

Analysis of the College Student Market Segment

College students are an important consumer segment for many downtown businesses. Students tend to have high levels of disposable income and free time to make purchases on basic goods and services, entertainment activities, and a range of discretionary items. As many of these purchases are made in the areas directly around college campuses, these students are a key market for Downtown Milwaukee. In addition to their spending potential, college students are also increasingly important to regional economic development efforts. The growing importance of knowledge in a wide range of industry sectors has placed an emphasis on developing a highly skilled and educated regional workforce. While local colleges and universities have become catalysts for providing these young workers, regions throughout the nation are in competition for new graduates. A downtown rich in employment prospects, living opportunities, and amenities can help facilitate the retention of college students after graduation.

National Trends

Student populations at higher education institutions across the country are growing in response to the demand for a well-educated and knowledgeable workforce. Between 1970 and 2004, enrollment rates at the postsecondary level for ages 18 to 19 (the age at which college is typically started) increased from 37% to 48%. Similarly, postsecondary enrollment rates for ages 20 to 34, increased from 22% to 35%.¹ Given the growth in college enrollments, the importance of students as both a consumer segment and as potential contributors to the regional labor pool is at a premium for downtowns. Specifically, more than half of all colleges and universities are located in urban centers and their immediate surroundings.

Economic Power of College Students

College students represent considerable spending power. According to the 360 Youth College Explorer Study, conducted by Harris Interactive during the fall 2003 semester, U.S. college students ages 18 to 24 have \$122 billion in spending power, including \$24 billion in discretionary spending. *These figures translate to \$13,000 in annual spending per student, 19% of which is discretionary income (\$211 per month).*

Many of the top purchases made by college students are technology-related devices and services, including computers, broadband Internet connections, stereos, cell phones and service plans, televisions, DVD players, digital cameras, MP3 players, and gaming systems. More importantly, these electronic goods and services are not simply one time purchases. Students continue to purchase technology products and services in order to update and replace obsolete items.

¹ National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES); Current Fund Expenditures

In addition to their discretionary income, college students average 11 hours per day of unscheduled time (i.e. time when they are not sleeping, working, studying or attending class). Not surprisingly, much of this free time is spent on pursuing entertainment and leisure activities. On a national level, students spend nearly \$3 billion annually on movies, DVDs, music, and video game purchases and rentals. Music sales comprise \$474 million in student spending, theater tickets account for \$658 million, and video games are responsible for \$341 million. Spending on in-home movies is also substantial, with \$600 million spent on purchasing DVD's, and another \$326 million spent on renting movies. In addition to watching movies at home, the average student views more than ten movies per year at the theater. Frequent visits to the movie theater correspond to students spending \$70 annually on movie tickets, compared to \$32 for the general population.² Table 7.1 reiterates the above information on entertainment and leisure spending.

Table 7.1 - Spending by College Students on Entertainment and Leisure Activities

Spending Category	2003 Yearly Spending (millions)
Purchase Videos/DVDs	\$600
Purchase Music CDs/Tapes	\$474
Purchase Video Games (not including equipment)	\$341
Going to Movies	\$326
Movie Rentals	\$791

In addition to their discretionary spending, college students typically spend large amounts of money when returning to campus each fall. The third annual *National Retail Federation 200 Back-to-College Consumer Intentions and Actions Survey*, conducted by BIGresearch,

*Harris Interactive/360 Youth College Explorer Study; fall 2003*²

found that college students and their parents spent \$34.4 billion on “back-to-school” items in 2005, up 33.8% from 2004. Because of their proximity, the shopping destinations nearby campus are most desirable for college students and their parents when making back-to-college purchases. More than half (59.8%) of students purchase back-to-college merchandise at a college bookstore, 55.8% shop at discount stores, 41.0% at office supply stores, 36.1% at department stores, and 32.0% make back-to-college purchases online.³

To further explore the national spending patterns of college students, market potential data from ESRI Business Information Solutions (ESRI BIS) Tapestry™ market segmentation system provides information on the “Dorms to Diplomas” (college student) consumers⁴. Using research from Mediamark Research Inc., Tapestry provides a nationally-based Market Potential Index (MPI) that measures the potential that college students will purchase a product or service, or participate in an activity. The U.S. index is 100. A value above 100 represents potential higher than the national level, while a value below 100 represents less potential.

