

## SUMMARY

### **Fresh Look Milwaukie: Downtown Road Map Community Workshop**

**May 9, 2013  
6:30-9:30 pm  
Masonic Lodge  
10636 SE Main St**

This is a summary of a community workshop held on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013, for the *Fresh Look Milwaukie: Downtown Road Map* project. This event was open to the general public, and the purpose was to present the ALIGN Planning team's findings and draft recommendations for Downtown Milwaukie, as well as to get more specific feedback on community priorities for strategies to achieve overarching goals for Downtown.

Feedback was facilitated through instant polling questions (using Turning Point software), followed by small group discussions and mapping exercises focused on specific questions related to the future of Downtown.

### **Participants**

#### ALIGN Team Present

Ryan Lemay, Project Manager  
Carine Arendes, Content Development Lead  
Jeffrey Butts, Public Engagement Co-Lead  
Erica Smith, Public Engagement Co-Lead  
Iren Taran, Production Lead

#### City of Milwaukie Staff Present

Steve Butler, Interim Community Development Director/Planning Director  
Ryan Marquardt, Senior Planner  
Li Alligood, Associate Planner  
Kari Svanstrom, Associate Planner

#### Volunteer Facilitator

Alex Steinberger, Urban Planner, Fregonese Associates, Inc. (Former PSU MURP student)



Milwaukie Community Participants (43)

Cheree Heppe  
Angel Falconer  
Ben Rosseau  
Brian T. Bradbury  
Cameron Wanes  
Carmen Meyer  
Carolyn Tomei  
Chantelle Gamba – Design and Landmarks Committee  
Charles Maes  
Chris Ortolano  
David Aschenbrenner  
David Miller  
David Ratzlaff  
Dion Shepard – Historic Milwaukie NDA  
Emily Miller  
Greg Deane – Lewelling NDA  
Irene Fin  
James Fossen  
Jean Baker – Historic Milwaukie NDA  
Jesse Stemmler  
Jude Bridges  
Kate O’Brien  
Kelly Casey  
Larry Werre  
Laura Gamble  
Lisa Batey – Planning Commission  
Lisa Fossen  
Mark Bedau  
Mark Gamba – City Council  
Mike Miller – City Council  
Paul Horton  
Paul Klein  
Peg Tarbox  
Pascal Sauton  
Paul Horton  
Ray Peck  
Rich Recker  
Rick Wheeler  
Samantha Horton  
Scott Barbur – Planning Commission  
Silvia Schulz

Scott Churchill – City Council  
Steve Hubbard  
Val Hubbard  
Wilda Parks – Planning Commission

## **Connection to the Project**

The community workshop was a follow-up event to the kickoff event (a combination open house and community workshop) held April 1st, 2013 to gather initial input from the community to establish general priorities and desires for Downtown, as well as build relationships with and among community members. The project team (the City of Milwaukie and ALIGN Planning) were seeking to get input on preliminary project findings, draft recommendations, and preferred strategies for achieving overarching objectives.

## **Purpose and Desired Outcome**

This event had six primary objectives:

1. Present project findings from previous community engagement and existing conditions research
2. Present and receive feedback on Draft Recommendations
3. Better understand participant's general perceptions of Downtown (positive, negative, neutral, e.g.), as well as participants' specific preferences and priorities for strategies to achieve overarching goals
4. Establish areas of agreement, and facilitate understanding among participants about each others' views regarding the future of Downtown
5. Achieve clarity in areas of uncertainty about community priorities for Downtown
6. Establish a positive jumping-off-point for continuance of effective and meaningful community engagement as the *Fresh Look Milwaukie* project comes to a close and transitions into Phase II of the Commercial Core Enhancement Program.

The desired takeaways from the May 9<sup>th</sup> Community Workshop included:

1. Responses to project findings and draft recommendations
2. Validation of previously established priorities
3. Clarity in areas of uncertainty
4. Prioritization of specific strategies to address established priorities
5. Good will and enthusiasm among community members regarding the future of Downtown Milwaukie

## **Appendices**

*Appendix F1 – Instant Polling Questions & Results*

*Appendix F2 – Group Discussion Notes*



*Appendix F3 – Group Discussion Maps*  
*Appendix F4 – Poster Images*

## Event Summary

### **Open Doors/Open House (6:15-6:45)**

Various posters displaying project findings and processes were available for viewing (poster images available in Appendix D).

### **Power Point Presentation (6:45-7:15)**

Steve Butler, Interim Community Development Director/Planning Director, provided introductions. Erica Smith, ALIGN planning, gave a presentation reviewing the general objectives of the project, community engagement activities, and findings to-date. She also presented ALIGN's draft recommendations, to be considered for inclusion in the final *Road Map* document.

### **Instant Polling (7:15 - 7:45)**

Using Turning Point software, instant polling questions were inserted into the PowerPoint presentation. Each participant had an individual clicker with buttons which could be used to answer multiple choice questions on the screen by selecting the letter corresponding to the preferred response. After all participants voted, results in the form of a bar chart immediately appeared, illustrating the proportion of participants who selected each answer.

The initial questions were aimed at characterizing the participant group by age, gender, relationship to Downtown Milwaukie, and general attitudes about Downtown. Following were more specific questions regarding strategies for improving Downtown, such as which kinds of dining people would like to see more of, and what participants believe the central characteristics of Downtown's identity should be. The options for answering the multiple choice questions were based on the most common responses to similarly-natured, open-ended questions asked of community members throughout previous engagement efforts (the community survey, business coffee klatches, and interviews, for example). Many questions asked participants to rank their top three choices, while some asked for just one response. A full list of the instant polling questions and results are attached in Appendix A.

An example instant polling question from the workshop is included below, alongside an image of the clickers used by participants:



Figure 1: Results from the May 9<sup>th</sup> workshop's instant polling question "What is your general sense of Downtown Milwaukie?"



Figure 2: Turning Point clickers used by participants

77% of the 43 participants chose the response "It's getting better."

### **Small Group Discussions (7:45 – 8:30)**

After completing the instant polling activity, participants remained seated in groups of 6-8 people to discuss some place-specific questions about priorities for improving Downtown. By dividing the Downtown into three general areas—north, central and south—as well as three corridors—SE McLoughlin (Highway 99E), Main Street, and 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue—groups were able to discuss strategies for improvement in a more spatially explicit manner. A large aerial view map print out of the Downtown area at each table served as a helpful point of reference.

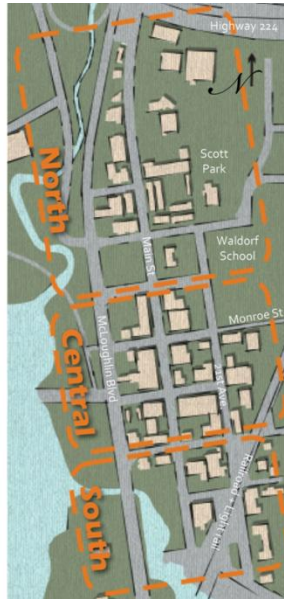
Groups were asked to answer the following questions. One participant from each table was designated to record the group responses to facilitate reporting out at the end of the discussion. Discussion questions were:

1. What is your top priority for:
  - a. North downtown
  - b. Central downtown
  - c. South downtown
2. Which area (north, central or south) needs the most attention?
3. What is your top priority for:
  - a. SE McLoughlin (Hwy 99E)
  - b. Main Street
  - c. 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue
4. Which corridor (McLoughlin, Main St., or 21<sup>st</sup> Ave.) is your top priority overall?
5. What is your top priority for Downtown overall?

Groups were given different colors of sticky dots and stars to indicate on the map where they would like certain uses to be located. Participants were also invited to write and draw on the maps, in any way that helped them communicate their opinions. Sticker colors and categories, as well as the area designations for Downtown, were as shown below:

## Mapping with Dots

HOUSING	→	●
OFFICES	→	●
GREEN SPACE	→	●
DINING	→	★
ARTS & CULTURE	→	★
ENTERTAINMENT	→	★



### **Report Out (8:30-8:50)**

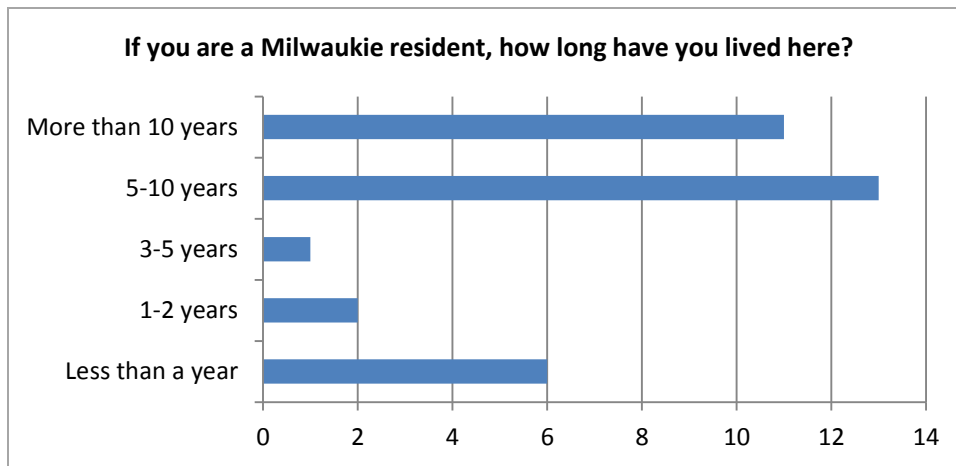
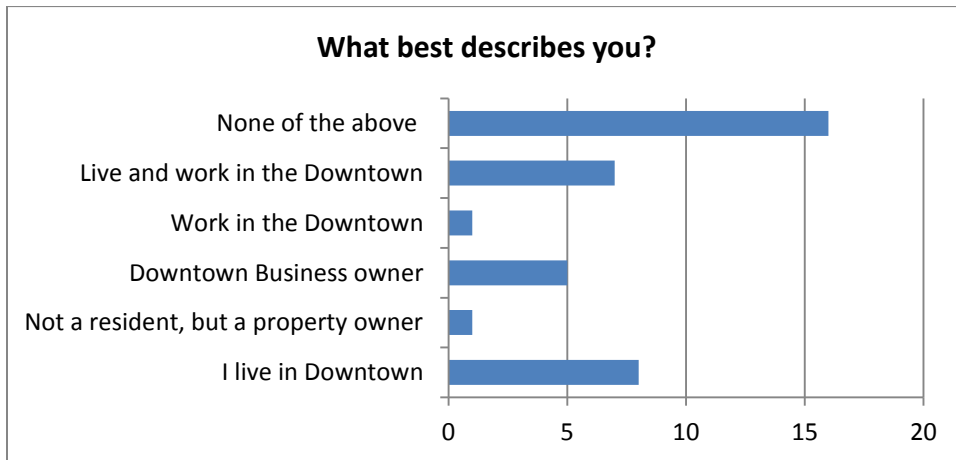
One person from each group reported out the group's top priority area and corridor; the specific priority for each; and the group's overall priority for the Downtown (which were mix of overall themes and location-specific improvements). Reporters used their group's map as a point of reference for indicating these priorities. After the event all maps were gathered and photographed by ALIGN planning (see Appendix C).

### **Wrap-Up/Q&A (8:50 - 9:05)**

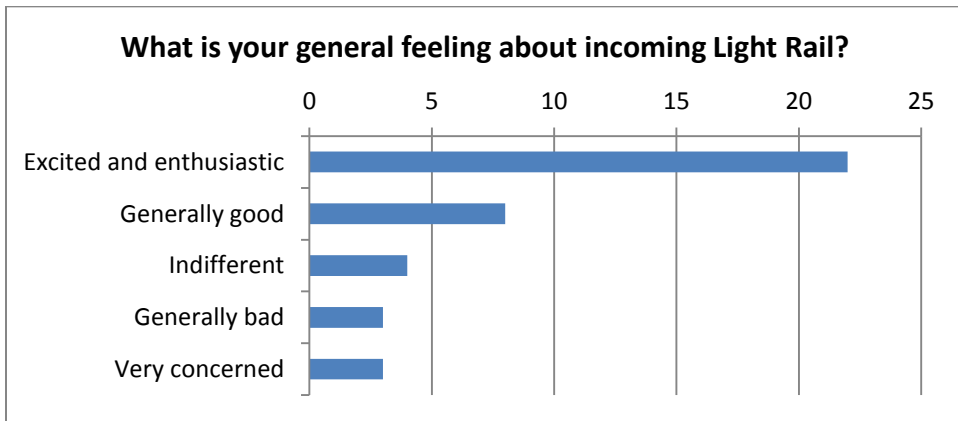
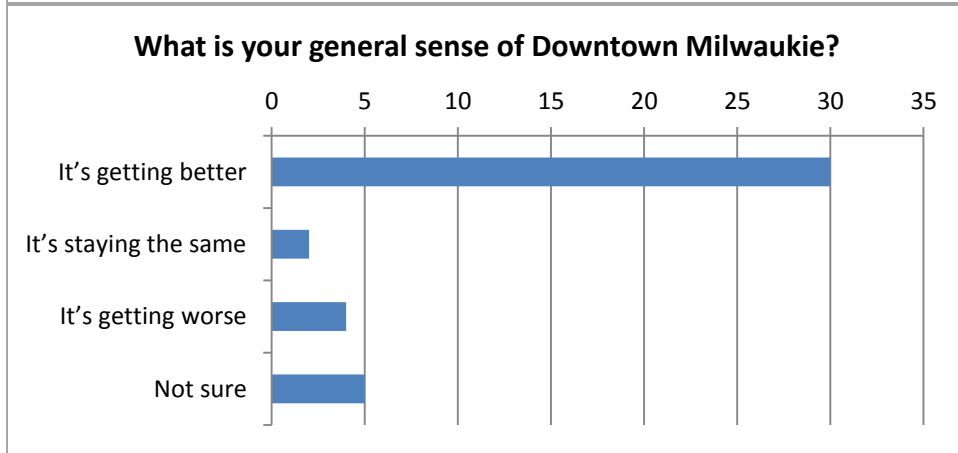
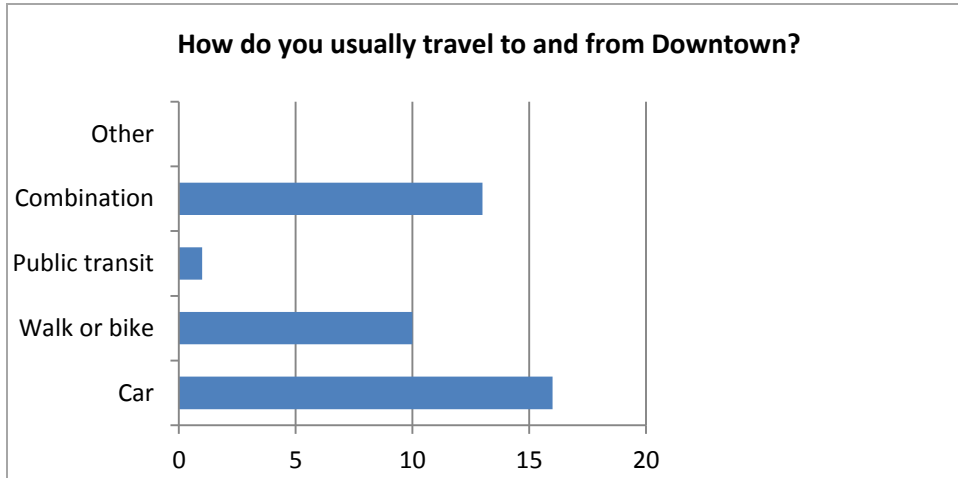
Erica wrapped up the report-out session by thanking participants and handing things off to Li Alligood, Associate Planner, who explained the next steps for the *Fresh Look Milwaukie* project and how it would lead into Phase II of the Commercial Core Enhancement Program in the fall. Jeff and Erica thanked the City of Milwaukie staff for their support and guidance throughout the project, as well as businesses and organizations who contributed refreshments and meeting spaces for various events. A few participants stayed to discuss further points of interest or concern with each other and the project team or City staff. Because the workshop was running late, most participants left fairly quickly after the event conclusion.

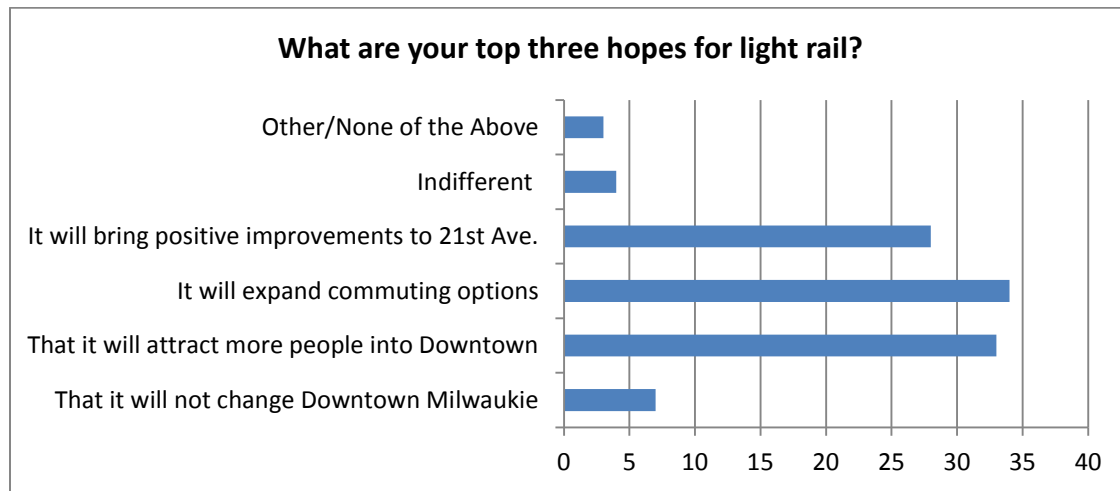
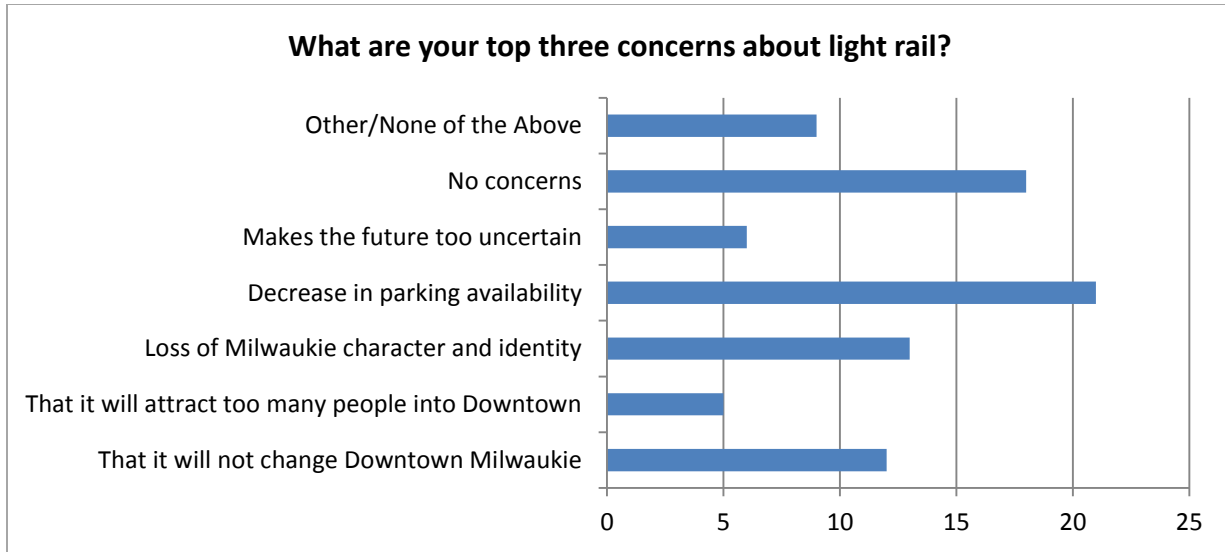
## Appendix F1: Instant Polling Questions and Results

