

*Perceptions toward downtown:
Surveying City Managers in smaller Texas towns*

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Abstract

In recent years, as city leaders have looked for ways to create a higher quality of life for residents and diversify their tax bases, downtown revitalization has captured the attention of citizens and policy makers alike. Unfortunately, the literature on the topic seldom examines the topic empirically. At the same time, however, there has been a call for increasing this relatively scarce body of knowledge. The study fills a gap by examining attitudes city managers in smaller Texas towns have about the components and challenges of downtown revitalization. Attitudes about infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools are explored through a survey of 256 city managers. The results show that city managers have very strong attitudes toward downtown revitalization. For instance:

- Encouraging private development as a future contributor to the tax base is viewed as a viable tool for redeveloping the center city.
- Downtown business owners can be very effective partners and leaders for pushing the revitalization program forward.
- A mix of businesses and special events are important components of multi-functionality.

Some suggestions for future action and study are also presented:

- Expand and increase educational opportunities for those involved in downtown revitalization.
- At the local level, formalize processes for addressing infrastructure, multi-functionality, leadership and financing.

Chapter One Introduction

Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, American downtowns were in a state of continual change. Advances in transportation in the nineteenth century allowed masses of people to regularly travel from the countryside into the city. Until the 1920s, downtowns were bustling centers of commerce offering virtually all of a community's economic and social functions. In the next few decades, however, suburbanization, rising automobile use and massive interstate highway construction were factors leading to downtown's decline as the community's central core.

Throughout all of these years there have been continuing efforts to revive ailing downtowns. These initiatives range from federal urban renewal and other major grant programs to public/private partnerships and historical preservation programs. According to Frieden and Sagalyn (1989: xi): "One of the longest campaigns of local government has been the campaign to rebuild downtown." Both Robertson (2001: 9) and Kemp (2000: 1) note that widespread efforts and active engagement in revitalizing downtown are increasingly evident all across the United States.

The trend is also apparent in Texas. In the fall of 2002, for instance, the *Dallas Morning News*¹ ran a cover article in a Sunday edition focusing on ongoing downtown rehabilitation efforts in some of the area's outlying communities such as Plano, Grapevine, Denton, Arlington, and Carrollton. The story referred to downtowns as the hearts of the respective cities and noted that significant, ongoing rehabilitation efforts reflect citizens' desires. In the story, for instance, the mayor of Grapevine points out that a downtown needs continual investment to stay alive. He adds that the downtown reflects the community spirit, so the investment is worthwhile.

¹ See Lindenberger, in Bibliography.

Also, just this month (April 2003) in Central Texas, the City of Georgetown held its final public workshop to put the finishing touches on a Downtown Master Plan. The 112-page draft document outlines the downtown vision that includes maintaining it as the “heart of the community...with a diversity of offerings.” The plan is based on various organizational frameworks to guide development. It takes into account cultural amenities, employment, tourism, accessibility and housing objectives. One of the recommendations, or instance, is to strengthen and expand the existing pedestrian core by adding ‘activity anchors’ that encourage walkers to shop beyond the traditional courthouse square.²

Another example signifying the continuing interest in downtown revitalization in Texas is the 2002 statewide plan for historic preservation published by the Texas Historical Commission. In the document, the outcome of revitalizing downtown business districts was listed as one of the reasons why historic preservation is important.

PERCEIVED NEED

Social and Economic Value of Downtown

The overall health of a community is greatly influenced by the viability of its downtown (Robertson, 1999: 270; 2001:9). From a social standpoint, downtown symbolizes the heritage of the community and provides a sense of identity. A vital center city features unique shopping and dining opportunities, tourist attractions, employment possibilities and recreational outlets to residents and visitors. This translates into economic stability through higher property values and increased sales tax collections that benefit public budgets. Revitalizing downtown can stimulate business growth, maximize the utilization of public resources and provide tax diversification. Haque (2001: 278) notes that in addition to symbolizing the entire locality’s perceived quality

² Georgetown is the Williamson County seat, with the county courthouse at the center of its downtown square. See <http://www.georgetown.org/pdfs/ds.master.plan.final.draft.pdf>.

of life, downtown's economic health directly affects the whole community. "Cities large and small see a healthy core as integral to their overall heritage, tax base, sense of community, identity, economic development appeal, and image" (Robertson, 2001: 9). Seemingly, there is much to gain from a focused revitalization program. According to Palma (1992: 2), small businesses, which create local jobs and tax revenue, traditionally locate downtown. "Small business is a significant force in a city's economic vitality" (Marshall, 2000: 56). In smaller towns, the benefits may be even more direct than in an urban setting. A 1986 study by the National Trust for Historic Preservation found that as many as two-thirds of all new jobs nationally occur in small businesses, which are likely to operate in smaller downtowns (Les, 2000: 175).

More Empirical Research Needed

Unfortunately, much of the literature and empirical research has focused on large cities and neglected small-city downtowns. Both Robertson (1999: 270-271, 2001: 9) and Palma (1992: 5) encourage the continued documentation and expansion of a much-needed base of technical data and knowledge. Davis (1980: 448) notes that there is a "thirst for both ideas and for assistance in the area of downtown revitalization..." Also, even though a majority of the U.S. population resides in smaller communities³, federal policies providing assistance to downtowns have largely focused on major metropolitan city centers (Burayidi, 2001: 3).

PURPOSE

Generally, this Applied Research Project explores downtown revitalization in smaller cities (5,000 to 50,000 population). There are four interconnected purposes. The **first** is to review the literature in order to identify the fundamental components of a downtown revitalization program as well as the key challenges inherent in each component. The **second purpose** is to

³ See Burayidi, 2001: 3 and Kemp, 2000: 3.

explore city managers' attitudes about the importance of fundamental components of downtown revitalization. The **third purpose** is to explore city managers' attitudes about the challenges to downtown revitalization programs. The **fourth purpose** is to explore city managers' attitudes about their cities' downtown revitalization programs.

The project is divided into two topic areas: Fundamental Elements and Challenges. Each topic area is explored through four categories: Infrastructure, Leadership, Multi-functionality and Financing Mechanisms/Implementation Tools. The project is summarized and organized through conceptual frameworks.

PROJECT ORGANIZATION BY CHAPTER

Chapters two and three, which immediately follow, review the literature on Fundamental Elements and Challenges, respectively, of downtown revitalization. The fourth chapter (Setting) examines the formal and informal roles of the city manager as they relate to downtown revitalization in a political environment. Chapter Five operationalizes the Conceptual Framework and presents the methodology utilized to collect data (surveys and interviews). The chapter also defends these techniques as appropriate vehicles for this type of empirical study and takes into account strengths and weaknesses of surveys as well. Chapter Six (Results) presents the findings of the survey of 256 city managers in cities with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 and the outcome of three structured interviews. In Chapter Seven, various conclusions from the evidence collected are provided, along with some suggestions for future study.

Chapter Two

Fundamental Elements for Downtown Revitalization

Introduction

The essential components⁴ of downtown revitalization are **infrastructure** (Bridges, 1991:202), **leadership** (Haque, 2001:277) (Davis, 1980: 452), **multi-functionality** (Robertson, 2001:14) (Jacobs, 1961:14) and **implementation tools** (Buraydi, 2001: 258).⁵ Each are identified and discussed in separate sections.

Infrastructure

What is infrastructure?

According to Bridges (1991:208) infrastructure is “the basic physical structure” of a community. Hicks (1999:5) adds that parking, sidewalks and roadways provide mobility and access, key ingredients to a downtown’s vitality. Utility systems provide energy, water and wastewater. Rypkema (1994:39) notes that infrastructure “is to a city what mechanical systems are to a house.” The mechanical systems of a house and the infrastructure in a downtown are, simply, the most essential elements that allow it to *function*.

Paying attention to the quality and capacity of infrastructure is important for several reasons. First, according to Bridges (1991: 202), there is a verifiable connection between a sound, healthy economy with a secure environment and the quality of infrastructure. Each basic physical element plays an important role in a downtown’s vitality. For instance, Jacobs (1958:160) asserts: “...the street works harder than any other part of the downtown. It is the nervous system; it communicates the flavor, the feel, the sights.” Conversely, inadequate

⁴ Purpose One of this Applied Research Project.

⁵ It should be noted that overlap exists between all of the categories. For instance, the decay of downtown infrastructure could drive away businesses, which in turn would damage the multi-functionality of the downtown. Or, the leadership of a community who encourage or condemn policy initiatives can have tremendous influence upon the direction of a downtown revitalization program.

infrastructure inhibits economic activity: an inadequate physical condition with crumbling sidewalks, antiquated utilities or over-utilized roadways is one of two major reasons a business moves from downtown, according to a 1986 survey by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Les, 2000: 175).⁶ The lack of functional infrastructure makes it difficult or unpleasant for people to be downtown. Businesses find it difficult to prosper without shoppers, workers and downtown residents (Les, 2000: 175). The critical role infrastructure plays, however, often goes undetected until access, mobility and usage of facilities are hindered by infrastructure failures (Bridges, 1991:202). Secondly, in order to *be* downtown, people must be able to *get* there. Hicks (1999: 5) refers to a “continuum” where the driver arrives downtown, easily transitions to a pedestrian and then to a driver again. “The switch from driver to pedestrian is significant” and the “experience of circulation” is critical. Public improvement projects like sidewalks, parking garages, signage, and crosswalks enable the capacity for circulation.⁷ Third, the rate of growth and economic activity in a local community influences infrastructure demand (Bridges, 1991: 202). In a rapidly growing community, usage is likely to be at full capacity, whereas demands are lower in a stagnant area. Paying attention to usage levels and infrastructure quality remain important in both cases. When there is peak demand, improvements and expansions may become necessary. If economic activity or population growth wanes and infrastructure demand falls, systems deterioration caused by under-use can occur. Also, a change in the type of economic activity can influence demand (Bridges, 1991: 204).

⁶ The other reason is a deteriorating market. See Les, 2000: 175. See challenges topic chapter, multi-functionality.

⁷ It seems unusual that none of the more recent literature published since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990 have mentioned this law in their discussions on accessibility. ADA decrees that any entity open to the public must be accessible to the handicapped. The U.S. Department of Transportation and related state transportation agencies have comprehensive regulations concerning accessibility. Transit-related projects in the downtown such as sidewalks, curbs, roadways, traffic signals, crosswalks and others must adhere to ADA standards at both the state and federal level. (Some states have regulations even more stringent than the federal government). ADA regulations also govern any private business open to the public such as restaurants and certain businesses.

A successful downtown revitalization program can spur growth and economic activity. Likewise, an environment for declining economic activity exists in a community where downtown redevelopment is a low priority.

Lastly, infrastructure is important from a resource maximization standpoint. Redeveloping the center city represents a reuse of existing infrastructure and a more efficient use of tax dollars. In developing outlying areas for instance, tax dollars must be spent to extend infrastructure (Rypkema, 1994:39). Even if the developer pays for the initial extension of the infrastructure, it must be maintained by municipal government for the next thirty or forty years.

As reviewed in this section, the literature suggests that infrastructure is important to the downtown. Thus, the first Working Hypothesis is presented:

WH1: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is an important component of a downtown revitalization program.

Another important component of a downtown program is leadership: According to Davis (1980:452): “...when a city has undergone successful revitalization...a leader has been responsible.”

Leadership

Jacobs (1958: 183) notes that leaders for downtown revitalization need vested interest, “an observant eye” and curiosity. They help ensure revitalization occurs by creating buy-in and ownership for downtown with unwavering passion and enthusiasm (Burayidi: 2001: 291). Leaders inform, share, boost morale, educate, help focus plans and create vision. They form partnerships that help achieve success. For instance, Buraydi (2001: 291) found that \$1 million in seed money for a downtown revitalization program in a Wisconsin town came from the efforts of a partnership between local businesses and residents. According to Davis (1980: 452-453) concern, optimism/confidence, leadership, knowledge, a plan, a public partner and the ability to make deals are critical to the successful downtown program. Keating’s (1991: 137) elements of a successful downtown strategy include personal qualities: acceptance by property owners, tenants and government; recognition of downtown in the context of the larger community; the ability to forge a planning and design connection; choices instead of generalities; and “attention to the political realities.”

