

April 1, 2019

Dearborn City Brand
Takeaways 3.0

APPLIED STORY TELLING

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Applied Storytelling and Octane are working with the Dearborn DDAs, the City of Dearborn, and other Dearborn community stakeholders to articulate a powerful, distinctive brand story for Dearborn.

This effort combines insights gained from a number of discovery efforts, including a stakeholder work session held in the Ford Community & Performing Arts Center on Friday, February 1, 2019.

Introduction

The following document presents an initial pass at takeaways from a six-hour work session with a diverse group of some two-dozen Dearborn community stakeholders on February 1, 2019.

Using guidance from this round, we will revise this document and further expand on its content to prepare it for sharing with community stakeholders.

On approval, this document will serve as the primary source of insight for developing the Dearborn brand.

“We need to align everyone’s message. All of our assets are important and all of our messages should be aligned.”

Dearborn Brand Visioning Work Session Participant
February 1, 2019

“We need to treat our issues as cosmopolitan rather than negative.”

Dearborn Brand Visioning Work Session Participant
February 1, 2019

Takeaways Summary

“How can we reinvent ourselves based on what we already have?”

Dearborn Brand Visioning Work Session Participant
February 1, 2019

Takeaways Summary 1

- **The State of the City:** Dearborn is seeing many positive developments poised to strengthen its appeal as a place to live, work and play.
- **Vision:** Stakeholders articulated a vision of Dearborn as one of the most desirable cities in the United States in which to live.
- **Key Audience: Millennials:** While Dearborn lacks the Millennial cool of, say, Royal Oak, it can make a strong appeal to Next Gen individuals today.
- **Key Audience: Millennials:** Stakeholder have identified a number of areas of need to address in strengthening Dearborn's Next Gen appeal.
- **Character & Personality:** Dearborn possesses a number of features and attributes that can be developed support a distinctive personality today.
- **Character & Personality:** To fully live up to its promise, Dearborn will need to address perceptions that it is lacking energy and lacking a vibe.
- **Assets & Amenities: Food:** Dearborn has a compelling food story to tell—but not one that relies on upscale dining to compete.
- **Assets & Amenities: Drink:** Dearborn's bar scene has a distinctive character that remains largely untapped—and that can set the stage for more to come.

Takeaways Summary 2

- **Assets & Amenities: Arts & Culture:** Dearborn has a compelling story to tell around arts and culture, with amenities comparable to a city many times its size.
- **Assets & Amenities: Education:** Dearborn has a unique education story that can draw on—and reinforce—key themes of innovation and diversity.
- **Assets & Amenities: Safety & Services:** Dearborn residents rate the city's safety and services very highly, and attach great importance to them.
- **Assets & Amenities: Nature & Recreation:** Dearborn has a compelling story to tell around the Rouge River—a natural asset of a type that most other area cities can't match.
- **Positioning:** Dearborn has an opportunity to exploit its unique relationship to Detroit relative to other area towns and cities.
- **Positioning:** Dearborn has a strong story to tell about being a center of innovation—if it can connect the dots.
- **Positioning:** In line with an innovation story, Dearborn has a strong opportunity to position itself as a smart, next-gen city.
- **Positioning:** Dearborn has an opportunity to position itself around being the perfect combination of urban amenities and a sense of belonging.

Takeaways Detail

Takeaway 1

88% of Dearborn individuals agree that “Dearborn has a positive future.”

69% of Dearborn business owners expect their business revenues to increase in the next 3 years.

“It has nice neighborhoods but it also has amenities. It has two colleges. Woods. Great rec center and performing arts center and the Arab American Museum is a gem...if it was connected for biking and walking, it could be a second Ann Arbor but better since closer to Detroit and also not as congested. There is room to grow.”

Dearborn Individual

The State of the City

Dearborn is seeing many positive developments poised to strengthen its appeal as a place to live, work and play.

