

Fond du Lac Business Owner Survey Results

In order to better understand the conditions and concerns of downtown business owners in Fond du Lac, a business owner survey was undertaken to collect comprehensive business information about needs and opportunities, business and workforce data, and market and marketing data. Ninety-eight business owners returned the survey. The following section provides a summary of the responses collected in the survey.

Needs and Opportunities Assessment

This portion of the survey collected information to find out what Main Street services and products businesses would find useful, to gauge the local business climate, and to determine how satisfied business owners are with the location of their business.



Downtown Fond du Lac

- Respondents found insufficient parking, both in town and out-of-town competition, expensive employee wages or benefits, and vandalism to be business challenges.
- Respondents felt the need for information or assistance with:
 - Business planning
 - Financial management
 - Advertising or marketing
 - Business market analysis
 - Customer service or hospitality
 - Building improvements
 - Internet or E-Commerce
- Surveyed business owners found the following existing Main Street products and services useful:
 - Information sharing
 - Advertising or marketing of Main Street district as a shopping destination
 - Downtown business directories, brochures, maps
 - Façade grant up to \$1,000
 - Special event coordination
- The following proposed Main Street products were selected as useful to the surveyed business owners:
 - Individual or group business training
 - Cooperative advertising program
 - Cooperative insurance program

- Respondents strongly and somewhat agreed with the following statements:
 - Local police protection is outstanding
 - I feel safe downtown, even at night
 - Local fire protection is outstanding
 - I always try to buy products and services locally
 - I always direct customers to other downtown businesses
 - I seek ways to cooperate with complementary downtown businesses
 - The existing downtown business mix helps my business
 - The look and feel of downtown helps my business
 - My advertising helps my business
 - My business is open when people want to shop
 - Employees of my business show great customer service
 - Downtown Fond du Lac is an excellent place to have a business
- A majority of respondents are satisfied with the present location of their business.
- Overall, respondents were satisfied with their present location due to:
 - Centrally location, heart of downtown
 - Easy to find
 - Accessible by public transportation
 - Convenient for customers
 - Good visibility
- Overall, respondents were unsatisfied with their present location due to:
 - Poor traffic
 - Problem with parking
 - Too much noise
 - Owner conflicts
- A majority of respondents do not have any plans for changes to reduce or expand operations for their businesses.
- Respondents say that they, or the building owner, are not considering any building improvement projects.

Business and Workforce Data

Information gathered in this section of the survey focuses on tenancy, duration of ownership, parking availability, and employee statistics in order to make comparisons among similar downtown communities.

- A majority of respondents' businesses have been in operation for over 20 years.
- The highest percentage of respondents has owned their businesses for over 20 years.
- A majority of respondents own the space in which their business is located.
- Respondents' customers typically park in on the street.
- These customers typically park near the entry of the business.
- Respondents and their employees typically park in a private parking lot.
- Respondents and their employees typically park near the entry of the business.

Market and Marketing Data

The purpose of this portion of the survey is to collect data regarding store hours, busiest shopping times, sources of advertising, complementary and competitive businesses, and target markets in order to understand how to better market and develop businesses in downtown Fond du Lac. By analyzing this information, it can be determined what changes can be made in the planning of downtown activities and economic development to improve foot traffic, to improve success among businesses, and to increase the overall economic vitality in the downtown area.

- A majority of respondents feel that they are open all the hours they need to be.
- Surveyed business owners responded that the seven busiest times of the week are:
 - Monday – Saturday before 11a.m.
 - Friday 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- The three busiest months of the year for a majority of the businesses surveyed are:
 - October
 - November
 - December
- A majority of respondents answered that 50 to 250 customers/clients visit their business per week during the summer months of May to October.
- A majority of respondents answered that less than 50 or 50 to 250 (tied) customers/clients visit their business per week during the winter months of November to April.
- Respondents felt that the events that increased foot traffic or sales volume for their business the most were Girls on the Town and Fall Festival

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Girls on the Town	16	16.33	
Farmers Market	10	10.20	
July Sidewalk Sale	14	14.29	
Fall Festival	29	29.59	
Tick or Treat	4	4.08	
Holiday Parade of Lights	6	6.12	
Holiday Open House	5	5.10	
None	55	56.12	
Other	1	1.02	
Missing	6	6.12	

- A majority of respondents described their target market as:
 - Female
 - Ages 25-44
 - Annual household income \$50,000 - \$74,999
- A majority of surveyed business owners responded that none of the listed radio or TV stations is included in the annual advertising budget for their businesses.

