold community or small-group meetings to openly discuss the benefits and challenges of creating an ethnic specialties district, and to explore ways to make sure the strategy is inclusive. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Develop a brand or identity that connects the ethnic specialty and the commercial district. ▸ Organize a "Street Fare" showcasing the foods (and arts and music) of the neighborhood's culture(s). <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Establish a commercial kitchen where home-based ethnic food businesses can produce specialty foods for retail sale or distribution. ▸ Establish a business assistance team that can help immigrant business owners adopt standardized practices.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Family-friendly commercial districts offer a range of products and services for all members of the family. But the “family-friendly” nature of these districts is defined as much, if not more, by the types of special events they offer, their store hours, and the overall atmosphere of inclusiveness that they provide. Special events provide opportunities for families to have fun together, for children to have a safe environment in which to play, and for young people to build lasting memories of the district. Businesses adapt their merchandise mix, services, and hours to meet the needs of busy families. And the physical characteristics of the district help make the experience of visiting a convenient and engaging one.</p> <p>More than most other Catalyst Strategies, a Family-Friendly strategy focuses on children. For this reason, family-friendly districts are more likely to be liveliest in the early evening and on Saturdays – versus, for example, districts focusing on entertainment and nightlife, which are more likely to be liveliest later in the evening. Family-friendly districts also often focus on meeting the shopping and service needs of the community’s aging population, providing a walkable place to live, shop, access medical and other personal services, and socialize.</p>	<p>The customers for this strategy are families, of course – and, in particular, families with children at home and/or those helping care for aging parents or grandparents. There are several customer segments to pay particular attention to in planning a Family-Friendly strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Families, particularly with babies and young children at home ▸ Grandparents and households caring for elderly family members ▸ Teens <p>Besides the obvious benefit of offering products and experiences for all members of the family, a Family-Friendly strategy helps young people develop positive memories of the district – memories that will hopefully translate into lifelong preferences for walkable, mixed-use districts.</p> <p>The primary trade-off for a Family-Friendly strategy is that it is not generally compatible with a strategy heavily dependent on bars and nightlife. Also, to the extent that a Family-Friendly strategy depends on attracting shoppers from a relatively large geographic area, rather than primarily from walking-distance neighborhoods or from the district’s workers, it might place additional demands on downtown parking.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Add kid-friendly, kid-scale street furniture to public spaces. ▸ Sponsor a design competition for high school students to decorate fire hydrants or traffic light switching boxes. ▸ Offer changing tables in restrooms <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Partner with area high schools to offer internships in downtown businesses. ▸ Add a student representative to the board of the revitalization organization. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Organize a Halloween window painting event for children. ▸ Offer outdoor movie screenings <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Add new product lines to existing businesses: restaurants might package and sell homemade baby food, or a pack-and-ship store might offer gift wrapping. ▸ Create an independent living and/or assisted living facility downtown, perhaps adapting an older or historic warehouse, hotel, or industrial building for this purpose.

FOOD

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>The Food strategy expands the role of food sales and food service in older and historic commercial districts and establishes the commercial district as a food hub, including farmers’ markets, food production, catering, restaurants.</p> <p>Historically, downtowns were home to farm markets and food stores. For centuries, these were specialized stores – green grocers, bakeries, butchers, fish markets, confectioners, and many more. These later evolved into the modern grocery store.</p> <p>While grocery stores left downtowns and neighborhood commercial centers in the 1960s and 70s, restaurants and cafes remained, offering sit-down and carry-out meals, and a social experience to district workers, residents, shoppers, and visitors.</p> <p>As interest in downtown living has grown, the need for downtown food stores has grown, also. Downtown and neighborhood commercial district revitalization programs have been increasingly successful in attracting grocery chains and in helping launch independently owned grocery stores to support the needs of new residents. In addition, a growing number of older and historic commercial districts serve as food production hubs, offering facilities where restaurateurs, caterers, food cart operators, and others can prepare and package food for resale.</p>	<p>Everyone eats food, of course, but the core customers tend to be one of two groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ People who live or work in or near the district: For the people who live or work nearby, food is a convenience product. ▸ People looking for a social experience: Restaurants, cafes, and bars offer opportunities for social interaction – a place to meet friends, to celebrate special events, to casually discuss business, or to kick back and relax after work. Sociologist Ray Oldenberg calls these “third places” – places that, like home (“first places”) and work (“second places”), are essential to civic life. <p>There are other potential customers, also. For instance, grocery stores, grocery wholesalers, and restaurants might be customers for foods that are produced and packaged downtown. Downtown restaurants might also provide catering services, serving the entire community or region. And downtown grocers might offer local deliveries, reaching many potential customers.</p> <p>There are a few trade-offs to consider. In particular, start-up costs for both restaurants and food stores can be high. And, because inventory can spoil, work hours are often long, and profit margins can be thin, successfully managing a food business is more difficult than managing many other types of businesses.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Develop a public orchard in a pocket park. ▸ Install banners to strengthen the visibility of the district’s restaurants. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Develop a partnership with the closest culinary school(s) within the region to identify potential entrepreneurs. ▸ Develop a partnership with the US Department of Agriculture’s Rural Development office to identify potential sources of funding and technical assistance. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Organize a food festival to spotlight the district’s restaurants and other food-related businesses. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Create a program to help establish new restaurants, such as a deferred loan repayment program, an incentive grant program, or a crowdfunding program. ▸ Identify unique food items created by district restaurants and talk with restaurateurs about the possibility of packaging and marketing them regionally or nationally.