- In recent years, the Rouge River has been cleaned up and beautified to become a significant recreational resource and natural asset.
- Realtors are starting to see young families come back to Dearborn to live.
- Dearborn is poised to be a part of the mobility corridor Ford is building around its new mobility hub in Detroit’s Corktown.
- Dearborn DDAs are making solid progress in developing product and promoting key Dearborn districts.

Takeaway 2

Vision

Stakeholders articulated a vision of Dearborn as one of the most desirable cities in the United States in which to live.

93% of Dearborn individuals say that Dearborn is “a good place to live.”

“The diversity is wonderful, and one of the things that I’d miss about leaving. Also, seriously, we have a university, a museum and a world headquarters in our city!”

Dearborn Individual

“Great neighborhoods, 43 public parks, the Ford Performing Arts Center, all very close and easy to access AND GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.”

Dearborn Individual

- They see a Dearborn that benefits from its strong connections to other places via auto, rail and air.
- They see a Dearborn of vibrant neighborhoods and lively downtowns—yet also largely free of traffic due to smart mobility solutions.
- They see a Dearborn that is a talent magnet of the first order.
- They see a Dearborn that provides the kind of diverse, responsive education from kindergarten through college that fosters success in a 21st Century economy.
- They see a Dearborn that is a national and international role model for diversity as a driver of success.

Takeaway 3

Key Audience: Millennials

While Dearborn lacks the Next Gen cool of, say, Royal Oak, it can make a strong appeal to Next Gen individuals today.

88% of Next Gen individuals in Dearborn agree that “Dearborn is a good place to live,” and 53% say they plan to stay in Dearborn for the foreseeable future.

“Come here and make it happen.”

Possible slogan proposed by a stakeholder.

- One of the strongest appeals to Next Gen individuals is Dearborn’s proximity to Detroit.
- Dearborn is also affordable—a logical place to look for people priced out of Downtown and Midtown Detroit.
- Dearborn provides interesting and varied storefronts and commercial spaces for the entrepreneurially minded.

Significance

For Next Gen individuals, the key to Dearborn’s appeal at present might be as a discovery brand: The place with untapped potential that cool insiders know about.

It’s also important to note that not all Next Genners dance to the same drummer. We might, for example, position Dearborn as a place for “pioneers” or “makers” more than “millennials”.

Takeaway 4

Only 37% of Next Genners in Dearborn say Dearborn is their primary destination for dining, entertainment and nightlife.

“Not enough nightlife destinations. Usually go to Detroit or Ferndale.”

Dearborn Next Genner

“Unique locally owned options that are family friendly are hard to come by. There is not a good walking downtown etc in Dearborn. We go to Plymouth and Northville.”

Dearborn Next Genner

<https://www.dearbornareachamber.org/tourism/plan-your-visit/>

Key Audience: Next Gen Individuals

Stakeholder have identified a number of areas of need to address in strengthening Dearborn’s Next Gen appeal.

- Dearborn lacks an edgy quality that single Next Gen individuals, especially, favor.
- While not completely without amenities, Dearborn generally lacks a vibrant nightlife.
- Dearborn has a somewhat complicated walkability story that has not yet been articulated.
- Much of Dearborn’s housing stock is relatively homogenous-looking. Larger homes as well as urban-style lofts and condos are under-represented.
- Dearborn-based organizations are not engaged in promoting Dearborn within their own brand channels.
- Dearborn’s de facto visitor website is not currently positioned to tell a strong, focused, Next Gen-oriented story.

Take Note

The Downtown Dearborn Strategic Plan has identified a number of near-term and mid-term opportunities for increasing next gen appeal (as well as addressing other perceived challenges). Messaging must take into account not only assets and amenities today but also those that will be coming online over the next few years.

Takeaway 5

Character & Personality

Dearborn possesses a number of features and attributes that can be developed support a distinctive personality today.

More than half of Dearborn individuals express strong pride in Dearborn.

“Dearborn has the potential to be the affordable Birmingham, and the unpretentious Royal Oak in Wayne County.”