- *The Action Advisor* and *The Reporter* are included in the annual advertising budget for the majority of the respondents' businesses.

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Action	55	56.12	
Advertiser			
The Reporter	52	53.06	
Assoc. of Commerce Newsletter	5	5.10	
Winnebago B2B	7	7.14	
Real estate guides	6	6.12	
Java News	6	6.12	
Oshkosh Northwestern Press	6	6.12	
Sheboygan	3	3.06	
Other1	12	12.24	
Other2	7	7.14	
Other3	5	5.10	
None	21	21.43	
Missing	9	9.18	

- Most business owners surveyed responded that the toughest competition for their businesses were those businesses selling similar products or offering similar services

Examples:

Fond du Lac Pet Grooming: Margi's Pet Resort, Affordable Pet Grooming, Tails-A-Waggin

The Nail Buff: Sisters Nail Solon, Kimz Nails, 4 Seasons Nails

The Bagelmeister: Cool Beans N' Bagels, Pick N' Save, Cousins

- A majority of business owners surveyed responded that the following traits help make their business more competitive to a large degree:
 - Service
 - Quality
 - Price
 - Selection
- A majority of business owners surveyed responded that the following traits help make their business more competitive to a small degree:
 - Location
 - Hours
- The majority of respondents target an average price point.
- Respondents answered that those downtown businesses that complemented their business the most were those that sold products or offered services that went together well with their own products or services.

Examples:

Woodmaster: Amelia's Antiques, Craft Connection, Bagelmeister

Bagelmeister: UPS, Brownboots, Banks

Fond du Lac Pet Grooming: Fond du Lac Veterinary Clinic, Animal Outfitters, Victoria's

Shut Up & Dance!: Edith's Bridal, Lucky's Dance Club, Club DNA

- Respondents would like to see the following businesses available downtown:

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Women's apparel	24	24.49	
Shoe store	5	5.10	
Specialty gift store	22	22.45	
Sporting goods store	13	13.27	
Hobby/toy store	3	3.06	
Discount store	16	16.33	
Hearth & home shop	20	20.41	
Ethnic eatery	20	20.41	
Grocery/pharmacy	30	30.61	
Lotions & potions shop	14	14.29	
Other	17	17.35	
Missing	31	31.63	

- Additional businesses that respondents said they would like to see come to downtown Fond du Lac are:

Eateries:

Greek
Mexican
Vegetarian
Soup & Sandwich shop
Health Food
Olive Garden
Panera Bread
High end deli
TGI Fridays
Starbucks
Rock Bottom Brewery
Chili's
Ice Cream/Dessert Shop
Japanese

Retail:

Bakery
Children's High End Store
Antiques
Specialty Grocer
Designer shoe store
Bed, Bath, and Beyond
Whole Foods
Old Navy
Hobby Lobby
IKEA
Marshall Fields
Cigar Lounge
Clothing Stores
Scrapbook supplies
Big Lots
Bath and Body
Barnes & Noble

Services:

Dentist
Professional Offices
Banks
Insurance Companies
Service Industries

Other:

Parks
Apartments

- Respondents would like to see the following community assets developed:

Response	Frequency	Percent	
Expanded	23	23.47	
riverfront trail			
Riverfront	34	34.69	
cleanup			
Outdoor ice rink	12	12.24	
Expanded	47	47.96	
public parking			
Expanded	27	27.55	
green space			
Farmers Market	28	28.57	
pavilion			
Public art	19	19.39	
Public	15	15.31	
restrooms			
None	4	4.08	
Other	8	8.16	
Missing	18	18.37	

- Other community assets respondents would like to see developed are:

Downtown Residential
 Removal of old water tower and old reservoir on Macy
 Outdoor dining and entertainment
 Downtown lighting and new garbage holders
 Elimination of meters
 A downtown gathering place or piazza
 Anchor type store
 Lake Winnebago
 More of an open mall atmosphere
 Resort/restaurant on lake

The attached appendices comprise the preliminary business owner survey results and a condensed item analysis report.