Leading through Partnerships

Cities can respond to limited municipal budgets and the need to use resources efficiently by creating public/private partnerships to help leaders achieve goals and mutual benefits (Rubin, 2001: 4). As strategic alliances between leaders, partnerships can act as bridges and provide “greater diversity of voices” (Rubin, 2001: 4). Burayidi (2001: 285) finds that the keys to successful downtown revitalization include community support and public/private partnerships. Both can be provided through the efforts of leaders. Davis (1980: 449) notes further that forming public and private sectors partnerships is one way to help ensure that downtowns will survive as viable American institutions.

Public/private partnerships are generally defined as long-term alliances that involve two or more partners in which at least one is a public entity. Each partner brings something to the relationship, can individually bargain, and each shares responsibility for the outcome (Rubin, 2001: 3). Public/private sector partnerships and alliances are not new. As early as the 1830s, Alex de Tocqueville noted the need for “extragovernmental associations” (Davis, 1986: 1).

Other important partners for downtown redevelopment include special districts, chambers and other civic organizations, along with economic and community development offices (Kemp, 2000: 45). Special districts are authorized by law and created by local government. They are defined as a geographic area in which a majority of property owners levy a tax upon themselves to fund an additional level of service. Generally one- to three-percent of the assessed value is levied (Mitchell, 2001: 115). Participation of these organizational partnerships increases chances for success in downtown redevelopment programs.

Leaders and Planning

According to Haque, (2001:275), successful leaders doing economic development planning in small cities should focus on the following action items: business retention/recruitment and downtown improvements. There are many areas in which leaders may participate, such as educating the public about downtown and being involved in developing specific tools like master plans, ordinances, design guidelines and standards.

Writing in the same book as Haque⁸, Burayidi (2001: 283), notes that the chances for successful downtown revitalization are slim unless there is broad-based community support and focused vision for the mission. Committed leadership focuses attention on the issues (Mayer, 2000: 10). In downtown revitalization, as with many community development efforts, numerous entities band together to reach common goals. Each participating organization, however, may

⁸ *Downtowns. Revitalizing the Centers of Small Urban Communities* by M.A. Burayidi. See Bibliography.

have a different reason for being involved and perhaps even different outcome objectives. Formalized planning helps to focus the outcome desires, gives credibility to the effort and publicizes the need for the action. Leaders oftentimes initiate and focus the planning initiatives and they are also the champions and defenders when necessary to ensure that a “grassroots mobilization of support for downtown revitalization” occurs (Burayidi: 293).

Thus, as has been noted in the previous three sub-sections, there are many ways leaders can influence the downtown program. This review of literature on leadership leads to the next set of Working Hypotheses:

WH2a: City Managers will perceive that strong downtown leaders exhibit certain traits.

WH2b: City Managers will perceive that effective partnerships help leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.

WH2c: City Managers will perceive that effective planning helps leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.

Multi-functionality **Defining**

Multi-functionality is another component of the successful downtown program. A multi-functional downtown is defined as the diverse myriad of activities, attractions, physical elements and venues that continually attract people.

Why is diversity important?

Diversity of function in the downtown is important from both a social and economic standpoint. Multi-functionality includes public facilities and spaces, as well as venues for entertainment, recreation, tourism and cultural enjoyment that bring different people downtown at different times. Simply put: “Multifunctional downtowns are the healthiest” (Robertson, 1999: 282).

Jacobs (1961: 150, 14) notes that cities need “diversity of uses that give each other constant mutual support, both economically and socially.” There are not many places, writes Robertson (1999: 278) that can rival downtown’s “intrinsic asset of possessing a wide range of functions within a compact area.” While the built environment may segment downtown into financial, arts and shopping districts, for instance, and the natural environment may do the same to a certain degree, the well-planned downtown improvement program provides connections to encourage continual usage. This constancy can help increase a downtown’s economic vitality. For instance, a mix of businesses and activities can help minimize leakage – the dollars flowing out of a community (Mayer, 2000: 9). Also, a downtown with a myriad of opportunities attracting visitors on workdays, evenings and weekends can encourage new business formation and the expansion of existing business. Subsequently, property values and the value of the community-wide tax base increases. Also, increased sales result in increased sales taxes. Economic vitality, however, is not the only issue. There is a social aspect as well.

In the downtown, one can generally find historic landmarks and theaters, centuries-old buildings and other symbols of the community’s heritage. Furthermore, downtown represents a collection of memories and important events from the community’s past. City leaders can capitalize on both the images and the physical stock to create a sense of community (Robertson, 2001: 15).

Elements of Multi-Functionality

Is there agreement on the elements that make up multi-functionality in the downtown? To some degree there is, as shown by the following writings of some of the most prolific downtown scholars.

In her seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (1961: 150) Jane Jacobs stipulates four conditions to generate diversity of use: downtown places must serve more

than one function; blocks must be short; buildings must be mingled; and there must be a dense concentration of people. Other 'fundamentals' include pedestrian- and transit-friendly streets, focal points, compactness, variety, contrast, character, open spaces, and a sense of human scale (Jacobs, 1958: 160-182).

Elements of a multi-functional downtown espoused by Robertson (1995: 429) include: pedestrianization, indoor shopping centers, historic preservation, waterfront development (if applicable), office development, special activity generators such as arenas and stadiums, and transportation enhancement. He also recommends high density levels, public spaces, design controls, multi-functionality, street-level activity, individuality (don't suburbanize) and effective use of upper floors (Robertson, 1999: 41).

Palma's (2000: 158-159) list of action items for creating multi-functionality features market-driven planning and management that results in creating unique niches, targeted business attraction, and establishing downtown housing.

The opinions of Jacobs, Robertson and Palma concerning the multi-faceted downtown are condensed into Table 2.1. To summarize, their primary areas of agreement for a successful downtown are: a mix of businesses, a diversity of uses, high density and formalized planning.

Table 2.1
Guiding Principles for the Multi-faceted Downtown as Described in Literature
General T R A I T S as denoted by Author

	<i>Jacobs</i>	<i>Robertson</i>	<i>Palma</i>
<i>Business Mix</i>	X	X	X
<i>Leadership</i>		X	X
<i>Anticipating New Markets</i>			X
<i>Exploiting Market Niches</i>			X
<i>Use Diversity</i>	X	X	X
<i>Well-Planned physical layout</i>	X	X	
<i>Historic preservation</i>	X	X	
<i>High Density</i>	X	X	X
<i>Human Scale</i>	X	X	
<i>Formalized Planning</i>	X	X	X
<i>Capacity for Walking</i>	X	X	

From this review comes the next Working Hypothesis:

WH3: City Managers will perceive that a vital downtown will be multi-functional.

Implementation Tools

According to Peterson (1994: 88), since the 1970s as the federal government began to significantly reduce financial support for local public services and initiatives, municipalities have had to rely more on their own resources to get things done. ‘Getting things done’ locally includes revitalizing downtown. But paying for it is only one side of the issue. Creating an environment that both encourages new business development and one where existing businesses will prosper and expand is another task. Haque (2001: 275) calls this environment “the engine of economic growth.”

Cities can use a host of tools to successfully accomplish both financial and non-financial objectives⁹. A non-financial mechanism deserving special note is the Main Street approach to downtown revitalization, which is a product of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Considerable, formalized community commitment is required for effectively utilizing this small-city tool for downtown revitalization. The Main Street method is based upon four principles: organization of interests, design that enhances the built and visual environment, promotion, and economic development. According to Robertson (1999: 276), the Main Street approach was the most commonly used strategy for downtown redevelopment in fifty-seven towns he surveyed between 1995 and 1997.

Other tools for downtown revitalization include tax increment financing, design guidelines and standards, the use of revenue sources such as taxes, grants from public and private sources, and various fees charged both to users of facilities and developers of properties.¹⁰ There is also the federal historic tax credit, abatements and other methods of encouraging private development to enlarge the tax base. A review of some of these tools follows.

Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is considered to be an effective tool for downtown revitalization because it is widely available and has a wide range of appropriate projects.¹¹

TIF does not require the property owner to pay additional taxes, although it does require that 'blight' be established as a condition of the pre-development property (Ward, 2000: 2). The creation of the TIF project boundary also creates a baseline. Future increases in property values produced by development generate additional tax revenues. The difference between the baseline

⁹ Some of the non-financial tools, such as leadership, planning and partnering, were discussed earlier in this chapter.

¹⁰ Fees will be discussed under the **Some Revenue Sources** section

¹¹ See for example, Ward, 2000: 3; Klemanski, 1989: 659, 666; and Frieden and Sagalyn, 1989: 251.

and the additional revenues created by the increased values is called the increment. Debt can be incurred against the increment or the incremental revenues can be used for a variety of purposes related to the development of the property. Common uses of TIF are infrastructure improvements, land acquisition, street lighting, landscaping, and parking (Ward, 2000: 3). Greuling (2000: 209-215) notes that utilizing a TIF can enhance the tax base; increase the quality of the economic climate; provide new job opportunities; spur building rehabilitation; and create project capital without increasing property owners' tax burden or directly impacting other taxpayers. Furthermore, this economic development tool can be a viable mechanism when there is confidence that property values in the development will increase. (Ward, 2000: 3) TIF also, however, takes the incremental taxes out of the general fund for the life of the development. Greuling (2000:215) notes that some issues of open government as related to TIF exist since use of this financing mechanism does not require voter approval. However, neither do abatements, incentives and a number of other financing tools.

Design Guidelines and Standards

Another method for achieving preservation and revitalization goals is design policies, often referred to guidelines and/or standards. There is no definitive industry distinction for the difference between guidelines and standards and planners sometimes use the two terms interchangeably. In some cases, the 'standard' refers to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards, codes that govern the treatment of historic properties, including the rehabilitation, restoration, preservation and reconstruction that is applied to properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. This standard is applied uniformly, regardless of locale. Locally devised design guidelines, however, will vary between communities and will reflect individual community goals, desires, objectives and the physical setting. Generally, design guidelines address issues ranging from color and building materials, to signage and lighting.

Some Revenue Sources

Sources of income for cities include the sale of utility services such as water, wastewater and electricity, along with property and sales taxes. Sales taxes are a desirable method for tax diversification at the local level (Bland, 1988: 241). The economic development sales tax, which is authorized by voters as a local option tax, is another popular tool used by cities (Cornyn, 1999: 1). Unlike the traditional sales taxes, which are generally collected by the state and distributed back to cities, the economic development sales tax funds a special development corporation that is not directly managed by the city government. Income tax, in states where it exists, can also be a municipal revenue stream.

Funding for community-wide projects, including those in the downtown, may also come from charging developers impact and permitting fees to build within the city limits, while user fees may be utilized to offset the costs of constructing a facility such as a sports arena. Revenue bonds (which do not effect a community's bonded indebtedness) can also pay for these types of facilities where ticketed events are held. Traditional debt financing is also used for project funding.

Additionally, grants from both public and private sources can finance specific projects for downtown redevelopment and help close a financing gap (Hagaman and Olmstead, 2002: 1-2). In utilizing grants, however, some equity issues should be considered. For instance, does the grant money – which can include money from private foundations and community development block grant funds from the federal government – serve a local policy purpose and how is it to be executed to meet that policy objective (Nathan, 1983: 48)? The federal government's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is another source of grant funding for local initiatives. Prior to the 1970s, categorical grants were the primary source of federal aid for downtown redevelopment. In the mid-1970s, three policy areas were transformed from categorical grants to the more flexible block grants: manpower, social services and community

development¹². No new block grants would be approved until 1981, during President Ronald Reagan's administration, when seventy-seven separate programs were merged into nine block grants (Conlan, 1984: 247-270). The block grant system continues today.¹³

As discussed in the preceding paragraphs, many alternative financing techniques exist. From the literature reviewed, two Working Hypotheses have been developed:

WH4a: City Managers will perceive that adequate revenue must be available to revitalize downtown.

WH4b: City Managers will have opinions about a variety of finance mechanisms available for use in downtown revitalization.

In this Topic Chapter, seven Working Hypotheses that pertain to the fundamental elements of downtown revitalization (purpose one) have been presented. In the next Topic Chapter, the **challenges** of downtown revitalization in infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools are discussed and another set of Working Hypotheses is presented.

