

FAIRMOUNT RETAIL DISTRICT RESEARCH AND BUSINESS RECRUITMENT PROJECT

Work Product Three:

Planning Models For Community Economic Development:

Strategies and Tools for
Neighborhood Business Districts

December 2011

Prepared for:

Fairmount Indigo CDC Collaborative

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OUR PURPOSE

- Identify and analyze **4 case studies** of planning models used to to spur community economic development in neighborhood business districts
- Focus on plans near **transit stations**
- **Primary questions:**
 - What kind of planning process did each community use?
 - What economic development strategies were recommended/implemented?
 - How can these approaches be applied to the Fairmount corridor?
 - What lessons can we learn from these planning processes?



PLANNING PROCESS TYPOLOGY

Traditional Station Area Planning (Type I)

Land-use policy document that addresses aspects of physical planning, such as:

- Allowable land uses
- Building heights
- Setbacks
- Streetscape design guidelines

Information often gathered through **charrette** or planner-facilitated workshops

Example: Charlotte LYNX Blue Line

Commercial District Revitalization Planning (Type II)

Retail **analysis** and **intervention strategy**

Coordinates roles and responsibilities of local actors to contribute to **business recruitment, development, and expansion** in an area, including:

- Attracting customers
- Physical improvements
- Real estate development
- Evaluating retail enhancement potential

Case studies explored in this research are Type II

CASE STUDIES

- **Saint Paul, MN:** Central Corridor Light Rail Transit (LRT) Plans
- **Rainier Valley, WA:** Retail Development Strategy
- **Oakland, CA:** Retail Enhancement Strategy
- **Washington, DC:** Retail Action Roadmap

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Common Elements of the Planning Process

- The planning process should incorporate an **inclusive, community-based** approach.
- Information gathering strategies should include **data collection** as well as more **participatory approaches** like interviews, site-visits and neighborhood working groups.
- **Community surveys and focus groups** are effective tools in gathering information about public perceptions, as well as goals for existing or proposed retail areas.
- **Planning outcomes should include:**
 - Market recommendations, or suggestions about the amount, mix, and format of new retail needed in each neighborhood and about physical improvements that might boost each neighborhood's retail performance.
 - Strategies, or ideas for more effectively attracting and cultivating retail businesses, financing retail development, and marketing the city's retail districts.

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Overview of Selected Strategies

- Develop a corridor wide **branding** strategy that creates a **unique identity** for each commercial node
- Create a user-friendly **website, or online portal**, targeted to visitors and new or potential consumers
- Strengthen and support **existing small businesses** to address any local retail/sales voids
- Provide **commercial property** assistance
- Improve small, **undercapitalized** businesses' access **to financial resources**
- Improve access to basic **technical assistance** services
 - Including helping existing businesses to adapt and take advantage of impending transportation improvements

CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Overview of Lessons Learned, Advice/Suggestions for Fairmont Station Area Business District Planning

Some broad takeaways from the case study analysis:

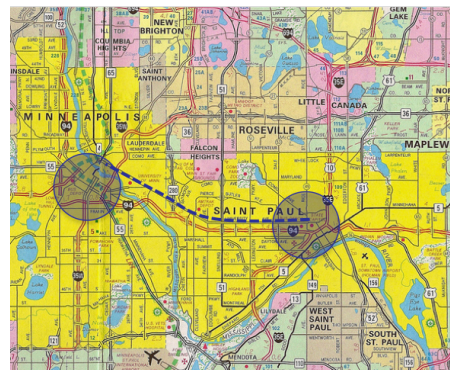
- Start planning early and be deliberate about forming a specific, cohesive plan
- Involve the community (Community Advisory Council)
- Be meticulous and realistic about organizational capacity
- Provide incentives for business recruitment such as competitive grants and free services to small businesses
- Be creative in filling vacancies
- Track progress and make adjustments.



Central Corridor Light Rail Transit Saint Paul, Minnesota

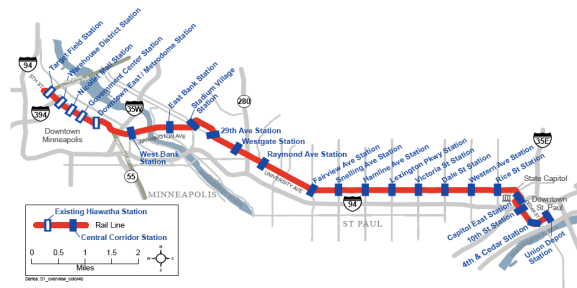
NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

- **Saint Paul**
Population: 285,086
- **University Avenue**
Major streetcar and automobile thoroughfare connecting Saint Paul and Minneapolis
- **1960s: Construction of I-94**
Discontinuation of streetcar and increased auto/bus traffic along University Ave.
- **2011: Funding for light rail transit**
Metropolitan Council received federal funding to develop LRT along University Ave.
- **Central Corridor LRT project will cost \$1 billion**



CHANGES IN THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR

- Neighborhoods along the corridor are **ethnically and economically diverse**
- Approximately **2,000 businesses** along the corridor, most of them small firms
- **18 new stations** built and operating by 2014
- Estimated **40,000 riders per day by 2030**
- **The 11-mile Central Corridor LRT will:**
 - Connect **five major areas of activity** throughout the Twin Cities
 - **Serve 123,000 residents** in 15 neighborhoods of Saint Paul
 - Contribute to **job growth** (from 280,000 jobs in 2010, to 345,000 by 2030)



CENTRAL CORRIDOR PLANNING

Saint Paul Central Corridor Development Strategy

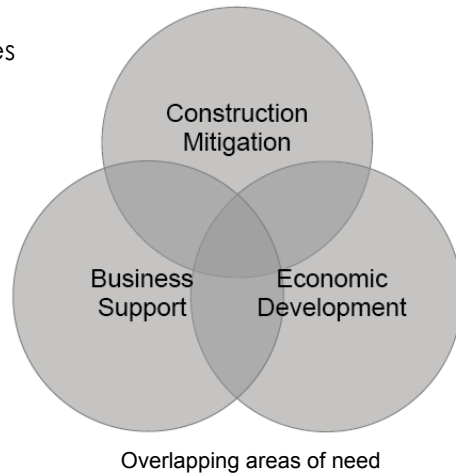
- Example of **Type I** planning
- Completed by the **City of Saint Paul** in 2007
- **Vision & development strategy** adopted as part of the City's Comprehensive Plan
- Addresses **land use, economic, and social development** impacts of LRT
- Includes **general strategies** for supporting local businesses

Business Resources Collaborative (BRC) Strategic Work Plan

- Example of **Type II** planning
- BRC → **coalition** of business groups, nonprofit community developers and local governments
- Strategic Work Plan completed by the **BRC** in 2010
- Provides a vision for the Central Corridor and identifies **specific action strategies** to support and grow local businesses

KEY FINDINGS

- The BRC Strategic Work Plan identifies **three overlapping areas of need** along the corridor:
 - **Construction Mitigation**
 - **Business Support**
 - **Economic Development**
- The plan includes **strategies** to address all three of these needs



STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

DEVELOP CORRIDOR-WIDE BRANDING STRATEGY

- Identify and assess the **unique characteristics of businesses** along the corridor.
- Evaluate district branding opportunities and find **common elements** that can be shared in an overall corridor-wide campaign.
- Identify tools and resources to develop and promote a **corridor-wide branding campaign**.

IMPLEMENTATION: DISCOVER CENTRAL CORRIDOR

- Discover Central Corridor is a corridor-wide **Buy Local initiative** that connects the community to businesses that are impacted by LRT construction.
- The **recognizable Central Corridor logo** provides a brand for businesses along the Corridor.
- The main logo is tailored to **reflect four distinct neighborhoods** along the corridor.
- The website, **discovercentralcorridor.com**, includes a map of all affected businesses along with basic store information so that it's easy for residents and visitors to connect with businesses.



Central Corridor Logo



Neighborhood Logo

IMPLEMENTATION: DISCOVER CENTRAL CORRIDOR

- Map from discovercentralcorridor.com showing the distinct neighborhoods along the corridor.

