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REDUCING THE FEAR
OF DOWNTOWN CRIME

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Principal Investigator

The Executive Summary of the Final Report

of the

DOWNTOWN SAFETY, SECURITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

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REDUCING THE FEAR OF DOWNTOWN CRIME

I. INTRODUCTION.

Regional Plan Association, a private, nonprofit, planning organization has been concerned with the growth and economic well-being of the 31 county New York-New Jersey-Connecticut Urban Region since the 1920s. Its Second Plan emphasizes the revitalization of metropolitan centers throughout the Region, and over the past two decades it has worked with local business and government leaders in numerous cities (e.g., Stamford, CT, Downtown Brooklyn, NY, Bridgeport, CT, New Brunswick, NJ, Paterson, NJ, Jamaica Center, NY) to devise and implement downtown revitalization strategies.

Regional Plan quickly found that crime and the fear of crime can be a major barrier to downtown revitalization. A 1984 survey of 47 major corporations headquartered in Manhattann showed that safety and security of the area surrounding potential sites was the third ranking criteria in back office locational decisions. And in other discussions with corporate leaders, Regional Plan heard that the fear of crime made many downtowns undesirable places to locate their new office or retail facilities.

In 1984 Regional Plan initiated the Downtown Safety, Security and Economic Development Program to combat this problem. Focusing at first on three downtowns in the outer boroughs of New York City, evidence drawn from surveys of trade area residents and downtown merchants, police records, interviews with key corporate executives and security directors, office worker focus sessions and countless days of field observation was analyzed to learn precisely how crime works to dampen downtown economic growth. Downtowns across the nation were then surveyed to find programs capable of weakening the negative affects of crime on downtown development. The results of this research were then used to assist task forces in Downtown Brooklyn and Jamaica Center to formulate and implement image enhancement programs.

Regional Plan's research indicates that the fear of crime makes people hesitant to walk on downtown streets, thus impeding development by reducing the number of downtown activities they will engage in. Our research also indicates that the fear of crime downtown, which is often exaggerated, can be reduced by dense, compact, multi-use development as well as by police patrol tactics that emphasize citizen contact and the control of quality of life crimes.

II. HOW CRIME THWARTS DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT

A. How A Succcessful Downtown Functions. As national surveys show, the most important factors influencing where people will shop are the variety and quality of stores. Successful shopping centers, whether downtown or in the suburbs, will have a large number of shops offering name brand or specialized high quality merchandise. Successful downtowns not only provide a comparatively large and diverse shopping environment, but also opportunities for people to visit in a wide range of other destinations, e.g., restaurants, theaters, movies, lecture and concert halls, museums, hospitals, colleges, professional offices, business and government offices, sports arenas and stadiums, train and bus terminals and housing.

These "central place functions" can draw substantial numbers of people, many of whom are middle-income-- even in downtowns where the revitalization process has not yet been completed. For example, Regional Plan's 1984 trade area telephone survey showed that 47 percent of those who reported regularly visiting Jamaica Center (NY) came from households with incomes of at least $25,000.

When people visit successful commercial areas, they tend to go to more than one "destination". A shopper visiting a department store, for instance, is also likely to shop at other stores located in the shopping mall.
Successful downtowns share this trait, but again carry it even further; visits to healthy downtowns are likely to involve not only multiple destinations but also different kinds of destinations. The office employee works downtown, but he or she can also shop, go to a restaurant, attend a concert, visit a museum or doctors office, etc. Similarly, someone coming downtown to file a legal document may also shop, dine or visit the library. A study done in Denver, for example, found that 52 percent of those shopping downtown initially came there for other reasons such as work, visiting doctors, lawyers and government offices, conducting financial transactions, going to museums, etc.[Smith, Urban Land 1972 pp3-10].

It is the ability of downtowns to generate these "multiple-purpose" trips that gives them their true competitive advantage over other types of commercial districts.

In successful downtowns, walking becomes the quickest, easiest and least expensive way to go from one downtown destination to another, and such areas are consequently characterized by heavy pedestrian traffic.

B. The Fear of Crime and Actual Crime Rates. Many suppose that if people fear for their personal safety while in some residential neighborhood or business district, there must be a lot of crime in that area --especially crimes involving the threat of personal violence. But evidence provided by many

studies suggests that the relationship between the fear of crime
and actual crime rates is very "loose" and indirect. One study,
for example, found that although the objective likelihood of
being robbed was 20 times greater in Washington, D.C. than in
Milwaukee, the residents in Milwaukee only felt slightly safer.
Another recent study concludes that:

> " the patterning of fear across areas does not match the
> patterning of crime levels. Although some studies do find
> that actual victims of crime are more fearful than non-
> victims, it is not the case that areas with higher crime or
> victimization rates have residents who are more fearful."
> (Taylor and Hale, 1985:4-5)

Regional Plan structured its program to deal with the fear
of crime, rather than actual crime, because fear has a closer
impact upon the way people act downtown and consequently on how
successful the downtown will be.

C. Exaggerated Perceptions of Crime. Regional Plan's survey
of residents in the trade areas of Downtown Brooklyn, Fordham
Road and Jamaica Center found (see Tables 1 and 2) that the
perceived level of crime among trade area residents can be
demonstrated to be substantially exaggerated. Table 2
demonstrates that 70 percent of the respondents had estimates of
the number of street robberies in Jamaica Center that were
between 2 and 7 times higher than a very conservative estimate

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Table 1. RPA Estimate of Average Number of Street Robberies in
Jamaica Center in 1983 Based On Police Reports And Compensating
For Unreported Incidents Compared to Estimates Made by Trade Area
Residents in June 1984

Average number of street robberies
reported to the police per day   1.78

Estimated number of street robberies
not reported to police each day   1.78

Estimated number of total
street robberies each day in Jamaica   3.55

Table 2. Number of Street Robberies Per Day as Estimated by
Jamaica Center Trade Area Residents in June 1984

Number of street robberies	Percent
0	2.2
5	25.2
10	23.7
15	8.9
20	17.8
25	9.6
30	4.4
35	8.1
Total %=100	

N=135

based on actual police department records. Fifty percent had
estimates that were between 3 and 7 times higher than RPA's
conservative estimate. The analysis of data from Downtown
Brooklyn yielded almost exactly identical results; we did not
have the appropriate information to replicate the analysis for
Fordham Road.

  D. Fear and Visitation Rates. Conventional wisdom holds that
the fear of crime keeps people, especially the respectable middle
class, from visiting downtowns. Thus, in many downtowns we
visited during the course of this project, leaders were intent on
devising anti-crime programs aimed at drawing new "traffic"
downtown.

