

City of Evanston & EVMark

Downtown Evanston *Visioning Process*
FINAL REPORT

Prepared by The Lakota Group, City Staff & EVMark Staff

DOWNTOWN VISIONING

1. Introduction

2. Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

3. Downtown Vision/Direction

4. Implementation Strategy

5. Improvement/Development Suggestions

Appendix

☐ S.W.O.T. Summary

1. Introduction

The following is a summary of the strategic visioning process for Downtown Evanston recently conducted by the City of Evanston and EVMark with assistance by The Lakota Group. The process involved the following steps:

- ⇒ *Creation of a Planning Team to organize and facilitate the visioning process.*
- ⇒ *Working meetings and a Downtown tour with the Planning Team.*
- ⇒ *Preparation of briefing materials that summarize Downtown growth/changes since the City's 1989 Downtown Master Plan.*
- ⇒ *Two workshops with community leaders and Downtown stakeholders (See appendix for list of participants).*
 - *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (May 1, 2004)*
 - *Vision, Goals, Strategies, and Initiatives (May 13, 2004)*
- ⇒ *Preparation of a report to the City Council, Economic Development Committee, EVMark Board, Plan Commission and Parking Committee on the results of the process.*

The Downtown Visioning Planning Team included the following individuals. Workshop facilitators are noted with asterisks:

City of Evanston:

- ⇒ *Aldermen Steve Bernstein, Gene Feldman, Art Newman*
- ⇒ *Chair: Ald. Feldman*
- ⇒ *Judith Aiello, Assistant City Manager*
- ⇒ *Dennis Marino*, Asst. Director, Community Development, Planning*
- ⇒ *David Jennings, Director of Public Works*
- ⇒ *Tracy Norfleet, General Planner*
- ⇒ *William Stafford, Finance Director*
- ⇒ *Jim Wolinski, Director Community Development*

EVMark:

- ⇒ *Chair: Howard Kain, Managing Director, First Bank & Truist*
- ⇒ *Rick Braunstein, Rotary International*
- ⇒ *Diane Williams, Executive Director*

The Lakota Group:

- ⇒ *John LaMotte*, Principal*
- ⇒ *Scott Rubland*, Associate*

Mid-America Real Estate Corporation:

- ⇒ *Peggy Blanchard*, Director of Municipal Services*

Kenig, Lindgren, Aboona & O'Hara (KLOA):

- ⇒ *Neil Kenig, Principal*
- ⇒ *Tim Doron*, Principal*

The Downtown Visioning Participants were:

Robert Perlmutter –Davis Street Land Company
Lynn Robinson Phillips – Robinson Propertis
Dan Kelch- Lulu's
Kim McGuire –Northern Realty
Paul Gottschalk- Evanston Library
Jim Corirossi –JPC Equities
Howard Kain –First Bank & Trust
Larry Widmayer- Plan Commission
Rick Braunstein-Rotary International
Gail Robinson- Marly Chocolates
Jim Nash-Farnsworth-Hill
Peggy Robinson- Peggy Robinson Design
Gordon McGill- Family Properties
Richard Davis-Gallery Mornea
Greg DeStefano-Greenfield Properties
Joseph Violi-Hotel Orrington
Lisa Kupferberg
Ald. Arthur Newman
Ald Steve Bernstein
Ald Gene Feldman
Helene Miller
Alex Darragh- Balcor
Valarie Kretchmer-Valerie Kretchmer & Associates
Douglas Doetsch-Plan Commission
Janice Greenberg- Northshore Hotel
Tom White –Arthur Hill & Company
Arthur Hill- Arthur Hill & Company
Ron Kysiak- Evanston Inventure
Alice Rebechini-Plan Commission/EDC
Gene Sunshine-Northwestern University
Lucille Krasnow- Northwestern University
Robert Yohanan- First Bank & Trust
Richard Peach-Dempster Auto Rebuilders
Jon Perman-Evanston Chamber
Michael Newman-Golub & Company
Lee Golub-Golub & Company
James Klutznick-Sherman Plaza Venture
Tim Anderson- Focus Development
John Terrell-Sherman Plaza Venture
Laura Saviano-Public Art