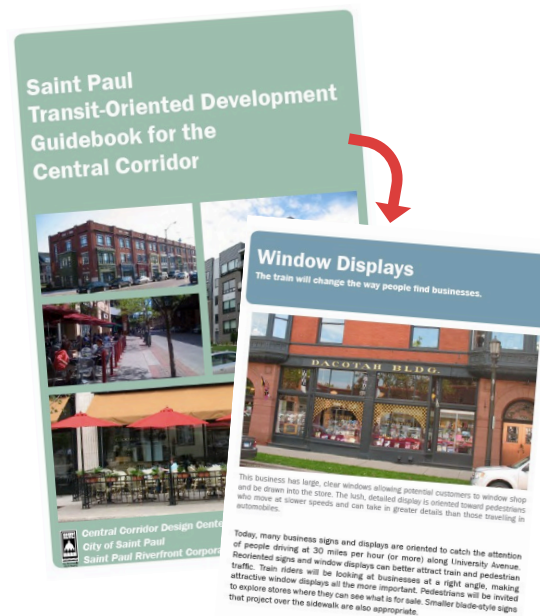


HELP EXISTING AND NEW BUSINESSES ADAPT TO LRT

- Evaluate need for alternative forms of financing/property ownership to maintain **affordability**.
- Identify, develop, and market **financing tools** geared toward small, locally-owned businesses.
- Assess **policy/regulatory implications** for new and existing businesses, and make recommendations for streamlining the process.
- Encourage **mixed-used developments**.

IMPLEMENTATION: TOD GUIDEBOOK FOR THE CENTRAL CORRIDOR

- Simple, **user-friendly** manual
- Provides **business tips, guiding plans, and design development principles** for the corridor
- Useful starting point for:
 - **Existing businesses** trying to adapt to LRT
 - **New businesses** interested in locating along the corridor



IMPROVE ACCESS TO BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

- Integrate and enhance the efforts of resource providers in offering **assistance and/or service and resources** to local businesses.
- Produce and maintain a **comprehensive directory of resource providers** that can be distributed community-wide as a co-branded informational tool. Develop website with links to providers' URLs.

IMPLEMENTATION: **READYFORRAIL.NET**

- ReadyForRail.net is an **information hub for businesses** located along the Central Corridor.
- The website contains information and **updates about LRT construction**.
- The site also includes information about **resources for small businesses** in both Minneapolis and Saint Paul.

IMPLEMENTATION: READYFORRAIL.NET

READY FOR RAIL net

The Central Corridor Light Rail Line will link Minneapolis and Saint Paul in 2014, and construction is under way. Go from here to find resources that will help you get your business ready for rail.

ReadyForRail.net is a Central Corridor information hub provided by the Business Resources Collaborative.
The BRC is a partnership of business coalitions, nonprofit community developers, and local governments that bridges various community-led planning efforts addressing business and economic development in the Central Corridor.
BRC Member Organizations

CONSTRUCTION INFO

Call the construction hotline with construction related comments or to report an incident:
651-602-1404

Sign up to get Central Corridor project updates from the Metropolitan Council:
Your Email Address [Send](#)

Outreach Coordinators
Your direct contacts for the construction project.

Schedules & Updates
What's happening when? Get the latest information from the Metropolitan Council.

Parking & Access
Know how yours will be affected.

BUSINESS RESOURCES

Business Consultants
One-on-one help to strengthen your business.

Minneapolis Small Business Support Services
See help for Minneapolis businesses.

Saint Paul Small Business Support Services
See help for Saint Paul businesses.

Small Business Loan Program
Find out how you can qualify.

Joint Marketing Programs
Learn about efforts to market, promote, and encourage area businesses > COMING SOON

Screenshot of the ReadyforRail.net homepage

INCREASE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

- **Identify all financial assistance and resources** to mitigate business interruption and provide business improvement and access to capital for business growth:
 - Grants
 - Loans
 - Technical and professional assistance
 - Business education and training
- **Provide financial assistance**, services, and resources for small businesses.

Implementation:

Small Business Forgivable Loan Program

- The Ready for Rail Small Business Forgivable Loan Program provides up to **\$20,000 loans** to qualifying businesses along the Central Corridor.
- **Businesses that qualify:**
 - Have no more than \$2 million in gross annual sales
 - Are independently owned with four or fewer locations
 - Have been at their Central Corridor location for a minimum of one year
 - Are focused on retail
 - Have experienced a decline in revenue due to the construction of LRT
- The forgivable loan **may be used for basic business expenses**, including payroll, inventory, rent/mortgage, utilities, taxes, marketing, and insurance.
- Loans are administered by the **Neighborhood Development Center**
- As of October 2011, the total value of loans approved is **\$691,307**.

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

START PLANNING EARLY

- Improved transit can bring a number of changes to a neighborhood– greater investment, changes in infrastructure, more people–so it’s better to **start planning for these changes sooner**, instead of reacting to them later.

“It would have been good for us to set up our small business forgivable loan program earlier so that the loans were ready to be distributed as soon as light rail construction started. Instead, construction started and disrupted many local businesses. Businesses lost customers but were unable to access funds until much later.”

~ Ellen Muller, *Economic Development Manager, City of Saint Paul*

INVOLVE THE COMMUNITY

- It's important for community members to be involved in a planning process from the beginning. Without community support, a plan is much less likely to be implemented successfully. Citizens should have the **opportunity to voice their concerns** and work together with other stakeholders to find a solution.

"It's essential that community members have the opportunity to express their concerns. In Saint Paul, past development decisions have negatively affected some of the communities along the Central Corridor. Many residents are understandably weary of new development, and we are respectful of that... We want to work with them to strengthen the fabric of the existing Central Corridor community so that long-standing residents benefit, and more people come to the avenue to experience its richness and culture."

~ Ellen Muller, Economic Development Manager, City of Saint Paul

LEARN FROM OTHERS

- When possible, **take advantage of existing resources** related to transit oriented development.
 - Learn from other cities that have done TOD
 - * Both Central Corridor interviewees were happy to share information and advice about their planning/implementation process
 - Find consultants who have worked on TOD

"If possible, find consultants who have done TOD planning. Otherwise, you'll spend a lot of time starting from scratch learning about TOD."

~ Chris Ferguson, BRC Chair and President & CEO, Bywater Business Solutions

MAKE THE MOST OF MARKETING

- Marketing can play an important role in neighborhood business district revitalization. Not only does it provide **important advertising** for local businesses, it also demonstrates **community support**.

“Visible marketing gives local businesses a sense of hope—it lets them know that people are pulling for them and working on their behalf.”

~ Chris Ferguson, BRC Chair and President & CEO, Bywater Business Solutions

- However, marketing should not be considered successful unless it actually provides **effective assistance to businesses**. For example:
 - A Progressive Dinner was organized to support Central Corridor businesses. Although the dinner received great media coverage, for many businesses, the cost of hosting the dinner was not worth the small number of people who attended. Here, the event cost businesses more than it was worth to them overall.
 - In contrast, a local coupon book was developed to help draw customers to Central Corridor businesses. For one business, 700 coupons were redeemed within a month, many of which came from customers that would not have come to their store otherwise. Here, businesses put forth relatively little effort for a substantial increase in the amount of foot-traffic to their business.

CONSIDER ZONING CHANGES

- A city’s zoning ordinance can make transit-oriented development particularly challenging to implement. To promote greater density and more pedestrian-oriented design, **consider revising local zoning codes**.
 - In April 2011, the City of Saint Paul amended the zoning code to allow for denser, more mixed-use development along the Central Corridor.
 - Several parts of Saint Paul’s Central Corridor are historically industrial. The city is in the process of evaluating how investment in light rail transit could strengthen the industrial sector and employment base, while, at the same time, fit with the character of existing neighborhoods. This process may be particularly relevant to areas along the Fairmount Corridor, such as Columbia Road, that have a history of industrial use.