GREEN PRODUCTS + SERVICES

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>A “Green” strategy pursues an environmentally-friendly economy for the commercial district. It supports businesses concerned with recycling and upcycling, and service businesses that use sustainable practices, such as purchasing energy from renewable sources or delivering goods by bicycle.</p> <p>A Green district prides itself on green building practices (which includes historic preservation) and the management organization works to be at the leading edge of environmentalism. This may be visible in public improvements and amenities like extensive bike lanes, rain gardens and water run-off retention, and street lights designed for both low energy consumption and reduced light pollution. The strategy should also be visible in the district’s commercial activities, such as small manufacturing businesses that produce new products from old materials (upcycling) and businesses that commit to zero landfill waste. Restaurants in a Green district source their products from sustainable suppliers, and they compost their food waste. There are electric car charging stations throughout the district. If in an urban area, public transit and car-share services are emphasized over personal cars.</p>	<p>A Green strategy targets customers who tend to be younger, highly educated, values-driven, design-conscious, and members of the “creative class.” Core audiences may also include young families, idealistic and aging “Boomers” and others who care deeply about the environment. A preference for locally-made and sustainably-sourced products align with these shoppers’ values.</p> <p>The Green strategy is forward-looking and advances a long trend that can trace its origins to the early 1960s, but has only recently come to be almost-universally embraced and part of broad public consciousness. Even as it is forward-looking, it leverages the layout and infrastructure of historic commercial districts and traditional town planning, as compact development creates efficiencies in land and energy use. A Green strategy can have local benefits while also being good for the planet.</p> <p>While it is hard to argue with the virtues of an environmental friendliness, the Green strategy may prove difficult in trying to get some existing, old-school businesses to embrace it. In addition, some older or very traditional customers may not identify with the strategy. Perhaps the greatest potential trade-off or barrier for pursuing the Green strategy is its potential impact on price points: Local, organic, and green products tend to be significantly more expensive than conventional alternatives.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install bike lanes and bike racks ▸ Install rain gardens <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Involve the community in building a green movement in the commercial district and at home. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Hold special events with zero landfill waste. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Help businesses to purchase energy from renewable sources ▸ Help businesses create zero-waste practices

HEALTH + WELLNESS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>A Health and Wellness strategy pulls together retail, recreational, educational, and professional businesses (including social service organizations) and organizes them around improving people's wellbeing. Businesses like pharmacies, urgent care centers, and doctors' and dentists' offices are obvious components of this strategy. Others may include gyms, yoga studios, spas, organic grocers, smoothie shops, health-and-beauty-aid stores, etc.</p> <p>The cluster may already exist yet not be visible or obvious (even to revitalization leaders) because the individual businesses may not explicitly promote health and wellness. For example, health and wellness may be inherent in what a business does (as a dance studio), or an aspect of what a business does (as a restaurant with healthy choices highlighted on their menu). Pursuing a Health and Wellness strategy often involves consciously cultivating these aspects and promoting them to make the cluster apparent.</p> <p>A health and wellness district may be organized around a medical anchor (like a hospital); or it might center around relaxation, as in a spa or resort town. Incompatible businesses include unhealthy fast food chains, tanning salons, an excessive number of liquor stores, and the like.</p> <p>Public space amenities may include fitness parks, tennis courts, running trails, and even water bowls for dogs and benches for people – to encourage walking.</p>	<p>Customers for the Health and Wellness strategy can range from young families to senior citizens and from “medical tourists” to vacationers. In some cases, customers may be unaware of their own participation in a health-and-wellness pursuit, such as someone who enrolls in a martial arts class with the goal of learning self-defense.</p> <p>Not all people identify themselves as interested in a health and wellness lifestyle: People who make healthy eating and healthy living part of their identity are often highly educated and more affluent. (Whole Foods, for example, is known for looking at educational achievement data when identifying potential store locations.) The customer profile for someone who participates in Health and Wellness strategy is less price-sensitive than most other strategies.</p> <p>One of the great benefits of a Health and Wellness strategy is its ability to tie together diverse businesses, often by making subtle changes in business operations (e.g., by adding or adjusting some products or services). In order to make Health and Wellness a driver of your district's economy (and more than a promotional tie-in), it needs at least a couple of businesses that are clearly linked to the strategy. This might include a fitness center or YMCA, or a hospital or other anchor business or institution.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Install signs and markers to create walking and running trails in and around the commercial district. ▶ Install exercise equipment in a pocket park. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Convene representatives of local health-related institutions or businesses to establish a partnership for the strategy. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a brand identity that connects health and wellness to the district. ▶ Hold a health fair, with healthy cooking demonstrations, physical activities, and opportunities to get screened for blood pressure and other health indicators. ▶ Install parking signs that note number of steps to the center of district, making a challenge of parking farther away from one's destination, rather than closer. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work with restaurants to offer healthy options on their menus. ▶ Work with a local gym to run outdoor “boot camps.”