Dearborn Individual

- **Gritty:** Dearborn is “gritty” but “not necessarily edgy”. **Carhartt** is a brand with a strong, muscular quality that feels well-suited to Dearborn.
- **Authentic:** Dearborn offers authentic experiences that do not feel themed or manufactured.
- **Comfortable:** Dearborn housing is generally modest and squared away. Residential Dearborn has a strong neighborhood feel. Downtowns and commercial districts are inviting and comfortably-sized.

Takeaway 5, ctd.

Character & Personality

Dearborn possesses a number of features and attributes that can be developed support a distinctive personality today.

“Dearborn is actually a completely unique city. It is incredibly diverse in nationality, ethnicity, and religion. ...It is so rich in authentic food through small businesses. It’s also a place full of city and community leaders who are brown, who are Muslim, who are immigrants. It’s a powerful place.”

Dearborn Individual

- **Creative:** Dearborn is increasingly appealing to artists as well as entrepreneurs and small businesses.
- **Diverse:** The city has strong ethnic diversity underscored by its large Arab-American community, which is diverse in its own right.
- **Diverse:** The city offers a diverse array of experiences—at least as much if not more so than other area towns and cities.
- **Diverse:** The cityscape itself is diverse, from tidy residential neighborhoods to main streets to corporate centers to industrial areas to to parks and natural areas and a robust civic center.

Takeaway 5, ctd.

VISION
KEYWORDS

Diverse
Friendly
Hub of Activity
Pedestrian
Regional Destination

Character & Personality

Dearborn possesses a number of features and attributes that can be developed support a distinctive personality today.



Carhartt Brand Platform Audit **Personality**

Carhartt Brand Personality	True
Conversational	Honest
Down to Earth	Revered
Comfortable	Confident
Purposeful	

Note

In addition to stakeholder perspectives, values expressed in the Dearborn Strategic plan might help to inform the Dearborn brand personality.

So, too, might the personality attributes of Carhartt, a Dearborn-based brand with certain broad affinities to Dearborn itself.



Takeaway 5

Character & Personality

A word cloud featuring various traits in different colors and orientations. The words are: 'creative' (green, horizontal), 'diverse' (red, vertical), 'vibrant' (red, vertical), 'accessible' (red, horizontal), 'connected' (grey, horizontal), 'smart' (red, vertical), 'inclusive' (grey, horizontal), 'authentic' (blue, vertical), 'having grit' (grey, horizontal), 'affordable' (green, horizontal), 'down-to-earth' (teal, horizontal), 'real' (red, horizontal), 'welcoming' (blue, horizontal), 'homey' (grey, vertical), and 'sense of community' (red, horizontal).

creative

diverse

vibrant

accessible

connected

smart

inclusive

authentic

having grit

affordable

down-to-earth

real

welcoming

homey

sense of community

Takeaway 6

Character & Personality

To fully live up to its promise, Dearborn will need to address perceptions that it is lacking in energy and lacking a vibe.



The city's seal is not a part of any proposed visual re-branding. That said, key visual and verbal elements of the seal provide a useful perspective on how desired top-of-mind associations with the city have probably evolved with the passage of time.

- Portraying Dearborn's strong arts and cultural offerings can help to convey a sense of creative energy.
This picks up on an acknowledged strength noted in the Dearborn strategic plan.
- Developing compelling stories-within-stories about key Dearborn neighborhoods—the DDAs—can help to create intrigue and character.
- Featuring unique, locally owned businesses will help to convey a diverse, entrepreneurial spirit.

This picks up on an acknowledged strength noted in the Dearborn strategic plan.

- Adopt The Henry Ford's "past forward" strategy for making historic assets exciting and relevant.

Past Forward is a strategy for tying historic assets to contemporary uses and trends.

- Iconography of Dearborn industrial sites might further differentiate the city and intensify the vibe, adding to its aura of grit and authenticity.

