

Appendix E

SWOT Analysis

Combined from Six Committees

STRENGTHS

Circulation

- Good pedestrian orientation around the square, zero lot lines, canyon feel, sense of closure
- Multiple entries
- Schools and being able to walk to them
- Core of churches – may need to look into sharing parking

Economic

- Courthouse / County Seat
- Core businesses
- Visitor's Center – 80,000 visitors annually
- Bank
- Square
- Offices and commercial
- Grocery store
- Shareholder's week
- Chamber of Commerce
- Main Street
- Personal services and retail
- City government
- Development activity around 8th & A – two new brick buildings, Bentonville Plaza
- Location – backyard to the largest company in the world
- Area is becoming more multi-cultural
- Location in regards to the nation's population
- The city's location is along a great corridor
- Fortune 500 companies with representation in Bentonville
- Financial resources
- Low unemployment
- Skilled work force
- NWACC
- Mixed use environment
- Main Street Program with a strong director and leadership
- Population center
- Geographically central location

- Good mix of age groups
- Chamber and A & P Commission being located downtown
- Affordability of housing – cheaper than some lots in town

Image and Identity

- Community support – people to attend festivals
- Nostalgia – marriage proposals
- Place to gather
- Square
- Safety
- Fountain
- Historical value
- Statue – commitment to something they believe in, part of heritage and culture, conversational topic, dedicated to honor those who died
- Central with its redbud trees, flags and creates a pathway to downtown
- Area is becoming more multi-cultural
- Laid back and friendly
- Clean
- Mixed use environment
- Core of churches – may need to look into sharing parking
- Geographically central location
- Good mix of age groups
- Chamber and A & P Commission being located downtown
- Affordability of housing – cheaper than some lots in town
- Home town atmosphere
- The downtown does already have destinations, both pedestrian and vehicles, including the park on the east side, the terminus of the trail, the square, Compton Gardens, churches, schools and county facilities.

Future Development

- Development activities are exempt from impact fees
- Two historic districts in the downtown
- Grocery store
- Offices and commercial
- Courthouse / County Seat
- Core businesses
- Visitor's Center – 80,000 visitors annually
- Bank
- Library – 60,000 visitors annually, seniors during the day, Wal-mart associates over lunch, children after school, workers after five, and families and students after 6
- Personal services and retail
- City government
- Studio 412
- Development activity around 8th & A – two new brick buildings, Bentonville Plaza

- Location – backyard to the largest company in the world
- Location in regards to the nation’s population
- The city’s location is along a great corridor
- Fortune 500 companies with representation in Bentonville
- Square that wasn’t there five years ago
- Existing developers that are setting examples of good development
- Opportunity to grow away from the core
- Compton Gardens north of town
- Population center
- Good mix of age groups
- Demonstrated commitment to stay from the churches and government
- Area is growing and is an opportunity for rehabilitation and restoration which doesn’t happen in a dying community
- Affordability of housing – cheaper than some lots in town

Architecture & Streetscape

- Two historic districts in the downtown
- Square
- Architecture – older, character, no strip malls
- Fountain
- Historical value
- Statue – commitment to something they believe in, part of heritage and culture, conversational topic, dedicated to honor those who died
- Central with its redbud trees, flags and creates a pathway to downtown
- Bentonville School Districts
- Square that wasn’t there five years ago
- Historical facades – there is something to work with
- Aesthetically pleasing streetscape in certain areas

WEAKNESSES

Circulation & Linkages

- Difficult access from the east and west
- Bottlenecks during the rush hours – especially A & Central
- Noticeable entrances and gateways needed at 14th and Main, 14th and A, Central, 8th
- Not taking advantage of the 11,000 people working at the Wal-Mart General Office – problems could be lack of transportation and workers don't want to lose their parking space – may need to consider a trolley service
- Focus on A or Main to develop first as a main thoroughfare – transportation entry point
- Traffic around the square at 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.
- Lack of pedestrian activity – needs to be walkable
- Parking – convenience, need something to look at while traveling between parking space and businesses
- Lack of sidewalks outside of square
- Redbuds have torn up the sidewalks
- Width of right of way for parking and landscaping (some debate on this point)
- Accessibility
- Square is an island – it is nice when one street is closed off – some of which will improve with the second phase of the square renovation project
- No true entryway with directional signage
- No trolley or light rail to move people and bring them downtown and encourage development along those lines

