How Crystal Bridges Museum Impacted the Downtown Revitalization of Bentonville, Arkansas in The Last Decade

by Korab Vranovci, MS and Fiona Davidson PhD

University of Arkansas, Department of Geosciences

INTRODUCTION

The importance of anchor projects is vital to the quality of life and how the process of revitalization helps the cities undergo processes of rebuilding their identity. Following the practices of similar projects in other cities around the United States, local governments with public-private partnerships have implemented projects to help rebuild cities. These projects focus on downtowns most of the time since the idea to fight sprawl and bring back residents to downtown is essential to revitalizing the city (Zielenbach, 2000).

This project discusses the importance of anchor projects in the downtown revitalization efforts and the importance of private capital to impact change.

STUDY SITE

- Bentonville is the largest city in Benton County, 2nd largest in Northwest Arkansas
- 47,093 residents according to U.S. Census (2016)
- 33.5% employed in the retail industry
- 74.2% white, 10.2% Asian, and 9.2% Hispanic
- $76,447 median household income as of 2016
- Crystal Bridges Museum designed by Moshe Safdie and 200,000 foot² in 120 forested acres and named from a perennial stream, Crystal Springs
- Opened on 11/11/2011 and created an identity for Bentonville, Arkansas with 600,000 visitors each year.
- Artwork accession estimated at $2 billion
- Hardwick’s Act (1865, 2005) permits art acquisitions tax-free
- 1,198 vendors located in NWA work for Walmart

RESEARCH QUESTION

The effect of Crystal Bridges Museum on the downtown revitalization of Bentonville, Arkansas in the last decade: a case study in businesses and quality of life?

RESULTS

- There is no prior research in the impacts of Crystal Bridges Museum in the downtown economy and business.
- An increase in the urban area impacted the growth of the cities in NWA.
- The 2007 city bond of $110 million allowed infrastructure investment that benefited the museum and increase quality of life.
- The museum provided an influx in the city’s economy through cultural tourism (600,000 visitors in 2016) allowing new establishments to open in downtown.
- Most of downtown establishments are focused on retail trade, restaurants, apparel, food stores, and general merchandise. This did cause a jump on the property prices.
- City amenities coexist and contribute to the overall Crystal Bridges Museum
- Investment in the downtown revitalization did bring people back to the city and increased walkability through the establishment of events and businesses there. Moreover, the museum is a major factor behind this change.
- City officials currently work to provide opportunities where square footage will be affordable for future businesses, and keep people in downtown past 10 p.m.

METHODS

- Landsat land-cover imagery representation
- Aerial imagery analyses
- Qualitative analysis: downtown reports
- Qualitative analysis: interviews
- Qualitative survey analysis comparisons
- Kevin Lynch identity mapping approach
- Restaurants inventory and survey

Temporal Filtering of Northwest Arkansas Urban Growth

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<th>Non-Urban</th>
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Downtown Bentonville General Demographics

| 2016 Population | 4,167 |
| 2010-2016 Annual Population Growth | 1.1% |
| Median Age | 33.9 |
| Median Household Income | $35,119 |
| Total businesses | 451 |
| Total Employees | 24,188 |
| Unemployment rate | 4.2% |
| % of the population with bachelor’s degree | 26% |

References

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