¹² Downtown revitalization falls under community development.

¹³ As mentioned earlier, there are policy issues associated with all of these revenue sources; however that topic is outside of the realm of this project and will not be discussed in detail within these pages. It should be noted, however, that local funding for a downtown revitalization program will compete against many other programs that operate within the city. This point is mentioned for two reasons: 1) to highlight the need for accessing multiple revenue sources, and 2) to emphasize the importance (as mentioned in the Leadership section) of leaders to help create vision, plans and buy-in for a downtown program. A well-known federal block grant dispersed in Texas to local communities is the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which funds transportation-related projects. In Texas, this grant comes through the department of transportation and has been used in downtowns for projects ranging from sidewalk enhancements, streetscapes and railroad depot restorations. See www.dot.state.tx.us for a list of downtown projects that have been funded.

Chapter Three

Topic Chapter for Challenges of Downtown Revitalization

Introduction

In this Topic Chapter, challenges for downtown revitalization as they relate to infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and financing are reviewed. As noted in the earlier Topic Chapter, these four factors are fundamental elements for downtown revitalization.

Infrastructure Challenges

Maintaining

Bridges (1991: 202) states that infrastructure is “vital for a healthy economy and preservation of quality of life in American cities.” Since it is in the city’s best interests to maintain its physical elements and the downtown represents millions of dollars of public investment in infrastructure and public property, “a revitalization program protects public as well as private capital investment” (Noyes, 2000: 102). According to Rypkema (1994:56), “allowing downtown to decline results in underutilization of infrastructure already paid for with taxpayers’ dollars.” Thus, the reuse of existing infrastructure can also represent the efficient use of fiscal resources.

Hence, one would expect city managers to perceive that

WH5: maintaining sound infrastructure is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

Another challenge of downtown revitalization, leadership, is discussed next.

Leadership Challenges

“The nuts and bolts of leadership,” notes Peters (1985: 284) is to “know where you are going...be able to state it clearly and concisely – and you have to care about it passionately.” Leaders, he notes in the well-known book *In Search of Excellence*, champion causes because of firm beliefs, personal drive, passion and knowledge.

Scholars such as Davis (1980: 452) and Palma (1992: 3) stress the importance of knowledge about the state of downtown and the ability to gather the facts and analyze the data so that informed decisions can be made and a proper course of action taken. Palma (1992:3) adds that leaders must develop skills and resources to take advantage of trends affecting downtown. Marshall (2000: 63) refers to knowledgeable city leadership as “the best local ally a small business can have.”

Davis (1980: 452-453) believes that effective leadership can result in the attainment of an “achievement quotient” for successful downtown revitalization. He defines this quotient as “how good a city or city’s central business district is compared to how good it could be with the application of ‘optimum civic effort.’” Other conditions he lists that enable or foster leadership are: 1) widespread concern among downtown business owners and the public at large that the issues of downtown must be addressed; and 2) optimism, confidence and inspiration coming from a belief that downtown is worth the effort. According to Haque (2001: 277), many small-city economic development efforts are challenged by a lack of understanding concerning how to promote strengths while minimizing weaknesses. Successful leadership strategies, he notes, can be critical to overcoming these obstacles.

Hence, another set of Working Hypotheses is developed:

WH6a: City Managers will perceive that finding effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

W6b: City Managers will perceive that keeping effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

Literature reveals that leadership is critical to a viable downtown program. City managers are expected to agree that finding and keeping effective leaders is a challenge.

Effective leadership is important to further the mission of a successful downtown that: 1) achieves a sound tax base for the community, 2) reflects public needs and desires, 3) provides essential public services, and 4) increases business and employment. Challenges to accomplish these objectives can be great, especially in small cities, which tend to have slower economic growth than their larger city counterparts, due to less diversity in their range of business types (Haque, 2001: 277).

The Challenges of Multi-functionality

According to Kemp (2000: 1) and Peterson (1994: 88), citizens look to local governments such as municipalities to implement taxing and spending policies in ways that help increase the local quality of life. In addition to traditional public services such as fire and police protection, water and wastewater, and roadway construction, citizens also want municipal government to ensure that recreational and cultural opportunities exist in the community. A multi-functional downtown is one element in this mix. Haque (2001: 275-277) asserts that the business mix and diversification in downtown is critical, but can also be difficult for smaller cities to achieve.

Achieving a multi-dimensional downtown, nonetheless, seems important. A survey undertaken by Robertson (1999: 282) of downtowns with declining vitality found that one of the greatest challenges was attracting people downtown outside of traditional business hours. He

concluded from this survey that downtowns with the widest array of business, leisure, shopping and recreational opportunities would attract more consumers at different times. A continual influx of visitors should lead to higher profits for businesses that are increasing their sales and greater revenues for municipalities as property values and sales tax revenues increase.

According to Les (2000: 175), one reason for a business to close or move out of downtown is due to “diminished market support,” which includes too much outlying competition or a poor retail mix downtown. If the surrounding neighborhood deteriorates or the building in which the business is located is outgrown or crumbling, there may be few options besides moving. Herein lies some of the challenges: creating multi-functionality when there is none and maintaining it at a level that produces economic results for the city (increased taxing ability) and profits for the businesses. Notes Jacobs (1958: 163): “It is not only for amenity but for economics that choice is so vital.”

According to Hyett and Palma (2003: 7), historic buildings are just one facet of many assets in the downtown “that can be leveraged to build...economic futures.” Additionally, they point out economic potential in the downtown’s history. In some communities, using history to attract investors has been successful in increasing commercial real estate values.

It is to be expected, then, that city managers will generally consider multi-functionality a challenge of downtown revitalization. This leads to the next Working Hypotheses:

WH7a: City Managers will perceive that creating multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

WH7b: City Managers will perceive that maintaining multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

Financial Challenges to Downtown Revitalization

From the 1960s to the 1980s, urban renewal was heavily financed by federal grants (Mitchell, 2001: 115). Since then, direct federal aid has declined and cities have had to rely more on their own resources to fund local projects (Ward, 2000: 1).¹⁴ A multitude of projects, programs and services are funded through the municipal budget, so prioritizing is essential. Local public officials must spend a “vast” amount of time “thinking and worrying about how government revenues will be found to pay for a growing number of public services” (Arnold et al, 1979: 115). Civic leaders seeking to obtain financial support for downtown from the public budget must prove that a vibrant downtown will help achieve vital economic functions.¹⁵ They must also show that an active city core provides a public benefit for the community at large and greater equity for the taxpayer. Musgrave and Musgrave (1989: 6) point out that, while “particular tax or expenditure measures effect the economy in many ways and may be designed to serve a variety of purposes,” policy objectives for public budgets include allocation, distribution and stabilization functions.¹⁶ (The stabilization function is not applicable to local government.) Equity is an overarching objective in tax-structure design, and two “strands of thought” exist: the benefit principle and the ability-to-pay principle (Musgrave and Musgrave, 1989: 218). Under the first principle, those who benefit pay. Under the second, payment is made based upon ability to pay. Neither principle is “easy to interpret or implement” (Musgrave and

¹⁴ See also Keating and Krumholz, 1991: 137 and Bridges, 1991: 204

¹⁵ This would include increasing the value of the property tax base and increasing sales tax receipts.

¹⁶ Musgrave defines the allocation function as “the process by which total resource use is divided between private and social goods and by which the mix of social goods is chosen.” The “just” state is measured by the distribution function, while in the stabilization function, budget policy is a “means of maintaining high employment, a reasonable degree of price level stability and an appropriate rate of economic growth.”

Musgrave, 1989: 219).¹⁷ These equity issues surrounding property and sales tax allocations play into public budgets as levels of funding for particular programs are determined.¹⁸ Bland (1988: 242) states that differences in sales tax rates between neighboring communities can inadvertently create location incentives or disincentives for retailers, especially if local government does not offset the detrimental impact of a higher sales tax rate with other incentives. A national study found that a difference of just one percent in the sales tax between a central city and its suburbs could result in a per capita loss of sales tax revenue ranging from 1.7 to 11 percent (Bland, 1988: 242-243). As mentioned earlier, another avenue for funding downtown projects is the legislatively-created economic development sales tax. However, this tax is restricted to certain uses and many downtown projects cannot be financed with these funds.

Fortunately for municipalities, there is a broad array of financial tools¹⁹ available for local economic development – including downtown revitalization. The challenge, according to Krumholz (1999:83), is to analyze and select the most appropriate tools to achieve the most effective and equitable results.

Thus, the literature reveals that, while many tools for financing the downtown program are available, there are still significant challenges. The downtown program competes with many others for funding in increasingly strained local budgets, while monies from federal sources for

¹⁷ Using the benefit principle, it becomes readily apparent that downtown merchants are benefactors of free enterprise and pay via the property tax. At the same time, consumers who enjoy the public services provided downtown and the availability of shops, pay via the sales tax.

¹⁸ These determinations may also change year to year, depending on current or anticipated municipal needs or emergencies that may arise and necessitate the need to shift budgeted monies elsewhere. As reviewed in both this and the previous Topic Chapter, the risk of year-to-year shifts in budgeted monies can be lessened if effective leadership is in place to champion the downtown effort and inform the public of its worth.

¹⁹ Fourteen different tools are listed in Burayidi (2001: 258). Also see Marshall (2000: 200), Grueling (2000: 209), Klemanski (1989), Krumholz (1999: 84). Alongside debt financing, financing from the general fund through sales and property taxes, other tools mentioned include Tax Increment Financing, abatements, incentives, and grants. Many of these tools are operationalized as questions in the Downtown Revitalization Survey of City Managers on which this Applied Research Project based. The tools are also mentioned in the Topic Chapter on Fundamental Elements (finance section).

revitalization continue to fluctuate. Thus, it is expected that city managers will consider that funding downtown revitalization is difficult and the next Working Hypothesis is presented:

WH8: City Managers will perceive that providing adequate revenue to revitalize downtown is difficult.

This study also assumes that City Managers will have certain perceptions about the success of revitalization programs within their own downtowns, which leads to a last Working Hypothesis:

WH9: City Managers will have perceptions concerning qualities of their own downtowns.

In this Topic Chapter, the challenges of downtown revitalization as presented in the literature have been introduced and discussed. Since this Applied Research Project focuses on perceptions of city managers toward downtown revitalization, it is important to know the role they play, both officially and politically, in municipal government. The following chapter addresses the setting of this study.

Chapter Four: Setting

In the introductory chapter, it was established that downtown revitalization is a priority across the United States. This national phenomenon is also apparent in Texas, as shown by the Dallas-area and Georgetown examples reviewed in the introductory chapter. Municipal government is the primary force for downtown revitalization efforts in local communities and in Texas the city manager is the chief administrative officer for city government. Thus, this chapter briefly discusses how Texas municipal government is structured and introduces some of the legal and political roles of city managers.

Before concluding the chapter, the setting will be enhanced via a brief synopsis of downtown revitalization activity in two state associations, The Texas Historical Commission's Main Street Program and the Texas Downtown Association.

Texas cities – Legal definitions

The Local Government Code and Texas Constitution lay out general provisions for the powers of municipal government. The Code defines three primary types of municipalities: general law, home rule and special law.²⁰

There are three types of general law cities. Population and geographical size generally divide them, with the Type C General Law Municipality having additionally adopted the commission form of government in which the governing body is comprised of a mayor and two commissioners.

Next, a city may become a Home Rule Municipality if it has more than 5,000 inhabitants and has gone through a formal process to craft a charter for governance. The Home Rule charter

²⁰ First established in Section 1.005 of the code.

establishes a system of governance that better reflects the community's unique characteristics and allows planning functions in ways not permitted by a general law city. The charter allows the full power of local self-government.²¹ Lastly, a Special Law municipality is one that operates under a charter granted by local law enacted by the Congress of the Republic of Texas or by the legislature.

The above-mentioned entities operate with one of three types of governing bodies: aldermanic, commissioner or city manager. In the aldermanic and commissioner forms of government the mayor acts as the chief executive officer. This study is limited to the form of municipal government in Texas in which a professional city manager acts as the chief administrative officer. He or she serves at the will of the governing body and is responsible for administering the municipality's affairs. The governing body may also delegate to the manager any other powers or duties that are deemed appropriate or necessary for the efficient administration of the city.