Appendix

Fond du Lac Business Owner Survey Preliminary Results

NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES ASSESSMENT

1. Please rate the degree to which you are experiencing the following business challenges? (● mark ONE answer for each item)

	Major Challenge (-3)	Minor Challenge (-2)	Don't Know (-1)	No Challenge (0)
Conflict with building owner or tenant.....	3.1%	8.2%	1.0%	83.7%
Difficulty recruiting or retaining employees.....	11.2%	28.6%	6.1%	52.0%
Expensive or unavailable products.....	1.0%	20.4%	8.2%	62.2%
Expensive or unavailable utilities.....	12.2%	19.4%	5.1%	56.1%
Expensive employee wages or benefits.....	14.3%	34.7%	5.1%	37.8%
Expensive rent.....	7.1%	15.3%	8.2%	61.2%
Expensive shipping or transportation.....	4.1%	19.4%	11.2%	57.1%
Insufficient financing.....	5.1%	11.2%	7.1%	67.4%
Insufficient parking.....	26.5%	37.8%	1.0%	33.7%
In-town competition.....	21.4%	43.9%	4.1%	28.6%
Out-of-town competition.....	10.2%	41.8%	8.2%	38.8%
Language barriers.....	0%	23.5%	5.1%	66.3%
Poor building condition.....	2.0%	20.4%	1.0%	70.4%
Restrictive business regulations.....	2.0%	21.4%	11.2%	59.2%
Shoplifting or theft.....	1.0%	27.6%	6.1%	60.2%
Unskilled workers.....	4.1%	12.2%	4.1%	71.4%
Vandalism.....	4.1%	38.8%	5.1%	48.0%
Other.....	1.0%	3.1%	6.1%	21.4%

2. Could you or your employees use information on or assistance with the following topics? (● mark ONE answer for each item)

	Definitely (2)	Probably (1)	Unsure (0)	Probably Not (-1)	Definitely Not (-2)
Business planning.....	8.2%	14.3%	12.2%	35.7%	22.5%
Financial management.....	6.1%	15.3%	11.2%	29.6%	30.6%
Inventory management.....	4.1%	7.1%	7.1%	36.7%	38.8%
Advertising or marketing.....	13.3%	31.6%	5.1%	20.4%	22.5%
Employee hiring or training.....	7.1%	13.3%	10.2%	33.7%	27.6%
Customer service or hospitality.....	6.1%	21.4%	9.2%	30.6%	23.5%
Building improvements.....	11.2%	16.3%	7.1%	30.6%	26.5%
Window displays or interior store design.....	6.1%	14.3%	10.2%	30.6%	31.6%
Business market analysis.....	12.2%	19.4%	10.2%	28.6%	23.5%
Internet or E-Commerce.....	8.2%	18.4%	5.1%	33.7%	25.5%
Transfer of ownership or selling a business.....	6.1%	7.1%	4.1%	33.7%	39.8%
Other.....	0%	1.0%	3.1%	10.2%	17.4%

3. How useful to your business are these existing Main Street Program products and services? (● mark ONE answer for each item)

	Very Useful (3)	Useful (1)	Don't Know (-1)	Useless (-3)
Free design & business assistance.....	13.3%	19.4%	39.8%	21.4%
Advertising or marketing of Main Street district as shopping destination.....	25.5%	22.5%	21.4%	24.5%
Low interest business loan program.....	16.3%	14.3%	32.7%	27.6%
Façade grant up to \$1,000 (if guidelines met).....	24.5%	18.4%	17.4%	30.6%
Landlord-tenant or seller-buyer referral network (i.e. Vacancy Guide).....	5.1%	25.5%	30.6%	29.6%
Information sharing (i.e. newsletters, flyers, business fact sheets).....	29.6%	41.8%	15.3%	5.1%
Downtown business directories, brochures, maps.....	29.6%	41.8%	14.3%	8.2%
Special event coordination (increasing foot traffic).....	29.6%	24.5%	22.5%	16.3%

4. How useful would these proposed Main Street Program products and services be to your business?

(● mark ONE answer for each item)