Ted Maurakias-Giordano's
Bill Smith-Second Baptist
Bob Reese-Second Baptist
Cameel Halim-Carlson Building
Steve Turner- Turner Advertising
Barbara Boigegrain-General Board of Pensions
John Ferguson-Golub & Company
Scott Anderson-Clean Plate Club
Brian Tolls- Student Northwestern University
Jane Lee- Student –Northwestern University
Martha Koch-Koch Properties
Federico Vargas- Design Evanston
David Galloway-Design Evanston
Robert Teska-Teska Associates
Sara Schastock- Evanston Community Foundation
Marybeth Schroeder-Evanston Community Foundation
Renee Finucane

MISSION

The City and EVMark mission for the Downtown Evanston strategic visioning process was to:

- ⇒ *Identify the progress and success of area revitalization since the 1989 Plan.*
- ⇒ *Identify and prioritize current Downtown Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.*
- ⇒ *Confirm and refine the Downtown “vision” and goal.*
- ⇒ *Confirm and redefine Downtown “boundaries”.*
- ⇒ *Confirm and refine Downtown improvement and development objectives.*
- ⇒ *Define new planning and development initiatives for the next five years.*

During the visioning process the City also commissioned Mid-America Real Estate Corporation to conduct a retail inventory and market assessment of Downtown, and KLOA to conduct a parking and traffic inventory/assessment. KLOA and Mid-America have begun their respective studies and the results of these follow-up studies will be presented upon completion in the next few months. The studies will address the issues, opportunities and initiatives generated during the visioning workshops.

2. Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats

During the May 1, 2004 visioning workshop, participants were asked to identify, discuss and prioritize the strengths, accomplishments, issues, and weaknesses of Downtown Evanston, 15 years after the 1989 Master Plan was completed. Participants were also asked to identify

opportunities for Downtown improvement and development, as well as threats or situations that could negatively affect its future. A full list of the workshop findings is provided in Section 6: Appendix.

DOWNTOWN STRENGTHS

The following were considered the key strengths and positive attributes of Downtown Evanston. They represent the building blocks and marketing points for improvement and development of the area in the next five years.

Unique Environment:

The City of Evanston as a distinctive choice to live, do business, visit and shop... it's urban, suburban, cosmopolitan, and university. Downtown as a safe, vibrant, active, and attractive area with an "urban feel".

Strategic Location:

Downtown is an easily accessible location to Lake Michigan, North Shore and Chicago.

Development Market:

Large mixed-use downtown with medical/ university facilities, daytime employment, entertainment/ dining and significant new residential development activity. Strong demographic contributing to a wealthy market area within 5 miles.

Transportation:

Downtown Evanston has great rapid transit and commuter rail service and access.

DOWNTOWN WEAKNESSES

The following were considered the primary weaknesses of Downtown Evanston. They represent the key problems and issues that need to be addressed.

Parking Supply & Management:

Perception that there is a lack of: 1) on-street parking, 2) longer duration parking and 3) signage for shoppers and visitors. Concern that local employees are using shopper/ visitor parking and that aggressive parking ticket practices are a disincentive for the shopper.

Occupancy Costs:

Occupancy costs for businesses are too high (real estate/ liquor taxes and utility costs).

Retail Mix:

There is a lack of sufficient retail mix/ diversity in Downtown. A comprehensive retail merchandising/ marketing plan is needed. Challenging landlords make recruiting new retail tenants difficult.

Physical Conditions:

The lack, use, condition, and maintenance of public spaces, especially Fountain Square is a concern. There is a need for more connectivity among downtown blocks. Wayfinding is difficult. The viaducts are natural barriers and they appear unsafe, unattractive, and deteriorating.

OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to its strengths/positives, the following were identified as key opportunities for improvement and development of Downtown.

New Growth Markets:

The downtown “growth” areas or markets – restaurants, residential (2,000 new residents), and convenience/specialty/niche retail should be built upon. More residential units should be encouraged.

Institutional Relations:

The on-going and productive communications between institutions – City, EVMark, Northwestern, YMCA, schools, and churches is an opportunity to do more with Downtown.

Diversity:

The City’s diversity should continue to be embraced and promoted within Downtown.

Cultural Arts:

Arts and culture should be incorporated into downtown designs, places, venues, activities, and programs wherever possible. It should be one of the Downtown’s future building blocks.

THREATS

In addition to the weaknesses/negatives that needed to be addressed, the following were identified as key internal and external threats to Downtown’s future.

Occupancy Costs:

High occupancy costs were considered to be a continual threat to the health of Downtown.

Development Concerns

Growing concerns about the density and boundaries/size of downtown, as well as a possible backlash against diverse, newer architecture could threaten its growth.