The City Manager

Professional Role

As previously noted, the Texas Local Government Code stipulates that the governing body may delegate additional responsibilities deemed necessary to the city manager. The discretion of governing bodies can quickly be seen in a random review of seven city websites²² in which large variances in the extent of listed responsibilities are seen, along with some shared characteristics.²³ Of the seven websites upon which these statements are based, all mention the job as chief administrative officer and all mention responsibilities for managing day-to-day

²¹ Local Government Code, Chapter 51, Section 72a.

²² www.ci.grapevine.tx.us, www.ci.cedar-park.tx.us, www.ci.rowlett.tx.us, www.ci.frco.tx.us, www.ci.allen.tx.us, www.baytown.org and www.georgetown.org

²³ This review was not intended to be an empirical test; instead the check was done merely to offer some information to support the author's statement of shared characteristics and varying listed responsibilities. City managers' contracts were not reviewed as data. Thus, the declaration should not be taken as empirical evidence.

operations and executing the laws and policies of the governing body. This is all that is stated as manager duties on three of the websites. All but one list preparing the city budget as a job responsibility, which is not directly stipulated in the government code. Directing and/or selecting department heads is mentioned three times. Two offer a specific list of about a dozen responsibilities.

As pointed out earlier, the city manager's job is not only professional, but political as well.

Operating in a Political Environment

The city manager is the chief administrative officer reporting to the elected body of a municipality and thus operates in a political environment. Although charged with carrying out the policies of the council, the city manager – whose advice and recommendations are often sought prior to policy implementation -- can have tremendous influence on the political process. Thus, the successful city manager is likely to have strong leadership skills. This Applied Research Project focuses on leadership, which is tremendously important in the political arena. In addition, leadership skills are frequently mentioned in an unofficial review of current²⁴ city manager job postings on the websites of the Texas Municipal League and the Texas City Management Association.²⁵

Since this Applied Research Project is a study of city managers' perceptions toward downtown revitalization, it is appropriate to provide some insight on the general setting for downtown revitalization in Texas. This subject was mentioned earlier in the Introductory Chapter, where some local examples were provided.

²⁴ Current in March 2003. Again as in footnote 6, this is intended as supporting information only and should not be taken as empirical evidence.

²⁵ www.tml.org

The General Setting for Downtown Revitalization in Texas

Two of the premier organizations for downtown revitalization in Texas are the Texas Main Street Program (TMSP), a division of the Texas Historical Commission, and the Texas Downtown Association (TDA).²⁶ The TMSP assists Texas municipalities reinvest in their historic downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts through the use of preservation and economic development strategies. The program, begun in 1981, is affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Texas program has assisted almost 150 cities, resulting in the reinvestment of more than \$1 billion back into the communities, the creation of 18,350 jobs and the establishment of more than 4,800 new businesses.²⁷ As a local, self-help initiative, the program provides only expertise and technical resources – not funding -- to local participants. Thus, application to and participation in the program requires a financial commitment to downtown revitalization on the part of the city. Officially designated ‘Texas Main Street’ cities are selected on the basis of competitive applications. To apply to and participate in the TMSP, cities with populations up to 50,000 must agree to hire a full-time Main Street manager for three years and provide funding for the program and staff. Cities with more than 50,000 in population must partner with a private non-profit corporation, hire two full-time staff members and provide staff and program funding for two years.

Loosely affiliated with the TMSP is the Texas Downtown Association (TDA), a private non-profit initiated in 1985 under the umbrella of the state main street office. Each year, TDA provides training for certified Texas Main Street managers, their boards of directors and hundreds of other downtown professionals in the state, including city managers. Although participation in TDA is voluntary, the organization currently has close to 400 active members

²⁶ The Texas Downtown Association was actually begun in the mid-1980s under the umbrella of the Texas Main Street Program. While still informally affiliated, the two organizations now operate autonomously from one another.

²⁷ Source: Texas Historical Commission at www.thc.state.tx.us/mainstreet as of December 2002.

from 200 downtowns across the state that pay an annual fee to belong. This voluntary membership has increased by 72 percent since 1999. As with the TMSP, the participation levels can be construed to signify a commitment to downtown revitalization in Texas.

So far, this Applied Research Project has focused on the state of downtown revitalization from a national and statewide perspective. Additionally, fundamental elements of and challenges to downtown revitalization have been reviewed, along with the general role city managers play in redevelopment activities. In the next chapter, a system of inquiry to measure attitudes towards central-city reinvestment is introduced.

Chapter Five: Methodology and Conceptual Framework

In this chapter, the techniques used to determine attitudes of city managers toward downtown revitalization in smaller Texas towns are introduced and justified and conceptual frameworks for working hypotheses are summarized.

For this project to be a credible body of work, the following principles of empirical research were used as guidelines:

- Adherence to a clearly articulated conceptual framework for organization and operationalization;
- A sound review of literature for knowledge;
- Development of realistic and testable working hypotheses;
- Use of recognized guidelines and content development in the creation of a survey instrument to test hypotheses;
- Distribution of the survey to an appropriate population;
- Use of supporting documentation through interviews with reliable sources.

Conceptual Framework

Working Hypotheses (WH) is the conceptual framework for this study. In exploratory research, Working Hypotheses “enable and focus evidence collection” (Shields, 1998: 206). The hypotheses for this study propose a relationship between fundamental elements and challenges of downtown revitalization and the perceptions city managers will have towards them. Empirical testing determines the extent of these relationships.

Framework for Fundamental Elements

The first set of hypotheses concerns attitudes toward fundamental elements for downtown revitalization in four previously-mentioned categories (infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools). This conceptual framework is summarized in Table 5.1. First, as comprehensively reviewed in Topic Chapter Two (Fundamental Elements), the mechanical elements (WH1) of downtown are important and range from utilities and roads to sidewalks and parking facilities. They encourage mobility and access for visitors. Secondly, working hypotheses pertaining to leadership are explored. This set of hypotheses studies various traits of effective leaders and leaders as planners and partners in relation to the impact of people on the downtown program (WH2a-c). Third, multi-functionality is addressed as a component of downtown revitalization. This category refers to how a variety of businesses, entertainment venues, housing and the like attract people to downtown (WH3). The fourth element to be addressed is implementation tools, which includes financing downtown revitalization. It is by design that this component is addressed last, since once the formal plans for downtown revitalization are adopted, these tools are the instruments and action items utilized to achieve the vision.

TABLE 5.1
Working Hypotheses for Fundamental Elements
 Purpose Two

Sources	WORKING HYPOTHESES	Survey/Interview items
Bridges (1991), Burayidi (2001), Jacobs (1958), Hicks (1999), Les (2000), Noyes (2000), Rypkema (1994)	<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>WH1: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is an important component of a downtown revitalization program.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey</p> <p>Q: The following is considered infrastructure: sidewalks, roads, public spaces, streetscapes, public parking, crosswalks, and utilities. (3)</p> <p>Q: Maintaining sound infrastructure is important to a downtown revitalization program. (4)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interview</p> <p>Q: Do you think that maintaining sound infrastructure is important to a downtown revitalization program? Why or why not? (2)</p>
Burayidi (2001), Davis (1980), Davis (1986), Haque (2001), Jacobs (1958), Kemp (2000), Keating and Krumholz (1991), Mayer (2000), Mitchell (2001), Rubin (2001)	<p>Leadership</p> <p>WH2a: City Managers will perceive that strong downtown leaders exhibit certain traits.</p> <p>WH2b: City Managers will perceive that effective partnerships help leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.</p> <p>WH2c: City Managers will perceive that effective planning helps leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey</p> <p>Q: There is a connection between strong leadership and a vital downtown. (5a)</p> <p>Q: Effective downtown leaders have concern, optimism, knowledge, vision, and knowledge of historic preservation. (5b-g)</p> <p>Q: Partnerships are important for downtown revitalization. (5h)</p> <p>Q: It is important that leaders engage in formal planning for downtown. (5i)</p> <p>Q: The following can be effective downtown revitalization partners: special districts, downtown associations, Main Street program, development corporation, chamber of commerce, city staff, convention & visitors bureau,</p>

		<p>downtown business owners. (6a-h) Q: The following are important to downtown planning: simplified permitting, historic preservation, design standards, design guidelines, ordinances, zoning, and master planning. (7)</p> <p>Interview: Q: How can effective leadership impact a downtown program? (3)</p>
<p>Jacobs (1958), Jacobs (1961), Mayer (2000), Palma (1992), Palma (2000), Robertson (1995), Robertson (1999), Robertson (2001)</p>	<p>Multi-functionality WH3: City Managers will perceive that a vital downtown will be multi-functional.</p>	<p>Survey Q: The following are important to achieving a multi-functional downtown: culture, business mix, special events, entertainment, public buildings, open spaces, housing, tourist attractions (8a-h) Q: It is important that downtown be multi-functional (8i)</p> <p>Interview Is a multi-functional downtown important and what is the mix of elements that should be present to achieve this diversity? (4)</p>
<p>Bland (1988), Conlan (1984), Cornyn (1999), Frieden and Sagalyn (1989), Greuling (2000), Hagaman and Olmstead (2002), Haque (2001), Klemanski (1989), Nathan (1983), Peterson (1994), Robertson (1999), Ward (2000)</p>	<p>Implementation Tools WH4a: City Managers will perceive that adequate revenue must be available to revitalize downtown. WH4b: City Managers will have opinions about a variety of finance mechanisms available for use in downtown revitalization.</p>	<p>Survey Question Q: Adequate revenue must be available to finance downtown revitalization. (9a) Q: The following finance mechanisms are viable for use in downtown revitalization: Texas Capital Fund, TEA-21 grant, heritage tourism grant, certified local government grant, history museum grant, historic tax credit, private grants, debt financing, general fund, user fees, developer</p>

		fees, encouraging private development, tax increment financing, tax abatements (10a-n) Interview Q: How can downtown revitalization be funded? (5)
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Framework for Challenges

The second set of hypotheses explores attitudes toward challenges for downtown revitalization in four previously-mentioned categories (infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools). This conceptual framework is summarized in Table 5.2. First, literature establishes that maintaining sound infrastructure in a downtown is a critical challenge to be addressed. It is expected that city managers will agree (WH5). As comprehensively reviewed in Chapter Three (Challenges), the lack of sound infrastructure can negatively influence accessibility, mobility, business expansions and recruitment, sales tax revenues and property values in the downtown. Secondly, effective leaders are considered kingpins to successful downtown revitalization; thus it is appropriate to explore the challenges of finding and keeping them (WH 6a-b). Third, a variety of uses and a mix of offerings should entice a continual flow of visitors to the downtown, but it is expected that this will be difficult to achieve. This set of working hypotheses (WH7a-b) addresses issues of creating and maintaining a multi-functional downtown. Lastly, it is expected that city managers will find financing and implementing the effective downtown program challenging. This barrier is summarized in Working Hypotheses Eight (WH8).