² Harris Interactive/360 Youth College Explorer Study; fall 2003.
<http://www.harrisinteractive.com/news/allnewsbydate.asp?NewsID=835>

³ *NRF 2005 Back-to-College Consumer Intentions and Actions Survey*, conducted by BIGresearch; August 2004.
<http://www.nrf.com/content/default.asp?folder=press/release2005&file=btc0805.htm>

⁴ See Section 2 for more information on Community Tapestry

Table 7.2 summarizes many of the spending categories showing high Market Potential Indices among college students. Nationally, the spending potential data indicate that college students spend more money than the average U.S. consumer on products like designer jeans, laptops and electronics, movies, travel, and recreation. They prefer restaurants ranging from Chili's to Bennigan's; and clothing stores such as Express, The Gap, Banana Republic, and The Limited.

Table 7.2 - Spending by "Dorms to Diplomas" (College Students) ESRI Tapestry Segment

Spending Category	MPI	Spending Category	MPI
<i>Sample Purchases</i>		<i>Media</i>	
Bought men's designer jeans	238	Watches comedy central	250
Bought men's sweater	215	Watches VH1	255
Bought women's designer jeans	176	Read women's fashion magazine	224
Bought engagement ring	193	Public radio listeners	236
Drank beer	140	Radio format - rock	229
Bought adventure book	267	<i>Restaurants</i>	
Owns a laptop	241	Dined at Bennigan's	369
Owns a PDA	242	Dined at Boston Market	226
Purchased Sony Playstation	239	Dined at Little Caeser's	289
Purchased sofa bed	419	Dined at Chili's	212
Purchased office furniture	171	<i>Stores</i>	
Purchased cooking products	131	Shop at Banana Republic	369
Purchased bed/bath goods	113	Shop at Express	620
Purchased cell phone	147	Shop at The Gap	233
Purchased frozen pizza	130	Shop at Lerner	314
<i>Personal Care</i>		Shop at The Limited	387
Exercise at club 2+/week	211	Shop at Old Navy	181
Diet Control to maintain weight	158	Shop at Target	138
Use nutrition/energy bar	168	Shop at Wal-Mart	97
Wear contacts	208	Shop at TJ Maxx	182
<i>Activities</i>		<i>Recreation</i>	
Went to bar/nightclub	204	Went backpacking on vacation	306
Went dancing	254	Foreign travel personal reasons	259
Dined out in past 12 months	78	Participated in aerobics	193
Went to movies in past 6 months	118	Participated in bowling	254
Attended musical performance	187	Participated in Frisbee	327
Played pool	235	Participated in jogging/running	282
Played chess	212	Participated in tennis	318
Did painting/drawing	186	Participated in downhill skiing	205

Source: ESRI, Tapestry Users Guide CD

How Downtowns and Cities Can Serve the College Market

Given the economic importance of college students, it is vital that downtowns, cities, and regions take certain steps to meet the needs of this consumer segment, and ensure their continued participation in the local economy. While a good academic program is essential in attracting students to a particular college or university, equally important is the campus surrounding including quality retailers, entertainment venues, and cultural amenities. Local amenities provide students cultural and entertainment options that enhance students' quality of life and their education outside the classroom. *Furthermore, these amenities also promote the potential livability of the city after graduation.* An economically depressed city, hinders the recruitment of students, affects post-graduation retention, and encourages commuting students to leave campus after class to exercise their spending power elsewhere.⁵ *In particular, cities and downtowns should concentrate on providing the goods and services that students seek, as well as creating a 24-hour living environment and atmosphere that will attract students to the college, the campus, and the community.*

One of the most important aspects of an appealing college city or town is an attractive selection of retail stores. According to *University Business Magazine*, developing a retail portfolio near campus provides a variety of benefits. *Vital retail offerings can satisfy students' needs, boost a school's image, attract faculty and staff, enliven surrounding neighborhoods, and strengthen revenue streams.*⁶ As indicated by the preceding consumer data, students are interested in frequenting retail stores where they can purchase electronic goods, apparel, food and beverages, and entertainment-oriented products like movies and video games.

The creation of "destination" shopping complexes is another trend in campus-area retail development that has seen recent success. A destination complex is a mixed-use area that offers housing, office and commercial space. According to Robert Bronstein of The Scion Group, these environments are becoming increasingly popular among college students.⁷ These complexes are attractive to students because they offer affordable housing, diverse dining options, a variety of retail operations (including both local and national chains), and entertainment options such as a movie theater. Destination complexes also create an enjoyable and lively atmosphere that brings students together outside of class and gives them an opportunity to interact in an exciting and safe environment.