For a full list of questions and response data, refer to the excel spreadsheet posted on the City of Milwaukie [project page](#).

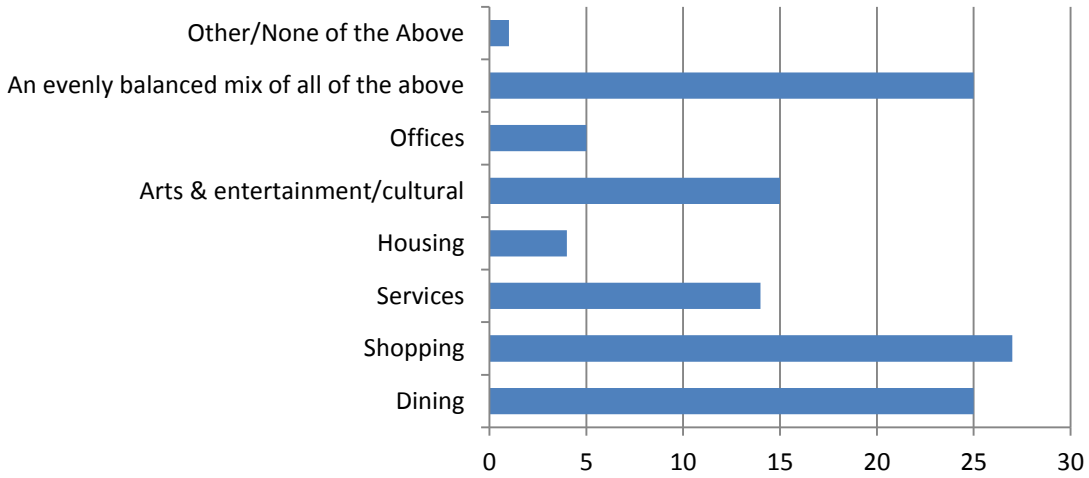




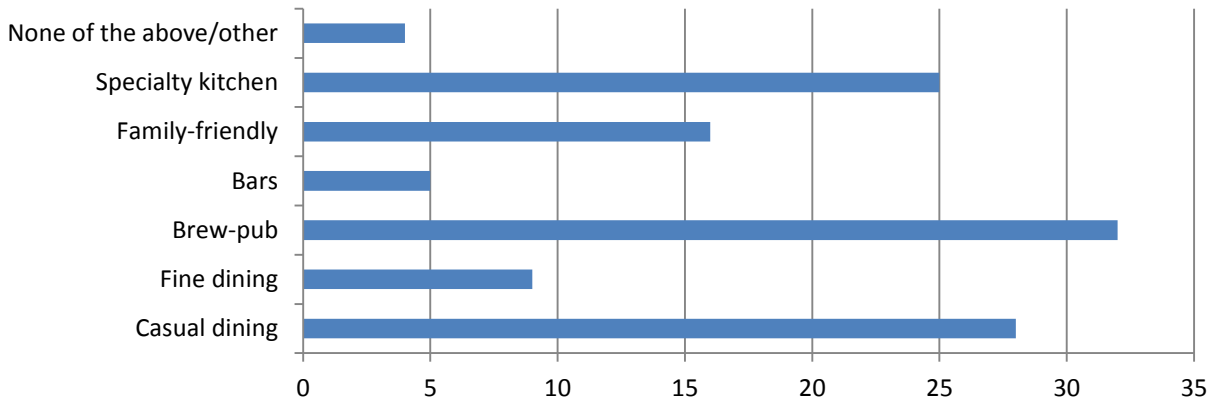


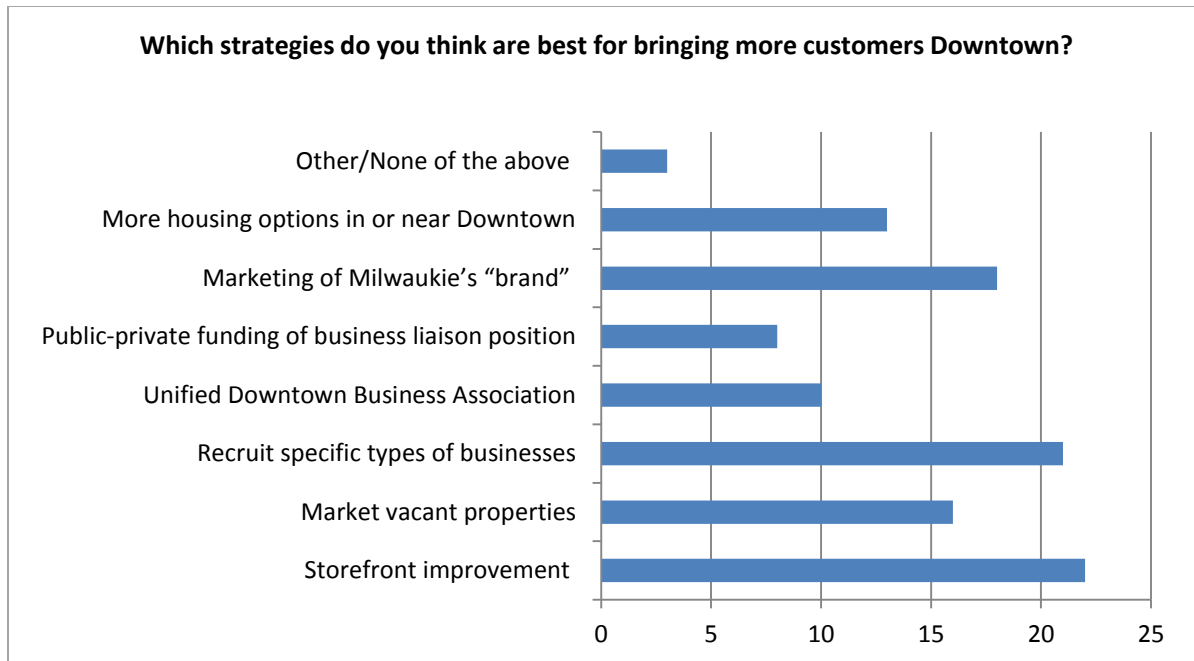
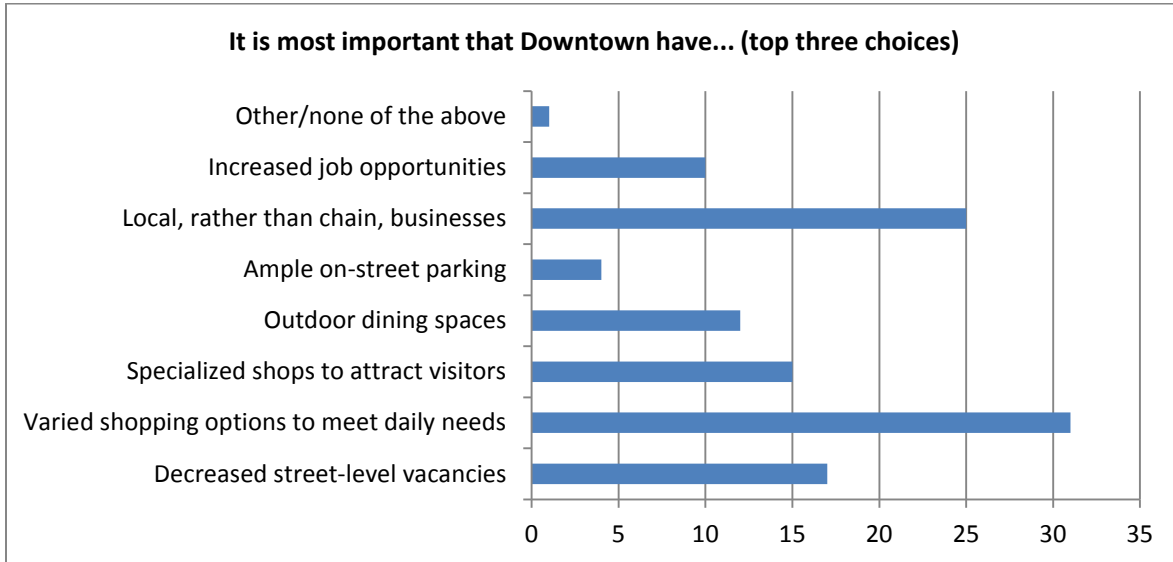