TABLE 5.2
Working Hypotheses for Challenges
Purpose Three

Sources	WORKING HYPOTHESES	Survey/Interview items
Bridges (1991), Noyes (2000), Rypkema (1994), Wilson (1983)	<p>Infrastructure WH5: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey Q: Maintaining sound infrastructure downtown is challenging. (4b)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interview Q: Do you agree that infrastructure is a critical challenge for those involved in downtown revitalization? Why or why not? (1)</p>
Davis (1980), Marshall (2000), Palma (1992), Palma (2000), Peters (1985)	<p>Leadership WH6a: City Managers will perceive that finding effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p> <p>W6b: City Managers will perceive that keeping effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey Q: Keeping effective leaders committed to downtown revitalization is a challenge. (5j) Q: Finding effective leaders for downtown revitalization is a challenge. (5k)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interview Q: Do you agree that leadership is a critical challenge for those involved in downtown revitalization? Why or why not? (1)</p>
Haque (2001), Hyett and Palma (2003), Jacobs (1958), Kemp (2000), Les (2000), Peterson (1994), Robertson (1999)	<p>Multi-functionality WH7a: City Managers will perceive that creating multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p> <p>WH7b: City Managers will perceive that maintaining multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey Q: Keeping downtown multi-functional is a challenge. (8j) Q: Creating a multi-functional downtown is challenging. (8k)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interview Q: Do you agree that multi-functionality is a critical challenge for those involved in downtown revitalization? Why or why not? (1)</p>
Bland (1988), Bridges (1991), Burayidi (2001), Greuling (2000), Klemanski (1989),	<p>Financing WH8: City Managers will perceive that providing</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey Q: Providing adequate revenues for downtown is</p>

<p>Klemanski and Krumholz (1991), Krumholz (1999), Marshall (2000), Mitchell (2001), Musgrave (1989)</p>	<p>adequate revenue to revitalize downtown is difficult.</p>	<p>difficult. (9b) Q: Without availability of adequate revenue, changes for successful downtown revitalization are slim. (9c)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interview</p> <p>Q: Do you agree that funding is a critical challenge for those involved in downtown revitalization? Why or why not? (1)</p>
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Framework for Individual City Experiences

In the two previous framework sections, thirteen hypotheses proposing that city managers will have opinions about fundamental elements and challenges of downtown revitalization has been summarized. It is assumed that these managers will also have opinions on those overarching topics as they specifically pertain to their own downtowns. The last Working Hypothesis addresses a single expectation: that city managers will have perceptions concerning the qualities of their own downtowns (WH9).

TABLE 5.3
Working Hypothesis for Individual City Experiences
(Purpose Four)

Sources	WORKING HYPOTHESES	Survey/Interview items
Burayidi (2001), Les (2000), Marshall (2000), Palma (2000), Robertson (1995), Robertson (1999), Robertson (2001), Rypkema (1994),	WH9: City Managers will have perceptions concerning qualities of their own downtowns.	<p style="text-align: center;">Survey</p> Q: The quality of infrastructure in my downtown is high. (11a) Q: Local elected leadership is committed to downtown revitalization. (11b) Q: Non-elected leaders support downtown revitalization. (11c) Q: My downtown is multi-functional. (11d) Q: Adequate revenue is available to finance downtown revitalization. (11e) Q: Alternative revenue sources outside of the local community are sought to finance downtown revitalization. (11f)
		<p style="text-align: center;">Interview</p> Q: Do you think your downtown has specific strengths and if so, what are they? (6) Q: Do you think your downtown has specific weaknesses and if so, what are they? (7)

Methodology

This chapter sub-section examines the techniques used to address the research questions. Specifically, the development of the survey and interview instruments, strengths and weaknesses of surveys and focused interviews, sampling techniques and statistical methods employed are discussed, along with some issues uncovered during the survey process.

The focus of this project is to measure attitudes and perceptions of city managers in smaller Texas towns. The following related evidence about downtown revitalization is being collected:

- General perceptions about recognized elements; and
- Opinions about challenges.

Techniques

This study utilizes self-administered surveys and structured interviews. Both are appropriate for exploratory research. Surveys are also acceptable when the purpose of the research is descriptive. (Shields, 2002, 73)²⁸

Surveys are “excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes” and perceptions. Questionnaire research is effective for “collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly” and it is an affordable method of collecting quantitative evidence from a large group (Babbie, 2001, 238).

The credibility of survey evidence is dependent on: (1) the appropriateness of the sample, (2) the structure of the instrument utilizing recognized guidelines,²⁹ (3) the connection between the survey instrument and the research questions developed earlier, and (4) connection

²⁸ Babbie also endorses use of both of these methods as appropriate for exploratory and descriptive research purposes. See bibliography. (2001, 238, 258) The first purpose of this project has a descriptive objective.

²⁹ Babbie in his textbook, *The Practice of Social Research*, 9th edition, beginning on page 239 provide these guidelines. See bibliography.

of the research questions to the literature through a carefully constructed conceptual framework(s). Questions in a survey should be clear, short, relevant, unambiguous, unbiased and mutually exclusive. An uncluttered, well-ordered format allowing the respondent to finish in a short period of time increases the instrument's viability (Babbie, 2001: 238-253).³⁰ The failure to achieve any of these aforementioned principles can weaken the project.

In the survey for this study, a Likert scale is employed, coded as follows:

Strongly Agree (SA) = 5

Agree (A) = 4

Neutral (N) = 3

Disagree (DA) = 2

Strongly Disagree (SDA) = 1

Some of the survey questions also asked simple yes/no questions. Mode and percentages were primarily used in analyzing the evidence. Closed-end questions can more readily be operationalized and most of the survey instrument is in this format. Open-ended questions closely related to the survey questions are asked in structured interviews.³¹ One general weakness of survey research is the depth allowed; interviews help overcome this issue. (Babbie, 2001: 238-253). Interviews primarily provide qualitative evidence but are more difficult to generalize. Thus, information garnered from the interviews only plays a supportive role in this project.

³⁰ See attached cover letter in the Appendix stating that the survey should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete.

³¹ See attached interview questions.

Prior to mailing, the survey instrument was pre-tested by Dion Miller, city manager in Mineola and Howard Langner, architect with the Texas Main Street Program. Both suggested some minor revisions, but also said the survey was clear, concise and useable.³²

Data Sources and Sample

This survey was sent to 256 city managers in Texas in cities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000. A total of 157 surveys were returned, representing a response rate of slightly more than 61 percent. According to Babbie (2001: 256): "...a response rate of 50 percent is adequate for analysis and reporting...a response rate of 60 percent is good." He adds that a high response rate can also help to decrease the chance of response bias.³³

As listed by the Texas State Comptroller,³⁴ the U.S. Census recognizes 1,523 cities in Texas. Of that number, 313 are not incorporated towns with governing bodies, but are Census Designated Places (CDP). They were removed from this study. Thus, the process began with 1,210 Texas cities.

The following assumptions were made in order to narrow that number into the 256 that eventually became the focus of this project:

³² For the interviews, several professionals were asked to recommend city managers they knew had expertise in downtown revitalization. Recommendations were solicited from Karla Vining, deputy executive director of the Texas Municipal League; Terry Colley, deputy executive director for the Texas Historical Commission; Kay Harvey-Mosley, state coordinator for the Texas Main Street Program; and Dina Stapleton, community development consultant for KSA Engineers, Inc. All work extensively with city managers throughout Texas on downtown revitalization issues. Subsequently, the following city managers were asked for an interview: Bob Hart, former city manager in Huntsville and Georgetown; Ned Muse, city manager in Pittsburg; and Mike Conduff, city manager in Denton and formerly in Bryan. All of these cities have active downtown revitalization programs.

³³ According to Babbie (2001: 256) response bias occurs when less than 100 percent of the survey population answers the questionnaire (which is almost always). This creates the possibility that the respondents do not represent the total population.

³⁴ www.window.state.ts.us/ecodata/popdata/citypop.xls

- Cities in with populations of 5,000 to 50,000 would be large enough to have the resources to be active in downtown revitalization, but would also not be so large that their issues would be too unique for generalization.
- The number of cities within the group would provide a population large enough for a realistic, affordable and empirically sound study.

For descriptive purposes, the 256 were narrowed into the following population categories for study: 5,000 to 14,999; 15,000 to 24,999; 25,000 to 34,999 and 35,000 to 50,000. They are summarized in Table 5.4 below. The comparison shows that, for the purposes of this project, an adequate cross section of the total population was achieved in the responses. The responses indicate that between 51% and 84% of the total population is represented in each category.

Table 5.4
Populations

Population	Texas Comptroller Number of cities (N)	Survey Responses Number of cities (n)	n/N (% rounded)
5,000 – 14,999	169	86	51%
15,000 – 24,999	41	30	73%
25,000 – 34,999	25	21	84%
35,000 – 50,000	21	13	62%
Q not answered	0	7	n/a
Total	256	157	61%

After the city names were developed from the comptroller’s website, the precise list of addresses and names for mailing purposes came from two sources: the Texas Municipal League and the Texas Downtown Association. Just over 1,000 incorporated cities and their elected and appointed representatives belong to the Texas Municipal League, which was organized in 1913. The Texas Downtown Association, begun approximately 15 years ago to provide advocacy, networking and training services to those involved specifically in downtown revitalization, has almost 400 members. City manager addresses from these two organizations were combined with those from the comptroller’s city list to arrive at the final list of who would receive the survey.

Issues

According to Babbie (2001: 240), precision in questionnaire wording is important. Apparently, in the second survey question of this project, that preciseness was absent. This question, asking in what region of Texas the respondent was from, was to be used for descriptive purposes. It was removed from study results because many respondents added in extra information that skewed the information being sought. For instance, instead of marking North or West Texas, respondents might mark both to signify that they were from a city in Northwest Texas. Central Texas was also not specifically offered as a choice, so many wrote it in.

Another issue pertained to the tools section of the survey. As the completed surveys were returned, a few written comments and one phone call briefly noted the use of economic development sales tax proceeds as another tool for downtown revitalization. This tax, as authorized by the Texas legislature, allows municipalities to create non-profit corporations that promote local business development. The economic development sales tax was originally authorized in 1989 and expanded in 1991. It allows local voters to approve the additional levy. As a result, some additional information was collected. First, a complete list of cities that have adopted the tax was obtained from the Texas Comptroller's office. It was compared with cities being surveyed for this project and yielded 169 names. Then, emails were sent to 41 of the city managers in those cities.³⁵ Responses to this ancillary question are discussed in the Results Chapter.

In summary, this chapter has summarized and operationalized the conceptual frameworks of the Applied Research Project and has also discussed research techniques and the study sample. In the next chapter, the results of the study will be shared.

³⁵ Since this was an ancillary and last-minute activity for this Applied Research Project, emails were sent to the city managers whose email addresses (41) were readily available.

Chapter Six Results

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings of the study as they relate to the previously-mentioned, interconnected project purposes:

- to review the literature in order to identify the fundamental components of a downtown revitalization program as well as the key challenges inherent in each component;
- to explore city managers' attitudes about the importance of fundamental components of downtown revitalization;
- to explore city managers' attitudes about the challenges to downtown revitalization programs; and
- to explore city managers' attitudes about their cities' downtown revitalization programs.

This chapter examines the attitudes of city managers toward downtown revitalization in smaller Texas towns. Attitudes were obtained from empirical evidence resulting from surveys, structured interviews and emailed questions. Organizationally, the results are examined under the two topic areas – Fundamental Elements and Challenges. Within each topic area, attitudes for each category (infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools) are examined.

Fundamental Elements

Results: Infrastructure as a Fundamental Element

WH 1: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is an important component of a downtown revitalization program.

Infrastructure – as represented by components like streets, sidewalks and utilities – provide access to downtown, mobility within it and basic functionality. Thus, infrastructure is a necessity. As shown in Table 6.1 city managers define roads and utilities as the primary components of infrastructure, followed by sidewalks, crosswalks, parking, public spaces and streetscapes. Furthermore, they overwhelmingly agree that maintaining sound infrastructure is important to downtown’s success, with 75 percent responding “Strongly Agree” and 25 percent as “Agree.” By first getting all of the respondents ‘on the same page’ in defining infrastructure, the question that followed on infrastructure as an important component became more credible.

In the interviews, this same philosophy is articulated. According to Mike Conduff, Denton city manager, many critical studies and the literature emphasize infrastructure’s importance. Developing the infrastructure is the principal role that a municipality can play in downtown revitalization. He adds that without good infrastructure in place, it becomes difficult to attract private investment to downtown. Bob Hart, former city manager in both Huntsville and Georgetown, supports this premise as well, noting that infrastructure is important because it is an indicator of the general health of the downtown area.

Table 6.1³⁶

Survey Results on Infrastructure as a Fundamental Element of Downtown Revitalization
 What is Infrastructure and is it important?

What is Infrastructure?	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	n*	Mode
Roads	100	154	Strongly Agree
Utilities	98	156	Strongly Agree
Sidewalks	90	156	Strongly Agree
Crosswalks	82	155	Strongly Agree
Parking	81	151	Strongly Agree/ Agree
Public Spaces	72	149	Agree
Streetscape	66	150	Strongly Agree/ Agree
Infrastructure as important to downtown	100	155	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

Results: Leadership as a Fundamental Element

WH2a: City Managers will perceive that strong downtown leaders exhibit certain traits.