Retail Development Strategy for Rainier Valley

Prepared for the City of Seattle's Office of
Economic Development

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

- **Rainier Valley**
Population: 46,000
- **Late 1800s-1950s**
Economy supported by growth of **Seattle's streetcar line**
- **1960: Streetcar line moved**
Dramatic decline in economic growth
- **Post-1960: Neighborhood changes**
Increase in small and independently-owned businesses
- **2009: New Light Rail Transit (LRT)**
Rail line followed MLK Way and created three new stops:
 - Mt. Baker
 - Othello
 - Rainier Beach

LEVERAGING THE NEW LIGHT RAIL LINE

- Estimated **30,000 LRT riders per day** by 2030
- Community Land Use and Economics (CLUE) Group commissioned to **identify strategies to strengthen Rainier Valley's retail districts**
- Focused on commercial nodes surrounding the **Othello** and **Rainier Beach Stations**



CLUE's Planning Process

Phase I: Data collection and analysis that included:

- Market analysis (retail buying power, purchasing preferences, etc.)
- Current business performance and sales estimates
- Demographic, psychographic and economic characteristics
- Light rail ridership (current/projected)
- Existing commercial node marketing strategies

Phase II: Collection of in-depth info about consumer base, commercial nodes, and local businesses. Strategies included:

- Site visits,
- Interviews,
- Business inventories, and
- Neighborhood workshops

KEY FINDINGS, OBSERVATIONS AND CHALLENGES

- Retail **sales void** data can be **deceptive**
- Protecting and supporting Rainier Valley's **strong ethnic business market** is a priority.
- Lack of control over **increasing commercial rents** is a significant problem for the area's independent businesses.
- Experience of arriving at commercial nodes via LRT is **visually weak**.
- The **perception of crime** is a strong deterrent.
- Independently owned businesses need **basic assistance with business planning**.

Summary of Challenges: even though evidence supports the existence of sales leakage, the capture rate that could be expected in the commercial districts would not support many new businesses. There may however be opportunities for existing businesses to increase their sales.

STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

STRENGTHEN EXISTING RETAIL BUSINESSES

Encourage and help existing retail businesses to **fill in neighborhood market gaps to recapture sales** lost to outside markets.

Difficult to develop a cluster of any one single market segment of comparison good and services.

- Work with local businesses to **add new or expand existing product lines** and develop new sales channels
- Offer **deliveries** (or more flexible delivery schedules)
- Use **mobile vending** units

IMPLEMENTATION: OTHELLO PUBLIC MARKET



- **Year-round, indoor market** with local vendors
- Modeled after **traditional international markets**
- Available products include **food, clothing, arts & crafts, collectibles, etc.**

COMMERCIAL PROPERTY ASSISTANCE

Help independent businesses to **buy** commercial property, or **buy a share** in commercial property.

Currently, a **very small percentage of businesses in the Rainier Valley own the buildings in which they operate**. Owning all or part of the property would reduce operating costs and provide greater financial security for many independent businesses.

Recommended strategies:

- Develop a non-profit community land trust to purchase and lease commercial properties at below-market rates;
- Develop a shared equity partnership with a local non-profit entity; and
- Dedicate a pool of money to be used to help business owners purchase the buildings in which they operate.

“Commercial property assistance is a priority for the City. We have applied for two different rounds of urban development financing through the HUD Challenge Grant, however have not been successful to date.”

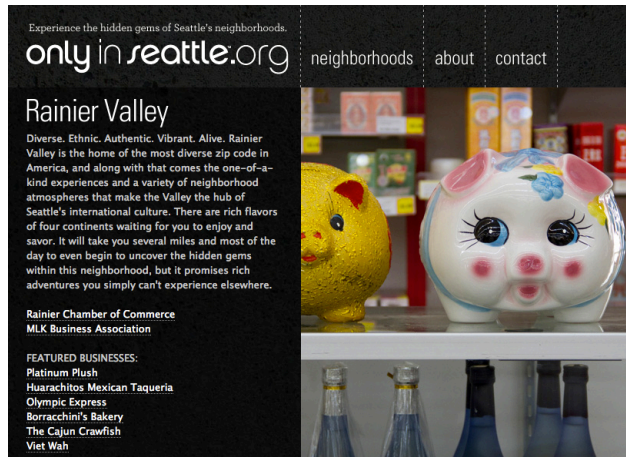
~ Tina Vlasaty; Business Services Team. Seattle Office of Economic Development

MARKETING RAINIER VALLEY AND ITS COMMERCIAL NODES

Market each commercial node independently, but **use common messaging and design elements to create cohesion and unity** between the four nodes.

- Create dynamic, consumer-focused **website** to connect residents/visitors to local business and create sense of community among commercial nodes.
- Develop 2 signature annual **promotional events** for each commercial node.
- Market each node outside of Rainier Valley to **attract new customers** and transform negative perceptions of the area.

IMPLEMENTATION: ONLY IN SEATTLE.ORG



- **Website** highlighting Seattle neighborhoods
- Simple, **user-friendly**, visually stimulating
- Highlights a **rotating selection of local businesses** from each neighborhood

IMPLEMENTATION: PLATE OF NATIONS

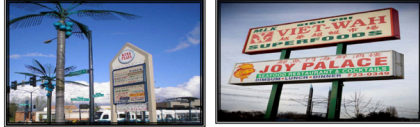


PLATE OF NATIONS
March 27 - April 9, 2011

- 12 OUTSTANDING INDEPENDENTLY AND LOCALLY-OWNED RESTAURANTS •
- UP AND DOWN MLK IN THE VALLEY •
- \$15-\$25 GROUP MEAL DEAL STEALS •

- **Annual event** hosted by MLK's Business Association
- 12 restaurants offer **meal deals** to highlight the Valley's international cuisine
- All restaurants easily **accessible via light rail stations**

IMPLEMENTATION: LOCAL WALKING TOURS



Eat, Shop, Play & Buy Local on MLK

Announcing :
The 2011 MLK BA Business District Tour Schedule

June 11th @ Othello & MLK
July 30th @ Graham & MLK
August 13th @ Othello & MLK
September 17th @ Graham & MLK

All Tours will be on a Saturday morning from 10:30–12:00

- Walking tours of the Othello business and transit node **highlight recent and impending improvements**, including:

- Apartments and retail space for lease
- Improvements in safety and lighting
- New grocer in the area

“We anticipated attracting residents from the greater Seattle area, but instead, participants ended up being **middle-age, Caucasian residents from the Valley**. Many of the residents **were intimidated by the ethnic businesses**, but after the tour said they would go back to shop. This was positive for the neighborhood because local residents are more likely to **become repeat patrons**.”

~ Tina Vlasaty

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

- Rainier Valley set up an **advisory council** that was actively involved in shaping the scope of work and selecting the consultant group.
- The council remained **active and engaged** after completion of the plan, and their organizations have been in integral in encouraging implementation of the recommendations.

“Community based involvement is key in shaping the scope of work, and ensuring the long-term support and success of the plan.”

~ Tina Vlasaty

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COUNCIL

Advisory Council Members

- African Business Association of Seattle
- South East Effective Development (CDC)
- Rainier Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
- Martin Luther King Business Association
- Seattle Housing Authority
- Othello Partners (Developer/Property Owner)
- HomeSight (CDC)/Columbia City Merchant Association
- City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Only in Seattle Initiative Funding:

The City sponsors an annual **competitive grant program** that distributes \$1 million dollars annually across the City's neighborhoods.

- Up to **\$200K per business district** annually

Action plans submitted must address one of the following areas:

- Business Organization
- Business and Retail Development
- Safety and Cleanliness
- Marketing and Promotion
- Appearance and Pedestrian Environment

Grant proposals were given **extra points** for addressing recommendations or strategies in the **Rainier Valley retail development strategy**

GREATEST CHALLENGE

Organizational infrastructure and capacity

“Figuring out who can take on tasks, finding funding to complete tasks and keeping everyone coordinated and moving in the same direction is very difficult. There needs to be an organization that is dedicated to convening people and sustaining the effort over the long-haul.”

~ Tina Vlasaty





RETAIL ENHANCEMENT STRATEGY OAKLAND, CA

Prepared for:
Oakland Community Economic
Development Agency

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

- **Oakland**
Population: 403,188
- **Underserved Area**
Comparison goods sales expenditure potential of Oakland residents exceeds retail sales by \$1 billion a year.
- **Expenditure Potential**
Oakland retail stores captured \$1 out of every \$3 of its residents' expenditure potential for comparison goods.
- **Captured Leakage**
\$1 billion in captured leakage would generate \$10 million a year in additional sales tax to the City and support over 10,000 new jobs.
- **2006: Retail Enhancement**
Planning initiated by Oakland City Council.

PLANNING PROCESS

Planning team: Oakland City Council, Conley Consulting Group (CCG), JRDV Architects, Colliers International

Community Survey and Public Meetings

Survey distributed to businesses, shoppers and residents. Over **2,300** responses received: “Improving the retail sector is an important goal for the City.”

Best Practices Research

Research retail revitalization in other cities.