Characteristics of Milwaukee College Students

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) has almost 97,000 college students⁸. Over 63,000 of these students live in the City of Milwaukee and 3,700 live in the Downtown Study Area (see Appendix 2A). Approximately 8.3% of the metropolitan area's residents age 15 and older are enrolled in college. Of the ten comparison cities, Milwaukee only trails Columbus, Ohio (at 8.6%) as indicated in Table 7.3. Given the presence of Ohio State University in Columbus, this difference is not surprising. The large number of regional college students provides a large spending potential and a prospective labor pool with a variety of fresh skills.

⁵ *University Business Magazine*; <http://www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?p=1207>

⁶ *University Business Magazine*; <http://www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?p=1082>

⁷ *University Business Magazine*; <http://www.universitybusiness.com/page.cfm?p=1082>

⁸ The Milwaukee MSA includes the counties of Milwaukee, Waukesha, Washington and Ozaukee

Table 7.3 – College Students Residing in Selected Metropolitan Areas

Metropolitan Statistical Area	Population Age 15 And Over (2005 Estimate)	Total College Students (2005)	Population Age 15 and Over Enrolled in College (%)	Percent of College Students Between Ages of 15 to 24
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	1,159,925	78,582	6.8%	49.8%
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	1,597,188	116,320	7.3%	57.4%
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	1,662,737	124,904	7.5%	49.3%
Columbus, OH	1,308,117	112,715	8.6%	50.4%
Indianapolis, IN	1,238,848	85,635	6.9%	47.5%
Kansas City, MO-KS	1,505,427	109,977	7.3%	50.0%
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	957,101	65,382	6.8%	49.7%
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	1,168,884	96,713	8.3%	49.9%
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	1,103,276	74,331	6.7%	51.7%
Pittsburgh, PA Metro Area	1,905,512	138,256	7.3%	57.8%

Note: All figures are estimates based on a 90 percent confidence interval

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2005 ACS

Due to the large number of colleges and universities located in or near its urban core, Downtown Milwaukee is a prime geographic location to take advantage of the economic power of the college student market. The area is home to 10 colleges and universities, both large and small, with a student population over 63,000. *If local students have spending patterns similar to the national average, the area's college students could represent a sizeable amount of discretionary spending potential.* Table 7.4 summarizes enrollment data for many of the local higher education institutions.