  Regional Plan's trade area telephone surveys indicate,
however, that the downtowns in our study were already drawing
substantial traffic from their trade areas. Respondents were
asked whether they visited their borough downtowns at least once
a week, once a month, once in a while or never. As can be seen in
Figure 1, in each trade area only between 20 percent (Brooklyn)
and 30 percent (Fordham Road) report never going to their
downtown. And overall among the "visitors", there is almost an
even division between those who visit regularly on a weekly or
monthly basis (38 percent) and those who just visit once in a
while (37 percent).

  Figure 2 shows that the vast majority of those from
households with annual incomes in excess of $25,000 visit their
downtowns, although trade area residents with lower incomes are
more likely to be visitors and to visit more often.

  Regional Plan conducted a type of statistical analysis
capable of showing the comparative impacts of the fear of crime
and such other factors as the ease of getting downtown, the type

Figure 1. Downtown Visitation in Three Outer Borough Downtowns
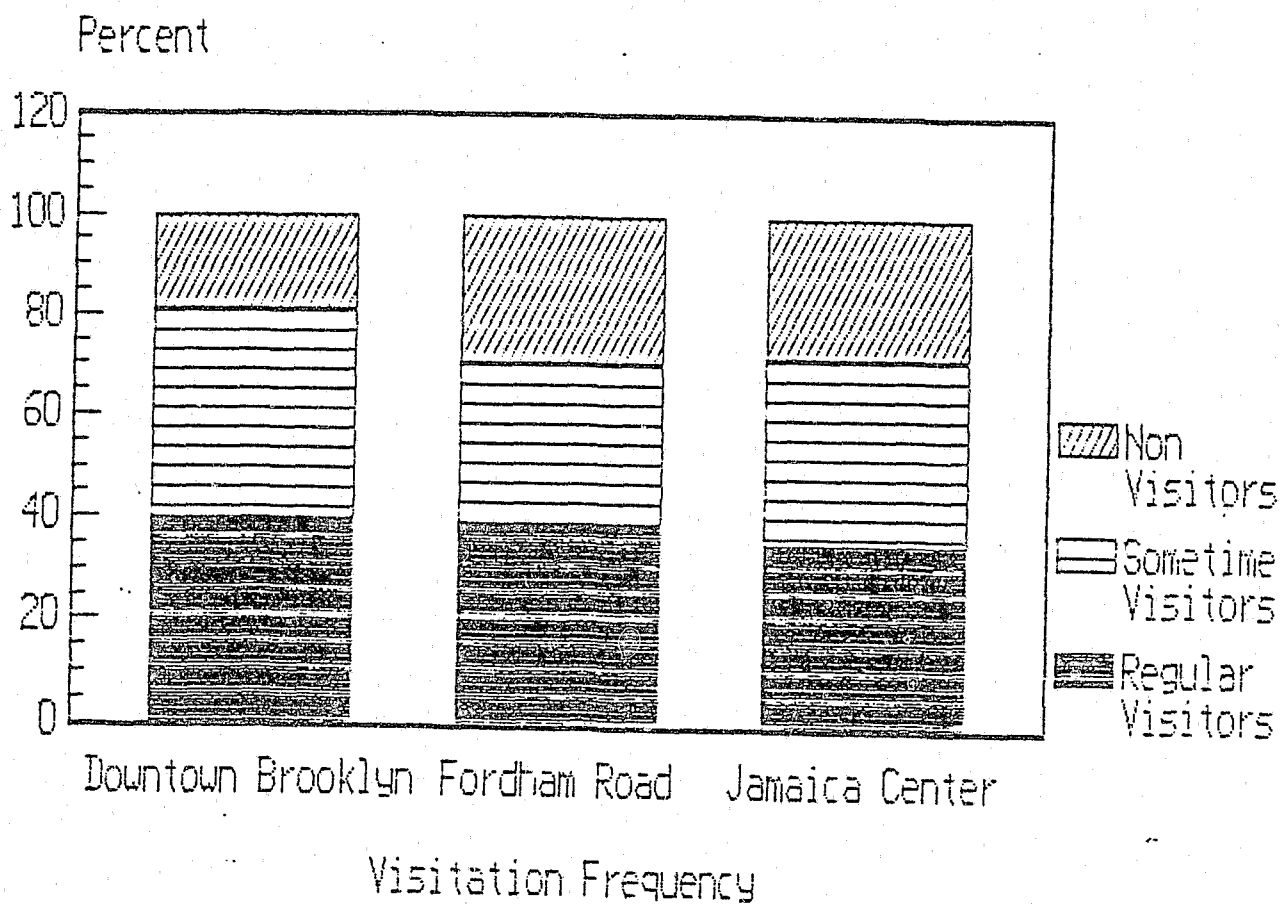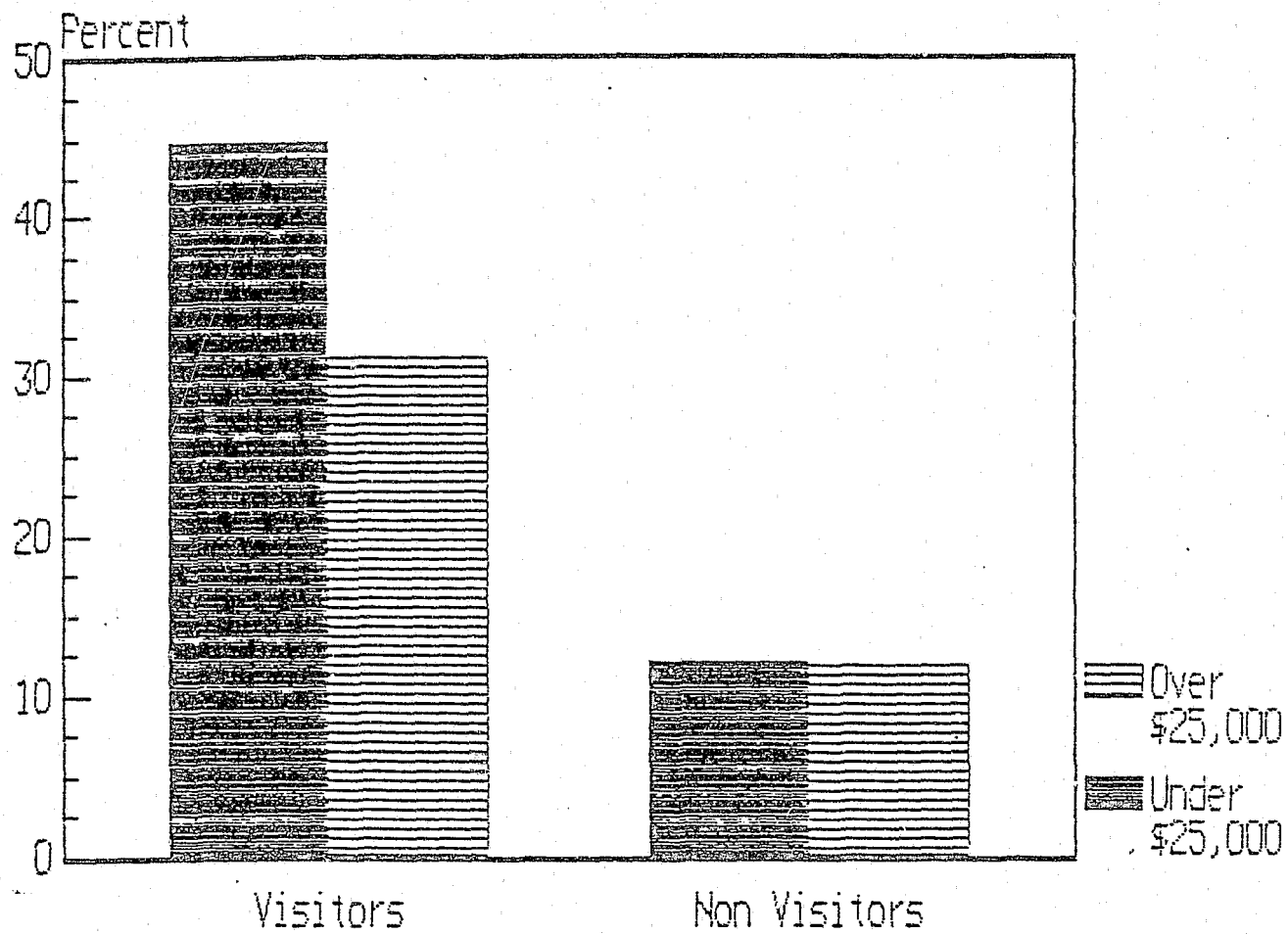
Percent