Architecture & Streetscape

- Inconsistency of appearance – lack of desire of property owners to keep up properties
- Lack of consistent signage
- Lack of consistent landscaping
- Noticeable entrances and gateways needed at 14th and Main, 14th and A, Central, 8th
- Need core items to build from – i.e. The Plaza in Kansas City was built around two features – architecture and fountains
- Focus on A or Main to develop first as a main thoroughfare – transportation entry point
- SW A Street – the condition and use of the properties
- Lack of good lighting – especially pedestrian level (see Hot Springs)
- Width of right of way for parking and landscaping (some debate on this point)
- Lack of code enforcement
- Visual appearance of storm drainage – lack of effective city-wide drainage plan
- Lack of street front buildings along entrance corridors – not pedestrian oriented
- Parks could be enhanced – maybe more pocket parks
- Lack of consistency in site development
- Lack of small gathering places – courtyards, niches
- Need a duplication of Central at the other entrances to the square
- No controls over appearance, but it needs to remain flexible so it doesn't become monotonous

- Unattractive appearance leading into downtown, except W. Central

Economic

- No restaurants or bars in the evening – lack of night life
- Variety of businesses is hodge-podge – not planned
- Not very unique – need a strategy that is unique to the area – a niche market
- Not taking advantage of the 11,000 people working at the Wal-Mart General Office – problems could be lack of transportation and workers don't want to lose their parking space – may need to consider a trolley service
- Dry county status perceived to be a deterrent to restaurants locating in Bentonville.
- Limited retail
- Lack of incentives for new businesses and to help existing businesses
- Monday and weekend business is slow
- Dead after 5:30 – need after-hours gathering place
- Churches as a weakness that restaurants can't locate – however, there is no minimum separation requirement in city code or state law - associated costs may be higher, but the ability is there
- Lack of specialty shops

Future Development

- No restaurants or bars in the evening – lack of night life
- Lack of loft apartments and urban-type housing
- Variety of businesses is hodge-podge – not planned
- Not taking advantage of the 11,000 people working at the Wal-Mart General Office – problems could be lack of transportation and workers don't want to lose their parking space – may need to consider a trolley service
- Growth and trying to keep up with it
- No hotels or facilities for trade shows
- Uninhabitable places
- Parks could be enhanced – maybe more pocket parks
- Lack of consistency in site development
- Lack of small gathering places – courtyards, niches
- Residential areas have not undergone redevelopment
- The fact the development in this area is exempt from impact fees is not promoted enough
- Thoughtless revitalization – need long term investments as opposed to making a quick profit
- Lack of variety of housing styles
- Fairgrounds

Infrastructure

- Infrastructure needs enhancement
- Overhead utilities
- Water/ sewer needs to be upgraded
- Stormwater drainage

- Lack of curb and gutter, mostly ditches
- Growth and trying to keep up with it
- Visual appearance of storm drainage – lack of effective city-wide drainage plan
- May need to upsize water and sewer lines to accommodate future development

Image & Identity

- Lack of image – need a consistent marketing plan
- Lack of overall plan
- SW A Street – the condition and use of the properties
- No true destination or gathering place
- No arts/sciences
- Lack of code enforcement
- Awareness of where downtown is
- Not promoting downtown businesses enough, such as through radio or television
- Not truly a destination

OPPORTUNITIES

Architecture & Streetscape

- Accent the positive and be complimentary to existing development/businesses
- Lack of control of codes – may need to get some established
- Create a visual signage plan to unify downtown