HOME FURNISHINGS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>A Home Furnishings strategy pursues a cluster of retail, service, and professional businesses related to the home, including interiors, furniture and housewares, floors and finishes, garden and outdoors, design and construction services, and other businesses related to home life.</p> <p>When the Home Furnishings strategy is fully developed, your downtown or commercial district will be recognized as a “go-to” place for goods and services related to making a home.</p> <p>To be successful in the diverse category of home furnishings, the business mix does not necessarily need to be comprehensive, but it should contain at least several (in a small town) to a dozen or more (in a larger downtown or urban district) related businesses within a tight geographic area – usually a couple of blocks. Contributing businesses are often “complementary”, related to different aspects of the home – a furniture store and a paint supply store, for example.</p> <p>Because many home furnishings goods and services are only occasional purchases, a Home Furnishings strategy functions as a destination and its trade area is therefore relatively large.</p> <p>In addition to businesses directly related to the strategy, restaurants are a desired amenity, especially because shopping for home furnishings can be a several-hour (or even all-day) trip. Coffee shops and places to sit outdoors are also highly desirable.</p>	<p>Virtually every household makes home furnishings purchases from time to time, and at different stages in its life cycle. But, generally speaking, the customers most closely identified with home furnishings purchases tend to be:</p> <p>Younger. This may include recent graduates starting their careers and moving into their first apartment, young couples moving in together, or young families. Younger people are at a life stage when they are acquiring the things they need for living. Life changes (such as moving or divorce) can also initiate home furnishings spending. Older individuals may make less frequent but more expensive purchases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Homeowners. People who own their homes are likely to make larger investments in furnishing and decorating their homes than renters. ▸ Renters. Renters are more likely to purchase adaptable home furnishings, such as smaller furniture pieces they can take with them when they move. <p>Price points for a Home Furnishings strategy can cover the entire spectrum from low to high, but should be appropriate to the customers and context. The strategy is very compatible with historic buildings and remains stable as a bricks-and-mortar retail sector.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Paint some old wooden chairs bright colors and place them throughout the public space to create informal places for people to sit. ▸ Facilitate home furnishings businesses to place products in other stores throughout the district, such as placing table-top wares in a local restaurant. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Meet with district property owners to discuss how they would support or participate in the Home Furnishings strategy. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Stage live window displays, with volunteers living out everyday life in a furniture store's window display (e.g., having a family dinner, or watching a movie on television). ▸ Offer home decorating workshops for target customer segments, such as designing for small-apartment living, or designing a new kitchen. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Turn a café into a furniture store (or vice versa) ▸ Provide a description of the Home Furnishings strategy along profiles of target customers to all of the district's businesses.

KNOWLEDGE WORKERS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Primarily focuses on software and technology, but also includes workers in creative professions and the traditional professions (e.g., lawyers, etc.)</p> <p>The strategy attracts young, creative entrepreneurs and can be a way for rural communities to grow jobs and population</p>	<p>Knowledge economy workers are typically younger, highly educated, and entrepreneurial.</p> <p>The strategy requires excellent and reliable broadband service to all suitable areas of the district.</p> <p>Knowledge workers often keep long/odd hours, a benefit because they make the district more vibrant at night</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Create an outdoor “beer garden” as a “third space” for knowledge workers – both to work and socialize <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Help individual workers convene and define needs for communal work space. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Invite food trucks to serve knowledge worker centers at lunchtime <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Establish a co-working space ▸ Make wifi available in all businesses