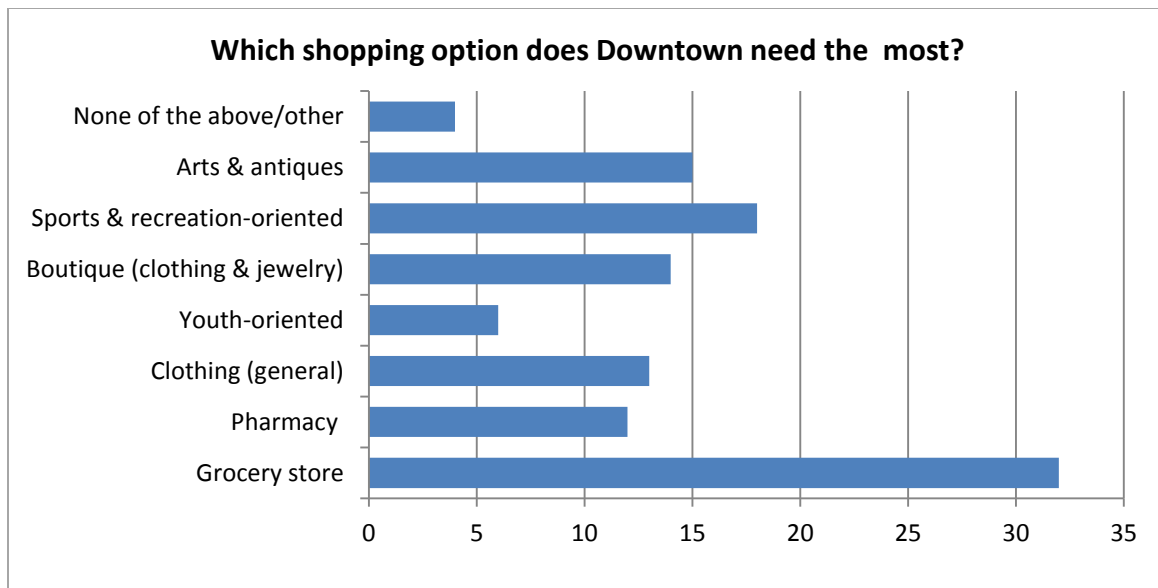
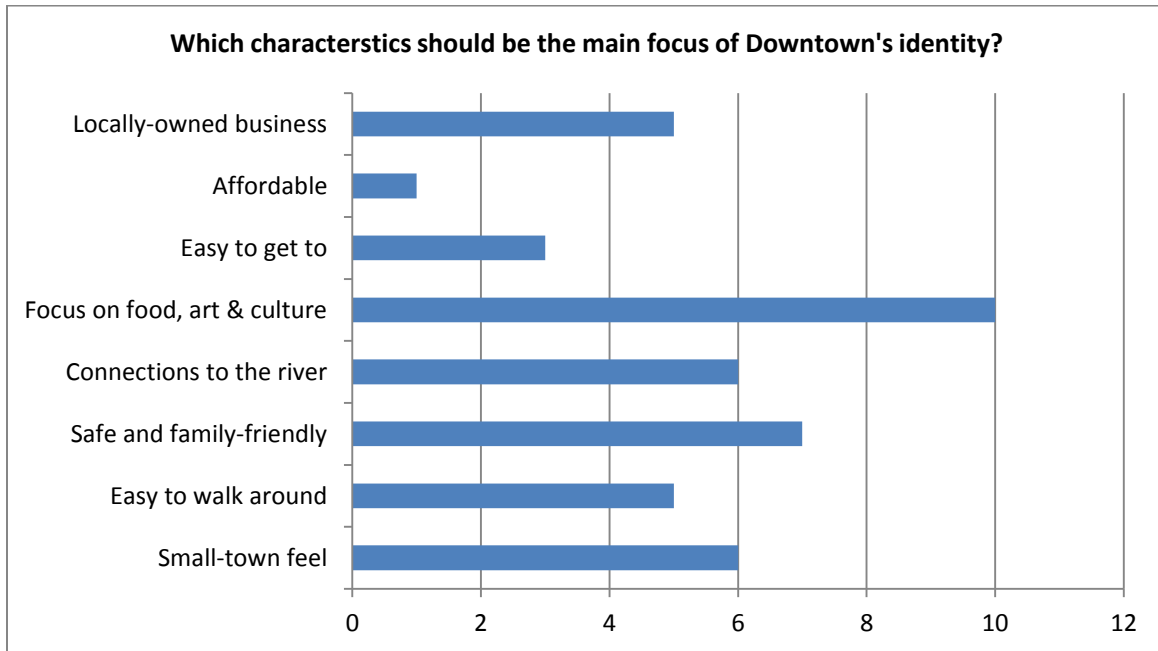
**Street-level uses: What should go there? (top 3 choices)**

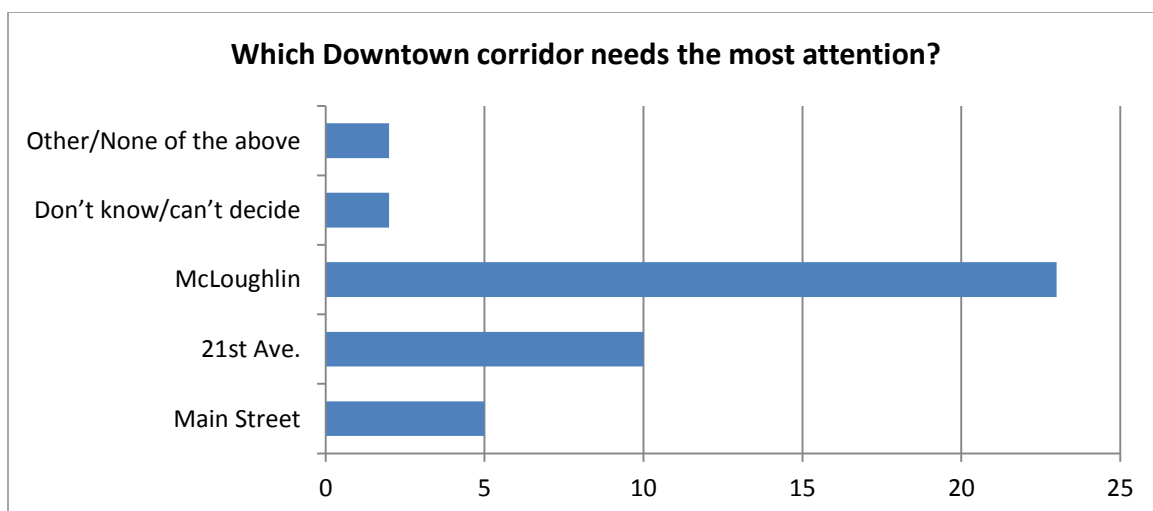
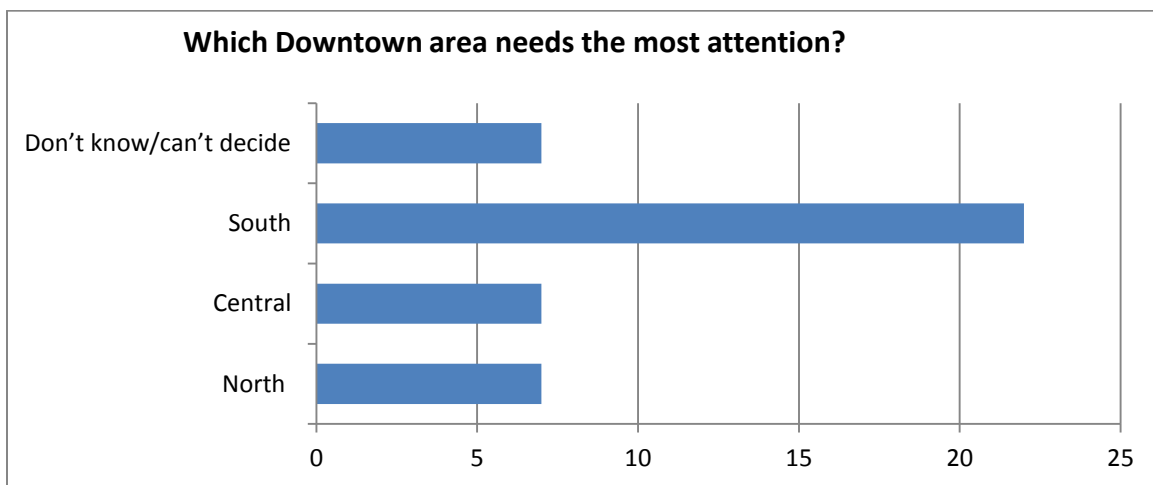
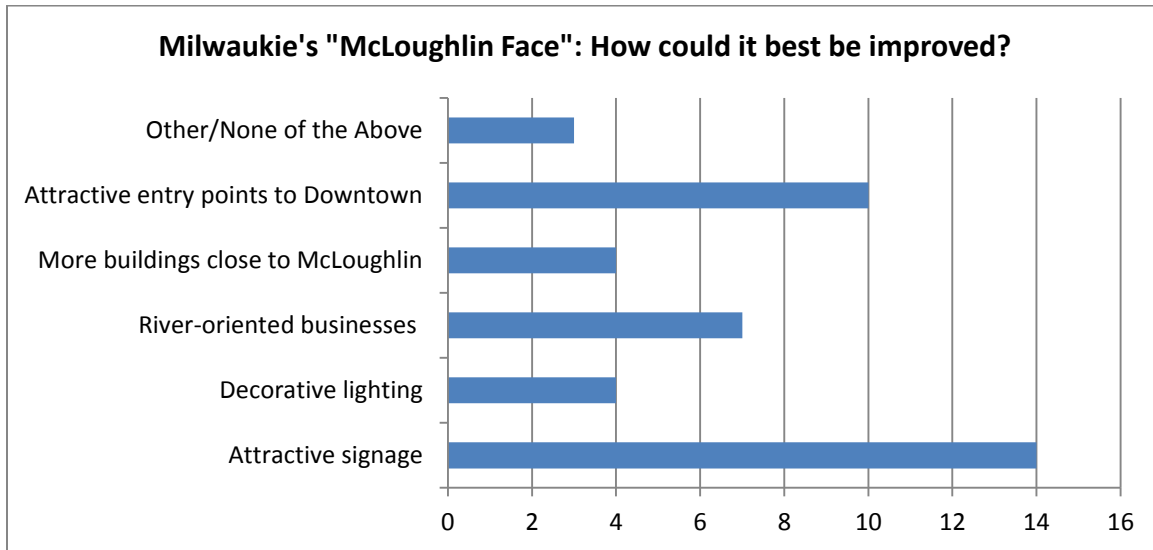