Visitation Frequency

Figure 2. Downtown Use By
Household Income

of merchandise to be found there, the attractiveness of the
downtown and the race of the respondent on downtown visitation.
As Table 3 shows, the fear of crime is the strongest of a number
of factors deterring the 25 percent of the respondents who never
visit their downtowns, but only by a relatively narrow margin
(look at the values of the partial correlations).

When we look at the majority of trade areas residents, the
75 percent who at one time or another visit their borough
downtowns, and try to find out why some will visit with some
regularity and others less frequently, we find that the only
statistcally significant factors are the ease of getting
downtown and how attractive the downtown is perceived to be (see
Table 4). The fear of crime , along with the race of the
respondent and the type of merchandise expected downtown, is not
associated in a statistically significant way with how often
visitors go to their downtowns.

The survey also asked respondents how likely they felt
someone visiting their borough downtown would be a victim of an
attack or rape, street robberies or car theft. A statistical
analysis showed that these perceptions of risk had little or no
impact on downtown visitation.

These results were confirmed in another Regional Plan study.
A survey of 1,000 households in northern New Jersey conducted in
March, 1987, found that how safe people felt their local parks to
be had little impact on how often they used them. This finding
suggests that the link between fear and the use of public spaces
may be weak in non-downtown areas as well.

While people who never visit their downtowns may indeed be
fearful, it is not simply the fear that keeps them away; if
people are not coming downtown it is probably also because --as
Tables 3 indicates -- the downtown can not compete with other
nearby locations in terms of access, attractiveness, quality and
quantity of shops and offices, etc. Conversely, there is some
evidence that downtowns can draw more people --even those afraid
of crime-- if they can offer attractions that are unique in terms
of product, service or price. For example, three of New York
City's most popular restaurants are located in such highly
"crimeogenic" areas as East Harlem, under the Williamsburg Bridge
and the Lower East Side .

But focusing solely on those who never visit their downtown
diverts attention from the issue of why growth is impeded; 70 to
80 percent of the trade area residents --including many from
middle-income households-- use their downtowns, and the rate they
visit is not affected by their fear of crime.

E. Fear Decreases Pedestrian Activity. The fear of crime
stimulates those using a downtown to alter their behavior by
avoiding being a pedestrian or going into particular downtown

Table 3 The Comparative Impacts of the Perceived Downtown Safety
During the Day , Race, the Perceived Attractiveness of the
Downtown, the Ease of Getting Downtown and the Appropriateness of
Downtown Merchandise on Whether Trade Area Residents Will Visit
Their Borough Downtown. (Multiple Stepwise Regression Analysis).

Variables in Equation

Dependent Variable= Visit/not visit
Multiple R=   .3810
Adjusted R Square= .1385
F (Eqn)=   21.951
Significance F=   .0005

Variable	Beta	SE Beta	Partial corr	Sig T
Safety, day	.1793	.0453	.1713	.0001
Attractiveness	.1294	.0458	.1232	.0049
Merchandise	.1473	.0424	.1508	.0006
Race	.1376	.0437	.1369	.0018

Variables Not In Equation
Ease of Trip   .1985

(Analysis done in 1987 on z scores of dichotomized variables)

Table 4. The Comparative Impacts of the Fear of Crime, Race, the
Perceived Attractiveness of the Downtown, the Ease of Getting
Downtown and the Appropriateness of Downtown Merchandise on
Whether Trade Area Residents Will Visit Their Borough Downtown
Regularly or Just Once In a While. (Multiple Stepwise Regression
Analysis).

Variables in Equation

Dependent Variable= Visit Once A Week or Month/
                    Visit Once In a While
Multiple R=   .2620
Adjusted R Square= .0639
F (Eqn)=   14.668
Significance F=   .0005

Variable	Beta	SE Beta	Partial corr	Sig T
Ease of Trip	.2049	.0486	.2068	.0000
Attractiveness	.1442	.0486	.1471	.0032

Variables Not In Equation

Fear of crime	.8347
Race	.0533
Merchandise	.3511

(Analysis conducted on z scores of dichotomized variables)

areas or being downtown at certain times. Probably the most
noticeable example of of this type of behavior is the "five
o'clock flight" that is found all across the country: workers and
shoppers rush to be out of the downtown before dark, leaving
empty sidewalks and closed shops and restaurants.