Action Steps

- Conduct market leakage analysis, evaluate retail enhancement potential and create implementation action plans for retail nodes.
- Develop conceptual design plans for retail implementation.
- Identify citywide implementation efforts.
- Evaluate resource requirements for implementation.
- Work sessions for economic development staff.

KEY FINDINGS, OBSERVATIONS, AND CHALLENGES

Observations

- Merchants want to see an expanded consumer-oriented marketing effort.
- Sustainable sales volumes best achieved in a **strong neighborhood district** with anchor tenants.

Challenges

- Combating key retail vacancies in retail enhancement nodes.
- Staffing capacity—in both the Office of Economic Development and within small businesses.
- Overcoming slow economy to encourage small business growth.

Components of Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy

- Improve the retail tenant mix
- Develop sustainable locally-owned retail
- Create strong neighborhoods where retail can thrive
- Improve the performance of existing retailers and retail districts
- Make retail enhancement a priority in all parts of Oakland’s government

STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO THE FAIRMONT CORRIDOR

CREATE STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE RETAIL CAN THRIVE

- Develop retail action plans with the participation of residents and the business community for the enhancement nodes. Plans should be tailored to local conditions and reflect local preferences.
- Facilitate community or business association involvement in re-tenanting key vacant retail sites. Partner with property owners, non-profits, and broker-consultants to define leasing programs for key vacant sites.

IMPLEMENTATION: URBAN SOLUTIONS MODEL

Create programs similar to the San Francisco “urban solutions model” for burgeoning small businesses.

- **Urban Solutions** – San Francisco-based neighborhood economic development corporation that provides free leasing assistance to businesses in San Francisco as well as programs for **tenant improvements, technical assistance, and merchant organizing.**



Before - Split Pea Seduction

After - Split Pea Seduction

Photo courtesy of: urbansolutionsf.org

CREATE CUSTOMER-ORIENTED ONLINE MARKETING PORTAL

- Develop online tenant directory and maps.
- Promote special and ongoing customer events. Provide opening day promotion assistance for new stores.
- Create linkages to Neighborhood Association/BID websites.

IMPLEMENTATION: SHOPOAKLAND.COM

- ShopOakland.com already existed, but has been modified to be a more consumer-oriented web portal similar to sanjoseretail.com.
- ShopOakland promotes neighborhood districts, includes retail maps and merchant lists, while also providing links to merchant association and BID websites as available.



The screenshot shows the ShopOakland.com website. At the top left is the ShopOakland logo. To its right is a navigation menu with links for Home, Contact Us, Links, and Merchant Sign Up / Log In. Below the navigation menu is a grid of neighborhood names: Allendale, Fruitvale, East Lake, Fruitvale, Bancroft/Fairfax, Brentwood, Chinatown, Diamond Square, Eastmont, Elmhurst, Foothill Square, Glenview, Golden Gate, and Grand Avenue. Below the grid are four buttons: Explore Districts, Search Businesses, Getting There, and Event Listings. Below the buttons is a section for 'SUPPORT oakland grown Businesses & Artists' with a link to the official Oakland Grown website. Below that is a section for 'Find Neighborhood Shops & Art Galleries' with a list of categories and a 'Find More...' link. At the bottom is a section for 'Shop Online at Oakland Unwrapped!' with a list of categories and a 'More...' link. There are also two 'Add to Cart' buttons for products shown in the bottom section.

EXPLORE DISTRICTS

Oakland's shopping districts vary from quiet, tree-lined streets to bustling commercial corridors. Parking is plentiful, inexpensive and there is no mall congestion to endure. From neighborhood serving to ethnic to upscale chic, Oakland has it all! The only thing more dynamic than the 40 shopping districts is the world of gifts and products found throughout Oakland - the most culturally and ethnically diverse city in America.



To explore and learn more, click on the name of the shopping district.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Adams Point | Hegenberger/Coliseum |
| Bret Harte | Ironworks District |
| Bancroft/Fairfax | Jack London Gateway |
| Black Wall Street District -- International Boulevard | Jack London Square |
| Bret Harte | KoreaTown/Northgate |
| Broadway Auto Row | Lake Merritt/E. 18th St./Park Blvd. |
| Chinatown | Lakeshore Ave. |
| City Center | Laurel |
| Dimond | MacArthur Blvd. (73rd to San Leandro border) |
| Downtown | Millsmont |
| Durant Square | Montclair |

LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

IMPORTANCE OF INCENTIVES FOR RECRUITMENT

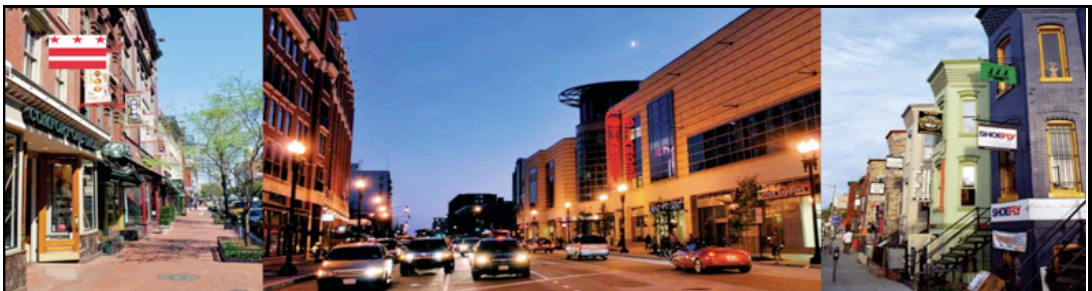
- The Oakland Community Economic Development Agency (CEDA) has made numerous efforts to attract businesses to the target development nodes:
 - Enterprise Zone
 - Tax Credits
 - **Façade and Tenant Improvement Program (FTIP)**
 - Retail Advisory Committee
- FTIP offers free architectural design assistance as well as **50% reimbursable** matching grants up to **\$90,000** to property and business owners within the retail nodes. 145 projects undertaken in 2011 with the help from third-party funders.
- **Restaurant Bootcamp**—partnership between CEDA and OBAC. Begun in 2009 and is in its 3rd year of operation. Features workshops on growing and starting restaurants as well as free services for those in the food industry.

NECESSITY FOR A SPECIFIC VISION

- Stakeholders have realized how important it is to have a shared vision for the nodes as they move forward. Lack of collaboration has hindered the many efforts that have been tried in the past.

“While retail plans for Downtown Oakland have come and gone over the years with little success, what makes the current effort different is the specific retail plan. In the past we’ve done too much without getting a reality check from retailers about what they want—accessibility, transportation.”

~ Gregory Hunter, Deputy Director of Development and Redevelopment, Oakland



Retail Action Roadmap The Future of the District of Columbia's Retail Markets

Prepared for Residents, entrepreneurs, Business
Owners, and Stakeholders in the
District of Columbia

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

- **Washington D.C.**
Population: 601,723
- **D.C. is the 26th most populous city in the country**
Commuters from surrounding areas raise the population to over 1 million during the work-week
- **Characteristics that make D.C. a good place for retail:**
 - Walkable neighborhoods
 - Disposable income
 - High volume of tourists
 - Established public transit
 - Cultural and research institutions
 - Government and business innovation

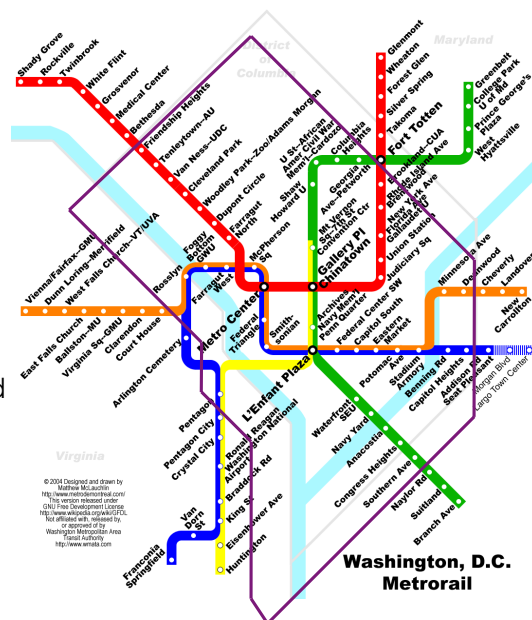


PLANNING PROCESS

- The *Retail Action Roadmap* includes **Neighborhood Retail Submarket Assessments** for 15 neighborhood commercial districts
- Neighborhood selection was based on:
 - Retail areas in **underserved areas** that could benefit from investment
 - Retail areas **undergoing substantial change**
- Neighborhood Retail Submarket Assessments included:
 - **Market analysis**- current/projected market retail demand
 - **SWOT analysis**- characteristics influencing retail performance
 - **Land use & zoning analysis**- building stock & physical characteristics
 - **Market recommendations**- suggestions for new retail & physical improvements
 - **Strategies**- ways to cultivate a thriving business environment

THE METRO: D.C.'S RAPID TRANSIT SYSTEM

- The **METRO** serves D.C. + areas of Maryland and Virginia
- **535,774** passengers transported within D.C. in 2009
 - Total passengers = 2.1 million
- **40 METRO stations** throughout D.C.'s neighborhoods
- Many of the **neighborhood commercial districts** are located **near transit stops**.