3. Downtown Vision/Direction

VISION/GOAL STATEMENT

The City’s Comprehensive Plan defined a vision for Downtown that was discussed and refined at the May 13, 2004 Workshop. Following is the revised vision or overall goal statement for Downtown.

A Mixed-Use Central Business District that is Attractive, Convenient, Livable, Accessible, and Economically Vibrant.

DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES

During the Workshop, the participants discussed Downtown boundaries and the need to adjust these edges to reflect current conditions and future needs.

There was consensus that the boundaries of Downtown, EVMark, and the Special Service Area should match to provide consistent funding, management, service, and advocacy for the overall area.

There were also some suggestions for changing Downtown boundaries as follows:

- ⇒ *Move west boundary from Asbury east to Ridge Avenue.*
- ⇒ *Exclude southwest corner block bounded by Ridge, Grove, Oak, and Lake.*
- ⇒ *Move east boundary of Hinman to include residential buildings on both sides of Davis.*
- ⇒ *Move north boundary along Clark to include blocks southwest of Sherman and Emerson.*

The previous boundaries were Asbury, Emerson, Hinman, and Lake

OBJECTIVES/POLICIES

During the 15 years since the Downtown Plan was completed, there has been substantial revitalization of the area. The workshop participants were asked to discuss improvement and development objectives to determine what policies were working and should be continued, as well as what other directives were needed to guide the next 5 years of Downtown growth.

The following objectives/policies were adapted from the 2000 Comprehensive Plan and updated as the most desirable guides for the future:

Issue Area: Physical Conditions and Overall Quality of Life

Objective/Policy

Enhance Downtown's livability through higher quality development and better design that places more emphasis on the human scale and pedestrian activity.

Strategies to achieve the objective:

- ⇒ *Raise the level of design quality through enhanced development oversight, process, and codes.*
- ⇒ *Connect the overall Downtown with coordinated physical improvements and attractive, well maintained streets, alleys and public spaces.*
- ⇒ *Add more public spaces and focal points.*
- ⇒ *Significantly improve Fountain Square.*

- ⇒ *Encourage sustainable “green” design and public art throughout the built environment.*
- ⇒ *Embrace the sub-districts, sub-markets, and micro-markets of Downtown with physical improvements, identity, and marketing.*
- ⇒ *Enhance and market culture and arts in Downtown in a more prominent and active manner, and continue to explore the potential opportunities for the “performing arts”.*

Issue Area: Access and Parking

Objective/Policy

Create efficient traffic patterns and a user friendly parking system

Strategies to achieve the objective:

- ⇒ *Enhance Downtown circulation and parking through a comprehensive traffic and parking system.*
- ⇒ *Establish a parking system/program that is sensible, easy-to-use and administer parking system/program.*
- ⇒ *Emphasize transit and transit-oriented development.*
- ⇒ *Continue to address wayfinding and signage.*
- ⇒ *Encourage employee parking in off-site locations*

Issue Area: Business Environment and Retail Mix

Objective/Policy

Establish strategies that enhance Downtown’s overall economic vitality.

Strategies to achieve the objective:

- ⇒ *Expand the Special Service Area to provide more and consistent services throughout Downtown.*
- ⇒ *Encourage a variety of retail, office, entertainment, convention/ conference, and tourism oriented uses.*
- ⇒ *Encourage residential/ commercial mixed-use developments that attract more shoppers and residents to the area.*
- ⇒ *Support efforts to improve the variety of retail businesses in Downtown to strengthen it as a regional shopping and entertainment center, including destination and specialty retail.*
- ⇒ *Develop and promote retail niches, streets, and corridors. Carefully consider the location, clustering, and massing of new retail uses.*

- ⇒ *Support the addition of various sizes/niches/types of retail spaces.*
- ⇒ *Attract more daytime activity to supplement the active night and weekend uses.*
- ⇒ *Continue to create a distinct Downtown Evanston brand and marketing program.*
- ⇒ *Foster a competitive business environment regarding operating/capital costs and development costs/process.*
- ⇒ *Continue to encourage collaboration between the many stakeholders within Downtown including the City, EVMark, Chamber of Commerce, Evanston Inventure, and Northwestern University for the betterment of the area.*

4. Implementation Strategy

The following five implementation initiatives were suggested during the visioning process to address the key current needs and weaknesses of Downtown.