MANUFACTURING

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Historically, most downtowns were major manufacturing centers for their communities. Tanners, tanners, sawyers, furniture makers, and many others set up shop in the town center.</p> <p>Over time, civic leaders became concerned about the pollution that some manufacturing businesses create. By the mid-20th century, many North American towns and cities had banned manufacturers from downtown and neighborhood commercial centers. But new technologies have made new, non-polluting manufacturing techniques possible. Most significantly, the internet has given birth to a huge number of software-based and knowledge-based industries, from software engineering to computer-driven component manufacturing. And, at the same time, there is new appreciation – and growing market demand – for a very broad range of handcrafted products, products made from repurposed materials, and custom-made items. In addition, there are many types of manufacturing businesses that never left downtowns, like printers, upholsterers, and tailors.</p>	<p>Many of the businesses pursuing these new opportunities are small businesses, typically with fewer than a dozen or so workers, making them ideal for upper-floor spaces, warehouses, and other secondary and peripheral downtown spaces. Those that produce physical goods are also often excellent ground-floor tenants, engaging passers-by in watching them work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Customers include: › Sales to other businesses › Direct-to-consumer <p>This can be a good secondary strategy, especially to make use of difficult spaces. And employees of manufacturing businesses become customers of the district</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Activate windows by bringing production to front of stores. › Identify building, zoning, or regulatory barriers that may need to be changed. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Assist manufacturers with distribution and marketing › <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Establish a “maker space” for entrepreneurs

MILITARY INSTALLATION

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>The United States military branches have training, educational, and readiness installations across the country. Some of these are adjacent to historic downtowns (like the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania). Others are more distant yet function as important economic anchors, like Fort Benning, which is about 10 miles outside Columbus, Georgia. The Military Installations strategy focuses on making better economic and social connections between the military site and the downtown or commercial district.</p> <p>In the past, military towns were often known for having seedy commercial strips. In many places, this characteristic has been changing, especially as more women enter the services and as the military becomes more career and family-oriented. As military installations have tried to expand commercial amenities on-post (often chains or franchises which enter into private development contracts), a nearby traditional downtown or business district with unique independent businesses can offer a market-differentiated alternative.</p> <p>With an all-volunteer military, quality of life has become increasingly important to all branches of service because it influences a person’s decision to pursue a military career. The quality of the local environment (both on-post and in the community) affects recruitment and retention – for officers, enlisted personnel, and the civilian employee population.</p>	<p>Army posts, Air Force bases, and the like may have a surprisingly long list of personnel affiliates, both military and civilian, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Military personnel Military spouses and families Civilian staff Military contractors, vendors Military heritage visitors <p>Civilian employees at military installations generally have secure jobs, good benefits, and discretionary income.</p> <p>Military personnel, while transient, are the much larger consumer segment. They tend to be in their 20s and 30s (many career members of the armed services “retire” in their early 40s) and they tend to spend only up to a few months at a given installation. Therefore, they usually need to be introduced to downtown to have reason go.</p> <p>The military has become largely family-oriented as it has become a career choice. Members tend to be well-traveled. Their worldly experiences often make them adventurous eaters (able to support ethnic restaurants in small towns, for example). And their retail interests may extend to unusual home furnishings they have collected from abroad.</p> <p>You may find this strategy competes with ever-expanding on-post restaurants and retail.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install American flags on all downtown businesses and light poles. ▸ Create a driving tour guide to military historical sites or memorials on and off the installation. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Establish liaison to post <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Host military appreciation event ▸ Set up a discount card (honored by participating downtown businesses) for members of the military. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Promote downtown residential options to military singles, families ▸ Help businesses establish online storefronts so they can maintain business relationships with military customers as they move around the country and the world.