Opportunity Alert

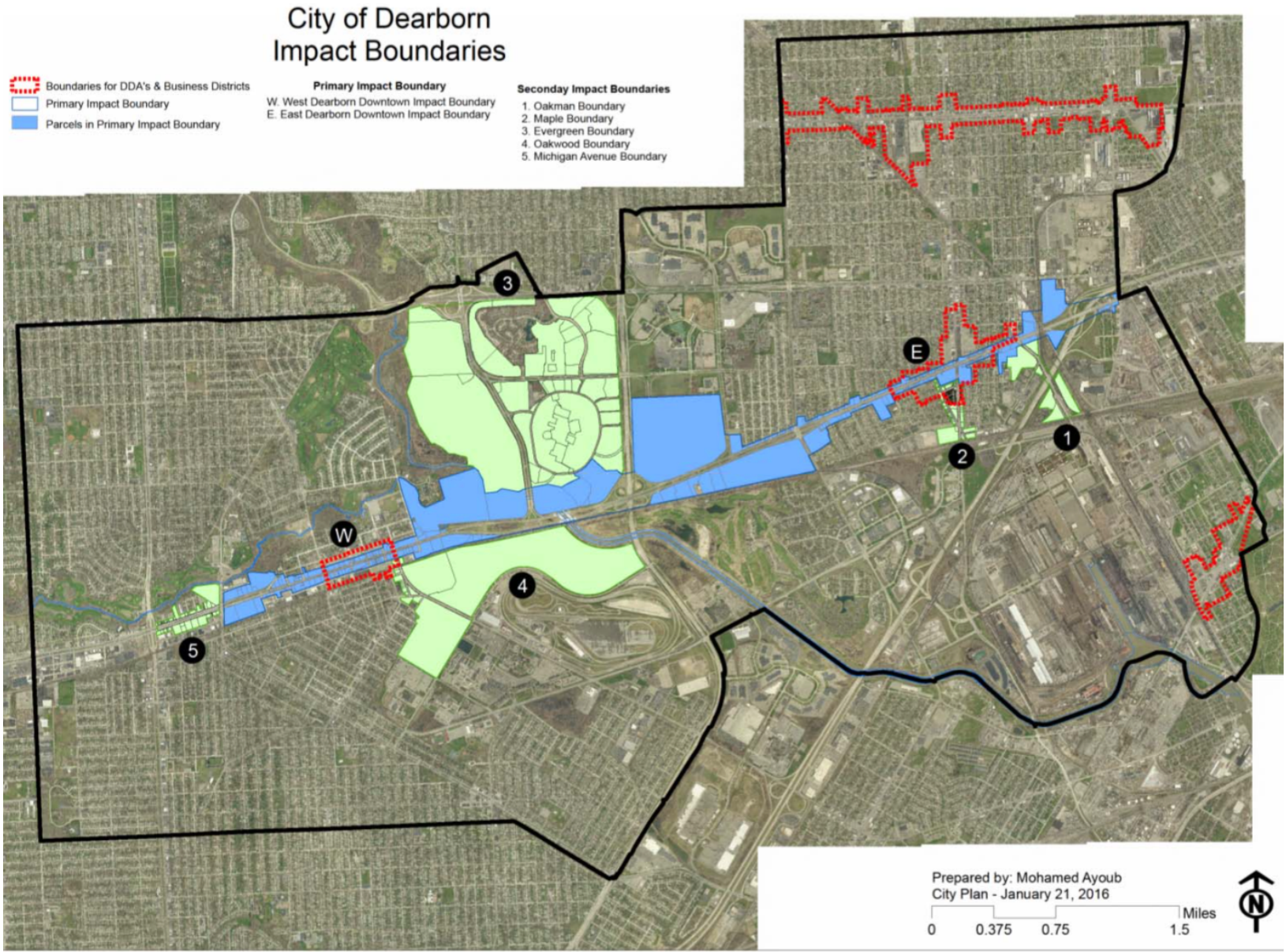
Dearborn is an historic city with some features and qualities that risk feeling "old-timey". While acknowledging these as part of the city's rich texture, marketers should not lead with them if the city wishes to project a more modern appeal.

Takeaway 6

Character & Personality

Dearborn possess at least four distinct districts, each with its own unique character and appeal.

