

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This Downtown study sets forth short and long term recommendations to help keep Ellsworth's Downtown vital. It identifies opportunities that can be used to support efforts to strengthen Downtown Ellsworth's economic and community position. *The strategy recommends that the Downtown continue to move toward distinguishing itself in the marketplace as being the premier specialty retail district and as the professional and government center of the region.*

Key Findings of the Market Analysis

- Downtown Ellsworth functions as the government service center for the Hancock County area, and as a professional service center providing a range of financial, legal, and health related services. It also functions as a specialty retail center that compliments the community shopping center nature of High Street.
- There is over 85,000 SF of occupied retail space in Downtown Ellsworth. Most of this space is devoted to the sale of comparison goods and food and beverage sales. There is a very small amount of convenience retail use in the Downtown area.
- Downtown draws most - 50% to 60% - of its customers from year round residents of a fairly well defined primary trade area. The primary trade area is quite large with a year round population of 35,000 to 36,000 living in approximately 14,000 households.
- Seasonal residents of the primary and secondary trade area are an important part of Downtown's customer base and represent about 15% to 20 % of Downtown's customers. Tourists are a very small percentage of Downtown's customer base representing 5% or less.
- Consumers identified the environment of Downtown as a positive feature. This included its atmosphere, convenience, friendliness, and character of its older buildings. A number of people suggested that there should be more stores, and an improved mix of offerings. Consumers also suggested that there should be more restaurants and entertainment offerings in the Downtown.
- Consumers use of Downtown includes; over 60% of consumers report regularly shopping in Downtown. About 40% regularly visit Downtown for banking. About 30% of consumers come Downtown for personal services.
- Businesses rate beautification activities the highest followed by bringing more businesses into Downtown and improved/expanded parking.
- A significant group of consumers report shopping outside of the Ellsworth area for certain lines of merchandise. This suggests opportunities for sales growth in certain lines of merchandise