	Very Useful (3)	Useful (1)	Don't Know (-1)	Useless (-3)
Website/Internet resources or Wi-Fi throughout district.....	27.6%	20.4%	28.6%	15.3%
Individual or group business training.....	10.2%	31.6%	26.5%	22.5%
Cooperative advertising program.....	28.6%	21.4%	28.6%	15.3%
Cooperative insurance program.....	21.4%	16.3%	31.6%	23.5%

5. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (● mark ONE answer for each statement)

	Strongly Agree (2) Disagree	Somewhat Agree (1)	Neutral (0)	Somewhat Disagree (-1)	Strongly Disagree (-2)
Local police protection is outstanding.....	32.7%	41.8%	18.4%	4.1%	1.0%
I feel safe downtown, even at night.....	30.6%	35.7%	14.3%	13.3%	4.1%
Local fire protection is outstanding.....	50.0%	33.7%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
I always try to buy products and services locally.....	51.0%	34.7%	11.2%	1.0%	0.0%
I always direct customers to other downtown businesses.....	51.0%	32.7%	14.3%	1.0%	0%
I seek ways to cooperate with complementary downtown businesses.....	46.9%	19.4%	26.5%	0%	1.0%
The existing downtown business mix helps my business.....	19.4%	28.6%	29.6%	14.3%	4.1%
The look and feel of downtown helps my business.....	13.3%	38.8%	26.5%	9.2%	8.2%
My building façade draws customers into my business.....	12.2%	31.6%	27.6%	16.3%	5.1%
My window and store displays help my business.....	10.2%	25.5%	40.8%	11.2%	5.1%
My advertising helps my business.....	27.6%	37.8%	18.4%	6.1%	6.1%
My business is open when customers want to shop.....	24.5%	36.7%	29.6%	1.0%	1.0%
Employees of my business show great customer service.....	55.1%	22.5%	15.3%	0%	0%
Childcare for employees and customers is readily available.....	5.1%	5.1%	55.1%	15.3%	8.2%
Downtown FDL is an excellent place to have a business.....	24.5%	51.0%	11.2%	7.1%	2.0%

6. How satisfied are you with the present location of your business? (● mark ONE)

33.7% Very Satisfied 48.0% Satisfied 8.2% Neutral 6.1% Unsatisfied 1.0% Very Unsatisfied 1.0% Plan to Move

Why? _____

7. Do you have plans to expand or reduce operations for your business in the foreseeable future? (● mark ONE)

- 24.5% I plan to expand products/services or square footage downtown.
- 5.1% I plan to expand products/services or square footage at a location outside the downtown.
- 1.0% I plan to reduce products/services or square footage downtown.
- 62.2% I don't have any plans for changes.

8. Are you or the building owner considering any façade or exterior improvements? 27.6% Yes 39.8% No 28.6% Don't Know

BUSINESS AND WORKFORCE DATA

9. What is the business or professional activity code for your business? (NAICS)
(Use the key provided or enter the business code from your 2004 federal tax return.) _____

10. How long has your business been in operation? (● mark ONE, include time at this & any previous locations)

- 2.0% under 1 year
- 19.4% 1-5 years
- 12.2% 6-10 years
- 16.3% 11-20 years
- 46.9% over 20 years

If you know the date your business was established, please list it here (MM / YY)

11. How long have you, or your corporation, been the owner of your business? (● mark ONE)

- 3.1% under 1 year
- 23.5% 1-5 years
- 12.2% 6-10 years
- 18.4% 11-20 years
- 37.8% over 20 years

12. Does your business own or lease the space in which it is located? 54.1% Own 40.8% Lease 2.0% Lease, want to purchase

13. For your business, what percentage of your total sq. ft. is devoted to the following? (percentages should add up to 100%)

- _____ Total sq. ft.
- _____ % sq. ft. sales space
- _____ % sq. ft. production space
- _____ % sq. ft. office space
- _____ % sq. ft. storage space
- _____ % sq. ft. unused space
- 100 %

14. Where do your customers typically park? (● mark ONE)

- 52.0% On the street
- 17.4% In a public parking lot
- 24.5% In a private parking lot
- 1.0% Other _____

How far do customers typically have to park from your business? (● mark ONE)

- 44.9% Near entry
- 3.1% 2 blocks away

- 32.7% ½ block away
- 13.3% 1 block away
- 1.0% 3 blocks away
- 1.0% 4 blocks or more