Influential individuals within the Warren Avenue DDA are already taking steps to identify the district as The Souk.



Opportunity Alert

Dearborn has an opportunity to tell distinctive stories around each of its four DDAs, adding texture to its story and reinforcing a cosmopolitan sensibility.

Assets & Amenities: Overview

Dearborn stakeholders shared perspectives that dimensionalized the SWOT Analysis in the Dearborn Strategic Plan.

The brand cannot contradict the product—the city—but it can find and amplify unifying threads between the city’s strengths and opportunities while minimizing or reframing its weaknesses or threats.

SWOT ANALYSIS			
S	W	O	T
Historical Sites/Landmarks	Image	Change the Perception of the Middle East	Image – lack of identity
College Town	Walkability	More Greenspace and Greenspace Programming	Lack of retail diversity
Access (proximity/transit/roads)	Lack of Youth/Hipster Appeal	Image Campaign and Public Awareness	Divisive/polarization – equality
Arts & Culture	Physical Environment	Capitalize on Museums/Institutions (The Henry Ford/Arab American)	Too many bars/restaurant (of same type)
Unique Locally-owned Businesses	Business Economy	Use Rouge River for more recreation activities	Need things geared to old and young alike

Takeaway 7

60% of Dearborn individuals agree that “Dearborn has vibrant shopping, dining and entertainment.”

“Our variety and quality of restaurants is good. I’m not sure it’s the best in all of metro Detroit, but it’s very good.”

Dearborn Individual

Assets & Amenities: Food

Dearborn has a compelling food story to tell—but not one that relies on an upscale dining to compete.

- Dearborn’s food story tends to be under-represented in social media: It is the subject of relatively few posts or Trip Advisor recommendations.
- Dearborn is acclaimed for its Middle Eastern-oriented food experience and one avenue in particular, Warren Avenue, has been noted as possibly Michigan’s top food street.
- Dearborn has been challenged to attract top chefs, even though they have expressed an interest in the city. In part, they are dissuaded by the perception that they cannot sell liquor in East Dearborn.
- Many of Dearborn’s more upscale dining options are, in fact, chains—albeit quality chains. [Example: P.F. Chang’s]
- Popular local food destinations include Miller’s Bar, Buddy’s Pizza, Mint, Bar.Louie and M Cafe.
- Destination food experiences in Dearborn include Ford’s Garage and Al Ameer.

Question

Can The Henry Ford’s plans to promote sustainable agriculture and open an historic farmer’s market factor into Dearborn’s food scene? Can it create synergies with the WDDA weekly food market?

Takeaway 7

Assets & Amenities: Food
Dearborn has a compelling food story to tell—but not one centered on upscale dining as such.

**—EAT, EAT
REPEAT!**

FEB 11-17, 2019

Dearborn Restaurant Week is a week-long event meant to showcase local cuisine.
Discover your new favorite restaurant or rediscover a longtime favorite!

Question

Dearborn's comfort food options combined with its unparalleled Middle Eastern cuisine options can serve as the basis of a story that's quite distinct from that of other cities—and one in line with other brand strengths.

Dearborn Restaurant Week is a powerful platform for telling a focused Dearborn food story

Takeaway 8

Assets & Amenities: Drink

Dearborn's bar scene has a distinctive character that remains largely untapped—and that can set the stage for more to come.

Opportunity Alert

Dearborn has an opportunity to exploit its leadership in dining experiences that focus on fresh, healthy juices and other non-alcoholic beverages. It'd be a real differentiator—one popular with health-conscious individuals as well as Muslim Americans.

- Dearborn is generally lacking in upscale, craft cocktail bars such as, say, Detroit's Sugar House.
- Stakeholders hypothesize that Dearborn's bar scene might suffer from its proximity to Detroit as well as some history with rowdy bars that attracted an undesirable element.
- Detroit possesses a significant (but dwindling) number of corner bars that possess the distinctive character of a bygone era.
- With many establishments serving an observant Islamic customer base, many Dearborn restaurants serve exclusively non-alcoholic beverages. In turn, some specialize in a wide variety of healthy juices and other beverages.