KEY FINDINGS

Challenges

- Low supply of capital
- Competition from nearby suburbs
- Mismatch between retail supply and demand
- Costly land values
- Regulatory hurdles for small businesses
- Rent-to-sales ratios
- Perceived market weakness

KEY FINDINGS

Strengths

- Employment base
- Income
- Population growth
- Accessible/walkable
- High number of suburban workers
- Innovation
- Historic resources
- Cultural attractions & neighborhood traditions
- Real estate development opportunities

RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

The *Retail Action Roadmap* has established **4 major objectives:**



STRATEGIES RELEVANT TO FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

FILL GAPS IN NEIGHBORHOOD MARKETS

- Encourage **mobile or pop-up retail units** to capture sales leakage
 - Bring products and services to **neighborhoods where there is not enough market demand** to support an entire store
 - City government can assist by **adapting occupancy and permitting regulations** to fit specific, temporary needs
- Help entrepreneurs **upgrade vacant or underused retail spaces**
 - Offer **incentives** to upgrade facades or interior safety features

IMPLEMENTATION: POP-UP MARKETS

- In 2010, D.C. Office of Planning awarded **funding to establish two pop-up retail shops**
 - **Mount Pleasant Main Street pop-up** will feature handmade goods, as well as special programming
 - **Shaw Main Street pop-up** will feature local fashion/design, art installations, and workshops

CULTIVATE & STRENGTHEN LOCAL BUSINESSES

- **Establish a growth fund** to assist small businesses that choose to expand into target neighborhoods
 - Provide **loans or grants** to businesses interested in expanding into neighborhoods targeted for particular retail categories
 - Offer **bonus incentives** to businesses that reach targets established in their business plans

CULTIVATE & STRENGTHEN LOCAL BUSINESSES

- Establish **programs to help** small business **owners own** the **spaces** in which **they operate**
 - Establish **retail condominium programs** offering the opportunity to purchase **smaller, individual spaces**.
 - Provide **funding assistance** to cover the difference between the amount of the **mortgage** and the businesses' current **rental payments** or funding to buy down mortgage **interest rates**.
 - **Incentives** may **prevent displacement** and could be tied to **performance benchmarks** outlined in a business plan.

CREATE NEW BUSINESS CONCENTRATIONS

- **Seed creative business corridors**, such as art galleries and theaters clustered with cultural offerings
 - Build on existing base of creative industries in the city that anchor retail districts



LESSONS LEARNED AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FAIRMOUNT CORRIDOR

ESTABLISH CREATIVE WAYS TO FILL VACANT SPACE

- Implementing **creative programs** to fill vacant space and **bring people to the retail center** has worked in several areas.
 - Encourage **pop-up retail** stores.
 - Create a **vacant space** retail finder **database**.

“The District has decreased the number of vacant spaces by sponsoring pop-up retail store fronts. Non-public sector investors have seen the success of the District’s pop-up retail strategy and sponsored several pop-up retail stores, increasing the total number to 8 successful retail pop-up stores.”

~ Kimberly Driggins, Associate Director of Citywide Planning, D.C. Office of Planning

TRACK PROGRESS & MAKE ADJUSTMENTS

- The District has a **quarterly tracking system** in place to **monitor programs** that are working and programs that require adjustments .
 - **Dedicated staff** work on specific Retail Action Roadmap initiatives and programs to make sure the programs are **being utilized** and are **efficient**.

“Tracking progress requires dedicated staff and resources. This process can be time consuming and challenging at times, but it allows the District to understand what is working for communities and what needs to change to make it work.”

~ Kimberly Driggins, Associate Director of Citywide Planning, D.C. Office of Planning

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Initial Date of Plan	Community Name	Commercial District Name	Total City Pop.
Retail Development Strategy for Rainier Valley	2009	Rainier Valley	Mt. Baker; Othello; and Rainier Beach	608,660 (Seattle)
Strategic Work Plan for the Central Corridor LRT District	2010	Saint Paul & Minneapolis, MN	Central Corridor District (includes Downtown Minneapolis; University of Minnesota; The Midway; Capitol Complex; Downtown Saint Paul)	285,086 (Saint Paul)
Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy (ORES)	2008	Oakland, CA	This strategy focuses on the city as a whole, but also targets specific nodes within the city where retail enhancement strategies could be particularly effective.	403,188 (Oakland, CA)
Retail Action Roadmap	2010	Washington, DC	N/A	601,723 (Washington, D.C. 2010)

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Approx Station Ridership (If Applicable)	Planning Leader	Project Participants	Key Components of Plan
Retail Development Strategy for Rainier Valley	21,611/Daily (2010)	Community Land Use & Economics Group LLC	City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development	(1) Identify primary challenges or threats to existing businesses; (2) Conduct an in depth study of Rainier Valley's retail economy; and (3) Identify strategies to strengthen and market Rainier Valley's commercial districts
Strategic Work Plan for the Central Corridor LRT District	Stations not built, but anticipated 40,000 riders/day by 2030.	Business Resources Collaborative (BRC)	Metropolitan Consortium of Community Developers; Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce; Midway Chamber of Commerce; Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul; Metropolitan Council; Stadium Village Commercial Association; African Development Center; University Avenue Business Association; Southeast Business Association; and Neighborhood Development Center	Identify strategies that: (1) Eliminate or reduce construction related impediments that may cause disruption to the financial performance of businesses; (2) Strengthen the ability of existing businesses to proactively prepare for and survive the impact of LRT; (3) Maximize the economic opportunity and job growth potential, and thereby the community benefit, of the Central Corridor Light Rail Transit line.

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Approx Station Ridership (If Applicable)	Planning Leader	Project Participants	Key Components of Plan
Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy (ORES)	N/A	Conley Consulting Group	JRDV Architects; Strategic Economics; Colliers International; Oakland Community Economic Devlp. Agency; Oakland City Council	To address the imbalanced retail sector in the city, these key components were developed: (1) Improve the City's retail tenant mix. (2) Encourage sustainable development of locally owned stores. (3) Support and strengthen existing retail. (4) Develop strong neighborhoods where retail can thrive. (5) Make retail enhancement a central focus of City government.
Retail Action Roadmap	61,568 (FY 2010) # is in 1,000	DC Office of Planning; The Deputy Mayor for Planning & Economic Development; The Washington DC Economic Partnership; Department of Small & Local Business Devlp.	Economic Research Associates; Jair Lynch Devlp. Partners; Street Sense	The strategies laid out in the Retail Action Roadmap will (1) Promote vibrant retail areas; (2) Leverage planning efforts and guide investments; (3) Expand small and local retail; (4) Provide residents, workers and visitors with a greater selection of goods and services; and (5) Help the District recapture more than \$1 billion of retail spending that leaks out of DC annually.