Studies have shown that the fear of crime can do more to
discourage walking in urban areas than the weather, condition of
the sidewalks, heavy auto traffic or pollution (Maring,1972). In
one outer borough downtown, for example, 54 percent of the office
workers interviewed reported avoiding walking through a park
during the day that was noted for drug use and sale, even though
it would be far more convenient for them to do so (Boggs, 1984).

In the same downtown hundreds of visitors a day have been
observed parking in a garage, crossing the street to do business
at a government office and then immediately reversing the process
on their way home. A similar pattern has been noted with regard
to those visiting the nearby hospital and courts.

In 1985 RPA surveyed the users of two parks located in the
heart of Manhattan's midtown central business district. In Bryant
Park, which is widely known for its crime problems, respondents
reported that some sections were safer than others, and frequent
field visits showed that office workers eat and relax in the
sunnier areas of the park while drugs are used and sold in the
more shaded and harder to observe areas

The net result of all of these forms of avoidance behavior
is far fewer pedestrians -- especially those that are respectable
and law-abiding. And reduced pedestrian activity tends to confine
downtown trips to a single purpose, thus impeding the downtown's
ability to fully benefit from the substantial traffic it has
already attracted.

III. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE AFRAID DOWNTOWN?

  A. Who Will Be There? Regional Plan's 1984 trade area
telephone surveys showed that how safe people feel in their
downtown during the day is most influenced by the probability of
finding the type of people they like to be with if they shopped
downtown.(See Table 5). This finding is consistent with the "fear
of strangers" theory which holds that people dissimilar to
ourselves stimulate fear because we do not know what to expect of
their behavior. For example, it has been found that perceived
social similarity among neighborhood residents decreases the fear
of crime (Kennedy and Silverman 1985; Skogan et al 1982).

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Perceptions of
Downtown Safety and General Attitudes Towards the Downtown,
Physical and Behavioral Signs of Disorder and Perceptions of Risk

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A. General Attitudes Towards Downtown		C. Perceived Risk of Specific Crimes	
--likelihood of finding desired merchandise	.1339*	--cars stolen/broken into	-.2677**
		--attacks, beatings, rapes	-.2929**
--how attractive they feel downtown is	.3698**	--street robberies	-.1757**
--ease of visiting downtown	.1781**	D. Demographics	
		--race	.2886**
		--income	.1188*
--likelihood of their type of people downtown	.3784**	--gender	.0983
		E. Behavioral Signs of Disorder	
		--groups hanging out	-.1497**
		--beggars and bag people	-.1531**
B. Physical Signs of Disorder		--drinking in public	-.1933**
		--gangs on the streets	-.2788**
--clean streets	.2498**	--drugs being used/sold	-.1791**
--abandoned buildings and stores	-.2105**	--prostitutes on street	-.1173
--well lit streets	.0654		
--broken windows	-.1941**		
--graffiti	-.1932**		

*Two-tailed significance = .01
**Two-tailed significance =.001
1987 analysis using z-scores of dichotomous variables

  B. Attractiveness. The second most influential factor
Regional Plan found on downtown levels of fear is how attractive,
overall, the downtown is perceived to be compared to other
shopping areas that respondents use. (See Table 5). Far less
important in explaining downtown fear are such particular aspects
of its appearance as how clean the streets are, the presence of
abandoned structures, how well the streets are lit or the
presence of broken windows or graffiti. For example, the

strongest of these, street cleanliness, has less than one half of
the statistical explanatory power of how attractive overall a
downtown is perceived to be on levels of downtown fear.

C. Signs of Disorder. Our trade area survey also revealed
that people are much more likely to feel that they will be
victims of street robberies and violence in downtowns where they
perceive a lot of drug use and sale, prostitution and gangs
hanging out on the streets (see Table 6). Such behavior downtown
appears to communicate to the observing public a very important
message: the authorities are not maintaining order here, this is
a dangerous place. And the public, in this regard, displays good
sense; a recent study sponsored by the National Institute of
Justice confirms that drug users are more apt to be criminals and
commit many more crimes than non-drug users.

Physical signs of decay and neglect such as broken windows,
abandoned buildings, graffiti, poor lighting and dirty streets do
not appear to be as strong indicators of a risky downtown
environment as the "behavioral signs of disorder".

Table 6. Strength of Association Between Perceptions of
Physical and Behavioral Signs of Disorder and Expectations
About Certain Crimes (Pearson Correlation Coefficients)

	Specific Crimes		
	Auto	Assaults	Str.Robberies
Signs of Disorder			
A. Physical			
--Street Cleanliness	-.1532**	-.1991**	-.1458*
--Abandoned stores and buildings	.2456**	.2341**	.1418*
--Street lighting	-.2036**	-.1901**	-.1381
--Broken Windows	.2277**	.2872**	.1493*
--Graffiti	.1953**	.2376**	.1333*
B. Behavioral			
--Groups hanging out	.2465**	.2717**	.2692**
--Beggars & bag people	.1646**	.2637**	.2161**
--Public drinking	.2891**	.2559**	.2735**
--Gangs on street	.2138**	.2975**	.2110**
--Drug use and sale	.3225**	.4008**	.2327**
--Prostitution	.2263**	.3658**	.1281

* Two-tailed significance= .01
** Two-tailed significance= .001
1987 analysis

IV. OVERCOMING THE FEAR OF CRIME AMONG DOWNTOWN USERS.

A. Organize to Formulate and Implement A Downtown Security Program. First create a Downtown Security Task Force with the mission of reducing the fear of crime and, to a lessor degree, helping to reduce the levels of crime.

An effective task force will require:

--a strong, prestigious chairperson
--representation from key downtown organizations
--appropriate technical and administrative support.

While a close working relationship between the task force and the police should be established as soon as possible, the police should not become task force members until the implementation stage of task force activities.

The task force will need appropriate information from police crime records and surveys of downtown users and trade area residents to identify security problems and establish priorities.

A key criterion in establishing priorities should be not just the severity of a security problem, but more importantly, its impact on the economic and social operation of the downtown.

Once the task force's agenda has been set through the initial needs assessment/priority-setting process, it can begin to work on developing solutions by forming subcommittees to handle specific subject areas. Each subcommittee should have its own chairperson, backed by appropriate administrative and technical support personnel.