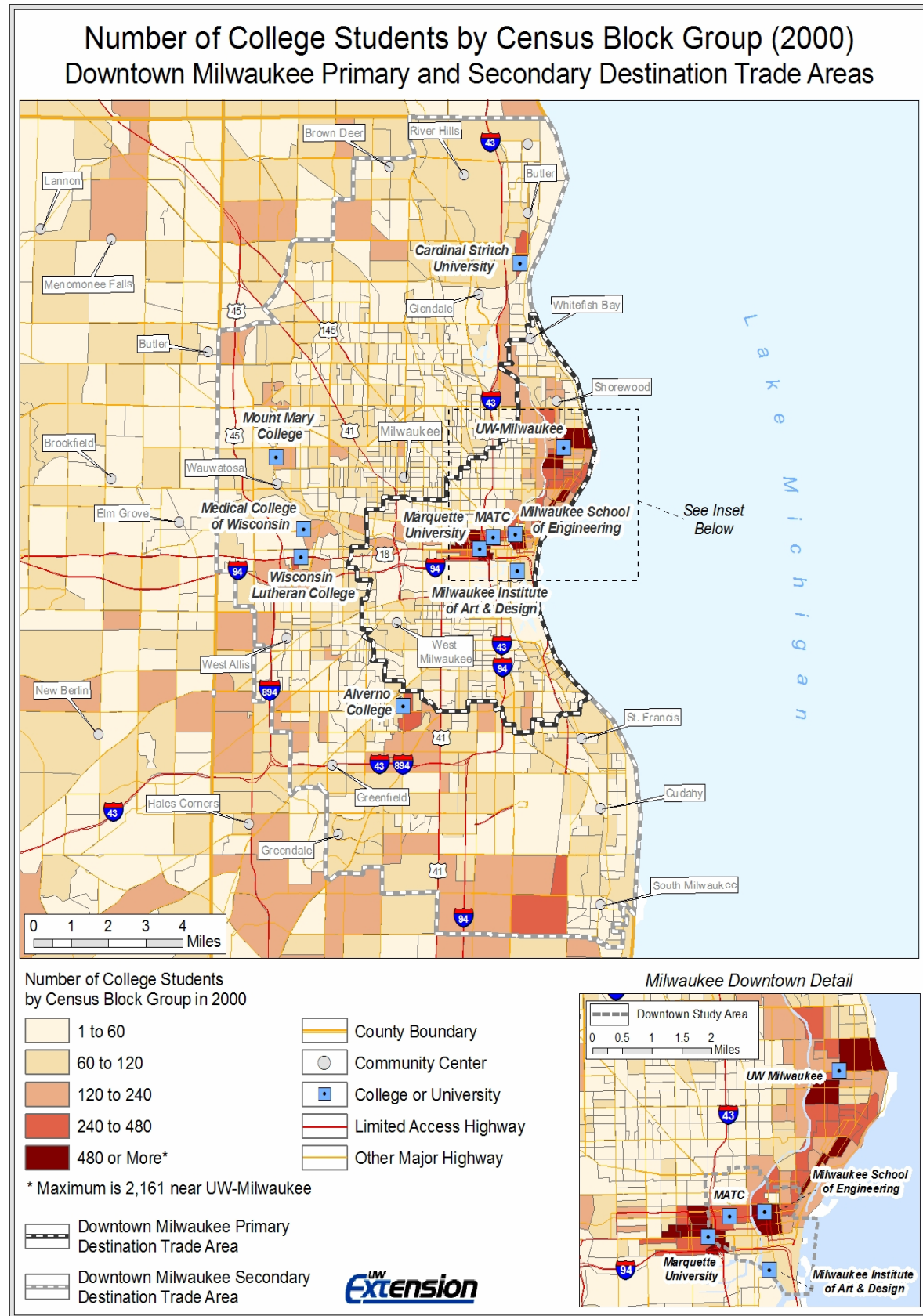
Map 7.1 (on the following page) illustrates the locations of Milwaukee's colleges and universities and the locations of college student residential concentrations. The map shows that many of Milwaukee's college students and campuses are located either in or near to the Downtown Milwaukee Study Area (including Marquette, MSOE, MIAD, MATC, and UWM). If Downtown Milwaukee businesses can effectively reach these students, college students could boost the potential for many downtown business categories.

Table 7.4 – Colleges and Universities in Milwaukee

Institution	Enrollment
Alverno College	2,372
Cardinal Stritch University	7,246
Marquette University	11,000
Medical College of Wisconsin	1,359
Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC)	13,400 (full-time only)
Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design (MIAD)	630
Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE)	2,315
Mount Mary College	1,700
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM)	23,000
Wisconsin Lutheran College	634

*Statistics are based on 2005 enrollment numbers and are approximate

Map 7.1 – Students. Colleges. and Universities in Milwaukee



Profile of Milwaukee's Largest Colleges and Universities

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

As Wisconsin's second largest university, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) is home to more than 28,000 students in 149 degree programs; including 81 undergraduate, 48 masters, and 18 doctoral. The school is divided into 12 schools and colleges, with more than 70 scholarly centers, institutes and laboratories. UWM also serves area residents through its School of Continuing Education. With more than 35,000 annual participants, UWM provides classes, seminars, special events, and educational tours and trips.

Of UWM's 23,000 students, approximately 83% are enrolled as undergraduates and 17% are enrolled as graduate students. In addition, a large portion (39%) of the student population is enrolled only part-time. Women represent slightly more than half (56%) of the student population and the average age of all students is approximately 25 years. UWM serves a diverse population with 8% of its students being African American, 2% Asian, 2% Southeast Asian, 1% Native American, 4% Hispanic and 80% white. UWM is also home to approximately 700 international students from 78 countries, 3% of its student population. The university has a research budget of \$22 million and receives \$72 million in federal aid, grants and contracts. The school also participates in NCAA Division I athletics⁹.

UWM is located on the Upper East Side of Milwaukee within a residential area five blocks from Lake Michigan. The neighborhood is a mix of single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment buildings, and is home to many faculty, staff, and students. The UWM campus is a blend of 19th century buildings and new architecture with the latest in educational technology.