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Description of Planning Process	Types of Data Collected/Analysis Completed	Product/Outcomes of Planning Process	Recommendations/ Strategies/Tools Used to Encourage Development
Retail Development Strategy for Rainier Valley	<p>Phase I: Data collection and analysis of specific types of information.</p> <p>Phase II: Implementation strategies to gather more in depth information about the consumer base as well as the commercial nodes and businesses themselves.</p>	Quantitative data was collected and analyzed and included but was not limited to: retail buying power, current business performance and sales estimate, demographic, psychographic and economic characteristics of Rainier Valley residents etc. More in depth qualitative data was also gathered through implementation of interviews, business inventories and neighborhood workshops.	Since the completion of this plan Seattle's office of Economic Development has implemented a number of strategies that include: development of a new marketing website, implementation of promotional events that include walking tours and restaurant week events. And finally, creation of an indoor, year-round public market for small businesses and vendors.	<p>The report outlines strategies in four areas:</p> <p>(1) Marketing Rainier Valley and its commercial nodes;</p> <p>(2) Strengthening Rainier Valley's existing businesses;</p> <p>(3) Improving the physical environment to encourage retail activity; and</p> <p>(4) Developing organizational infrastructure for retail development.</p>

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Description of Planning Process	Types of Data Collected/ Analysis Completed	Product/ Outcomes of Planning Process	Recommendations/Strategies/ Tools Used to Encourage Development
Strategic Work Plan for the Central Corridor LRT District	The BRC used a community-based approach to plan for economic development in the Central Corridor. Over 40 individuals, representing government, non-profits, and community organizations, worked together to define a vision, mission, and goals for the corridor. This shared vision provided the framework for the 2010 BRC Strategic Work Plan, which outlines strategies to address construction mitigation, business support, and economic development in the Central Corridor.	Relied on existing market data to develop relevant strategies.	Since the completion of this plan, the BRC and other partners have implemented a number of strategies, including: a corridor-wide Buy Local initiative; a website that provides businesses with construction updates and information about resources; a small business forgivable loan program; and a TOD guidebook for existing and new businesses.	(1) Develop corridor-wide branding strategy; (2) improve access to business assistance programs; (3) Increase financial resources for businesses; and (4) Help existing and new businesses adapt to LRT. The BRC used a community-based approach to plan for economic development in the Central Corridor. Over 40 individuals, representing government, non-profits, and community organizations, worked together to define a vision, mission, and goals for the corridor. This shared vision provided the framework for the 2010 BRC Strategic Work Plan, which outlines strategies to address construction mitigation, business support, and economic development in the Central Corridor.

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Description of Planning Process	Types of Data Collected/Analysis Completed	Product/ Outcomes of Planning Process	Recommendations/Strategies/ Tools Used to Encourage Development
Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy (ORES)	Conley Group was brought in by the Oakland City Council to address the underperformance of the City's retail strategy. The group developed a survey and distributed it to residents throughout the City to gauge how people felt about the retail sector and what they wanted to see develop. 2300 people responded, stating improving the retail sector is an important goal. Along with these surveys, they evaluated the retail potential of 5 commercial nodes within the City, developed conceptual design plans and conducted working sessions with economic development staff of the City to present research findings & best practices.	Conducted a survey of shoppers within Oakland. Held 3 public mtgs. to obtain feedback on what residents and shoppers wished to see in the retail nodes targeted by the consulting groups. Retail revitalization efforts in other cities were researched and the Conley Group also evaluated the resource requirements necessary for implementation activities within particular nodes.	Key Components of the Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy; Existing Retail Sector Performance; Implementation Plan; Illustrative Design Plan; Example tactics to encourage retail enhancement & devlp. within different nodes in the City	(1) Create strong neighborhoods where retail can thrive. (2) Provide retail ombudsman services. (3) Create customer-oriented online marketing portal. (4) Provide technical assistance for local retail businesses.

PLANNING CASE STUDY MATRIX

Plan Name	Description of Planning Process	Types of Data Collected/Analysis Completed	Product/Outcomes of Planning Process	Recommendations/Strategies/Tools Used to Encourage Development
Retail Action Roadmap	Examined 15 neighborhood commercial districts in detail. The districts were selected based on 1 or more of 3 criteria: (1) Retail areas in underserved neighborhoods that can better meet the needs of neighborhood residents through sustaining or attracting strong retail concentrations and overcoming market weaknesses. (2) Retail areas in which analysis could boost public efforts, neighborhood planning work, and investments. (3) Retail areas that are undergoing substantial change and/or transition.	Qualitative & quantitative data was gathered based on five focus areas for each neighborhood: (1) Market Analysis, (2) SWOT Analysis, (3) Land Use & Zoning Analysis, (4) Market Recommendations, and (5) Strategies for implementing the recommendations.	On December 28, 2010 the DC Office of Planning awarded funding to establish two local pop-up retail shops. Local pop-up stores transforms vacant storefronts or spaces into a temporary retail space for local entrepreneurs to exhibit and sell their work. Awardees include Mount Pleasant Main Street and Shaw Main Streets. The local pop-up is part of the Retail Action Roadmaps strategies to fill in the gaps in neighborhood markets.	(1) Filling in the gaps in neighborhood markets (2) Creating new business concentrations (3) Cultivating & strengthening locally owned small businesses (4) Marketing the City's retail offerings in innovative, effective ways

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APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson, Chair of the Business Resources Collaborative (BRC) and President & CEO of Bywater Business Solutions (November 22, 2011) 763-244-1090

Q: Could you briefly describe the structure and function of the Business Resources Collaborative (BRC)?

A: The BRC has a long history:

- 2007-08: Began as an informal meeting of business representatives, Metropolitan Council, and Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
- 2009: Group coalesced into what it is now—a smaller group of people, but the same organizations are represented
- 2010- Hired consultant to prepare the Strategic Work Plan

The BRC is funded by the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative (CCFC), which receives funding from local and national foundations. The CCFC funds numerous projects around the Central Corridor. In 2011, the BRC received \$91,000, slightly less funding than in 2010 when they hired consultants to prepare a Strategic Work Plan.

The role of BRC is to bring different groups together— often that may have adversarial relationships— so that they can have an open conversation about what happens along the Central Corridor. The BRC *facilitates interactions* and doesn't actually *enact* programs or strategies. That being said, we are very much involved in who's doing what along the corridor. Groups who are interested in making something happen will look for support from the BRC, the City, or the Met Council. So while the BRC doesn't provide funding, we influence who gets funding. Groups who want their project to happen will try to get BRC support so that they can propose them under the "BRC banner."

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

Q: What are the main components of the BRC 2010 Strategic Work Plan, and how is the BRC working to implement strategies outlined in the plan?

A: The three central components of the Strategic Work Plan are:

1. Construction Mitigation

- Helping businesses prepare for construction, helping them with marketing, signage, etc.

2. Business support

- Business support falls 100% under BRC purview
- BRC started forgivable loan fund for "small mom and pop businesses that are locally owned"
- Also working on grassroots marketing efforts
- Advice: Talk with contractors way ahead of time (before construction begins). Conversations about construction mitigation need to happen in advance so that a plan is in place once construction starts.

3. Economic Development

- This is more long-term planning for the Corridor, and many entities are involved (city, county, local organizations). Details continued on next slide...

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

- Job creation efforts are underway. There is a strong sense from the community that they want the light rail transit investments to benefit the corridor neighborhoods.
 - The east end of the corridor is lower-income, more diverse, and has higher rates of unemployment. The BRC and other groups want to ensure that money from this billion-dollar investment doesn't bypass the people who could greatly benefit from this project. A major concern in the community is that this will be another highway project that benefits those outside community (and commuters passing through). The goal is to create jobs for people living in/ around the corridor (jobs that are either walkable or on the transit line), help residents own businesses, and improve access to skills and education programs so that people are prepared to take on the jobs that will be in the corridor in the future.
- The city is also working on an anchor institution effort to identify hospital or higher education institutions willing to locate in the corridor and thus draw more people.
 - More people working in the corridor means there will be increased demand for restaurants, shops, etc. This will then create a stronger market for local businesses.
- The BRC is still figuring out their niche with long-term economic development. They will likely continue to work on expanding existing businesses and trying to help more locally-owned businesses get started. They want to work with the community to "keep the character of the corridor."

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

Q: What strategies have been implemented to support Central Corridor businesses?

A: Many of the strategies that have been implemented are marketing strategies, including:

1. Local coupon book

- Local businesses were invited to submit coupons to be included in a local coupon book. The goal was to attract more customers to small businesses during light rail construction.
- An online form was set up so that businesses could easily upload their logos and coupon information. Bywater Business Solutions provided data to businesses about the effectiveness of different types of coupon offers (i.e. a 5% discount doesn't bring in many customers, but a 10% discount or buy-1-get-1-free offer does).
- There was lots of community involvement in getting the coupon books distributed. They went to high schools, hospitals, neighborhood associations, etc.
- Coupons were pretty successful for some businesses. For one business, over 700 coupons were returned within a month, many of which came from people that would not have visited the store otherwise.
- "You can't control light rail construction, but you can control how many people come to your business. We need to change the mindset so that businesses are working proactively to bring people into their stores."