Create a Comprehensive Traffic and Parking Plan

(KLOA with City Parking Committee and Staff Direction)

- ⇒ Inventory existing and planned parking.
- ⇒ Assess land uses, parking type, location, cost, and visibility.
- ⇒ Review Parking Management Plan that addresses supply, location, accessibility, pricing, timing, public perception/education/relations, and signage.
- ⇒ Evaluate existing intersection operations and capacity.
- ⇒ Assess intersections for efficient traffic flow

Create Retail Marketing/Merchandising Plan

(Mid-America with City EDC, Staff and EVMark direction)

- ⇒ Inventory existing and planned retail uses.
- ⇒ Assess retail mix and define/consider sub-markets, clusters and niches such as University, Lifestyle, “Culture/Art”, Entertainment, and Convention/Tourism.
- ⇒ Identify retail competition.
- ⇒ Define Downtown Evanston market.
- ⇒ Develop Retail Marketing/Merchandising Plan with business retention and recruitment strategies.
- ⇒ Suggest changes to the existing retail mix
- ⇒ Identify potentially successful business types that can enhance the retail mix as new markets evolve

Start Physical Planning/Design Initiatives

(City Staff with Consultant Assistance as needed)

- ⇒ Consider of comprehensive/coordinated design approach that addresses:
 - *Viaduct improvements including lighting/finishes.*
 - *Alley enhancements, possibly with special treatment for unique locations.*

- *Streetscape improvements that continue design theme to all downtown blocks.*
- *Physical connections from block to block.*
- *Fountain Square enhancement.*
- *Gateways, entrances, edges, focal points, and public spaces and “greening”.*
- *Wayfinding and signage.*
- ⇒ Review the Downtown wayfinding plan and signage program to incorporate:
 - *Downtown identity and branding.*
 - *Directional signage to the area, key downtown activity generators, and parking.*
 - *Information kiosks and boards at key activity generators.*
- ⇒ Study the feasibility of complete reconstruction of deteriorated viaducts or at least the removal of unused viaducts/tracks.

Revise Development Standards

(City Staff with Consultant Assistance as needed)

- ⇒ Review and update the signage code.
- ⇒ Review/update if necessary the zoning code in regards to new mixed-use development.
- ⇒ Consider establishment of downtown design guidelines/standards.

Research Potential for Cultural/Arts Theme

(Organization Staff with Consultant Assistance as needed)

- ⇒ Assess strengths of city and downtown in regards to culture, art, and performing arts, including business possibilities and relationships with NU and school arts programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are suggestions, ideas, etc. which are recommended for further consideration by the appropriate bodies.

IMPROVEMENT/DEVELOPMENT SUGGESTIONS

The following are various suggestions, ideas, and concepts generated during the workshops for improving and developing Downtown:

- ⇒ Extend parking meter time (maybe 3 hours) so people can make multiple stops.
 - ⇒ Consider varied/expanded meter times and free parking after 6pm.
 - ⇒ Consider quick short-term parking for corners near coffee and fast food shops.
 - ⇒ Consider “Pay and Display” parking meter system.
 - ⇒ Consider valet parking
 - ⇒ Consider short term shopper parking on first floors of garages.
-
- ⇒ Create central places of focus and recognition.

- ⇒ Create focal points and physical linkages that interconnect subdistricts.
 - ⇒ Consider expansion of Fountain Square to the north.
 - ⇒ Dress up and clean up vacant storefronts with art, graphics, etc.
 - ⇒ Establish information kiosks, possibly using interactive technology.
 - ⇒ Add flower baskets/pots and waste cans throughout downtown.
 - ⇒ Remove unused viaducts.
-
- ⇒ Consider home furnishings retail to address downtown residential population.
 - ⇒ Extend Friday/Saturday retail hours and support evening activities with more events.
 - ⇒ Create incentives for retailers.
 - ⇒ Consider reallocation of food/beverage tax for downtown improvements.
 - ⇒ Promote use of technology to market downtown.
 - ⇒ Consider moving City offices downtown.
 - ⇒ Consider on-going public/private working committee to collaborate on next phase.
 - ⇒ Involve more downtown constituents in next phase.
 - ⇒ Establish an annual progress report/update on downtown.
 - ⇒ Consider more and regular “cross promotions” with NU.
 - ⇒ Consider establishing special walking paths with guided tours.
 - ⇒ Consider a “director of cultural affairs”.