Experience on the Downtown Brooklyn and Jamaica Center security task forces indicates that participation will diminish if meeting notices and agendas are not sent out in a timely fashion and if the chairpersons do not really have a clear idea of what is to be done. Conversely, participation and enthusiasm can be kindled by handing out reasonable "assignments" to task force members.

A plan collecting dust on a shelf is useless, if not wasteful. It is essential that the task force consider implementation factors for each recommendation it reviews, e.g., costs, political feasibility, timing, etc.

A security task force's report will stand little chance of being implemented if it is not formally adopted by an effective organization that is charged with the responsibility of "managing the downtown".

A report will also stand little chance of implementation if
sufficient funding is not available. An increasingly popular
strategy for improving downtown management and raising funds for
downtown programs is the creation of special downtown assessment
districts. These areas are geographically defined parts of the
downtown, usually including the commercial core, in which
special tax assessments are levied to pay for additional
municipal services, e.g., sanitation, parking, planning, sewage,
police, etc. Cities of all sizes are forming them, including New
Orleans, Tulsa, Downtown Brooklyn, Jamaica Center, Denver,
Charlotte, Winchester (VA), Allentown (PA) and several smaller
towns in North Carolina--one with a population of 7,800
(Milder,1979).

Downtowns that have special assessment districts appear more
likely to have strong downtown organizations.

A downtown lacking a strong organization and/or a special
assessment district should probably consider addressing those
problems before undertaking a downtown security program.

Downtown Security Briefing Papers available from Regional
Plan are meant to support and facilitate task force deliberations
by identifying and describing relevant solution options. They are
best used if distributed at least one week prior to the
appropriate task force meetings. Some of the information
contained in these Briefing Papers is described in the following
sections.

B. Create A Dense, Compact, Multi-Function Core Area. A
downtown can be designed and developed to make people feel that
it --or a significant portion of it - is attractive and the type
of place that "respectable people" such as themselves are likely
to visit. Once established, this core area can be the fulcrum for
future expansion and improvement of the downtown's security
image.

A core downtown area that is compact, densely developed and
multi-functional will concentrate people, giving them more things
to do, shorten distances between potential pedestrian
destinations and, consequently, generate heightened pedestrian
flows. The activities located in this core area will influence
the "type" of people that will stroll along its sidewalks; by
locating offices and middle- and upper-income housing in or near
the core area one can assure that there will be a high percentage
of "respectable," law-abiding pedestrians.

Such an attractive redeveloped core area would also be
sufficiently large to impact upon the downtown's overall image.

The length of pedestrian trips in Manhattan's central
business districts are about two times longer than in other
downtowns, yet the median length of Manhattan shopping trips is

Map 1. Jamaica Center's Core Development Area.
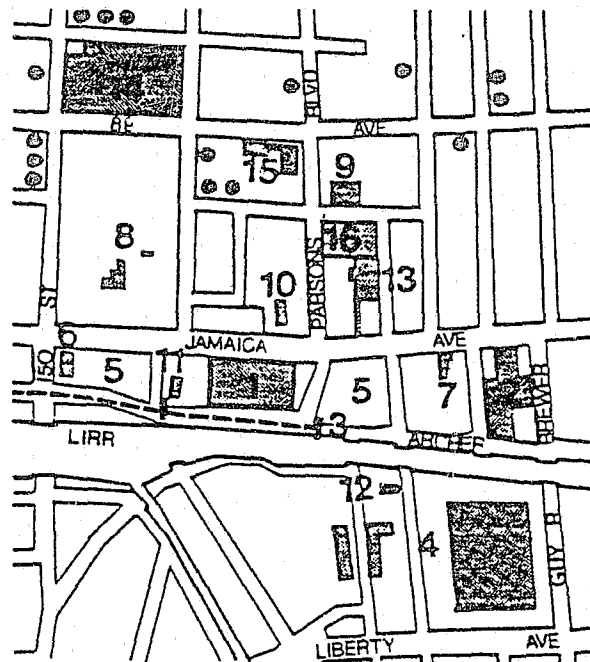
Key:
1   Federal Office Building
2   Gertz Plaza
3   New IND and BMT Subway Station
4   York College
5   Office Development Sites
6   Renovated Office Building
7   Jamaica Arts Center
8   Rufus King Historical Mansion and Park
9   YMCA
10 Grace Church
11 Former Reformed Church
12 St. Monica Church
13 Jamaica Farmers Market
14 Mary Immaculate Hospital
15 Family Court
16 Municipal Parking Garage
⊙   Renovated Apartment Buildings

Jamaica Center is an emerging dense, compact, multifunctional
core area in New York City.

only about 1200 feet; 75 percent of all pedestrian trips are
under 2000 feet. This finding suggests that the diameter of a
downtown core area should usually be well under one half mile.

What is emerging in Jamaica Center, NY is a good example of
a dense, compact, multi-function core area (see Map 1). When
development now under construction is completed in 1988 there
will be within a 1,200 foot radius of the key intersection at
Jamaica Avenue and Parsons Boulevard:

--7,000 office workers and 1.6 million square feet of new or
rehabilitated office space with cleared, assembled sites for
1.4 million square feet of additional office space;
--a new subway station;
--the new campus of York College with its 4,500 students and
650 faculty and staff members;
--the Family Court;
--a 650 car garage;
--the Jamaica Arts Center;
--a completely refurbished Rufus King Historical Mansion and
Park;
--the YMCA;
--several historic churches;
--90,000 square feet of new or recently renovated retail
space including a new Farmers Market similar to the Reading
Market in Philadelphia;
--a hospital with 1,400 doctors and nurses on staff;
--numerous renovated apartment buildings, many of which have
been co-oped.

C. Housing and Mixed-Use Development. Mixed use developments
have a variety of pedestrian traffic generators that have
different periods of high activity. Residential peaks, for
example, tend to occur with the surges of people returning home
between 6:00 and 7:00 in the evening, a time by which most of the
pedestrian activity in office buildings is over. More middle- and
upper-income housing can possibly alleviate the frequent problem
of workers becoming afraid as they leave their offices after the
evening rush when downtown streets often seem to be deserted and
threatening.

Restaurants can attract substantial traffic until 8:00 or
9:00 in the evening, but they need a reliable base of customers
to stay open that late. Downtown workers may give local
restaurants a hefty lunchtime trade, but not enough business for
the restaurants to stay open in the evening. Residential
customers can make staying open evenings economically viable.