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

2. Mobile app

- A couple of local companies designed a mobile app to support local businesses. The app was designed to be a loyalty program, a way to get people who are already in the area shopping at businesses one additional time per week.
- The app was not as successful as they had hoped. One business had only 50-70 people per month using the mobile app coupon (much fewer than the local coupon book). However, the app may be more applicable in the future.

3. Progressive dinner at local businesses

- Several businesses participated in a “progressive dinner,” in which participants purchased tickets to visit several restaurants over the course of an evening.
- From a marketing perspective, the event was very successful because it received good TV and press coverage.
- From a local business perspective, the event was maybe not as successful. For many businesses, the cost of hosting the dinner was not worth the small number of people who attended. Plus, many people came from outside the neighborhood, which means they are less likely to be repeat customers. This event involved more energy and resources than something like the local coupon book.
- Advice: Be cautious about activities like this. Just because an event gets good marketing doesn't mean it's a success. You need to determine how an activity will support business owners and whether or not they would consider it a success.

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

4. ReadyforRail

- ReadyforRail is an online and printed resource for businesses along the corridor.
- The information on the website was printed and delivered to all 700 businesses in the corridor. The website is currently being updated and will be printed and redistributed to all businesses.
- The website has been generally well-received by the business community and gets a lot of use.

5. Discover Central Corridor

- Discover Central Corridor is a buy local campaign directed toward consumers looking to support local businesses along the corridor during and after light rail construction. The site is currently connected to facebook and twitter.
- We're trying to find creative ways for the community to support local businesses. We're currently adding information to the website about businesses that cater/deliver, that have meeting space, etc., so that residents have more ways to show their support.

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Chris Ferguson continued...

Q: What advice would you share with the Fairmount/Indigo CDC Collaborative, a group that is beginning to plan for increased investment in public transit in Boston?

A:

1. Start planning early! Economic development takes a lot of planning and the sooner you get started, the better.
2. If possible, find consultants who have done TOD planning. Otherwise, you'll spend a lot of time starting from scratch learning about TOD.
 - In Saint Paul, since the light rail is being newly constructed, it was really important for us to understand the construction side of things. We needed to think creatively about construction mitigation (staging, traffic, signage, etc.). Since the Fairmount Corridor already exists, construction mitigation may not be as big of an issue.
 - One of the biggest complaints from customers is signage and they don't know how to access businesses during construction.
3. Marketing is critical. Visible marketing gives local businesses a sense of hope—it lets them know that people are pulling for them and working on their behalf.

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Ellen Muller, Economic Development Manager, City of Saint Paul (November 23, 2011) 651-266-6605

Q: How is the City of St. Paul planning for changes that will occur as a result of increased investment in light rail transit along the Central Corridor?

1. **A:** Land banking (purchasing land for future development)
2. Affordable housing development
3. Shared parking program and parking mitigation loan fund
4. Small business mitigation loan fund
5. Studies about job clusters in the corridor (how to create local workforce opportunities)
 - Looking at ways to attract anchor institutions like hospitals and educational institutions to the corridor (funded by the Central Corridor Funders Collaborative with Initiative for a Competitive Inner City and local researchers)
 - Exploring the future capacity to strengthen their industrial/manufacturing sector. The city isn't that big, so looking at how much growth could be accommodated. (Port Authority with Initiative for Competitive Inner City)
6. Zoning changes
 - In April 2011, the city upgraded areas along the corridor to be more TOD friendly
 - Also looking at industrial zoning—based on the city's industrial growth potential, what kind of zoning changes would be necessary to support increased industry? How does the city accommodate more industrial/light industrial uses along the corridor while keeping with the character of existing neighborhoods?

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Ellen Muller continued...

Q: Do lower-income neighborhoods along the corridor suffer from negative perceptions, and if so, has this hurt development potential?

- **A:** This has not been a major issue in the Central Corridor. Instead, the bigger challenge is that the long-standing community along University Avenue—a very diverse, predominantly African American community—was taken advantage of when the city was growing and a highway was built right through their neighborhood. Community members need to have the opportunity to express their concerns about issues like this. Here, past development decisions have negatively affected some of the communities along the Central Corridor. Many residents are understandably weary of new development, and we are respectful of that and don't want the light rail project to be a repeat of urban renewal. Instead, we want to work with residents to strengthen the fabric of the existing Central Corridor community so that long-standing residents benefit, and more people come to the avenue to experience its richness and culture.
- There are a few pockets along the corridor that have experienced decline, but through investment in certain blocks, we've built a sense of pride in those communities.
- Basically, we want to embrace the local community's diversity and culture while increasing density and access.

APPENDIX I: CENTRAL CORRIDOR INTERVIEWS

Phone interview with Ellen Muller continued...

Q: Are community members concerned that light rail investment will lead to increasing commercial rents? If so, is anything being done about this issue?

- **A:** This is a tricky issue, one that we have not yet found the answer to. It's a challenge to keep lease rates affordable. We're working with some non-profit partners on development opportunities, but property taxes are controlled by the county which means they need to be involved in the conversation. We haven't started working on this yet, but the mayor is interested in starting that conversation.

Q: What advice would you share with the Fairmount/Indigo CDC Collaborative, a group that is beginning to plan for increased investment in public transit in Boston?

- **A:** This is the first full construction season on a major portion of the avenue, so while I'm sure that we have lots of lessons learned, we're still very much in the midst of the project.
- One lesson would be that it would have been good for us to set up our small business forgivable loan program earlier so that the loans were ready to be distributed as soon as light rail construction started. Instead, construction started and disrupted many local businesses. Businesses lost customers but were unable to access funds until much later.
- In terms of our planning process, we had a number of charettes, lots of community meetings and community involvement. For more information about the planning process, talk to Donna Drummond in the Planning Department.

APPENDIX II: RAINIER VALLEY INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Tina Vlasaty, Business Services Team, Office of Economic Development, Seattle, WA (November 9, 2011) 206-684-3348
tina.vlasaty@seattle.gov

Q: What were the steps leading up to, and directly following the completion of the Retail Development Strategy?

A: Community involvement in the planning process was important from the outset. The City of Seattle put together a panel that included developers, small business owners, merchant associations, chambers of commerce and local community development corporations. After putting out an RFP, the panel met to select the consultant that would complete the plan. "Community based involvement is key to shaping the scope of work, and ensuring long-term buy in."

Panel members included:

- Abdillahi Ahmed – African Business Association of Seattle/Business owner
- Pat Chemnick – South East Effective Development (CDC)/Rainier Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Susan Davis – Rainier Chamber of Commerce
- Martina Guilfoil – Rainier Valley Community Development Fund
- Asari Monrath – Martin Luther King Business Association/Business owner
- Ed Rose - Seattle Housing Authority (Developer/Property Owner)
- Steve Rauf - Othello Partners (Developer/Property Owner)
- Tony To – HomeSight (CDC)/Columbia City Merchant Association
- Tina Vlasaty – City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

APPENDIX II: RAINIER VALLEY INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Tina Vlasaty continued...

Even though the plan is complete, the panel has remained active and engaged. It would be impossible for the City to implement all of the strategies on their own, but the panel was able to divvy up the responsibilities based on their organizational interests, capacities, etc.

The City used a unique strategy to encourage organic implementation of planning strategies by linking the program to the widely successful OnlyInSeattle initiative.

- The first component of OnlyInSeattle is a website that highlights the various neighborhoods of Seattle.
- The second component is a competitive grant program that distributes \$1 million in grants annually across the city's neighborhoods. The city encouraged neighborhood associations to use the recommendations found in this report to become more competitive in the program. Grant proposals were given extra points for addressing needs or strategies that were in the retail enhancement plan.
 - Two examples are the Plate of Nations and the Othello Public Market. Both of these ideas were originally grant applications for OnlyInSeattle. In addition to the grant funds, the City also provided the Othello Public Market with marketing assistance to help get it off the ground.

The retail plan was also completed at a time when local neighborhood planning was happening, so they were able to incorporate relevant components into local, neighborhood plans.

APPENDIX II: RAINIER VALLEY INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Tina Vlasaty continued...