Milwaukee Area Technical College MATC

Founded in 1912, MATC is one of the Midwest's largest community-based technical colleges. The college offers 200 degree, diploma, certificate and apprentice programs at 4 Milwaukee area campuses: Downtown Milwaukee, Mequon, Oak Creek and West Allis. The educational options at MATC include pre-college education, technical programs, 4-year college transfer programs, outreach programs, and short-term training. Classes are held during the day, evenings, weekends, and online.

The college serves about 57,000 students per year, the majority of whom attend part-time. Full-time equivalent enrollment (total credits taught, expressed as full academic loads) is approximately 13,400 students. Forty-four percent of students identifying ethnicity are minorities, making MATC the most diverse college in the state. The student body also is the state's most diverse in terms of age and social background. While non-traditional adult learners remain the backbone of the institution, MATC has a large influx of traditional college students transitioning directly from high school. *Although the average student age is 28, 19 year-olds currently constitute the most populous age band at MATC.*

⁹ *student body statistics for UWM are from 2001

Marquette

Marquette is a private Jesuit university that was established in 1881. It ranks as the largest Jesuit university in the country and the largest private university in Wisconsin. The University ranks in the top 100 of U.S. News top colleges and is often a destination for the best students in Wisconsin and Illinois.

Located in the heart of Milwaukee on an 80-acre campus, Marquette is home to nearly 7,800 undergraduates and more than 11,000 total students, including dental, graduate and law students. The university has 11 schools and colleges and offers 60 different majors. Marquette University reports having students from all 50 states and over 80 countries. The class of 2007 comprises 1,887 students; 55.4% female and 44.6% male.

Milwaukee School of Engineering

With a student body of approximately 2,300 individuals, the Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) offers bachelors, masters, and certificate programs in six fields of study, with an emphasis on engineering and technology. Additional opportunities include minors, double majors, dual-degrees, study abroad programs, and ROTC. The majority of students (1,858) attend full-time, although the school has 457 part-time students as well. Of the enrolled students, 2,092 are undergraduates, while 223 are graduate students. Approximately 900 students live in university residence halls situated on MSOE's 15-acre campus in Downtown Milwaukee. Eighty-three percent of undergraduate students are men, with women comprising only 17% of the student population. Similarly, 77% of graduate students are men and 23% are women. Minorities account for 10% of the undergraduate population and 7% of the graduate student body. The majority of the full-time undergraduates (1,249 students) are originally from Wisconsin.

Focus Group Findings - College Students in Region

A series of three, ninety-minute focus groups were conducted in April 2006 by the University of Wisconsin-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development to gather information about college students' perceptions of Downtown Milwaukee. Students from Marquette University, Milwaukee School of Engineering, and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee were invited to attend. The students represented a diverse geographic mixture, including those who were from southeastern Wisconsin, the entire state, and other areas of the nation.

Objectives

Focus groups were conducted to achieve three objectives:

1. Determine Milwaukee's strengths and weaknesses from the perspective of college students' attending school in the area.
2. Analyze the contributions that Milwaukee's social, cultural, and shopping opportunities make in the students' overall college experience.
3. Determine if the students saw Milwaukee as a place that they would consider living after they graduate.

Focus Group Questions

The following questions were used to guide the focus group discussions:

- If you were describing Downtown Milwaukee to new or prospective students, what words or phrases first come to mind?
- Think back about other downtowns around the nation where you may have lived, visited, or perhaps thought about living after college. What characteristics of those cities make them more desirable than Downtown Milwaukee as a place to live or work? What characteristics make them less desirable?
- For a moment, think about your college experience in Milwaukee. As part of your college experience, think about the cultural, social and shopping opportunities in the Downtown. How have these opportunities in Downtown Milwaukee contributed to your overall college experience?
- As a student, consider your picture of an ideal Downtown Milwaukee for social, cultural and shopping opportunities. From your perspective as a student, what could be done to improve Downtown Milwaukee in any or all three areas?
- At some point, you will be graduating from college. You will be faced with a choice to either stay in the area or leave for opportunities elsewhere. What aspects of Milwaukee would convince you to remain in the area or leave?

The following comments were made by participants in facilitated focus groups and are not the opinions of Milwaukee Downtown BID #21 or University of Wisconsin-Extension Center for Community and Economic Development.