D. Off-Street Networks? Through the use of overstreet
bridges, often enclosed, and/or understreet tunnels, off-street
networks in over 30 North American cities have linked together
office buildings, retail stores, boutiques, department stores,
restaurants, convention centers, hotels, apartment buildings and
railway stations. Some get as large as 38 overstreet bridges and

5 miles of walkways. They have few pedestrian entrances to the street. They are often built to increase the ability of retailers to capture the retail dollars of downtown workers (Milder, 1985).

These networks can reduce pedestrian flows on downtown sidewalks, which in turn can make people more fearful to be "outside". They can also reduce the customer traffic of non-network shops; a study of the impact of the off-street retailing network in Charlotte showed that 40 percent of the "on-street" merchants felt the network had hurt their businesses by taking away their clientele (Milder, 1979:4).

Some critics argue against these off-street networks on the grounds that they take pedestrians off the streets and represent a very non-traditional type of downtown in which the "automobile is victorious." Yet it must be noted that these networks do encourage pedestrian flows and multiple destination/multiple purpose downtown trips, the very things that make a downtown competitive, interesting and successful. As one developer in Charlotte put it: "the Overstreet Mall is Main Street Charlotte."

E. Foot Patrols. Downtowns are increasingly using foot patrols to make user populations feel more secure during the day. Such patrols are now being used, for example, in Atlanta, Charlotte, Cleveland , Downtown Brooklyn, Jamaica Center (NY). (See photo of foot patrolman in Jamaica.)

Interest in foot patrols derives from the findings of two systematic studies of neighborhood programs in Flint, Michigan and Newark, New Jersey (see Kelling et al, 1981 and Trojanowicz et al, 1983). These evaluations demonstrated that while foot patrols may not have reduced crime rates, they did:

--make local residents believe that crime rates had been reduced;
--stimulate local residents to feel more secure;
--generate very strong support from local merchants;
--generate more favorable opinions of police performance among local residents;

--reduce previous discrepancies in the evaluations among blacks and whites of overall police performance;

--generate strong support across racial lines for the foot patrol program in particular.

Kelling and Wilson argue that foot patrols work because "they elevate the level of public order" and address two of the primary fears of urban pedestrians: the fear of being suddenly and violently attacked by a stranger and the fear of being bothered by disorderly people such as panhandlers, drunks, addicts, rowdy teenagers, prostitutes, loiterers and the mentally

disturbed (1982:29-30). The foot patrolman keeps an eye on
strangers and makes certain that the "disreputables" obey some
informal, but widely understood rules. By setting and enforcing
this set of rules the foot patrolman creates a sense of public
order on his beat.

Reiss' research in Oakland found that downtown foot patrol
officers made an impressive number of "soft" crime (quality-of-
life) arrests (1984:36). Field interviews with large employers
and retailers in downtown Oakland, where there is not a great
number of office workers, indicate that the foot patrols have
made office employees feel more secure and have increased their
noon time pedestrian activities.

The Jamaica Center Security Task Force's experience strongly
suggests that if foot patrols are to effectively stimulate people
to use their downtown in ways conducive to its growth, then
business leaders must be able to communicate often with police
leaders and influence how some of the patrols are deployed.

The Jamaica experience also confirms the need reported in
other research for consistent, sufficient support and proper
training in downtown foot patrol programs. People must come to
expect a foot patroller to be in the area and come to know the
individual on patrol. To reduce fears, local residents must come
to believe in the reliability of the patrol and their ability to
depend on it. They must also come to trust the individual on
patrol; the policeman may be walking his beat, but if residents
do not trust and like him he may do little to reduce their fears.

In some departments foot patrols may be instituted, but only
weakly or inadequately supported within the decision-making
structure. This situation can both dissuade able persons from
pursing a foot patrol career path and diminish the actual support
a foot patrol person will get in the field.

A foot patrolman needs to have certain interpersonal skills
and adequate training about the foot patrol program and his role
within it. In one city Regional Plan visited, foot patrolmen were
being placed in the field without any adequate training about
their roles and how to interact with local residents and
businessmen; a local nonprofit group has had to develop a program
to overcome this shortcoming. A foot patrolman who can not work
or get along with the people on his beat, either because of a
lack of training or inappropriate personality traits, will not be
successful.

F. Mounted Patrols. To increase the visibility of police
officers in crowded downtowns as well as to reduce the fears of
downtown pedestrians, cities are increasingly using "ten-foot
cops", i.e. mounted patrols. During site visits to Atlanta,
Cleveland and Oakland, merchants, corporate executives and police
officials expressed positive attitudes toward horse patrols,
maintaining that besides making people feel more secure they also

help improve relations between police and downtown users. One of
the first actions taken by the Jamaica task force was to help the
Chamber of Commerce donate two horses to the NYPD for use as
mounted patrols in Jamaica Center.

   G. Using Assessment Districts to Increase Police Manpower.
In Denver, Tulsa and New Orleans, revenues generated by special
downtown assessment districts are paid to the city in return for
additional police officers. In Denver, the district's management
corporation contracts with the city for 10 additional officers
and a supervising sergeant for its "Mall Patrol". In New Orleans,
part of the district's revenue is used to provide 13 additional
officers and a sergeant. In Jamaica Center, revenues are used to
fund "information officers" on downtown streets. Dressed in
blazers, these officers engage in many traditional private
security functions.

   H.   Problem Users. Downtowns, especially those in decline,
often attract types of people who --because of the way they act
or appear-- make other downtown users feel uncomfortable. As
RPA's survey showed, for example, drug users, prostitutes and
gangs hanging out on downtown streets make other users feel the
area is a risky place to be in. Dealing with some of these
problem user groups such as "street people" and teenagers is
frequently difficult because they are usually innocent of any
crime and are often the victims of larger societal problems that
are well beyond the abilities of any one downtown to resolve.

   While the vast majority of teenagers are innocent and law
abiding, they are the age group most likely to engage in criminal
activities; many downtown stores report that teenagers are
responsible for most shoplifting. For example, one recent study
estimates that roughly one quarter of all income of inner city
youths comes from criminal activities (Viscusi 1986:322) In
addition, in their youthful exhuberance teenagers often go
downtown in groups -- a tendency often reinforced by the
downtown's role as a major bus transfer point for students on
their way home. While this "congregating" may be entirely playful
and innocent, it often makes other downtown users , especially
the elderly, feel afraid. Some downtowns report that groups of as
large as 300 teenagers have have disturbed pedestrians and
disrupted nearby retailing on afternoons after school.