**Which dining options does Downtown need more of?**









## Appendix F2: Group Discussion Notes

### Notes from report-out

#### **Table A**

Facilitator: Jeff Butts / Notetaker: Jeff Butts

*Priorities by Area:*

- North – Cohesive look
- Central – Mixed use
- South – Brew pub; grocery, esp. a co-op

*Priority area: South*

- Brew pub; Grocery co-op

*Priority Corridor: McLoughlin*

- Like a multilevel Pikes Mkt feel
- Activate with retail

#### **Table B**

Facilitator: Iren Taran / Notetaker: Li Alligood

*Priorities by Area:*

- North – more 2-3 story buildings
- Central – housing and office above ground floor
  - Gothic comic development
- South – plaza is key; retail and live/work

*Priority Area: South*

- Because of incoming light rail

*Priority Corridor: 21<sup>st</sup>; LRT foot traffic*

- Promote the right kind of developers

#### **Table C**

Facilitator: Ryan Lemay / Note taker: Kari Svanstrom

*Priority by Area:*

- South , 21<sup>st</sup>, Monroe – better uses
- North – Residential near Scott Park

*Priority Area: Central*

- Update buildings / better use of space

*Corridor Priority: 21<sup>st</sup> Ave.*

- Sections of Main, 99E and 21<sup>st</sup> all need real work

#### **Table D**

Facilitator: Erica Smith / Note taker: Ryan Marquardt

*Priority Area:*

- South – Gateway
  - Key to step off MAX

*Priority Corridor:*

- Corridor – 99E
  - Main & 21<sup>st</sup> will take care of themselves
  - Green belt on 99E up to Scott Park and up to Adams St.

*Overall Priority:*

- Conscious development, vibrant development

**Table E**

Facilitator: Carine Arendes / Note taker: Carine Arendes / Volunteer Facilitator: Alex Steinberger

*Priority by area*

- North - physical aspects; sidewalks
- Central – plaza at farmer’s market
- South – gateway overall; easy way to downtown

*Priority Corridor: McLoughlin*

- Slow people down; building; fill in green space

*Overall Priority*

- Top Overall – Affordable co-op grocery

**Extended group discussion notes – from each table (before report out)**

**Table A**

- Grocer across from City or
  - Or near light rail
  - Specialty and well known in area where people have to drive through town, not on McLoughlin (Trader Joe’s, New Seasons)
- Gateway on McLoughlin
  - With pedestrian and bike bridge (south)
- Potentially need housing (North)
  - Apartments / condos / row house
  - 2 or 3 story
  - Protect views of river
- Storefront redone (Central)
  - New look, clean
  - Mixed retail & brew pub
  - Maybe a Starbucks
    - Or more knowledge of existing coffee houses
- Central
  - Bakery
    - Need people
  - Cohesive look
- McLoughlin
  - Built up, not parking



- Reason for people to stop
- Brings eye to other side than river
- Bridge
- Mirror the whole way for river on both sides
- Main street
  - Increased N-S connection
  - Reface
  - New buildings
    - Mixed retail, brew pub central to all... bridge, LR, DT
    - Bars, entertainment.
- 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Service oriented (dry cleaner, nails, ...)
  - Maybe lumber store as grocer
  - Street improvements (benches, lamps)
  - More liveliness
  - Flower baskets everywhere
- THE top priority
  - Mixed use more like N. Main
  - Magnet: co-op
  - River, LR connection
  - Parking behind new buildings on McLoughlin
    - Limited height for views, graded with geography
- Art everywhere
  - Different types: sculptures, murals – talent
- Theatre as theatre not arcade

### **Table B**

- North
  - More activity / entertainment
    - Remote wasteland
  - Residents
  - Shopping
  - Gradual redevelopment
  - Green space @ Texaco site
    - Like Pioneer Square
  - More active uses in Reliable Credit and ground floor buildings
- Central
  - Relocate Dark Horse offices to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor
    - Retain in DT
    - More active uses on ground floor
  - No offices on main floor
  - Add 2-3 floors
  - Fill in McLoughlin
- South

- Parking structure
- Plaza
- Make Kellogg Lake accessible
- Hotel
- Main Street
  - Remove “dead zones” – put offices upstairs
- 21<sup>st</sup> Ave
  - Neglected – sidewalk, trees, lights
  - Housing @ Milwaukie Lumber site
  - More active uses
  - Townhomes w/ retail (like North Main)
  - Street activity
  - Parking structure @ 21<sup>st</sup> and Adams
  - Science museum near Milwaukie High School (mini-OMSI)
- McLoughlin
  - Signage – restaurants, Main St., etc
  - Better access point for SB
  - Murals on backs of buildings
  - Stores on ground floor
  - Visibility, activity, accessibility
  - Tie to river – services, retail
- THE Priority
  - Redevelop / rehab with housing / office upstairs
  - Theme – connection to ‘50s?
  - Reveal and embrace history
  - Public realm – lights, signage

**Table C**

- North Downtown
  - Parking (for much of downtown)
    - Combo parking for public / downtown and businesses
  - Bring greenspace from Scott Park to Main St.
  - People don’t know where they can park
    - City Hall, Library area, etc.
    - Parking exists, people don’t know
  - Explore more residential in North area
  - Potential at Pietro’s for mixed-use w/ Pietro’s on 1<sup>st</sup> Fl, housing above or nearby
- Central Downtown
  - Dark Horse – need a museum/ more active / on upper floors
    - “we like Dark Horse – don’t want them to leave”
  - Small grocery store
  - Spruce up 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Housing near / across from City Hall
    - Need parking still

- South Downtown
  - Somewhere between Walker – Macy & C. Alexander ideas
    - Need more fine-grained than big block
  - South Downtown public spaces – good concept
  - Parking below grade and businesses @ Adams/ Wash E. of 21<sup>st</sup>
  - Cash spot
    - Parking and Development
  - More street-scape friendly
  - Infill – esp. on 21<sup>st</sup> Ave
    - Between Monroe and Washington
- THE priority for Downtown
  - More modern / better looking/ designed
  - Storefronts with ACTIVE storefronts

#### **Table D**

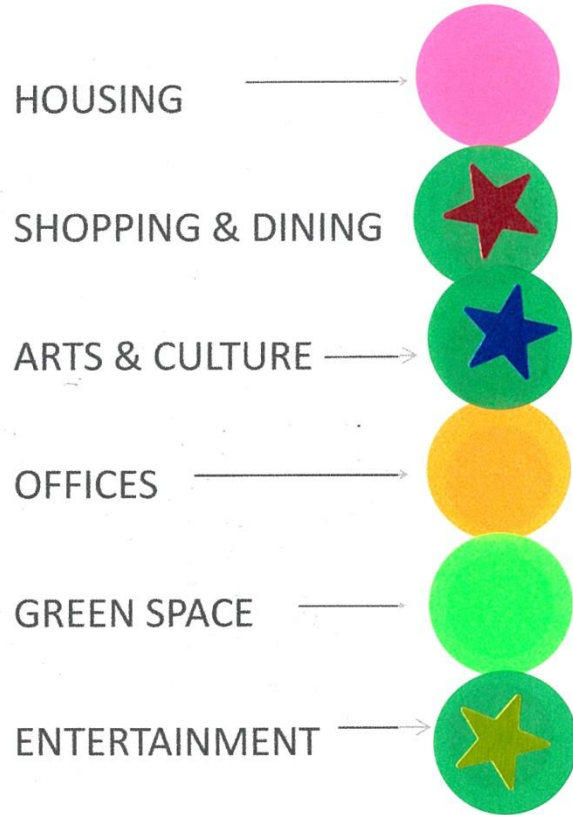
- North Downtown
  - Entryway to Downtown; improve appearance of sites and buildings
  - Better maintenance of sidewalks, trees and landscape strips
  - Use of parking spaces in front of buildings – food carts, etc.
  - Top Priority – Pedestrianization™
- Central
  - Storefront improvements
  - Key Bank façade changed
  - Local business focus
  - Rebuilding center
  - Too many banks / credit unions?
  - Events – more activity, tents to draw people downtown
  - Needs to draw to downtown from PDX
    - Waldorf, Farmers Market
  - Dark Horse – would be nice if it was more accessible for visitors, general pedestrians
  - Multi-model access
- South
  - “New Gateway”
    - brings new opportunities
    - improve look of buildings near station
    - active uses surrounding the station
    - fund lanterns
    - bike-share @ station; lockers
    - Ticket hub to buy tickets for attractions accessible via MAX
    - Pedestrian connectivity
    - Increase number of people living downtown
- THE Priority
  - High quality development, conscious