Downtown Milwaukee from the perspective of college students

Following are descriptors current college students would use to describe Downtown Milwaukee to prospective students:

- **Attractive Environment:** Students described Milwaukee as being a nice looking community, commenting on the lake, parks, and open spaces. Those students from outside of the Milwaukee area commented that Milwaukee was different, or not as industrial, than they had expected. They noted improvements being made in the city, and also appreciated Milwaukee's historic nature. Many described Milwaukee as being the "perfect size" – big enough for diversity in options, but small enough not to be overwhelming. Students felt safe in the downtown, as long as they took common sense safety precautions. Despite mostly positive comments about Milwaukee's environment, many commented about the odor around the lake.
- **Few Underage Social Activities:** Students commented that there are no under-age establishments, no first-run movie theaters, and no inter-collegial gathering places other than bars. There are pockets of fun places to "hang out", but much of the city empties out after work hours. There are more opportunities for underage social activities in the summertime, but not all students stay in Milwaukee over the summer – they miss-out on the "full picture of what Milwaukee is all about."
- **Accessible:** The bus system is fairly easy to navigate and many relied on the bus system. Some participants commented that there was limited availability of transportation later at night.
- **Affordable:** There are offers and deals for students if they look for them.

Desirable and less-desirable characteristics of Downtown Milwaukee

Focus group participants were asked to compare Downtown Milwaukee to other downtowns they'd either lived in or visited.

- **Few Job Opportunities:** Overwhelmingly, many participants pointed to a lack of opportunity in the Milwaukee area. "There is no industry hold," commented one student. "Milwaukee does not have a good climate for entrepreneurship," said another.
- **No Sense of Place or Cultural District:** Participants pointed to a desire for there to be either a cultural district where many activities were available in one place or street (students mentioned Beale Street, Michigan Avenue, and State Street) – or, for the various pockets of activity to be tied together (one student suggested uniform lighting) so the city would feel more cohesive. Many thought of the river as an untapped opportunity.

- **Good Size and Hometown Appeal:** Students felt that because of the city's size, there are opportunities to live, work, and recreate in the same community.
- **Transportation:** Students would like to be able to utilize transit rail. "Other cities are easier to navigate," one student commented. Many students said that late night transportation, including taxis and buses, is not sufficient.

Contributions of cultural, social, and shopping opportunities to college experience

The college students participating in the focus groups recognized that there are more opportunities available to them within an urban environment and that such an environment was part of the appeal for attending school in Milwaukee.

- **Shopping:** Overall, students were disappointed with shopping opportunities in Milwaukee. Many clearly favored Mayfair Mall for shopping opportunities, but stated that transportation to Mayfair Mall is time consuming and not available later at night. There have been some improvements at Grand Avenue Mall, but the mall and the downtown shopping district are not reaching their full potential. "Big cities should be places where you can find things," said one student, also pointing out that enhanced shopping opportunities should be a priority for catering to business travelers. Finally, many students expressed their desire to see, and frequent, locally owned small businesses – not just large chains.
- **Social:** Student's described Milwaukee as a college town with few opportunities for students to meet and gather inter-collegially. There are no underage establishments or first-run movie theaters. Students enjoy parks and open spaces, but activities within those spaces should be enhanced.
- **Culture:** There are many opportunities for art and sporting events, but fewer for the fine arts (e.g. symphony and ballet) and sciences. Many of the existing opportunities are affordable, but students would like to have more student discounts and have more cultural activities available to them in non-summer months.

Ideal social, cultural, and shopping improvements

The following improvements could be made to enhance the college experience for students:

- **Targeted Marketing for Students:** Make information easily available for college students. Create special promotions for students and develop a communication plan to attract the student market segment.
- **Improved Transportation:** Including a transit system, readily available parking, consistent metering, and improved signage.
- **Improve walk-ability:** Pointing again to a sense that Milwaukee has disconnected pockets of activity, participants suggested increasing the feel of connectivity between active locations (Brady, Lakefront Milwaukee, Water, Third Ward) with transportation

links or uniform lighting. They also suggested enhancing the walk-able appeal of streets with inviting boutiques, café's, and coffee shops.

- Promote smaller, locally-owned businesses: Students in each of the three focus groups expressed their preference for small businesses over chains and elements of commercialism.