   Another frequent problem group in downtowns is the "street
people". This group, at times addicted to alcohol or drugs or
mentally disoriented, can threaten other users by activities
ranging from public drunkeness to aggressive panhandling to
urinating in public. They also can be the source of more serious
downtown crimes: the police in Charlotte report that the vast
majority of street robberies and assaults in the central business
district is caused by "derelicts". Yet many "street people" today
are probably neither addicts nor mentally ill, but the victims of

unemployment who can no longer afford the increasing costs of housing.

While dealing with these problem groups is often complicated by complex legal issues and the large amounts of resources that may be required, some downtown organizations have developed effective programs.

Street People. In New Orleans, $30,000 of the funds raised by the downtown's special assessment district is used to support the activities of the city's alcoholic detoxification center in the doowntown area. In Tulsa, the HOW Foundation, sponsored by the City of Tulsa and the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, receives contracts for cleaning up the downtown while providing work for alcoholics, drug abusers and the unemployed. Participants in this voluntary program are provided with housing, food, clothing, medical care and stipends. Local officals claim that it has reduced the number of street people downtown by 70 percent.

Prostitutes. Prostitution was a major problem in the neighborhood business district of the Whittier area of Minneapolis. The Whittier Alliance, a community development organization, formulated an effective program to deal with it. Off-duty Minneapolis policemen were hired to patrol the area at key hours and the Alliance makes public the names of those arrested for using the local prostitutes (the "johns").

Teenagers. One of the prime reasons that youths litter, loiter and congregate in ways threatening to other downtown users is that they are often truants. The Oakland Police Department, in conjunction with the Oakland Unified Public School District, created a truancy reduction program that is both effective in controlling teenage behavior downtown and popular with parents in the community. Next to the foot patrol program, the truancy program is said to be the biggest reason for a substantial reduction of quality-of-life crime in downtown Oakland.

To deal with a serious problem of teenagers "hanging out" on the privately owned overstreet walkway system in Cincinnati, the Police Department, in conjunction with the Citizens Committee on Youth, developed a program that included stricter enforcement of existing ordinances, altering the use of bus passes so as to reduce the length of time students could stay downtown and the use of local sports stars to approach the kids in a friendly manner and explain why they can not hang out on the walkways.

As part of an experimental fear reduction program in Newark the police department arranged to have local schools kept open after hours for sports activities, counseling and classes in photography, crafts and design. Unfortunately, these elements of the fear reduction program were implemented too late to be covered by the program's evaluation.

Few business district organizations have ventured into this type of program beacuse of the resources required and the uncertainty of the benefits. The Whittier Alliance's attempts in this area are fairly unique and instructive. It runs an odd-jobs placement program for area teenagers as well as a recreation program that uses public facilities. However, only a limited number of teenagers participate in these programs. Furthermore, there is no indication that these programs are targeted to those youths who are prone to engage in criminal activities.

Also, a study in New York City by the Vera Institute (1985), indicates that employment is not likely to substantially alter the criminal activities of youth until they are almost out of their teenage years. But the Downtown Brooklyn Enhancements Task Force concluded that the value of teenage employment and recreation programs may not rest simply on their abilities to reduce criminal behaviors; they would still be of considerable value if they could provide opportunities sufficiently positive and rewarding to divert local teenagers from hanging out downtown. The difficulty is for a downtown organization to be able either to design a well-targeted program or to raise the resources required by a more diffuse effort.

V. IMPROVING THE DOWNTOWN'S IMAGE AMONG NON-USERS

A. *The Challenge.* In almost every city Regional Plan contacted during the course of this project, complaints were voiced about the downtown's image as a safe and interesting place to work, shop or reside. The perceived consequences of this image problem were the rejection of the downtown by many middle income shoppers and the refusal of many large firms to consider downtown office and retail locations. These groups are "non-users" who seldom if ever visit downtown and consequently have no personal experiences to influence their image of the area. The fear reduction measures discussed above will be incapable of altering the downtown's image among non-users.

One of the accompanying laments concerns the behavior of the local media which are seen as reporting only the bad things happening downtown and doing so in an extremely distorted manner. The major responsibility for the downtown's undesirable safety image is often placed squarely at the door of the local media. Some downtown organization have tried to develop special programs to increase communications with local reporters and editors and to get them to improve their "understanding" of the area. The reported results of these efforts have not been entirely positive and some hidden costs were revealed; the media can demand such a degree of "coming clean" and avoidance of hyperbole that the downtown organization's public relations efforts are weakened.

B. *The Impact of the Media.* Research does show that the coverage of local violence --especially homicides-- by television and newspapers is frequent, consistent, and distorted (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981:142). Studies have shown newspaper coverage of local crime to be highly distorted "with respect to the relative frequency of different types of offenses and the locations of those crimes" (Skogan and Maxfield, 1981:130). Television coverage has been shown to over-represent whites as murder victims and the number of premeditated crimes, while under-representing the amount of intrafamily violence (Dominick, 1973).

While local leaders may be correct in suspecting that media coverage of downtown crime has definite biases, it still does not mean that this coverage --biased or not-- increases fear. And there is substantial evidence that it does not. Regional Plan's interviews in downtowns all across the country suggest that many downtown leaders have been diverted from effectively dealing with the "safety image" problem because of an incorrect analysis of how such an image is established.

C. *How A Downtown Image Is Established.* One astute student of the processes involved in downtown decline during the post World War II years noted that:

"Fear was fed ...by the network of regular [downtown] workers who passed information on victimization by crime....

Visitors often were cautioned against going about on foot, becoming prisoners of their hotels and hostelries" (Reiss,1985:3).

Downtown retailers, managers and office workers --indeed, anyone who visits the downtown on some consistent basis--can play key roles in establishing its safety image through their conversations with other people (in and out of the downtown). This point is supported by one of Regional Plan's trade area surveys. Table 3 shows that although residents in Downtown Brooklyn's trade area were more apt to receive crime related information about the downtown from the media, it is what they heard from their friends, relatives and neighbors that affected their perceptions of risk and danger there.

Looking at the media and personal conversations as possible sources of messages about crime in an area and their relative impacts on levels of fear, Skogan and Maxfield report:

"We find no discernible impact of the media, but [personal conversations] carried news of great significance to those we interviewed....

"Conversation about crime is... fear provoking. And unlike direct experience with crime, the secondhand information about crime that flows through the networks of interpersonal communication is not a rare event. Talk magnifies the importance of each local incident. Our analysis also documented that talk about crime spreads news widely in low crime neighborhoods as well as in high crime neighborhoods. Thus it accounts for the fears of people who live in areas where the actual incidence of personal crime is relatively low." (1982:260)

Based on these research findings it is possible to summarize in the following terms the way a downtown's safety and security image is created and disseminated:

Downtown Users: their image is created by what and who they see while downtown as well as by what they hear from downtown co-workers, fellow students, shopkeepers, etc.