_____ If you own a parking lot, how many parking spaces are available for customers (not employees)?

15. Where do you and your employees typically park?

(● mark ONE)

- 8.1% On the street
- 35.7% In a public parking lot
- 46.9% In a private parking lot
- 4.1% Other _____

- 44.9% Near entry
- 20.4% 1/2 block away
- 21.4% 1 block away
- 5.1% 2 blocks away
- 3.1% 3 blocks away
- 1.0% 4 blocks or more

_____ If you own a parking lot, how many parking spaces are available for employees (not customers)?

How far do you and your employees typically have to park from your business? (● mark ONE)

16. What percentage of employees of your business live here in Fond du Lac? _____ %

17. How many people, including owners, does your business employ in each of the following categories?

(Full-time = 32 or more hours/week)

Full-time year-round _____ Part-time year-round _____ Seasonal _____

MARKET AND MARKETING DATA

18. What are the hours of operation for your business?

- Monday from _____ to _____
- Tuesday from _____ to _____
- Wednesday from _____ to _____
- Thursday from _____ to _____
- Friday from _____ to _____
- Saturday from _____ to _____
- Sunday from _____ to _____

What are your thoughts on store hours?

- 56.1% I am open all the hours I need to be
- 4.1% I can't be open more hours for personal reasons
- 4.1% I should be open more hours, but can't afford the staff
- 2.0% I should be open more hours, but can't find good staff
- 7.1% I would be open more hours if I were sure of sales
- 0% I would be open more hours if everyone else were

19. During a typical week, what are the seven busiest times for your business? (● mark up to SEVEN times total for the week)

	Before 11:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.- 5:00 p.m.	After 5:00 p.m.
Monday	35.7%	17.4%	14.3%	14.3%
Tuesday	26.5%	26.5%	12.2%	12.2%
Wednesday	22.5%	24.5%	16.3%	13.3%
Thursday	22.5%	21.4%	20.4%	16.3%
Friday	27.6%	24.5%	28.6%	11.2%
Saturday	21.4%	14.3%	5.1%	10.2%
Sunday	3.1%	8.2%	1.0%	8.2%

20. What are the three busiest months of the year for this business? (● mark up to THREE)

9.2% January	12.2% February	16.3% March
19.4% April	11.2% May	20.4% June
18.4% July	14.3% August	13.3% September
27.6% October	26.5% November	39.8% December

21. How many customers/clients visit your business per week during the summer months of May to October? (● mark ONE)

- 1.0% none, all business via phone, Internet, etc
- 26.5% less than 50
- 27.6% 50-250
- 10.2% 250-500
- 17.4% Over 500

How many customers/clients visit your business per week during the winter months of November to April? (● mark ONE)

- 1.0% none, all business via phone, Internet, etc
- 25.5% less than 50
- 25.5% 50-250
- 17.4% 250-500
- 16.3% Over 500

22. Which of the following events increased foot traffic or sales volume for your business, either during the event or in the next few days or weeks? (● mark ALL that apply)

16.3% Girls on the Town	29.6% Fall Festival	5.1% Holiday Open House weekend	1.0% Other _____
10.2% Farmers Market	4.1% Trick or Treat	56.1% None	
14.3% July Sidewalk Sale	6.1% Holiday Parade of Lights		

23. Approximately what percentage of your customers come from each of the following Zip codes?

(Total should = 100%)

- a. ____% Fond du Lac 54935
- b. ____% Fond du Lac & North FDL 54937
- c. ____% Oakfield 53065
- d. ____% Brownsville 53006
- e. ____% Eden 53019
- f. ____% Campbellsport 53010
- g. ____% Rosendale 54974
- h. ____% Brandon 53919
- i. ____% Lomira 53048
- j. ____% Malone 53049
- k. ____% Waupun 53963
- l. ____% Other _____(specify)
100 %

24. What percentage of the annual advertising budget for your business is spent with each of the following media?

(Total should = 100%)

- a. ____% Newspapers
- b. ____% Magazines
- c. ____% Radio
- d. ____% Television
- e. ____% Yellow Pages
- f. ____% Direct Mail/Catalogs
- g. ____% Window Displays
- h. ____% Billboards
- i. ____% Internet
- j. ____% Local Service Organizations
- k. ____% Other _____(specify)
100 %