- Get people to slow down – stay a moment
- Conscious development
- Don't lose working class feel
- Get people to stay downtown
  - Get people out of their cars, high quality and conscious development, access – get people to be aware that Milwaukie is there, events, connect disconnected gems and nodes

**Table E**

- North
  - Unattractive building
  - Springwater corridor
  - Rowdy people
  - Trail, streetscape, attractive places
  - Family Friendly focus
- Central
  - Parking
    - Garage: size/scale
  - Show up differently
  - Bike parking
  - Public space
- South
  - Welcoming attractive
  - Welcome map
- McLoughlin
  - Slow traffic
    - Signals
    - As speed
  - Buildings built to property line
- THE priority
  - Tacoma – Sellwood examples
    - Traffic calming
    - Identity
  - Grocery

### Appendix F3: Group Discussion Maps



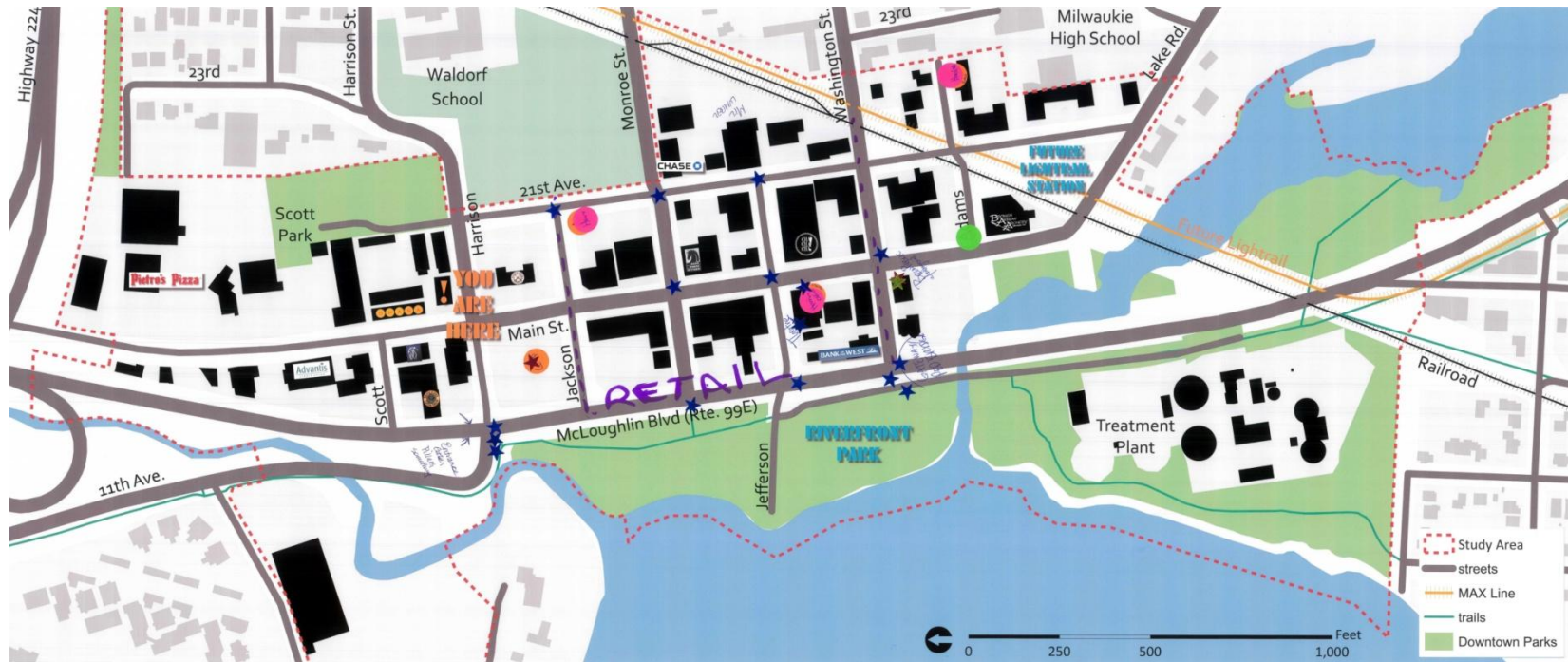
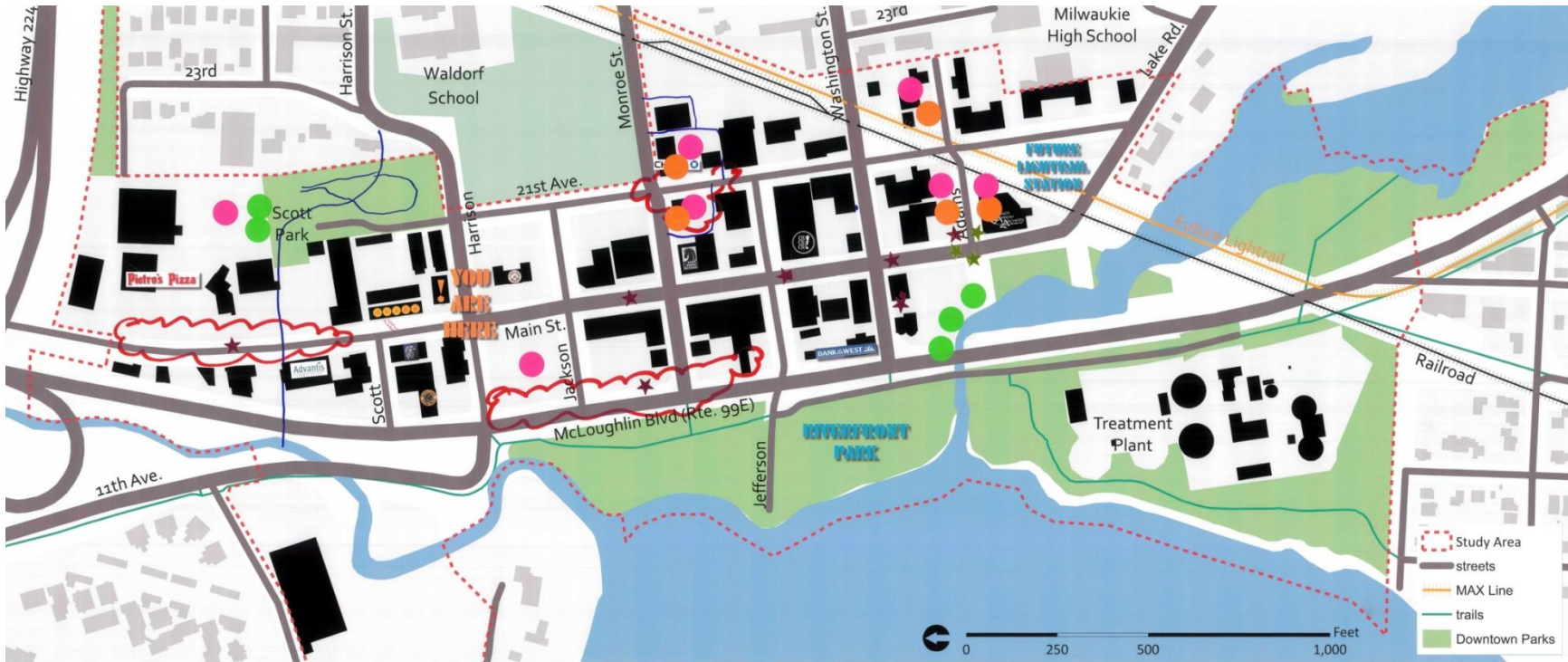