It is recommended that the recommendations, ideas, suggestions, set forth above be reviewed by each of the organizations participating in the study: Economic Development Committee, EVMARK, Plan Commission, Parking Committee. Each group can determine those recommendations, which are most appropriate for further study and consideration by their group. During the process of the study, City and EVMARK staff did not participate nor edit any of the recommendations. Therefore it is important for the respective staff to review the recommendations and provide information to their board/committee/commission, which may help to clarify some of the recommendations.

APPENDIX

S.W.O.T. SUMMARY

Downtown Strengths:

The following were considered the key strengths of Downtown Evanston. They represent the building blocks and marketing points for improvement and development of the area in the next five years.

Unique Environment

- ⇒ Evanston as distinctive choice – urban, suburban, cosmopolitan, university.
- ⇒ University proximity – spending power, housing demand, business support, student employees, activity generator (visitors/conferences/events/games), cross marketing.
- ⇒ Security and sense of safety is good.
- ⇒ Vibrant, active, attractive area with “urban feel” (18 hours/7 days).
- ⇒ Has become safe, attractive draw for young people from North Shore.
- ⇒ Has become a desired destination venue and “cool community”.
- ⇒ City’s overall quality of life and “livability”.
- ⇒ Diversity of uses and architecture.
- ⇒ Diversity of people and businesses.
- ⇒ Arts, culture, personality.

Strategic Location

- ⇒ Accessible location to Lake Michigan, North Shore and Chicago.
- ⇒ International draw from University, Rotary, and Research Park.
- ⇒ Views of Lake Michigan.

Development Market

- ⇒ Overall market strength of Evanston and downtown.
- ⇒ Medical/university anchors, daytime employment, entertainment.
- ⇒ New residential development activity – improved/increased demographics.
- ⇒ Overall residential population within and in nearby neighborhoods.
- ⇒ Mixed uses – one stop activity center.
- ⇒ Restaurant and now entertainment mecca.
- ⇒ Moving forward from a strong position - competitive advantages.
- ⇒ Huge, wealthy market area within 5 miles.

Transportation

- ⇒ Transit hub - Great rapid transit and commuter rail service and access.
- ⇒ Varied access points and modes.

Additional Strengths:

The following are other Downtown strengths/positives discussed during the workshops. While they were not considered “key” or consensus items, they are included for record purposes.

- ⇒ Strong recent growth fulfills vision for downtown as “City”, not “Small Town”.
- ⇒ Leadership and progressive thinking.
- ⇒ Good, manageable size – not too big, not too small.
- ⇒ Pedestrian environment and outdoor dining.
- ⇒ Theater complex.
- ⇒ Public library.
- ⇒ Parking access.
- ⇒ Lighting and safety.
- ⇒ Evening and weekend hours for shops and restaurants.
- ⇒ Farmers Market.
- ⇒ EVMark – organization, special events, marketing, retail relationships, SSA.
- ⇒ Churches.

Downtown Weaknesses:

The following were considered the top weaknesses or negatives of Downtown Evanston. They represent the key problems and issues that need to be addressed.

Parking Supply & Management

- ⇒ On-street supply, duration, employee overuse.
- ⇒ 2 hour meters are insufficient.
- ⇒ Communication and signage.
- ⇒ Garage operations/management.
- ⇒ Parking ticket approach/practices.

Occupancy Costs

- ⇒ Real estate taxes.
- ⇒ Liquor taxes.
- ⇒ Utility costs.

Retail Mix

- ⇒ Lack of sufficient retail mix/diversity.
- ⇒ Missing national chains.
- ⇒ Lack of youth oriented entertainment.
- ⇒ Lack of clothing shops.
- ⇒ Difficult to get retail up and running.
- ⇒ Lack of comprehensive retail merchandising/marketing plan.
- ⇒ Small shops going to “edge” blocks not “core” blocks due to rents.
- ⇒ Lack of defined “retail core”.
- ⇒ Challenging landlords.

Physical Conditions

- ⇒ Lack of identity, sense of place or focal points.
- ⇒ Lack/use/condition/maintenance of public spaces, especially Fountain Square.
- ⇒ Gateway streets/entrances not distinguished.
- ⇒ Viaducts split downtown.
- ⇒ Unsafe, unattractive, and deteriorating viaducts.
- ⇒ Physical connectivity between downtown blocks/zones not strong.
- ⇒ Difficult wayfinding and lack of signage.
- ⇒ Ugly newspaper boxes.
- ⇒ Building and sidewalk maintenance is some locations.

Additional Weaknesses:

The following are other Downtown weaknesses/negatives discussed during the workshops. While they were not considered consensus items, they are included for record purposes.