25. Please describe the target market of your business. (● mark ONE for each category)

I haven't defined a target market yet (if you marked this answer, skip to question 26)

Target Gender 2.0% Male 18.4% Female

Target Age 1.0% under 18 1.0% 18-24 23.5% 25-44 4.1% 45-54 3.1% 55-64 0% Over 64

Target Annual Household Income	0% under \$15,000	5.1% \$35,000 - \$49,999	0% \$100,000 - \$149,999
	1.0% \$15,000 - \$24,999	12.2% \$50,000 - \$74,999	0% over \$150,000
	7.1% \$25,000 - 34,999	6.1% \$75,000 - \$99,999	

26. Which radio stations are included in the annual advertising budget for your business? (● mark ALL that apply)

20.4% WFDL, Fm 97.7	18.4% KFIZ, Am 1450	7.1% Other _____
9.2% WFDL, Am 1170	2.0% WRPN, Am 1600	1.0% Other _____
23.5% KFIZ, Fm 107	13.3% WTCX, Fm 96.1	56.1% None

Which local or network television stations are included in the annual advertising budget for your business?

(● mark ALL that apply)

3.1% WBAY, ABC-Channel 2 Green Bay	4.1% WFRV, CBS-Channel 5 Green Bay	4.1% Other _____
3.1% WLUK, FOX-Channel 11 Green Bay	3.1% WTMJ, NBC-Channel 4 Milwaukee	76.5% None

Which publications are included in the annual advertising budget for your business? (● mark ALL that apply)

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 56.1% Action Advertiser | 6.1% Real estate guides | 12.2% Other _____ |
| 53.0% The Reporter | 6.1% Java News | 7.1% Other _____ |
| 5.1% Assoc. of Commerce Newsletter | 6.1% Oshkosh Northwestern | 5.1% Other _____ |
| 7.1% Winnebago B2B | 3.1% Sheboygan Press | 21.4% None |

27. Please list the six products and/or services that best differentiate your business from the competition.

28. What is the toughest local and/or non-local competition for your business? (Specify up to THREE competitors by name)

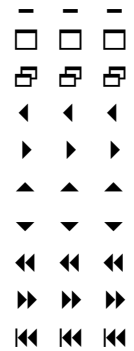
a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

29. To what degree do the following traits help make your business more competitive versus the competitors listed above?

(● mark ONE answer for each item)

	A Lot	A Little	Not At All
Location.....	28.6%	31.6%	18.4%
Hours.....	24.5%	35.7%	19.4%
Service.....	66.3%	10.2%	4.1%
Name Brands.....	22.5%	17.5%	29.6%
Quality.....	66.3%	7.1%	4.1%
Selection.....	36.7%	24.5%	13.3%
Price.....	38.8%	31.6%	10.2%

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30. Relative to other businesses in your trade, what price point do you target? (● mark ONE)

- 6.1% low-end 58.2% average 16.3% high-end

31. What three downtown businesses complement your business the most? (specify up to THREE businesses by name)

a. _____ b. _____ c. _____

32. With your business in mind, what four businesses from the following list would you most like to see available downtown? (● mark up to FOUR)

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| 24.5% Women's apparel/accessories shop | 20.4% Ethnic eatery _____ |
| 5.1% Shoe store | 30.6% Grocery/pharmacy |
| 22.5% Specialty gift store | 14.3% Lotions & potions shop |
| 13.3% Sporting goods store | 17.4% Other _____ |
| 3.1% Hobby/toy store | |
| 16.3% Discount store | |
| 20.4% Hearth & home shop | |

Name two businesses you would most like to see come to downtown Fond du Lac (specific chain or franchise)?

a. _____ b. _____

33. With your business in mind, what four community assets would you most like to see developed? (● mark up to FOUR)

- 23.5% Expanded riverfront trail
- 34.7% Riverfront cleanup
- 12.2% Outdoor ice rink and/or park
- 48.0% Expanded public parking
- 27.6% Expanded "green space"
- 28.6% Farmers Market pavilion
- 19.4% Public art/monument
- 15.3% Public restrooms
- 4.1% None of these
- 8.2% Other _____

34. How long did it take you to complete this survey? _____