WH2b: City Managers will perceive that effective partnerships help leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.

WH2c: City Managers will perceive that effective planning helps leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.

The champions of downtown revitalization help to focus the program, planning and partnering required for successful redevelopment. To set the stage for the leadership element, city managers were asked if they thought a connection between leadership and downtown vitality

³⁶ For a complete set of responses, see Appendix

existed³⁷. As shown in Table 6.2, there was overwhelming support for the supposition, with 95 percent responding either Strongly Agree or Agree. There was fluctuation, however, in attitudes toward specific leadership traits, which switched places when Strongly Agree and Agree responses were collapsed. This indicates that differences in intensity of opinion for certain traits exist. When ranked only by Strongly Agree, vision was at the top. However, when the two scales were collapsed, vision dropped to fourth of six. At the same time, when ranked only by Strongly Agree, optimism was third but rose to first when the two scales were collapsed. ‘Concern for downtown’ was the most stable, staying at second in both instances. With the significant historic aspects of downtowns that help establish community image, it seems ironic that ‘knowledge of historic preservation’ ranked last each time. It should be noted, however, that the trait also had the highest number of “neutral” answers (32). Had the respondents taken a stance on the trait, its order could have changed significantly.

City managers were also asked how they felt about partnering aspects of leadership. More specifically, one survey question asked about the importance of partners and another inquired about specific partnerships that could be possible allies for downtown revitalization.³⁸ Almost 100 percent of the respondents agreed in the value of partnerships, as shown in Table 6.2. Downtown business owners were viewed as the strongest allies. The downtown association was the ranked second highest. Neither group changed order when the scale was collapsed. These two groups are perhaps viewed as the strongest partners to cultivate because they have vested interest in the vitality of downtown. It should also be noted that “downtown business owner” had only two “neutral” rankings and the association had seven. But for all of the other partner groups, there were between fourteen and thirty-six “neutral” responses. That seems to add weight to the intensity of opinion in favor of the two downtown groups. It was also not surprising for “Main

³⁷ Question 5a.

³⁸ Q5h, 6.

Street Program” to rank in the middle instead of at the top, since in this program (as reviewed earlier in the Setting Chapter), cities are selected for participation based upon competitive bidding and not every city is eligible. Almost 100 percent of the respondents agreed that leaders should be involved in the planning process.

The interviews also supported the strong opinions toward leaders. Denton City Manager Mike Conduff said: “You have to have a champion. It can be an individual champion or a corporate champion, like a chamber or convention bureau, but it has to be a person or group that can translate the needs of downtown into a dialogue that the public can understand.” Former Huntsville City Manager Bob Hart said: “Good leadership can sell the vision, make things happen and create partnerships for such an effort.” Pittsburg City Manager Ned Muse noted that leadership is critical not only in the city structure, but also within the downtown community. “The community has to understand that this is their program,” he said.

Table 6.2³⁹
Leadership as a Fundamental Element

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Connection: leadership, downtown vitality	95	148	Strongly Agree /Agree
Traits			
Vision	95	149	Strongly Agree
Concern	97	149	Strongly Agree
Optimism	98	149	Strongly Agree
Knowledge of downtown	95	149	Strongly Agree
Confidence	95	149	Strongly Agree
Knowledge of historic preservation	71	149	Agree
Partnering is important	98	148	Strongly Agree
Leadership partners			
Downtown business owners	99	154	Strongly Agree
Downtown Association	94	157	Strongly Agree
Main Street program	86	157	Strongly Agree
Chamber of Commerce	85	157	Agree
Development Corporation	87	157	Agree
**City staff	75	156	Agree
Special District	76	145	Agree
Convention & Visitors Bureau	71	156	Agree
Leaders as planners	98	149	Strongly Agree

* n= # responses, ** other than Main Street manager

³⁹ For a complete set of responses, see Appendix

The Multi-Functional Downtown as a Fundamental Element

WH3: City Managers will perceive that a vital downtown is multi-functional.

For this category, the Agree was the most frequent response, indicating that while there are opinions toward the various elements, none are intense (which Strongly Agree indicates). First, as Table 6.3 shows, 95 percent (45 percent strongly agree/50 percent agree) of city managers perceive that a multi-functional downtown is important. Next, in considering the elements of multi-functionality, a mix of business types and having special events downtown to draw in people are the most important. Downtown housing is the least important and tourism stays anchored at the middle, even when Strongly Agree/Agree scales are collapsed.

It is not particularly surprising that business mix and special events come in as the top responses. Generally speaking, a mix of overall uses in the downtown “mitigates risk against the ups and downs of a single use” (Rypkema, 1994: 93). Single-use fluctuations could contribute to a ‘peak-and-valley syndrome’ in the municipal government’s property and sales tax collection effort and in the local job market, in addition to detracting from an image of downtown’s economic health and vitality. Special events could have scored near the top for several reasons. First, a number of objectives can be achieved by having special events downtown. For instance, a downtown event can be structured to promote holiday shopping, to introduce visitors and residents to what is available downtown by way of products or services, or to celebrate local history or folklore. Regardless of the reason for the event, consumers that visit are likely to spend dollars downtown, which benefits both the public and private sectors. Plus, these special events can have lasting power by creating return business for the downtown and by helping to promote that sought-after image of prosperity.

Table 6.3⁴⁰
Multi-Functionality as a Fundamental Element of Downtown Revitalization

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
<u>Important</u>	95	150	Agree
Important elements for multi-functionality			
Business Mix	99	150	Agree
Events	90	149	Agree
Entertainment	88	150	Agree
Tourism	86	150	Agree
Cultural venues	83	150	Agree
Open spaces	77	149	Agree
Public buildings	76	150	Agree
Housing	49	149	Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

In a structured interview, the Denton city manager noted: “You can’t have a definition of downtown that does not include multi-functionality. If you have a downtown with a single dimension, at some point the market will be tapped out. You need a continuing draw of interest and you get that from a continuing draw of activities.” Adds Pittsburg City Manager Ned Muse: “You need a lot of activities going on downtown; it gets back to downtown being the heart of the community.”

⁴⁰ For a complete set of responses, see Appendix.

Implementation
Financing as a Fundamental Element

WH4a: City Managers will perceive that adequate revenue must be available to revitalize downtown.

WH4b: City Managers will have opinions about a variety of finance mechanisms available for use in downtown revitalization.

As expected, city managers score the availability of adequate revenue as critical (95 percent). This evidence is displayed in Table 6.4. However, they are also very supportive of numerous non-financial implementation tools as viable for use in downtown revitalization.⁴¹ These results are shown in Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

Interestingly, encouraging private development as a future contributor to the tax base is the top-ranked viable tool in Table 6.5. This gives credibility to the importance of local economic development in which private-sector job creation is a main focal point. Denton City Manager Mike Conduff also pointed out in one of the structured interviews that the Texas Local Government Code allows cities to provide cash grants out of their general revenue to fund projects like façade improvement programs for private business. This would be considered an activity that stimulates private development. In surveying planning tools for downtown redevelopment, master planning was considered to be the most viable tool, as shown in Table 6.6.⁴² Historic preservation and simplified permitting anchored the bottom.

⁴¹ It should be noted that of all of the survey items, more items in this set of questions were left blank by the respondents than in any other part of the questionnaire and this skewing is taken into account. At any rate, some interesting and credible results were still apparent.

⁴² To keep the survey from getting too long, these tools were only studied in generality; respondents were not asked to rank them by preference for use in their individual downtowns. Master Plan stayed in the top spot in both “Strongly Agree” and when collapsed, with “Agree.”

Structured interviews also supported these themes. Bob Hart, former Huntsville city manager, stated that his preference for financing local downtown revitalization is “a combination of city tax dollars, low interest bank loans, grants and business contributions.” These points were supported in the survey results as well, since those elements all scored within the top half.

Before completing this section, the local economic development sales tax should be mentioned (This was briefly discussed in the Methodology Chapter). Twenty city representatives (of 41) responded to emailed requests for information on their view of these funds as viable tools for downtown revitalization. Ten viewed them as vital tools, two answered negatively and the remainder did not specifically respond. These funds are being used for downtown revitalization for a variety of purposes, ranging from salary enhancements for the downtown manager to streetscape improvements and sidewalk additions.

Table 6.4⁴³
Finance/Implementation Tools as a Fundamental Element of Downtown Revitalization

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Revenue needs to be available to finance revitalization	95	155	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

⁴³ For a complete set of results, see Appendix.

Table 6.5⁴⁴
 Viable Tools as
 Fundamental Elements of
 Downtown Revitalization

* n= number of responses; not all
 respondents answered every question

	% YES	*n
Encouraging Private Development	96	147
Grants	96	144
Debt	89	143
Tax Increment Financing	88	140
Abatements	76	148
General Fund Revenues	75	146
Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century (TEA 21)	93	110
Developer Fees	72	138
Heritage Tourism grants	92	103
User fees	67	139
Texas Capital Fund	76	121
Tax Credits	83	94
Certified Local Government Grants	86	86
History Museum grants	80	80

⁴⁴ For a complete set of responses, see Appendix

Table 6.6 Planning Tools⁴⁵

	SA	*n	Mode
Master Plan	95	157	Strongly Agree
Zoning	92	157	Strongly Agree
Ordinance	96	156	Strongly Agree
Design Standards	88	157	Agree
Design Guidelines	91	157	Agree
Historic Preservation	85	157	Agree
Simplified Permitting	69	157	Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

Challenges

Results: Infrastructure as a Challenge

WH5: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

As shown in Table 6.7, 96% of the respondents agreed that maintaining sound infrastructure is a challenge of downtown revitalization. There are many possible reasons for this sentiment. Unlike suburban development where infrastructure is constructed in virgin fields and generally unobstructed by existing structures, downtown is a product of centuries of construction. Thus, new infrastructure development or the repair or expansion of existing infrastructure requires making allowances for existing structures. Additionally, as Rypkema (1994: 56) notes, the “useful life” of infrastructure is influenced “more by age than by intensity of use.” In a historic downtown, then, there are likely to be significant and continual infrastructure development needs.

⁴⁵ For a complete set of responses, see Appendix.

Table 6.7 Infrastructure as a Challenge⁴⁶

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Infrastructure is a challenge	96	155	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

Results: Leadership as a Challenge

WH6a: City Managers will perceive that finding effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

WH6b: City Managers will perceive that keeping effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

As established in the previous section of this chapter, leadership is important to the downtown program. But how is leadership a challenge? Table 6.8 shows that 87 percent of the respondents think that both keeping and finding leaders to champion downtown revitalization is challenging.

Table 6.8⁴⁷
Leadership as a Challenge of Downtown Revitalization

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Keeping leaders is a challenge	87	149	Strongly Agree
Finding leaders is a challenge	87	149	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

⁴⁶ For complete responses, see Appendix.

⁴⁷ For complete results, see Appendix

The Multi-Functional Downtown as a Challenge

WH7a: City Managers will perceive that creating multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.

WH7b: City Managers will perceive that maintaining multi-functionality a challenge of downtown revitalization.

As discussed in the introduction, downtowns historically were the centers of commerce. But over the decades, as transportation improvements allowed people more mobility and then as suburbs were developed, downtowns faced a long period of decline. Some downtowns today are trying to re-create what they once had with the adaptive reuse of historic buildings and the re-creation of the center city as a place for shopping, living, working and recreation. The challenge, then, becomes one of keeping the downtown full of life by having a variety of activities and uses. As shown in Table 6.9, the challenges of creating and keeping a multi-functional downtown were both considered. In the survey, 97% of the city managers scored creating the multi-functional downtown as challenging. For 'keeping,' the score was 94%.

Table 6.9⁴⁸
The Challenge of Multi-functionality in the Downtown

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Challenge of keeping	94	150	Strongly Agree
Challenge of creating	97	150	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

⁴⁸ For complete results, see Appendix.

Financing Downtown Revitalization as a Challenge

WH8: City Managers will perceive that providing adequate revenue to revitalize downtown is difficult.

In the previous section of this chapter, city managers expressed the opinion that revenue must be available to finance downtown revitalization. At the same time, however, they also ranked items that do not necessarily constitute a direct expenditure of public dollars⁴⁹ – such as encouraging private development and master planning -- as viable tools. The responses to financing challenges for downtown revitalization, as discussed in this section, show a similar pattern.