Opportunity Alert

Dearborn's corner bar legacy has the potential to become a brand asset—perhaps in time to save any existing bars that are threatened to foster the emergence of a distinctive bar culture that no other area city has.

Takeaway 9

Assets & Amenities: Arts & Culture

Dearborn has a compelling story to tell around arts and culture, with amenities comparable to a city many times its size.

86% of Dearborn individuals agree that “Dearborn has good cultural and arts offerings.”

“Dearborn is actually a completely unique city. It is incredibly diverse in nationality, ethnicity, and religion. ...It is so rich in authentic food through small businesses. It’s also a place full of city and community leaders who are brown, who are Muslim, who are immigrants. It’s a powerful place.”

Dearborn Individual

- Dearborn has a lively cultural life characterized by many festivals and events as well as plentiful free music. Stakeholders feel this asset is under-represented in media.
- Dearborn has an impressive civic center with a first-rate community and performing arts center as well as a landmark central library.
- Dearborn hosts a number of theatre companies as well as its own symphony orchestra.
- Dearborn’s two museums, The Henry Ford and the Arab-American National Museum, are highly distinctive and widely regarded as nationally or globally significant.

Opportunity Alert

Dearborn has an opportunity to position the EDDDA as a creative and cultural hub through a designated “Arts & Culture District.”



Smithsonian Affiliate

Missed opportunity: The AANM’s status as a Smithsonian Affiliate is buried on its web site.

Takeaway 10

Assets & Amenities: Education

Dearborn has a unique education story that can draw on—and reinforce—key themes of innovation and diversity.

67% of Dearborn individuals say “the quality of education in our community is excellent”

“What makes Dearborn different is...”UM-Dearborn and HF College, but we don’t capitalize on their offerings.”

Dearborn Individual

- Dearborn Public Schools, the third largest school system in the state of Michigan, perform well by any measure—and particularly well for schools in a diverse community with a significant free/reduced lunch program.
- Dearborn Public Schools are frequently consulted by educators and administrators from other districts as a result of the success of their innovative educational programs.
- Dearborn is one of the only school districts in the nation to offer a comprehensive K-14 offering. (Henry Ford College is a part of the public school system.)
- Stakeholders shared that the college campuses are not well-connected currently to the center of town, diminishing the sense of Dearborn as a “college town”. [Note: This may represent a key product development opportunity.]

Opportunity Alert

Dearborn schools can play a strong, positive role in a Dearborn innovation story.

Takeaway 11

Assets & Amenities: Nature & Recreation

Dearborn has a compelling story to tell around the Rouge River—a natural asset of a type that most other area cities lack.

84% of Dearborn individual feel that “Dearborn has good sports and recreational offerings,”

“The natural area at University of Michigan-Dearborn is also great for exploring nature. Too many other communities in southeast Michigan have forfeited all their natural areas for the sake of increased suburban development.”

Dearborn Individual

- With its many parks as well as the Rouge River, Dearborn provides many opportunities to enjoy being outside, and supports a wide range of recreational activities.
- For a city, Dearborn possesses a high proportion of green space—the result of long-range vision and smart planning over the course of many decades.
- Stakeholders feel the Rouge River is a highly differentiating asset that is seriously under-represented. At the same time, they would like to see the city do more to reverse perceptions that “it has its back turned to the river”.
- Dearborn’s green space can combine with specific food and cultural offerings to reinforce the city’s image as a healthy, active place.
- **Urban to green in 0 to 60:** Dearborn has an opportunity to underscore its “best of both worlds” combination abundant green space close to the hub of metro Detroit.

Takeaway 12

Assets & Amenities: Safety & Services

Dearborn residents rate the city's safety and services highly, and attach great importance to them.

95% of Dearborn business owners rate fire services highly, and 87% rate police protection highly. 77% rate the overall safety of their business district highly.