MILLENNIALS

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>This strategy addresses the demographic slice born between the early 1980s and early 2000s. The authenticity and “retro” nature of traditional business districts appeals to this generation. At the same time, in order to connect with people in bricks-and-mortar stores, the district and its businesses must embrace social media, and the environment must be engaging. Millennials expect shopping and dining to offer experiences and entertainment. Pop-up stores, “night markets”, or digitally-interactive window displays all serve to connect to this consumer segment.</p> <p>Products and services in a Millennials-oriented district are characterized by the handmade, local sourcing, and authenticity. (Chain businesses are de-emphasized.)</p> <p>Because many Millennials have non-traditional jobs (as self-employed “makers” or knowledge workers), they are attracted to different kinds of office spaces and business models than generations before them. Work hours may be more erratic than traditional office workers, so retailers and restaurants may need to shift their opening hours later. Millennials are social (both digitally and in their after-work activities), and are frequent customers of independent, lower-to-moderate price point bars, restaurants and cafés.</p> <p>This trend-setting demographic tends to bring “piggyback” customers with it: Certain older consumers enjoy some of the vibe and creativity that Millennials generate.</p>	<p>Millennials represent an emerging market at the time of this writing (2015), and one that has a built-in affinity for the authenticity of traditional commercial districts.</p> <p>Millennials are taking longer than previous generations to get established in their careers and start families. The Great Recession adversely affected their job prospects and earning potential. Millennials therefore are reaching traditional benchmarks later than previous generations – things like buying a car (or even getting a driver’s license), marrying, having kids, and buying a home. Still, these same characteristics make them good consumer prospects for traditional business districts – places that often offer rental housing in authentic and interesting spaces and where there is less need for a car.</p> <p>Millennials are experiential consumers: they expect to be engaged through merchandising, presentation, and interactivity. But because Millennials value <i>values</i>, these experiences must be real and not fabricated or “Disneyfied.”</p> <p>Millennials are socially and digitally connected like no generation that has preceded them, challenging businesses to engage with the demographic in non-traditional ways. Some Millennials (especially busy professionals getting started in their careers) value and prioritize time savings. They do not necessarily see online shopping (including grocery delivery) as being in conflict with their ideals or their preference for local, independent businesses.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install creatively-designed bike racks throughout the district. ▸ Install native-plant landscaping and “rain gardens” – and include interpretive signs about water and plant management. <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Recruit members of the Millennial demographic to your board. ▸ Interview business owners who are part of this demographic to understand their needs. <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Set up social media profiles aimed at connecting the Millennial audience to the commercial district. ▸ Organize a “night market”, with food trucks and craft vendors. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Establish a co-working office space for independent knowledge workers. ▸ Establish a “maker space” for independent entrepreneurs.

SPORTS + RECREATION

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>Connects outdoor activities – camping, boating, hiking, climbing, hunting, etc. – with supporting businesses and amenities. This includes outfitters and equipment sales, restaurants and food services, accommodations, and others.</p> <p>The goal of the strategy is to connect the district to those who use nearby outdoor or recreational attractions</p>	<p>Customers include outdoor enthusiasts and cover a varied spectrum of ages and abilities, and travel lifestyle preferences.</p> <p>While sporting and recreation are usually associated with youth, many outdoor enthusiasts (hikers, hunters, fishermen (and women) are seniors traveling or enjoying their sport without families or children in tow.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install wayfinding signs from nearby trails or paths to the commercial district ▸ Install a climbing wall (or ice-climbing wall) downtown <p>Organization</p> <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Establish a bike or foot race that goes through downtown <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Work with sporting equipment businesses to offer guided tours

TOURISTS + TOURISM

IN A NUTSHELL	CUSTOMERS AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS	ACTIVITY EXAMPLES
<p>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.</p> <p>Sometimes the commercial district itself is the draw, if it is noted for its atmosphere, shops or restaurants. But often, in traditional commercial districts that have a tourism component to their economy, the district itself is not the primary driver of visitation. In these cases, the commercial district provides tourists with amenities and retail services that people need while they are traveling, or it provides supplemental activities that enrich their visit. Virtually all commercial districts serving tourists offer restaurant dining and some convenience items; many offer lodging options (if the destination typically involves an overnight stay).</p> <p>When trying to increase tourism 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.</p>	<p>Tourism is a vast category and its participants do not fit any one customer profile. Tourism includes visitors to historic places, cultural tourists, weekend/second home-owners, resort-goers, conventioners, business travelers, outdoors enthusiasts, and many others – and it exists at all price points. Articulating your visitors’ typical demographic profile will help you to align your commercial district’s offerings with what your tourists want. The quality common to virtually all tourists is that they 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.</p> <p>A primary economic benefit of tourism is that it brings outside consumer spending to the community. As a result, these districts 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 job, both directly and indirectly related to hospitality.</p> <p>There can be a trade-offs to tourism: 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 it brings a transient character to neighborhoods, or if the influx spurs gentrification. The general principle is, create a place that locals love, and visitors will love it, too.</p>	<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Install way-finding signs geared toward those unfamiliar with district <p>Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Convene regional tourism professionals to share data <p>Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Develop a guide to local businesses and attractions. ▸ Cross-promote businesses with local attractions by placing brochures, coupons, or other promotional material at those attractions. <p>Economic Vitality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Set up large-format maps in stores and have customers mark where they live ▸ Increase lodging options through short-term, upper-story rentals