First, it is clear from the data shown in Table 6.10 that city managers find funding downtown revitalization to be a challenge. Ninety-seven percent strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: “Providing adequate revenues for downtown is difficult.” This response is not altogether surprising. In the past decade, Texas has been one of the fastest-growing states in the nation and as such, it has been necessary that tremendous financial resources be dedicated to keeping up with growth in many local communities. As was mentioned in the earlier topic chapters, funding for the downtown program has to compete within the public budget alongside a multitude of other programs and services. In a municipal budget, this is also likely to include fire and police protection services and infrastructure expansion to serve rapidly expanding populations. At the same time, however, only 82 percent (significantly less than the 97 percent that believe funding is difficult) of the respondents agreed that the chances for a successful downtown program are slim without adequate revenue. So, it seems that a lack of available revenue may not necessarily mean the death of a downtown program.

⁴⁹ Not in the same sense that something like debt financing would be.

Table 6.10⁵⁰
The Challenge of Financing Downtown Revitalization

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Difficult, generally	97	156	Strongly Agree
Chances slim without adequate revenue	82	155	Strongly Agree

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

Individual Experiences

Results: Individual Experiences in Local Downtowns

WH9: City Managers will have perceptions concerning the qualities of their own downtowns.

It is assumed the city managers will also have opinions on the previously-introduced overarching topics and categories⁵¹ as they specifically pertain to their own downtowns.

First, city managers do not seem to be highly confident in how well the challenges of infrastructure maintenance has been faced in their own downtowns, with only 48 percent agreeing that the quality of local infrastructure was high. This evidence is provided in Table 6.11. Only 12 percent strongly agreed with this statement. Twenty-nine percent disagreed.

Table 6.11 Infrastructure –Individual Experiences⁵²

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	*n	Mode
Quality of infrastructure in local downtown	48	146	Agree

Secondly, a majority (71 percent) noted that in their downtowns, there was support and commitment by both elected and non-elected leaders. This evidence is provided in Table 6.12. Previously, in the challenges section, almost 90 percent had responded that keeping and finding

⁵⁰ For complete results, see Appendix.

⁵¹ Topics: Fundamental Elements and Challenges; Categories: infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools.

⁵² For complete responses, see Appendix.

leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization. The fact that this earlier ranking is much higher than the local response seems to verify the leadership challenge.

Table 6.12⁵³ Leadership-Individual Experiences

Facing the leadership challenge in individual downtowns	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	n	Mode
Commitment by local elected leaders	71	142	Agree
Support of local non-elected leaders	71	142	Agree

Third, while strong opinions were previously expressed toward multi-functionality in general, the sentiment toward the challenge as faced in individual downtowns was not as obvious. This evidence is shown in Table 6.13, in which only 58 percent of the city managers agreed that their downtowns were multi-functional. Additionally, the responses were more widely dispersed throughout the response scale than in many of the other questions. Only 14 percent strongly agreed that their local downtowns had multiple dimensions. At the same time, 20 percent of the city managers ranked the item neutral and another 20 percent disagreed with the statement.

Table 6.13⁵⁴ Multi-functionality-Individual Experiences

	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	n	Mode
How the challenge of achieving multi-functionality has been faced in individual downtowns	58	142	Agree

Fourth, as shown in Table 6.14, a majority of city managers do **not** feel that adequate revenues are available from within the community. Fortunately, a majority of them (56 percent) also reported seeking outside revenue to finance downtown revitalization. This connects back to

⁵³ For complete results, see Appendix.

⁵⁴ For complete results, see Appendix.

a point made in the previous section where grants were ranked relatively high as a viable tool for downtown revitalization.

Table 6.14⁵⁵ Financing Downtown Revitalization Locally

Facing the challenge of financing locally	% Strongly Agree (SA) + Agree (A)	n	Mode
Adequate revenues are available	16	146	Disagree
Alternative sources are sought	56	144	Agree

The use of specific tools in local downtowns was also studied. This evidence is summarized in Table 6.15. In the earlier section of this chapter (Implementation Tools-Fundamental Elements), 96 percent of the respondents marked encouraging private development as a viable tool for downtown revitalization (as a general concept). Only 59 percent, however, had the same answer in relation to actual use in the local environment. At the same time, use of general fund revenues is ranked sixth of fourteen possible viable tools in the earlier section on perceptions toward general tools. The reality for local downtowns, however, is that general fund revenues must be used. As noted below in Table 6.15, this funding stream finances downtown projects most frequently.

⁵⁵ For complete results see Appendix.

Table 6.15
Tools used in Individual Downtowns

Tools, as used in individual downtowns	% YES	*n	Mode
General Fund	72	111	Yes
Encouraging Private Development	59	102	Yes
Grants	47	102	No
Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century (TEA 21) grants	44	94	No
Debt financing	39	103	No
Abatements	33	110	No
User fees	23	105	No
Texas Capital Fund	22	100	No
Heritage Tourism grants	23	88	No
Developer Fees	19	104	No
Tax increment financing	15	106	No
History Museum grants	16	76	No
Tax Credits	15	81	No
Certified local government grants	10	78	No

*not all respondents answered each question

Chapter Seven – Conclusions and Recommendations

This project studies downtown revitalization in smaller Texas towns from the perspectives of city managers through four interconnected research purposes:

- reviewing the literature to identify the fundamental components of a downtown revitalization program as well as the key challenges inherent in each component;
- exploring city managers' attitudes about the importance of fundamental components of downtown revitalization;
- exploring city managers' attitudes about the challenges to downtown revitalization programs;
- exploring city managers' attitudes about their cities' downtown revitalization programs.

Through the study, city managers in smaller Texas towns clearly articulate that they believe in downtown as an important part of community life and that they are committed to downtown revitalization in their own towns.

Very briefly below, the hypotheses will be discussed as to how they support the research purposes. All fourteen working hypotheses were supported. There is a series of summary tables, Tables 7.1-7.3 at the end of this chapter.

Fundamental Elements of Downtown Revitalization

Of the four fundamental elements of downtown revitalization considered in this study, the strongest opinions were expressed toward the importance of sound infrastructure, with roads and utilities being ranked as the most important. The availability of revenue to finance redevelopment projects (which would presumably include infrastructure construction and maintenance) also scored high. The evidence suggests that master planning and encouraging private development as a future contributor to the tax base are the most important tools for

downtown revitalization. According to the survey responses, there is also a perception among city managers that a connection between effective leadership and a successful downtown program exists. Vision, concern and optimism are the primary desired traits of leaders. City managers also specified that a variety of business types and special events in the downtown were efficient means to achieve a multi-functional downtown.

Challenges of Downtown Revitalization

As with fundamental elements, opinions toward infrastructure and financing/implementation tools as challenges were the strongest. Finding and keeping effective leaders committed to the downtown program are considered challenges, as are creating and keeping a multi-functional downtown.

Individual Experiences in Local Downtowns

First, city managers do not seem to be highly confident in how well the challenges of infrastructure maintenance has been faced in their own downtowns. There also seems to be some frustration in the ability to achieve a multi-dimensional downtown. At the same time, the responses show that city managers struggle with finding ways to pay for many services that are provided not only to the downtown, but also to the community in general. Although leadership is considered a challenge, city managers seem somewhat satisfied with the quality of leaders involved in their local downtowns programs.

Suggestions for future study

In addition to answering many questions about the state of downtown revitalization in smaller Texas cities, this project has stimulated new issues and additional areas for further study. Some are briefly mentioned here.

First, survey results suggest educational opportunities for the organizations that work and advocate for municipalities and historic preservation in Texas, such as the Texas Downtown

Association, the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas Municipal League. All of these advocacy organizations spend a significant amount of their time and resources on developing and providing relevant information and training on downtown revitalization to public employees. As suggested by the literature and the survey results, the most visible and critical issues for downtowns today include 1) cultivating leadership for success; 2) developing an appropriate mix of businesses that impacts downtown's economic and social vitality; 3) organizing special events to bring people downtown and creating a returning loop of visitors; 4) master planning; and 5) encouraging private development as a future contributor to the future tax base. While not all of these activities are a function of municipal government, the public sector must play a critical role in creating an environment for these activities to occur. Any or all of these issues are highly appropriate topics for seminars, workshops, conferences, and resource materials and are of great benefit to those involved in downtown revitalization.

Second, at the local level, city managers and existing community leaders should formalize processes within their own communities for addressing downtown infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and implementation tools. This is especially relevant since survey results reveal city managers find these issues important and often in need of attention in their cities.

Third, future research can examine issues not fully addressed in this study. For instance, additional empirical research on financing downtown redevelopment would be helpful to many city leaders across the state. Or, a study of the different ways municipalities are employing economic development sales tax monies to revitalize their downtowns might prove interesting. Finally, case studies of successful downtown revitalization programs in selected Texas cities should be considered.

7.1

Working Hypotheses Summary Table
Fundamental Elements

WORKING HYPOTHESES	Hypothesis Supported	Purpose
<p>Infrastructure WH1: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is an important component of a downtown revitalization program.</p>	<p>YES Strong 75% Strongly Agree 25 % Agree</p>	<p>Exploration: city managers attitudes toward fundamental elements of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Leadership WH2a: City Managers will perceive that strong downtown leaders exhibit certain traits. WH2b: City Managers will perceive that effective partnerships help leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals. WH2c: City Managers will perceive that effective planning helps leaders achieve downtown revitalization goals.</p>	<p>YES WH2a: Moderate (Ratings fluctuated when scales collapsed) WH2b: Strong 64% Strongly Agree 34% Agree WH2c: Strong 54% Strongly Agree 44% Agree</p>	<p>Exploration: city managers attitudes toward fundamental elements of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Multi-functionality WH3: City Managers will perceive that a vital downtown will be multi-functional.</p>	<p>YES Strong 45% Strongly Agree 50% Agree</p>	<p>Exploration: city managers attitudes toward fundamental elements of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Implementation Tools WH4a: City Managers will perceive that adequate revenue must be available to revitalize downtown. WH4b: City Managers will have opinions about a variety of finance mechanisms available for use in downtown revitalization.</p>	<p>YES WH4a: Strong 63% Strongly Agree 32% Agree WH4b: Weak (High % unanswered)</p>	<p>Exploration: city managers attitudes toward fundamental elements of downtown revitalization</p>

Table 7.2
Working Hypotheses Summary Table
Challenges

WORKING HYPOTHESES	Hypothesis Supported	Purpose
<p>Infrastructure WH5: City Managers will perceive that maintaining sound infrastructure is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p>YES Strong 65% Strongly Agree 31% Agree</p>	<p>Exploring city managers' perceptions toward the challenges of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Leadership WH6a: City Managers will perceive that finding effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization. W6b: City Managers will perceive that keeping effective leaders is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p>YES WH6a: Strong 50% Strongly Agree 37% Agree WH6b: Strong 49% Strongly Agree 38% Agree</p>	<p>Exploring city managers' perceptions toward the challenges of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Multi-functionality WH7a: City Managers will perceive that creating multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization. WH7b: City Managers will perceive that maintaining multi-functionality is a challenge of downtown revitalization.</p>	<p>YES WH7a: Strong 58% Strongly Agree 39% Agree WH7b: Strong 48% Strongly Agree 46% Agree</p>	<p>Exploring city managers' perceptions toward the challenges of downtown revitalization</p>
<p>Financing WH8: City Managers will perceive that providing adequate revenue to revitalize downtown is difficult.</p>	<p>YES WH8: Strong 64% Strongly Agree 33% Agree</p>	<p>Exploring city managers' perceptions toward the challenges of downtown revitalization</p>

Table 7.3
Working Hypotheses Summary Table
Individual Experiences

WORKING HYPOTHESES	Hypothesis Supported	Purpose
WH9: City Managers will have perceptions concerning qualities of their own downtowns.	YES Infrastructure: Moderate Leadership: Moderate Multi-functionality: Moderate Financing: Moderate	Exploring city managers' attitudes toward downtown revitalization in their own cities