Of those who chose to move to Dearborn, 56% say they chose it for its safety (the top ranked reason for choosing Dearborn).

"It's a 'big' city that doesn't feel like it. Very safe place to live and raise a family."

Dearborn Individual

- Dearborn's level of city services confer a distinct competitive advantage.
- Dearborn's safety and services contribute to a unique feeling of comfort and welcome.
- Dearborn's crime rates are very low for a city though high relative to Oakland County towns such as Birmingham and Northville.

Opportunity Alert

Safety and services are rarely a lead story element in their own right, but they can play a strong supporting role: as a counterpoint to, say Detroit; as a solid foundation for launching a business or raising a family; as an essential component of what a smart, forward-looking city should deliver.

Takeaway 13

91% of Dearborn business say that “being close to all of the resources and amenities of Downtown Detroit is a benefit of living in Dearborn.”

“Very connected to Detroit, yet separate. Unmatched cultural offerings.”
Dearborn Individual

“What Dearborn lacks (places to shop), it makes up for in proximity to other activities/places. You’re no more than 45 minutes from everything important - downtown Detroit, outdoor recreation like at Kensington and all your friends in other cities.”
Dearborn Individual

Positioning

Dearborn has an opportunity to exploit its unique relationship to Detroit relative to other area towns and cities.

- Dearborn is one of the few cities that is contiguous with Detroit.
- Detroit is a quick commute from Dearborn.
- Dearborn and Detroit enjoy a strong connection via the Michigan Avenue corridor. Dearborn enjoys an especially strong connection to Corktown.
- Dearborn and Detroit share aspects of a “gritty” character.
- Other cities ignore Detroit in their marketing or actively position against it.

Significance

We see an exciting opportunity to explore differentiating Dearborn from other cities by touting its relationship to Detroit—something other cities don’t do, or actively counter.

Takeaway 13

Other Cities' Top-of-Mind	
Birmingham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong dining• Strong shopping• Not connected to Detroit—and doesn't want to connect- Too upscale to be edgy
Ferndale	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcoming and accepting• People are allowed to express themselves
Northville	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compact—small-town charm• Cute, quaint, historic—not edgy• Not especially accessible or connected to Detroit or Dearborn• Good shopping• Surrounded by townships.• “Good for day trips.”

Takeaway 13

Other Cities' Top-of-Mind	
Plymouth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong upscale dining• Quaint and walkable• Quaint shopping, including movie theater• “Slower paced, off the beaten path”• Surrounded by townships• Strong community events• Note: Many Ford employees live in Plymouth• Located on the far side of the I-275 divide: More in Ann Arbor’s orbit than Detroit’s• New housing stock
Royal Oak	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Urban-like experience [nightlife, entertainment, dining, lively downtown]• Housing for millennials

Takeaway 13

Other Cities' Top-of-Mind	
Ann Arbor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong, varied dining including upscale dining—a culinary hotspot.• Tech hub renowned for innovation.• Strong University of Michigan culture.• Own orbit, not a part of Detroit's.• Strong tradition of activism, including around ecology and the environment.• Strong transit hub.
Detroit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Entertainment and nightlife=Cars/culture/music/gaming/sports.• Housing for millennials*• A city on the rise: Attracting favorable national and global attention.

Positioning

Dearborn has a strong story to tell about being a center of innovation...

Opportunity Alert

Dearborn has an opportunity to position itself relative to Ann Arbor as more practical vs. theoretical—as a place where things are made, not only imagined.

- Dearborn has a strong history of innovation—in particular of building and making things.
- The recent repositioning of The Henry Ford and THF-sponsored events such as Maker Faire are strong examples of Dearborn innovation.
- Beaumont, The University of Michigan-Dearborn and Ford Motor Company are strong examples of innovators at the corporate level.
- Dearborn public schools are widely recognized as innovators in primary and secondary education.
- Ann Arbor is renowned for innovation but its focus is somewhat different: Dearborn has an opportunity to complement it, not compete with it.

Significance

We see this story as highly differentiating.

With the exception of Ann Arbor, no other city is telling it.