Future Development

- Accent the positive and be complimentary to existing development/businesses
- A restaurant or two to open up evening activity
- Perfect timing because people are getting tired of traveling to Fayetteville or even Scottsdale to go out to eat
- Turn Massey building back into a hotel when the library moves out
- New library will serve as a gathering place and will have film festivals, book festivals
- CDBG Funds
- Additional residential and providing a variety of housing types
- Fairgrounds – too small for its needs but is a great opportunity
- Opportunity for affordable housing
- Exempt from impact fees
- Corporations – need to put projects in front of them for fundraising efforts
- Municipal building planned to be downtown – they need to promote good civic architecture and design should not be an afterthought
- Library is committed to staying downtown
- Rogers has looked into abating property taxes and has approached the county and we will need to see what happens
- TIF Districts
- Look into historic preservation money available
- Continue to provide affordable housing – the market may take care of it, but the city may want to consider some regulation to maintain affordable housing in this area in order to maintain a diverse income - do not want to push affordable housing out away from the services - some of these efforts may be addressed with CDBG funds
- Create a pool of funds for low-interest loans for housing rehabilitation
- Rebuild Together is a good tool that could be used to help maintain affordable housing.

Economic

- Accent the positive and be complimentary to existing development/businesses
- A restaurant or two to open up evening activity
- Regional tourism opportunity with the Civil War activities and events
- Weekend trade shows
- Perfect timing because people are getting tired of traveling to Fayetteville or even Scottsdale to go out to eat
- Mixture of businesses – not all offices
- CDBG Funds

- Corporations – need to put projects in front of them for fundraising efforts
- Square Roots program offered by the Chamber which uses a consortium of banks to offer low interest loans for start-up capital or renovation for businesses in the downtown area – helps new businesses organize themselves with a business plan and uses SBA guidelines for those plans
- Promote success stories of downtown businesses

Circulation & Linkages

- Let visitors know that the square and downtown is here
- Trolley system
- Completing the connection with the General Office and making it easier for employees to access downtown
- Compton Gardens to the north of downtown
- Parking available for nighttime activities
- Link to trail system
- No transit hub – not connected
- 8th Street widening to three lanes, currently in front of the GO and planned for 2006 or 2007 from A on over to Moberly

Image & Identity

- Let visitors know that the square and downtown is here
- Expand culture, fine arts and public arts
- Need activity to bring people downtown on a continuous basis
- Link the statue with the Pea Ridge Battlefield
- Regional tourism opportunity with the Civil War activities and events
- Famous outlaws
- Culture – families, small town atmosphere that needs to be retained
- Downtown has a character that Scottsdale doesn't
- Old homes and trees
- Compton Gardens to the north of downtown
- Communication to travelers about what's going on downtown – need a better medium for promotion and communication
- Enhanced code enforcement
- Corporations – need to put projects in front of them for fundraising efforts
- Promote downtown lights and expand on holiday displays – possibly using an improvement district for property owners to contribute to the holiday displays
- Look into tourism money available from the state
- Need to promote Harp's as a full service grocery

THREATS

Future Development

- Residential redevelopment could squeeze out affordable housing - need to ensure that it maintains a mixed-income status
- I-540 corridor
- Developers gobbling up large portions of land
- Lack of planned development
- Renovation vs. new construction and the cost of renovation because of the age of buildings
- Degeneration of surrounding residential areas
- Lack of incentive program
- Pace of development
- No incentives for rehabilitation of existing housing stock – there are some historic preservation incentives for commercial buildings available at the federal level
- Need some land planning for linkage to Moberly from A along 8th St.
- Need to be able to look into the future

Architecture and Streetscape

- How high is too high for structures – need to determine the optimal height
- Renovation vs. new construction and the cost of renovation because of the age of buildings
- Protect the square – legal protection
- Lack of design

Image & Identity

- Degeneration of surrounding residential areas
- Losing small town character
- Short term thinking
- Not clearly defining the vision and not presenting it
- Resistance to change
- Potential challenge of decisions made throughout this process

Economic

- Lack of incentive program
- Boundaries of redevelopment district may be too small
- The County offices relocated which comes up every few years
- School district administration offices possibly relocating
- Competition with newer strip malls along Walton and other major transportation corridors

Circulation & Linkages

- Need connections to the commercial traffic
- Traffic – specifically through-traffic

- Parking continues to be an issue and we need to consider the type of development and how that will impact the need for parking - more pedestrian activities and residential uses would help decrease some of the parking issues