- ⇒ The area is three sided – Lake restricts marketplace.
- ⇒ Vehicular accessibility from west and south.
- ⇒ Traffic stacking/waiting for parking spaces.
- ⇒ Left turning movements at viaducts.
- ⇒ Lack of workforce/affordable housing in downtown.
- ⇒ Lack of definition/recognition of distinctive zones/sub-districts.
- ⇒ Downtown too much a collection of submarkets.
- ⇒ Lack of focal points other than movie theaters.
- ⇒ Lack of performing arts venues.
- ⇒ Frequency of bus service.
- ⇒ Stalled development.
- ⇒ Farmers Market locations and attractiveness.
- ⇒ Panhandlers and pigeons.
- ⇒ Town-gown issues.
- ⇒ Sign code.
- ⇒ Unattractive building facades.

OPPORTUNITIES:

In addition to its strengths/positives, the following were identified as key opportunities for improvement and development of Downtown.

New Growth Markets

- ⇒ Capture growth markets – restaurants, residential, convenience/specialty/niche retail.
- ⇒ Add more residential units.
- ⇒ Active, growing downtown needing comprehensive retail plan.
- ⇒ New residents (2,000) represent opportunity for more/better retail.
- ⇒ Additional entertainment uses/venues.

Institutional Relations

- ⇒ Communications between institutions – City, EVMark, NU, YMCA, ETHS, churches.

Diversity

- ⇒ Identify it, embrace it, promote it.

Cultural Arts

- ⇒ Programming expansion and coordination.
- ⇒ More downtown venues (indoor and outdoor), private galleries, public art.
- ⇒ Performing arts center.
- ⇒ Market as center of art and culture.
- ⇒ Leadership and promotion.

Additional Opportunities:

The following are other Downtown improvement/development opportunities discussed during the workshops. While they were not considered consensus items, they are included for record purposes.

- ⇒ Greening and wayfinding.
- ⇒ New gateways and entrances to create sense of arrival/place.
- ⇒ Special design/features for Fountain Square as downtown “centerpiece”.
- ⇒ Improved alleys, possibly with special features.
- ⇒ Office employees.
- ⇒ Blocks west of tracks and at north end of Research Park.
- ⇒ Proposed Sherman Plaza and 1603 Sherman.
- ⇒ Cross marketing of uses and submarkets.
- ⇒ Branding/enhancement/promotion of overall area and maybe subdistricts.
- ⇒ West Davis as submarket with potential for more boutique retail and other uses.
- ⇒ West Davis needing better link to broader downtown.
- ⇒ A civic center complex.
- ⇒ Capitalize on major anchors – NU, hospitals, and daytime employees.

- ☐ Young professional networks.
- ☐ Tourism.
- ☐ New parking programs.
- ☐ Expanded SSA boundaries.
- ☐ University partnerships.
- ☐ State and Federal legislators live in community.
- ☐ Visioning process a chance to revisit density, balance, and goals.
- ☐ Potential zoning amendments regarding density, use, and parking.

THREATS:

In addition to the weaknesses/negatives that needed to be addressed, the following were identified as key internal and external threats to Downtown's future.

Occupancy Costs

- ☐ Rents, real estate taxes, and energy costs too high.
- ☐ Non-taxable institutions and non-profit organizations citywide.

Development Concerns

- ☐ Growing concerns about density.
- ☐ Possible backlash against diverse, newer architecture.
- ☐ Concern for expanding growth and size of downtown.
- ☐ Fear of the unknown.
- ☐ Real or perceived results of "success" such as congestion and infrastructure.

Additional Threats:

The following are other Downtown improvement/development threats discussed during the workshops. While they were not considered consensus items, they are included for record purposes.

- ☐ Regional malls, especially competition with Old Orchard shopping center.
- ☐ Lack of understanding of overall retail competition.
- ☐ Market soft for some restaurants and office users.
- ☐ High current office vacancy.
- ☐ Unrealistic expectations about 2,000 new residents.
- ☐ Lengthy entitlement process.
- ☐ Complacency about what downtown means to City and where it is going.
- ☐ Increasing interest rates.
- ☐ Future of health care industry.
- ☐ Graffiti in some locations.
- ☐ Clustering of uses in same location such as restaurants.
- ☐ Trash removal, especially for restaurants after peak weekend activity.
- ☐ Infrastructure and open space improvements – needs, timing, funding.
- ☐ No current strategic plan for downtown.

