

1. GROUPS AND PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT NORTHFIELD AREA RETAIL.

MEDIA

PRINT

- Northfield News and Shopper
- Northfield Entertainment Guide
- Chamber and CVB publications
- College publications and ads

RADIO, TV

- KYMN
- NTV

DIGITAL

- Nfld.Org
- Locally Grown

SIGNAGE

- Commercial billboards
- City signage
- Organizational signage

ORGANIZATIONS

BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

- Chamber of Commerce
- Northfield Dntn. Devel. Corp.
- Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Business-specific trade associations

GOVERNMENT

- City of Northfield
 - Public Works
 - Building officials
- Economic Development Authority
- EDA loan and grant programs
- MN state departments and programs
- Northfield Enterprise Center
- Heritage Preserv. Commission
- Dundas Business Club
- Northfield Public Library

NON-PROFITS

- Northfield Historical Society
- Northfield Arts Guild
- Art.Org
- Northfield Area Foundation
- Sports organizations

Colleges

Wings

Tuesday Morning Group

YMCA

The Key

Public Schools

Mill Towns Trail Board and Assn.

Service Clubs: Rotary, Sertoma, Lions

1. GROUPS AND PROGRAMS THAT SUPPORT NORTHFIELD AREA RETAIL

EVENTS

COMMERCIAL AND SPONSORED EVENTS

- DJJD
- Winter Walk
- Vintage Band Festival
- ArtSwirl
- Crazy Daze
- CRWP in Bridge Square
- Thursday Evenings on the Square
- Bike tours and races
- Distance runs and races
- Third Thursdays
- Home and Garden Show
- Taste of Northfield
- July 4 events
- Arts and historical events

COLLEGE EVENTS

- New student weeks
- Parents and Family weekends
- Commencements
- MN High School X-country meets
- NCAA championship events
- Reunions
- St. Olaf Christmas Festivals

2. SEARCH FOR THE COMMONALITIES AMONG RETAILERS

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Location: in “greater Northfield”
Three areas: Downtown – “niche, unique”
North – “ag zone”
South – “suburban”
Independently owned
Self-employed entrepreneurs
Interdependence
High taxes
High costs
Similar sized spaces downtown
Specialty focus – gifts, antiques

MULTIPLES OF

Gifts
Flowers
Bookstores
Restaurants
Antiques

COMMON NEEDS

Need customers
Similar days and hours of operation
Need parking (reality vs. perception)
Need high-speed internet access
Organized advertising
Public restrooms

COMMON CHALLENGES

“Bottom Line” concerns
Employment – recruiting, wages, insurance, employee training
Marketing
Financial
 limited individual resources
 many barely making it
Property taxes
Competition from on-line retailers
Local competition
Individual shops are not destination shops
Appeal to tourists who are not here
Getting more “feet on the street”
Health insurance
Cohesiveness between colleges and town

COMMON OPPORTUNITIES

Potential for on-line sales
Interdependence
Collaborative spirit

3. GENERATE IDEAS ON WHAT “GAPS” EXIST IN OUR RETAIL MIX

“INFRASTRUCTURE” GAPS

Northfield is not a destination: Need to promote and market the city
Bike trail and River Walk
Store-to-store referrals
Parking
Way-finding
Retail space
Chamber/NDDC
Drop-off day care programs (YMCA?)

GAPS IN RETAIL CATEGORIES AND TYPES

Retail

Specialty meats – butcher shop
Shoes – family shoe stores
Clothing – men (x 4), kids, women
Sporting goods – outdoor sports clothing and equipment
Office supplies
Notions
Tailor/alterations
Bridal
Soda fountain
Craft, hobby
Sewing, fabric, yarn
Music - music supplies, instruments
Variety store
Toys – all ages
Bait shop
Electronics – small consumer
Technology
Hardware
Cooks’ store
Housewares

Restaurants

More of them
Asian
Italian
Steakhouse
Larger group space
Dinner with entertainment
Fine dining - “table cloth”
Outdoor dining
Ice cream, soda fountain
Deli

Services

Health services – Minute Clinic

Arts/movie theatre

Roller rink

Wedding planner

Conference planner

Coordinated hotel, restaurant, conference facilities

4. IDENTIFY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN FILLING GAPS

CHALLENGES

Perception issues -
 convenience, service, “experience,”
 establishing worth of “face-to-face” shopping vs. on-line
Reaching & attracting tourists and customers from outside Northfield
Keeping customers in Northfield,
Winning over residents who don’t shop locally - customer loyalty
Market size
Parking crunch
Pedestrian traffic - crossings at Hwy 3 and Division crossings
Competing with big boxes
Transportation
Limited size of available spaces and land for new, expanding businesses
Lack of adequate capitalization
High start-up and operating costs
Owner work load – burnout, owners no longer live above store, staff turnover
Staffing – boutiques often depend on secondary labor force
Finding, recruiting successful businesses and entrepreneurs for Northfield
Keep the place clean and tidy

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities to make more money, offer customer service, offer unique items
Big boxes keep more shoppers in town and bring more people to town
Internet
Expand liquor store
Entertainment, non-durable goods
Common hours
More “touch points,” “third places,” social interaction centers for residents:
 museums, galleries, arts & cultural center, Library, ice arena & sports
center,
 bars, restaurants, lighted walks and riverfront at night
“Think Casino!” (?)
New parking concepts
Expand tax base
History: “Americana” exemplified, “The Northfield Experience”
TV, radio Commercials to market the town/area and businesses
Pooled advertising, marketing – local, regional, national (alumni)
Emerging identities: art, biking, “green community”
Commitment to community
Historic outdoor mall feeling
Untapped suburban market
Northfield as a destination, including bus tours
Coordinate with College events: Christmas Festival, parents’ weekends, etc.
River events (remove dam)
Re-developable space down Highway 3 and Division to Woodley

Office space

5. CONCEPTS FOR WAYS THAT TOURISM CAN BOOST RETAIL SPENDING

EVENTS

- Promote bus and Segway tours
- Organize and promote tour packages - golf packages, overnight stays, etc.
- Consistent annual community and commercial events – market them
- (New) Pumpkin Festival
- Food and wine events
- Thursdays on the Square
- Jesse James Bike tour
- Youth events: connect to youth sports programs, tournaments, college events
- Need more family-oriented and kid-friendly events
- Arts and culture events – music, theater, festivals, etc.

ATTRACTIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

- Complete the Mill Towns Trail
- Better access to and more activities on the River – canoes, tubing, etc.
- Safe, comfortable environment
- Uniform shopping hours
- Support sporting events put on by schools, colleges, sports associations
- Malt-O-Meal museum
- Support Northfield Historical Society
- A carousel
- Promote as a Nature Destination: Carleton Arb, Maltby Nature Center, River, etc.
- Enhance the River Walk
- Organize for and promote business conferences

MARKETING

- No common identity
- Create an expectation: “Experience Northfield!”
- Build on and promote a sense of “community”
- Promote old buildings – a real downtown
- Manage empty buildings and store-fronts
- Target specific markets: youth, families, seniors
- Broader community advertising – Twin Cities, Western Wisconsin, etc.
- Cooperative advertising outside Northfield
- Event marketing
- Internet Marketing
- Revisit how CVB money is spent
- Web directory for local retailers
- Two-tier pricing strategies (Loyalty cards)
- Joint marketing with MN events: Explore Minnesota, etc.
- Coordinated Web sites and links
- National tourism (?)