Q: Aside from marketing efforts, what other strategies have been implemented to date, who has been involved in implementation, and how well are the strategies working?

A: Unfortunately the strategies that have been implemented to date have been hindered by limited organizational capacity. At the outset the City was very interested in implementing the community venture capital fund strategy, and even had the support of the Rainier Valley Community Fund (RVCF). This strategy sought to raise money from the private sector that could fund strategic investments in key start-up enterprises. However after some staffing changes at the RVCF, there has been no organizational capacity or money in the budget to see this through. The city still hopes that this will be revisited.

Q: According to the plan, one of the most significant problems facing Rainier Valley's independent businesses is a lack of control over increasing commercial rents. How have you, or a partner organization addressed this challenge, or how does your office plan to address this issue moving forward?

A: The City has applied for two different rounds of urban development financing through the HUD Challenge Grant, however they have not been successful to date. Rising rents are a priority issue for the city, but we currently do not have the resources to address this challenge without outside financial assistance. The good thing though, is that as a result of the recession and a slow economy, rent prices have stabilized and speculation has abated. (Although probably only temporarily).

APPENDIX II: RAINIER VALLEY INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Tina Vlasaty continued...

Q: According to the plan, crime and the perception of crime are a deterrent to both shoppers inside and outside your community. In your opinion, have walking tours of these communities been successful in changing perceptions? Who attends the walking tours?

A: These tours were actually coordinated through an organization called Home Site, and not through the Office of Community Economic Development. The tours have been an overwhelming success. We had anticipated that the tours would mainly attract residents from outside Rainier Valley, however the exact opposite was true. Tour participants tended to be middle-aged, Caucasian residents from Rainier Valley. Evidently many of the residents were intimidated by the ethnic businesses and saw this tour as an opportunity to expose them to local neighborhood shops. The feedback from the tours has been extremely positive. Most participants said they would definitely return to shop at the stores and eat at the restaurants in the Valley. This was a positive for the neighborhood because local residents are more likely to be repeat patrons.

Q: To date, what have been the greatest challenges your office has faced in implementing a retail enhancement plan in the Rainier Valley along the new transit corridor?

A: Again, this was organizational infrastructure. Figuring out who can take on tasks, finding funding to complete tasks and keeping everyone coordinated and moving in the same directions is very difficult. There needs to be an organization that is dedicated to convening people and sustaining the effort over the long haul. Even with the plan completed only 3 years ago, it seems like we've lost some of the initial momentum.

APPENDIX II: RAINIER VALLEY INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Tina Vlasaty continued...

Q: Do you think the Rainier Valley was more primed for retail enhancement than other areas as a result of previous light rail (street car) infrastructure that existed pre-1960's?

A: The new light rail corridor is actually not in the same location as the original streetcar line. As a result, the area was not necessarily primed. The business centers around the old streetcar line are much more compact and pedestrian friendly. However the new light rail line follows a truck traffic corridor, which is set up more like strip malls, and is highly auto-dependent and not very pedestrian friendly.

The city is trying to update zoning to address this issue. Currently city zoning law requires first-floor retail, however first-floor retail requirements are not necessarily effective when you can't concentrate walkability. Therefore they are trying to downzone and allow first floor residential in an effort to create concentrated retail nodes with more walkability. There are challenges they are working through. By limiting retail space you essentially raise the price (supply/demand), which can price out small businesses. They are looking into ways they could make this work without promoting gentrification.

APPENDIX III: OAKLAND INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Gregory Hunter, Deputy Director of Economic Development and Redevelopment, Oakland, CA (November 21, 2011) ghunter@oaklandnet.com (510) 238-2992

Q: Can you talk a little bit about the steps leading up to the formation of the Oakland Retail Enhancement Strategy?

A: It initially was driven by Oakland City Council, Conley Consulting Group (CCG), JRDV Architects, and Colliers International. As programs have begun to develop, more partners have come aboard. The Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce has sponsored the formation of the Oakland Retail Advisory Committee (ORAC) that is comprised of 20 retail professionals who volunteer their time to meet on a monthly basis with City officials.

Meetings of the ORAC are for Chamber members only, but limited guest passes are available. *(Note from interviewer: it still seems like there exists a distance between residents/ some small business owners and those who are making the decisions).*

We realized that there was a significant leakage in Oakland that was diminishing the tax base, which in turn was taking away from City services. The initial players were brought together by Oakland City Council to develop a strategy based on best-practices—those that were proven elsewhere—to propose a plan that could be effective in Oakland.

APPENDIX III: OAKLAND INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Gregory Hunter continued...

Q: What kinds of strategies have been used to market this plan to Oakland business owners? Has there been community input as the plans continue to develop?

A: We have reached out to business owners through the assistance of the ORAC as well as a partnership with the Oakland Business Assistance Center (OBAC). The Office of Economic Development releases a quarterly memo to Oakland business owners to keep communication constant, as well.

As far as community involvement goes, this has been a little more difficult. It's proved to be much more cumbersome to achieve consensus within communities. However, public meetings and information sessions have been held in all of the development areas within Oakland. *(Greg directed the interviewer to videos of public meetings posted on YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cnlx30KVlyc&feature=relmfu>. This could be an interesting way to spread information from public meetings along the Fairmont corridor.)*

Q: The plan indicates that one of the most significant problems facing Oakland is the sales leakage diminishing the city's tax base. How have you, or a partner organization addressed this challenge - or how does your office plan to address this issue moving forward?

A: It's something that cannot be tackled and conquered in a short period of time. There are a number of vibrant small businesses, but there's also a need for large stores to move in to some of the larger development areas to keep shoppers in the Oakland district and also direct them to the small businesses already established.

APPENDIX III: OAKLAND INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Gregory Hunter continued...

A: Working with the Oakland Enterprise Zone, efforts have also been made to work closely with Oakland businesses. *(Note from interviewer: See slide show for more info.)* There's additional information on the Enterprise Zone web site.

Q: The ORES mentions modeling programs after the San Francisco-based Urban Solutions model for small business improvement. Have there been any steps taken to put this model in place? If so, what are the logistics of this program?

The OBAC has been a great partner and have held a number of workshops to help small businesses thrive. There is also work with a façade improvement program, much like the Urban Solutions work.

Q: To date, what have been the greatest challenges your office has faced in implementing a retail enhancement strategy in the city?

A: Initially, a lack of a cohesive strategy and vision for the market muddled efforts. Other concerns and hurdles have included: public safety; not enough knowledge of urban market realities and opportunities; permit/development costs and processes; difficulty attracting investors to the areas of interest.

APPENDIX IV: WASHINGTON, D.C., INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Kimberly Driggins, Associate Director of Citywide Planning, Washington, D.C. (November 22, 2011) kimberly.driggins@dc.gov 202 442-7600

Q: What are some of your lessons learned from working on the Retail Action Roadmap?

1.A: It is very important to collaborate with other agencies within your City.
2. It's important to assist heritage business with business growth.

- Providing assistance to these businesses that will allow them to be able to thrive during the current market conditions.
- Some business have been in a neighborhood for decades and do not have processes in place to help them effectively compete with new and innovative businesses coming into their area.

Q: What aspects of the Retail Action Roadmap worked well?

A: The pop-up shops/emporiums worked really well in throughout the District

- The City funded 3 pop-up shops and out of this idea, non-public sector entities decided to fund an additional 5 pop-up shops throughout the city.
 - Retail and Creative Art pop-up emporiums spun out of this initiative.
- Pop-up shops allow residents and visitors to be drawn to areas to encourage spending.
- Initiative allows vacant underutilized property to be occupied for a period of time.
- Makes it easy for small businesses to occupy temporary space in a quick manner.

APPENDIX IV: WASHINGTON, D.C., INTERVIEW

Phone interview with Kimberly Driggins continued...

A:

- Encouraging mobile retail units also worked for the District.
- The retail space finder was a success because it is another avenue for people interested in acquiring space to be able to find information in one central location.

Q: Do you have any advice you can give for the City of Boston?

- Be open to collaborating with other service agencies in the city.
- Establish and implement mechanisms used to track performance (or lack of performance) of programs and initiatives.
 - This is time consuming and requires dedicated staff to properly gather useful data.
 - The District currently tracks the progress of programs mentioned in the Retail Action Roadmap on a quarterly basis.
- Consider updating zoning code to include denser development to include ground level retail space on buildings not zoned for retail use.