“Connecting the dots” of innovation in the community will make it more credible.

Positioning

...if it can connect the dots.

“With an innovation theme, we could invite people to visit Dearborn after they go to Maker Faire and make a weekend out of it.”

- While strong evidence of dynamic innovation activity exists individually, the city’s various “innovation entities” are not yet working in a coordinated manner to develop this potential.
- At present, the city lacks a dedicated public co-working/incubator space of the sort commonly associated with entrepreneurial and innovation hubs. [**Note:** DDDAs are currently working on this. Brand messaging should be prepared to incorporate this development into messaging.]
- The city’s homogenous housing belies the sense of vibrancy that the downtowns are beginning to convey. It’s not like Ferndale, where houses are colorful and there’s “a sense that you can do what you want”.

Opportunity Alert

Would it be possible for the city to loosen restrictions in one demo neighborhood and then to set up a “small home design showcase” to counter current perceptions and appeal to a more creative resident?

Maybe this could start as digital-only initially...

Takeaway 16

Positioning

In line with an innovation story, Dearborn has a strong opportunity to position itself as a smart, next-gen city.

“We have an opportunity to define the 21st Century community experience.”

“I sometimes think of an individual loosening their shirt tie to describe the city.”

- Dearborn is home to many individuals who “think outside the norm”. The brand story should identify and highlight them.
- Stakeholders note that Dearborn’s strong history and sense of tradition might be a factor in holding back some individuals and institutions from an outside-the-norm mindset—a gap that any brand story will need to take into account—and bridge.
- Dearborn is poised to take place in the Smart Cities initiative, designed to underscore the city’s preparedness for the emerging Internet of Things.
- With Ford mobility initiatives together with the advent of light rail that will connect Dearborn with Ann Arbor and Detroit, Dearborn is poised to strengthen its position as a connected, mobility-minded city.

Positioning

Dearborn has an opportunity to position itself around being the perfect combination of urban amenities and a sense of belonging.

- Stakeholders assert that Dearborn is large enough that “you don’t really need to go anywhere else” for variety in shopping, dining, entertainment, recreation or other amenities.
- Stakeholders also note that Dearborn is big enough “that there are always new things to discover.”
- Dearborn has a city center with civic institutions and community programs that one might expect of a city many times its size.
- Dearborn is small enough that an individual can feel as if he or she can still engage in “small town chatter”, participate in community networks, and make an impact in city government.

Question

What are the images that reinforce the impression of Dearborn as a city versus a town?

Brand Implications

Brand Implications

- **Positioning:** Develop three positioning scenarios for consideration and review: (1) one touting Dearborn's proximity and access to Detroit, (2) one focused on Dearborn as a next-gen center of innovation, and (3) one on Dearborn is the ideal blend of urban amenities and community belonging.
- **Promise:** Develop three brand promises (i.e., overarching value propositions) geared to a prospective millennial resident aligned to each of the three proposed positioning scenarios.
- **Targeting a Next Gen Audience:** Consider positioning Dearborn as a discovery brand: a place with untapped potential that cool insiders know about.
- **Targeting a Next Gen Audience:** Consider targeting a specific subset of Next Gen individuals—"Makers" or "Pioneers"—versus millennials in general.

Dearborn assets and personality align most closely with this group.

Brand Implications

- **Brand Personality:** Use “Diverse”, “Determined/Possessing Grit”, “Authentic” and “Comfortable” as starting points for Dearborn brand personality development.
Factor in a consideration of Dearborn Strategic Plan key words, too. Take a look at Carhartt as well.
- **Brand Personality—Creating a Sense of Energy:** Develop the insight shared in Takeaway 6 to create differentiated imagery and intensify the Dearborn vibe.
- **Assets & Amenities:** Position the Dearborn Food Story as a living expression of the Dearborn brand personality.
- **Assets & Amenities:** Develop distinctive names and stories-within-a-story for each of Dearborn’s focal districts.

Thank You

APPLIED
STORY
TELL
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OCTANE