Aspects of the city that would make students stay or leave Milwaukee after graduation

- Job Opportunities: The critical determinant for whether students would stay or leave was the ability to find a job in the area. Students commented that the prospect for employment in Milwaukee was not good. "This market is too small for the profession I'm going into," commented one student. The participating students did not perceive Milwaukee as a "creative, innovative, entrepreneurial climate" that would be desirable for locating for a job.
- Housing Affordability: Pointing to a growth in condominium development, focus group participants were concerned about affordability in Downtown Milwaukee. Some suggested that they would not be able to afford to live in Downtown Milwaukee and that their preference was to live and work in the same proximity.
- Age and Stage in the Lifecycle: Students said that they could see themselves living in Milwaukee in their 20's and 30's, but saw the city as undesirable once they had families. Examples of undesirable characteristics included an ailing public school system, "MPS has such a bad reputation that I wouldn't want my kids to go there;" lack of family activities; and increased concerns about crime.
- Climate: Students indicated that they enjoyed the four seasons, but that there were few activities in non-summer months.
- Size: Milwaukee's size had both positive and negative appeal for students.
- Positive: "Milwaukee is just the right size," said one student. Others pointed to its affordability in comparison to larger cities.
- Negative: Some students commented that Milwaukee is too small to offer diverse opportunities for jobs. Another stated that he wanted to "live in a transportation hub," and didn't see Milwaukee as being capable of reaching that potential.
- Safety: Some students expressed concern about crime, pointing to Milwaukee's murder rate. Other students said that there should be increased police presence, especially in areas of activity.

Conclusions

- College students tend to have large amounts of disposable income and leisure time. Consequently, students often spend money on technology/electronic goods and services, entertainment options, and basic consumer goods like snack foods and beverages. Students tend to spend more than average U.S. consumers on products like designer clothing, computers, movies, travel, and recreation. When considering these purchasing preferences and comparing them to the Downtown Milwaukee retail offerings, a number of retail gaps are apparent. *Specifically, Downtown Milwaukee lacks a number of national apparel retailers favored by college students, a movie theater, and stores with a large selection of electronics products (such as a Best Buy or Circuit City). Students would also like to see more locally owned businesses; which are preferred over chains by many. Given the lack of these stores, it is not surprising that many college students in the focus groups favored Mayfair Mall as a shopping destination. Developing these types of retail offerings may help to capture more student spending in Downtown Milwaukee.*
- When students spend their money, they usually shop at stores close to campus or at shopping “destinations” that might offer entertainment and food options as well as retail stores. *Increased marketing to college students (especially those outside of the Downtown Study Area), may help to position Downtown Milwaukee as a destination in the minds of college students.*
- College students often are attracted to city amenities such as a diverse selection of retail stores and a 24-hour living environment where they can interact with their peers and feel integrated with the city. Again, marketing efforts that target existing and potential college students could increase the visibility of Downtown Milwaukee as a shopping and entertainment destination. One specific effort was identified during the focus group sessions. In particular, a number of college students noted that there are more opportunities for underage social activities in the summertime, but not all students stay in Milwaukee over the summer. Consequently, many of these students fail to benefit from the “full picture of what Milwaukee is all about.” *Marketing efforts and employment/internship programs that encourage students to live in Milwaukee during the summer may help to expose college students to diverse entertainment options and a new aspect of Milwaukee’s quality of life.*
- Milwaukee is poised to take advantage of the growing trend in student spending due to the large student population (approximately 63,000 students) in or near the downtown area. Furthermore, the Milwaukee metropolitan area has the second highest percentage of college students among the ten peer metro areas studied. While many focus group participants value the city’s size and outdoor amenities, several barriers to capturing student spending potential were also identified. *These barriers included a limited number of underage social activities, no defined central cultural district, limited public transportation options, and no first-run movie theaters.*
- While many focus group participants clearly favored Mayfair Mall for shopping opportunities, many students also stated that transportation to Mayfair Mall is time consuming and not available later at night. *Increasing the retail choices in Downtown Milwaukee, including locally owned businesses, and encouraging longer business hours may provide students with an alternative to shopping destinations such as Mayfair Mall.*

- When thinking about staying in Milwaukee after graduation, many focus group participants feel the city lacks job opportunities and affordable housing. Furthermore, a number of college students feel they could live in the city during their 20's and 30's, but expressed concern that Milwaukee was not a desirable place to raise a family due to a poor public school system and high crime rate (several of the same concerns were expressed by young professional focus group participants in Section 6). As current college students are potentially part of the region's future labor force, overcoming negative perceptions about public schools, crime, downtown housing options, and the local job market will be several keys to retaining college students in Downtown Milwaukee. Several strategies for overcoming these images of Milwaukee will be explored further in Part III.