Table C





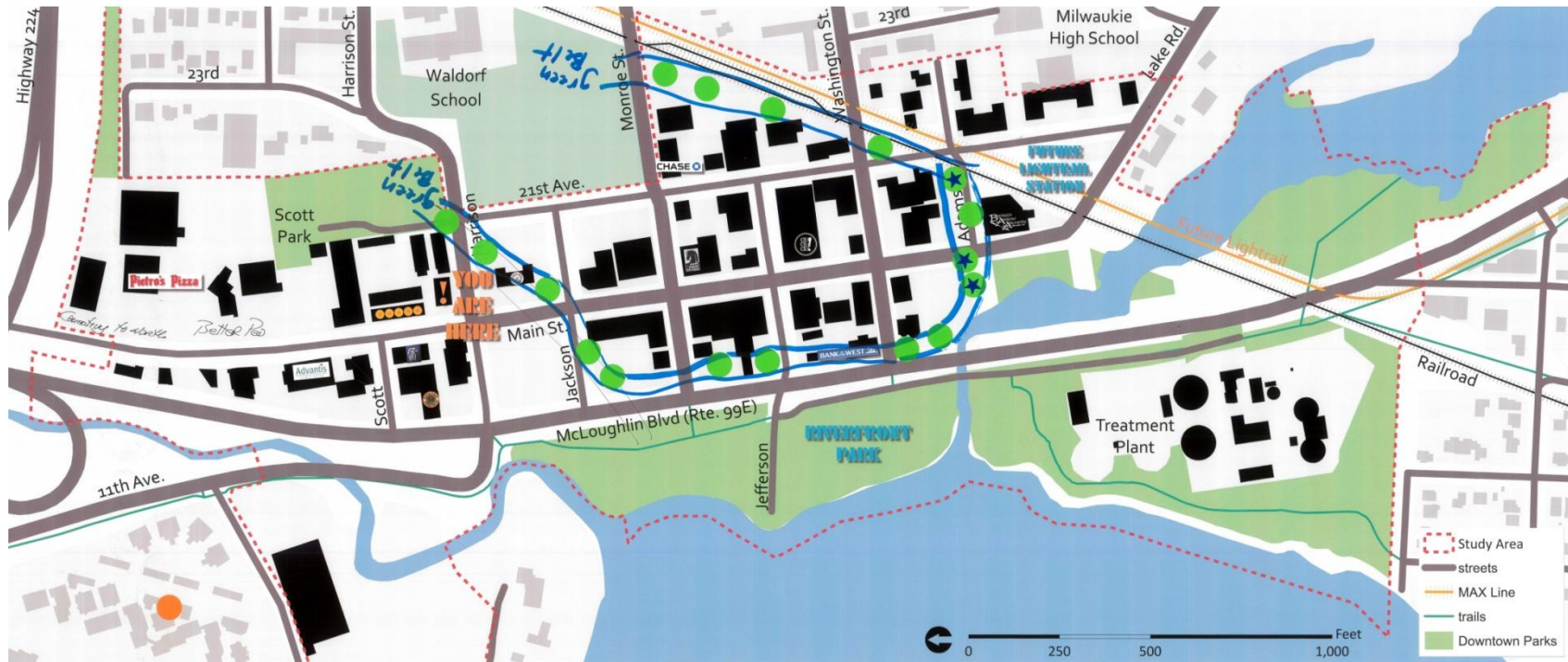
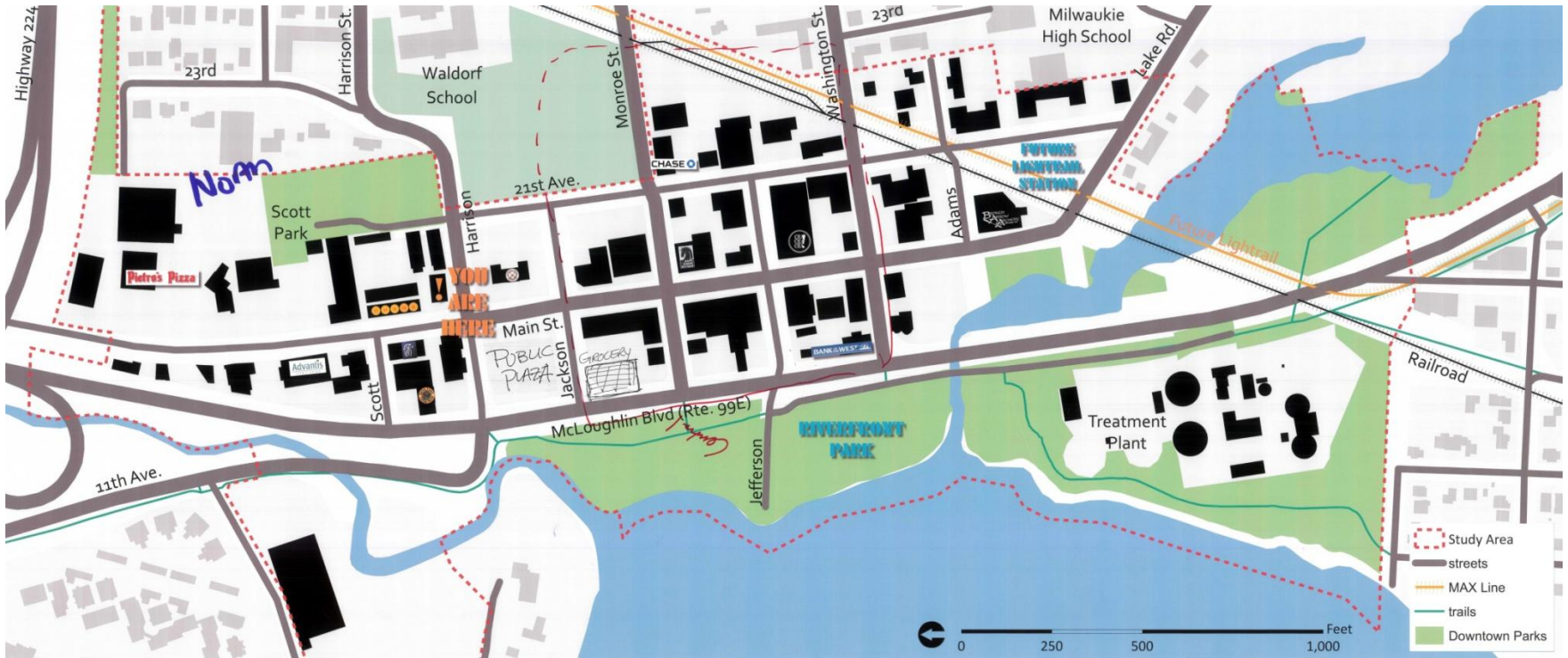


Table E



# MILWAUKIE Appendix F4: Poster Images

*Downtown City of the West*

## fresh look MILWAUKIE: downtown ROAD MAP project existing CONDITIONS

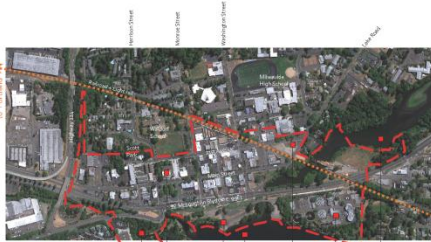


Figure 1 Aerial View of Downtown Milwaukee

**A** **DOWNTOWN AND RIVERFRONT LAND USE FRAMEWORK PLAN**  
The Downtown and Riverfront Land Use Framework Plan ("Framework Plan") was adopted in 2000. This is the guiding document for development in Downtown Milwaukee and is an ancillary document to the Milwaukee Comprehensive Plan. Its boundaries form the study area for the Fresh Look Milwaukee project.

**B** **THE SOUTH DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN**  
Adopted in 2011, the South Downtown Concept Plan is a vision for the area south of Washington between 9th (McLaughlin Boulevard) and 3rd Aves. Once codified, it will guide redevelopment and land use in preparation for the Milwaukee Light Rail Station opening in 2015. The first project to implement the plan is the Adams Street Connector project, to be completed in fall 2014.

**C** **THE MILWAUKIE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**  
The 1989 Comprehensive Plan establishes the land use and development policy for the City of Milwaukee. It classifies downtown as an area of special interest for the whole community and details planning concepts related to downtown development.

**D** **DOWNTOWN DESIGN GUIDELINES**  
The Downtown Design Guidelines were adopted in 2003 to support and complement the Framework Plan through the promotion of a consistent urban design vision and context-sensitive development. The guidelines address "Milwaukee character" architecture, signage, lighting and pedestrian elements. They are used by City staff and Milwaukee's Design/Landmarks Committee to evaluate the design of new construction and some exterior renovations.

**E** **PUBLIC AREA REQUIREMENTS**  
The Public Area Requirements (PAR) were adopted in 2000 to define and implement the circulation framework of the Framework Plan. This document defines circulation requirements for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists, guides the development of capital improvements in the public rights-of-way, and establishes standards and requirements for improvements at the time of development or redevelopment of parcels adjacent to the public right-of-way in downtown Milwaukee.

**F** **DOWNTOWN ZONING ORDINANCES**  
Zoning and Land Use regulations for downtown are addressed in Title 19, Section 194 of the Milwaukee Municipal Code (MMC). The current downtown zoning and regulations were adopted in 2000 to implement the Framework Plan. Aspects of the ordinances were revised in 2009 and early 2013. The zoning ordinances address allowed uses, dimensional standards such as building height and setbacks, design standards, residential density and applicability of design review and public area requirements.

The key question the Fresh Look Milwaukee project will answer is: To what extent existing plans, policies and regulations for Downtown Milwaukee reflect contemporary community desires, and are realistic to achieve given current conditions?

### EXISTING PLANS, POLICIES and REGULATIONS

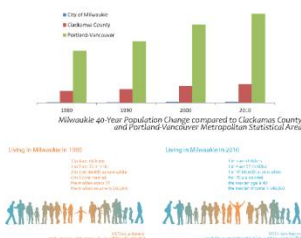
Development in Downtown Milwaukee is guided by plans and policies adopted by Milwaukee City Council. The primary documents directing downtown development were reviewed to identify planning concepts that demonstrate community values. The plans and policies guiding downtown development shared many similar characteristics at a conceptual level.

PLANNING CONCEPT	PLAN & POLICY			
	Framework Plan	South Downtown Concept Plan	Comprehensive Plan	Design Guidelines
Historical Character	X	X	X	X
River Corridor	X	X	X	X
Pedestrian Oriented	X	X	X	X
Quality of Housing	X	X	X	X
Employment Capabilities	X	X	X	X
High Resources & Open Space	X	X	X	X

Table: Shared Concepts

### SOCIAL, ECONOMIC and PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

**OVERALL POPULATION**  
The size of Milwaukee's population is growing however since 1980 it has increased more slowly than other areas in the region. The increase in regional population suggests a market demand for housing in the area that may be partially met by new development in Milwaukee. Successful examples of investing increased population demands may inform Milwaukee's response to the upcoming challenges.