Chapter Eight: Appendix

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Survey Questions-Raw Data

* n= number of responses; not all respondents answered every question

Note: not all percentages equal 100 due to rounding

Questions 1 & 2 were descriptive, collecting only demographic data

QUESTION 3

What is Infrastructure?	SA	A	N	D	SDA	n*	Mean
Utilities	89% 139	9% 14	1% 2	.64% 1	0% 0	156	4.8
Roads	86% 133	14% 21	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	154	4.9
Sidewalks	57% 90	33% 52	6% 9	2% 4	.64% 1	156	4.4
Crosswalks	53% 82	29% 45	13% 21	4% 6	.64% 1	155	4.2
Parking	42% 64	39% 59	12% 18	6% 9	.66% 1	151	4.1
Streetscape	33% 50	33% 50	24% 36	8% 12	1% 2	150	3.9
Public Spaces	32% 48	40% 60	20% 30	6% 9	1% 2	149	3.9

QUESTION 4

Infrastructure as important to downtown	75% 117	24% 38	0% 0	0% 0	0% 0	155	4.7
Infrastructure is a challenge	65% 101	31% 48	2% 3	2% 3	0% 0	155	4.6

QUESTION 5

	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	*n	Mean
Connection: leadership and downtown vitality	49% 72	46% 68	4% 6	1% 2	0% 0	148	4.4
Leader Traits							
Vision	66% 98	29% 43	5% 7	.67% 1	0% 0	149	4.6
Concern	62% 92	35% 52	2% 3	1% 2	0% 0	149	4.6
Optimism	55% 82	43% 64	2% 3	0% 0	0% 0	149	4.5
Knowledge of downtown	52% 77	43% 63	6% 9	0% 0	0% 0	149	4.4

Confidence	51% 76	44% 66	5% 7	0% 0	0% 0	149	4.4
Knowledge of historic preservation	25% 38	46% 69	21% 32	7% 10	0% 0	149	3.9
Partnering to lead is important	64% 95	34% 51	.67% 1	.67% 1	0% 0	148	4.6
Importance of leaders as planners	54% 80	44% 66	2% 3	0% 0	0% 0	149	4.5
Keeping leaders is a challenge	49% 73	38% 57	10% 15	3% 4	0% 0	149	4.3
Finding leaders is a challenge	50% 74	37% 56	9% 14	3% 5	0% 0	149	4.3

QUESTION 6

Important leadership partners							
Downtown business owners	78% 120	21% 32	1% 2	0% 0	0% 0	154	4.8
Downtown Association	50% 79	44% 69	4% 7	1% 2	0% 0	157	4.4
Main Street program	49% 77	37% 59	11% 18	2% 3	0% 0	157	4.3
Chamber of Commerce	41% 65	44% 70	11% 18	1% 2	1% 2	157	4.2
Development Corporation	39% 62	48% 75	9% 14	4% 6	0% 0	157	4.2
**City staff	33% 52	42% 65	20% 31	4% 7	.64% 1	156	4
Special District	34% 50	42% 61	22% 32	1% 2	0% 0	145	4
Convention & Visitors Bureau	29% 45	42% 65	23% 36	6% 9	.64% 1	156	3.9

QUESTION 7 - PLANNING

	SA	A	N	D	SDA	*n	Mean
Master Plan	51% 81	44% 69	4% 6	.63% 1	0% 0	157	4.5
Zoning	51% 80	41% 65	5% 8	2% 3	.63% 1	157	4.4
Ordinance	49%	47%	3%	1%	0%	156	

	76	73	5	2	0		4.4
Design Standards	41% 64	47% 74	10% 16	2% 3	0% 0	157	4.3
Design Guidelines	39% 61	52% 82	8% 12	1% 2	0% 0	157	4.3
Historic Preservation	27% 43	58% 91	13% 20	2% 3	0% 0	157	4.1
Simplified Permitting	19% 30	50% 79	20% 32	9% 14	1% 2	157	3.7

QUESTION 8

	SA	A	N	D	SDA	*n	Mean
Important elements for multi-functionality							
Business Mix	47% 70	52% 78	1% 2	0% 0	0% 0	150	4.4
Events	42% 63	48% 71	10% 15	0% 0	0% 0	149	4.3
Public buildings	31% 47	45% 68	23% 34	.66% 1	0% 0	150	4
Tourism	31% 46	55% 83	13% 20	.66% 1	0% 0	150	4.2
Entertainment	29% 43	59% 89	10% 16	1% 2	0% 0	150	4.1
Cultural venues	26% 39	57% 85	17% 25	.66% 1	0% 0	150	4
Open spaces	25% 37	52% 78	19% 28	4% 6	0% 0	149	4
Housing	15% 23	34% 51	33% 50	14% 21	3% 4	149	3.4
Multi-functionality is Important	45% 67	50% 75	5% 7	.66% 1	0% 0	150	4.4
Challenge of keeping multi-functionality	48% 72	46% 69	6% 9	0% 0	0% 0	150	4.4
Challenge of creating multi-functionality	58% 87	39% 58	3% 5	0% 0	0% 0	150	4.5

QUESTION 9

	SA	A	N	D	SDA	*n	Mean
Revenue needs to be available to finance revitalization	63% 98	32% 50	4% 6	0% 0	.64% 1	155	4.6
Difficult, generally	64% 100	33% 52	1% 2	.64% 1	.64% 1	156	4.6
Chances slim without adequate revenue	42% 66	40% 62	6% 10	10% 15	1% 2	155	4.1

QUESTION 10

Tools, as used in individual downtowns	YES	NO	*n		Tools, General perceptions	YES	NO	*n
General Fund	72% 80	28% 31	111		Encouraging Private Dev.	96% 142	3% 5	147
Encouraging Private Development	59% 60	41% 42	102		Grants	96% 138	4% 6	144
Grants	47% 48	53% 54	102		Debt	89% 127	11% 16	143
TEA 21	44% 41	56% 53	94		TIF	88% 123	12% 17	140
Debt financing	39% 40	61% 63	103		Abatements	76% 112	24% 36	148
Abatements	33% 36	67% 74	110		Gen Fund	75% 110	25% 36	146
User fees	23% 24	77% 81	105		TEA 21	93% 102	7% 8	110
Texas Capital Fund	22% 22	78% 78	100		Dev. Fees	72% 100	27% 38	138
Heritage Tourism grants	23% 20	77% 68	88		Heritage Tour	92% 95	8% 8	103
Developer Fees	19% 20	81% 84	104		User	67% 93	33% 46	139
Tax increment financing	15% 16	85% 90	106		Texas Cap. Fund	76% 92	24% 29	121
History Museum grants	16% 12	84% 64	76		Tax Credit	83% 78	17% 16	94
Tax Credits	15% 12	85% 69	81		CLG	86% 74	14% 12	86
Certified local government grants	10% 8	90% 70	78		History Museum	80% 64	20% 16	80

QUESTION 11

	SA	A	N	D	SDA	*n	Mean
Local infrastructure quality	12% 17	36% 52	18% 26	29% 43	5% 8	146	3.2
Commitment by local elected leaders	20% 29	51% 72	24% 34	3% 5	1% 2	142	3.8
Support of local non-elected leaders	20% 29	51% 72	22% 31	6% 8	1% 2	142	3.8
Local multi-functionality	14% 20	44% 63	20% 29	20% 28	1% 2	142	3.5
Adequate revenues are available	2% 3	14% 20	18% 26	54% 79	12% 18	146	2.3
Alternative sources are sought	12% 17	44% 63	26% 37	17% 25	1% 2	144	3.4

Debra Farst
P.O. Box 203455
Austin, Texas 78720-3455
(512) 219-5247

February 7, 2003

Dear City Manager,

I am a graduate student at Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos completing my Masters in Public Administration. My Applied Research Project on downtown revitalization in Texas cities with populations between 5,000 and 50,000.

The project includes surveying city managers in the targeted communities about the challenges of downtown revitalization. This original research will contribute to a much-needed body of knowledge in the professional field of downtown revitalization. It the first time city managers as a group have been surveyed on the topic to this extent.

Please take a few moments to answer the enclosed survey and return in the self-addressed envelope. Please postmark or fax (512-249-2672) by *March 3, 2003*. The three-page survey should not take any longer than fifteen minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Debra Farst

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION SURVEY

1.) Current city population:

5,000 – 14,999	15,000 – 24,999	25,000 – 34,999	35,000 – 50,000

2.) Region of Texas:

West	North	East	South

3.)	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
The following considered infrastructure:					
a. Sidewalks					
b. Roads					
c. Public Spaces					
d. Streetscapes					
e. Public Parking					
f. Crosswalks					
g. Utilities					
4.)					
<i>a. Maintaining sound infrastructure important to a downtown revitalization program.</i>					
<i>b. Maintaining sound infrastructure downtown challenging.</i>					

More

5.)	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. There a connection between strong leadership and a vital downtown.					
Effective Downtown leaders have:					
b. Concern for downtown					
c. Optimism for downtown					
d. Confidence in downtown					
e. Knowledge of downtown					
f. Vision for downtown					
g. Knowledge of historic preservation					
h. Partnerships are important to downtown revitalization.					
i. It is important that leaders engage in formal planning for downtown.					
j. Keeping effective leaders committed to downtown revitalization a challenge.					
k. Finding effective leaders committed to downtown revitalization a challenge.					

The following can be effective downtown revitalization partners:

6.)	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. Special districts					
b. Downtown association					
c. Main Street program					
d. Development Corporation					
e. Chamber of Commerce					
f. City staff for downtown management (other than Main Street Manager)					
g. Convention & Visitors Bureau					
h. Downtown business owners.					

7.) Please indicate with a checkmark your opinion of the importance of the following as they pertain to downtown planning:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. Simplified permitting					
b. Historic preservation					
c. Design standards					
d. Design guidelines					
e. Ordinances					
f. Zoning					
g. Master Plan					

More

8.) The following are important to achieving a multi-functional downtown:	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. Cultural venues					
b. Business mix					
c. Special events					
d. Entertainment venues					
e. Public buildings					
f. Open spaces					
g. Residential housing					
h. Tourist attractions					
i. It important that downtown is multi-functional.					
j. Keeping downtown multi-functional a challenge.					
k. Creating a multi-functional downtown challenging.					

More

9.)	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. Adequate revenues must be available to finance downtown revitalization.					
b. Providing adequate revenues for downtown difficult.					
c. Without availability of adequate revenue, chances for successful downtown revitalization are slim.					

10.) Please indicate with a checkmark finance mechanisms you think are viable for use in downtown revitalization & which have been used in your community.

	Not Familiar with		Viable Tools		Used in my downtown	
			YES	NO	YES	NO
a. Texas Capital Fund						
b. TEA-21 grant						
c. Heritage tourism grant (Texas. Historical Commission-THC)						
d. Certified Local Government grant (THC)						
e. History Museum grant (THC)						
f. Federal historic tax credit program to stimulate development.						
g. Private grants						
h. Debt financing						
i. General fund revenues						
j. User fees						
k. Developer fees						
l. Encouraging private development as a future contributor to the tax base.						
m. Tax Increment Financing						
n. Tax abatements						

11.) Please rate the following as they pertain specifically to YOUR downtown:

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DAGREE	STRONGLY DAGREE
a. The quality of infrastructure in my downtown high.					
b. Local elected leadership committed to downtown revitalization.					
c. Non-elected leaders support downtown revitalization.					
d. My downtown multi-functional.					
e. Adequate revenue available to finance downtown revitalization.					
f. Alternative revenue sources outside of the local community are sought to finance downtown revitalization.					

Thank You!

Postmark or fax (512-249-2672) by March 3, 2003 to:
 Debra Farst P.O. Box 203455 Austin, Texas 78720-3455
 Phone: (512) 219-5247

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

1. Do you agree that critical challenges for those involved in downtown revitalization today include infrastructure, leadership, multi-functionality and funding? Why or why not?
2. Do you think that maintaining sound infrastructure an important component of a downtown revitalization program? Why or why not?
3. How can effective leadership impact a downtown revitalization program?
4. a multi-functional downtown important? If yes, what mix of elements should be present to achieve this diversity of activity?
5. How can downtown revitalization be funded?
6. Do you think your downtown has specific strengths and if so, what are they?
7. Do you think your downtown has specific weaknesses and if so, what are they?