Non-Users: their image will be most strongly influenced by what they hear through their informal, personal communication networks of friends, neighbors and relatives who do use the downtown.

D. Formulating A Strategy To Improve A Downtown's Safety Image. The formulation of a viable strategy to improve a downtown's image requires answers to three key questions:

-- which groups of people do you want to reach?

-- what messages should they be given or sent?

-- how are the messages going to be communicated to the
   targeted groups?

Target Groups. Ultimately, a downtown will want to improve
its image among important non-users who are generally the middle
and upper income groups throughout the surrounding trade area,
and then among more specific groups of corporate investors,
office and retail locators. But the above analysis suggests that,
more immediately, current middle and upper income downtown users
should be targeted, e.g., downtown corporate managers and office
workers, retailers, university students, professionals,
subscribers to downtown cultural events, etc.

Messages. Our research found that people who felt that a
downtown was attractive or that they were likely to "meet their
type of people" shopping there were more likely to feel that the
downtown was safe compared to other shopping areas. Research has
also found that people who believe that neighborhood conditions
are improving or who are optimistic about its future are less
likely to be fearful (Taub et al 1984; Skogan et al 1982:112-
113).

Similarly, research has demonstrated that having a lot of
very attractive things to buy or do can raise thresholds of fear
(Taub et al 1984) and bring people downtown.

These findings suggest that information should be
disseminated to demonstrate:

   --that the downtown is getting increasingly attractive;
   e.g., show in photographs, slides or video tape new and
   charming parts of the downtown; but, only show facilities
   that are either under construction or already built --
   ignore "plans".

   --that more and more middle-income people are coming
   downtown and that it is surrounded by middle income
   neighborhoods; e.g., mention the number of students and
   office workers who are already there and the thousands that
   will be there with the completion of projects now underway.
   Show visuals to reinforce the numbers. Stress the solidly
   middle-income residential areas abutting the downtown,
   showing visuals of attractive homes and statistics about
   household incomes and the cost of homes.

   --that the downtown's future will be improving; e.g., by
   showing actual projects under construction and a list of
   major firms that are now committed to the downtown.

   --that the downtown has museums, legitimate theaters,
   restaurants, boutiques, historic sites, etc., which are
   unique within the region.

Crime Statistics. A recent evaluation of experimental
newsletter projects in Evanston (IL), Newark and Houston has
found that disseminating crime statistics for a particular area,
such as the neighborhood in which the person resides, will not
increase fear levels and under some circumstances may even reduce
them (Lavrakas 1986).

However, in many other instances, the use of crime
statistics can involve a downtown organization in a morass from
which extrication is difficult. This situation usually develops
when a corporation looking at downtown space asks for comparative
crime statistics.

Comparitive crime rates are usually computed on the basis of
the number of crimes per 100,000 residents rather than "users" of
an area. But how does one compare a downtown with another
downtown or residential area when most downtown users are not
residents? For example, roughly estimated, there are about 5,000
people who live in Downtown Brooklyn and somewhere in the
vicinity of 150,000 who visit it for, one reason or another
everyday. However, the estimate of daily visitors will have a
considerable error factor associated with it. Moreover, many
downtown visitors are transients; the 150,000 who use it on
Monday will not be the same who visit on Tuesday or Thursday or
next week, etc. Although roughly 150,000 may come every day,
perhaps 500,000 will come over a year and the number of times
they come will itself vary. Thus, although it is possible to
ascertain the absolute number of crimes occurring in a downtown,
it is extremely difficult to calculate its crime rate.

Getting The Messages To The Target Groups. Downtown safety
images are a function both of what the person sees and what he or
she hears from co-workers and friends, so public information
campaigns are also necessary. Information campaigns during the
early stages of revitalization may quicken changes in image by
making downtowners more aware of what is really happening. In
many downtowns, where trips are primarily focused on a single
destination, numerous visitors may only be familiar with what is
happening in the small portion of the downtown they use. And,
unless told, some downtowners will not know, in development
terms, whether they are looking at a pile of ice or the tip of an
ice berg.

Below are descriptions of some programs recommended by the
security task forces in Jamaica Center and Downtown Brooklyn to
get key safety and security related information to various
downtown user groups.

Downtown Office Worker Booster Groups. Both task forces have
recommended the creation of downtown booster groups patterned
after the "UpDowntowner" organizations that have become so
popular and effective in Cincinnati and Columbus (OH). The
Updowntowners in those cities draw their memberships from single,
downtown office workers who meet once a month at a function where

they have a chance to meet each other over drinks as well as to conduct more "official" downtown business such as planning for carrying out major downtown events. Members tend to be young professionals and are encouraged to join by their employers who indicate that participation in the organization will be a positive factor in their annual reviews. But reports indicate that the social incentives of possibly meeting attractive members of the opposite sex in a "non-meatmarket", or singles bar type setting, may be even stronger in stimulating participation and interest. It only takes an estimated $5,000 to $10,000 to get such an organization started after which it is financially self-sustaining. It is so popular in Cincinnati that there is a reported membership waiting list of 400 names.

In Jamaica and Downtown Brooklyn, the downtown development organization will provide suitable safety related information at each booster club meeting, which the members will then be expected to communicate to their colleagues at work and their friends, relatives and neighbors outside of the downtown.

Downtown Newsletters. Jamaica Center and Downtown Brooklyn plan to join the ranks of downtowns that distribute a newsletter to downtown workers. Some individuals will receive them, fully addressed, through the US Mail; others will receive them unaddresed through normal corporate mail channels. The booster clubs will help put the newsletters together, working with the local chamber of commerce.

Articles in University Student Papers. There are four major institutions of higher learning and 18,000 full time students in Downtown Brooklyn. The task force recommended that the Downtown Brooklyn Development Association prepare a column on what is happening downtown to be published in the local college papers.

The Brooklyn Academy of Music Audiences. The audiences at BAM events are often among the most prestigious and "well-connected" of any of Downtown Brooklyn's visitors. Models of important projects that will soon be under construction, especially those near to BAM, will be placed for viewing in the BAM foyer. The Downtown Brooklyn Development Association will also prepare materials about new things to do and see in Downtown Brooklyn that BAM can distribute in its normal mailings to susbcribers.