**HOUSEHOLD CHANGES**  
Milwaukee reflects national and regional trends for related to shrinking household/family size and an increase in non-family households and older households. Smaller households may have smaller incomes, while older households may have a desire to either "age in place" or downsize into smaller homes that are more easily maintained. An aging population and smaller households indicate a future demand for smaller, attached and accessible or retrofit homes. The aging population in Milwaukee may seek career or be a valuable reservoir of skilled volunteers.

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Median Age	31	36	38	40
Household Composition				
Living Alone	1914 27%	2276 12%	2581 12%	2757 14%
Family Households	4887 69%	15,260 82%	12,623 62%	15,079 79%
Non-Family	284 6%	1,028 6%	1,692 8%	1,835 10%
Household Size				
1 or 2 persons	4380 60%	5078 64%	5152 65%	5752 66%
3 or 4 persons	2,248 31%	2,278 29%	2,423 28%	2,226 26%
More than 4 persons	601 8%	550 7%	640 7%	619 7%

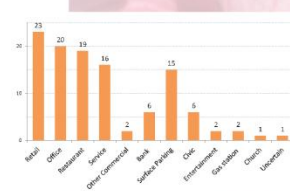
Table: Demographic Changes



**MAKING A LIVING IN MILWAUKIE**  
The City of Milwaukee is part of a regional economy. Most people who live in Milwaukee commute outside the city to work, while the majority of workers in Milwaukee reside outside the city. While large scale businesses may employ lots of people, the majority of businesses in Milwaukee are small businesses; jobs of Milwaukee businesses employ less than 10 people. New businesses downtown include specialty food, art galleries and a variety of dining venues. The Farmer's Market is a popular weekend activity and the grassroots monthly First Friday "Art à la Carte" event is also drawing people downtown.



**OBSERVED USE**  
Observed uses were recorded for each tax lot parcel. In many cases the specific business name was also recorded. The Downtown area east of McLaughlin includes Scott Park, Dogwood Park and other open spaces. Residential use consists primarily of multi-family housing at North Main Village, which consists of 64 affordable rental units and 23 market-rate townhomes and condominiums. The most common counted non-residential uses were retail, followed by offices and restaurants. Non-financial services, such as medical providers, dry cleaning, massage and insurance was also very common. Banking and other finance services are also frequently counted uses.



**OCCUPANCY and VACANCY**  
Vacancy rates are affected by the total amount of space devoted to particular uses and varied between types of uses. Total Occupancy: 139 occupied parcels were counted in the ground survey, including surface parking lots when paved and stripped for parking.

Total Vacancy: 15 vacant parcels and ground floor vacancies were observed, however "for rent" or "for lease" signage was displayed for only 7 units. In existing structures, the vacancy rate for small space was 24%, office space was 18% and 14% for services.

The vacancy counts included parcels without structures but not zoned for open space, four vacant parcels immediately adjacent to Kellogg Creek unsuitable for intensive development were therefore included in the overall vacancy count.



	Vacant	Occupied	Total	Percent
Other	6	6	12	50%
Office	3	11	14	21%
Mixed Use	1	9	11	9%
Service	1	9	10	10%
Bank	1	6	7	14%
Other Commercial	1	2	3	33%
Restaurant	1	11	12	8%
Housing - Rental	64	64	0%	
Housing	35	35	0%	
Surface Parking	15	15	0%	
Entertainment	2	2	0%	
Gas station	2	2	0%	
Church	1	1	0%	

Table: Occupancy and Vacancy

**BUILDING HEIGHTS**  
More than half of the buildings in the ground survey were single story construction (49 out of 77). Thirty five percent were 2 stories, and 9% were 3 stories. No structures higher than 3 stories were observed.





# fresh look MILWAUKIE:

## downtown ROAD MAP project

### april 1st KICKOFF EVENT

The kickoff event marked the beginning of a two-month long community engagement process. The project team (the City of Milwaukee and ALIGN Planning) were seeking to get input from as broad and diverse a range of Milwaukee community members as possible.

- Objectives**
- 1 Bring community members together to find out what their **priorities** are for future of Downtown
  - 2 Listen to their **ideas** for realizing a more thriving Downtown
  - 3 Invite them to **become involved** in future Fresh Look Milwaukee activities



**YOU ❤️ MILWAUKIE downtown because:**

- It retains its own identity and has a great transit hub. And Milwaukee Kitchen & Wine!
- You can walk to it. The library is fantastic. First Friday. Farmers Market. A few restaurants
- It is a wonderful place to be at. Safe. Quiet. And friendly community
- Small town feel, big city fun!
- Historical Background. Last developmental area w/ view of River. NDA, Council, Business, & citizen devotion to creating a great & prosperous place
- Please consider limiting buildings to 3 stories. To keep a scale that is both livable & pleasing to the eye
- It has a ton of potential. You like the scale/size, transit options (please work to ensure the max line becomes reality) and old school feel!
- You grew up here!
- Not too close. Not too far



**33 community members participated**

*Initial Themes that emerged during Group Discussion*

1. Connecting to Riverfront	10. Branding of the Downtown
2. Improve perception of Downtown - beyond McLaughlin	11. Limit buildings to 3 stories
3. Drawing people in (lodging, events, etc.)	12. North Cackamas Parks District runs parks
4. Ease of access to information/assistance with design (user friendliness)	13. Support destination with priority improvements to make city preferable: trash cleanup, building maintenance, sidewalk repair
5. Urban design	14. Business Development/Economic Resource
6. Destination location - shops, events, parks, fitness events	15. Vision/Direction
7. Milwaukee Signature events	16. Balance
8. Property maintenance - promote civic pride/ownership with list of properties to capture most important work	17. Excitement
9. Accessibility	

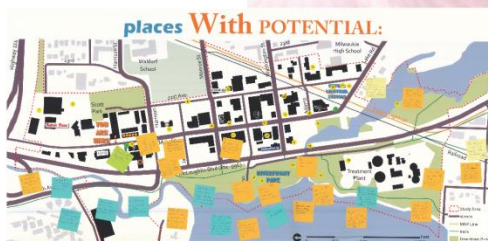
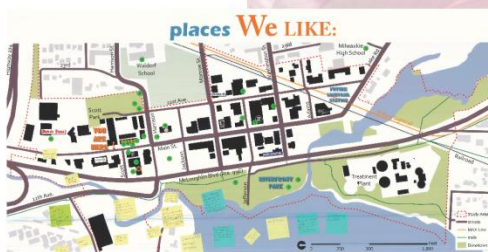
**GROUP DISCUSSION**

Steve Butler began gathering the participants and introduced the ALIGN planning team. Ryan Lemmy gave an introduction to ALIGN's involvement with the City of Milwaukee and overview of the Kick-off event. Erica Smith followed up by providing directions for the small group discussions.

ALIGN team members, City staff and event participants were divided into three small groups. The ALIGN team members facilitated the discussions while City staff took notes on the flipchart. Each participant was given about 5 minutes each to discuss four specific items.

**OPEN HOUSE**

There were two participatory activities in the beginning of the kickoff event, facilitated by ALIGN planning team members. The first activity involved participants writing down their opinion on stickers which have written on them "I Love Milwaukee because...". The second activity was a mapping exercise, where participants used a sticky dot to mark places on the map they liked or believed were places of potential. Post-it notes were also available to make comments.



**Find Milwaukee Box Themes**

Resources for Economic Development	Improve Urban Design Elements
Keep Buildings to 3 story height level	Improve Perceptions of Milwaukee
Improve Accessibility, Parking, Walkability and Visibility	Business Development and recruitment - Unified Vision and Direction
Property Maintenance and Services	Ground level businesses should be open for the public to drop by
Connecting Downtown to the Riverfront	Milwaukee Signature Events

**OUTCOME**

The kickoff event brought many different opinions together regarding the key strengths and barriers to achieving a vibrant downtown. Through the exercises and group discussions, we heard that the key strengths of Downtown Milwaukee include:

- People love downtown Milwaukee because of its small town scale and the potential to develop into a sustainable center
  - Riverfront Park is a significant part of the downtown and enjoyed by many throughout the year. However, the potential to utilize the riverfront has yet to be realized, due to the separation presented by McLaughlin Boulevard
- However, we also heard that there are barriers to achieving a vibrant downtown. Participants

identified two primary issues: **lack of attractions** in Milwaukee, and **lack of a unified vision and direction** for downtown. Outside of the occasional events, downtown Milwaukee is NOT portrayed as a destination. People often visit the downtown for short-term activities, such as dining at the local restaurants, and leave shortly thereafter.

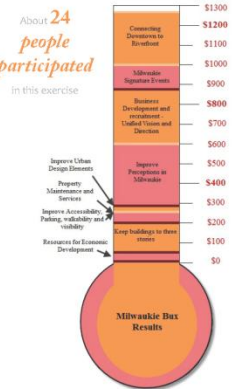
- The highest priorities identified by attendees suggest that Milwaukee needs to better connect the downtown with the riverfront; draw people from out of town with signature events; and downtown businesses need to improve recruitment and development by forming a unified vision and direction.

Although participants agreed on barriers to achieving a vibrant downtown, they did not agree on



how exactly to address these barriers. For example, one proposed method to support business owners was to provide more resources for economic development, yet this theme received the lowest amount of Milwaukee Box. In contrast, a unified business vision and direction received the 3rd highest amount of Milwaukee Box. This divergence on the exact measures of overcoming identified barriers will serve as a basis for discussion during future engagement efforts with the Milwaukee community.

About **24 people** participated in this exercise



**MILWAUKIE BOX**

After the group discussions concluded, ALIGN team members began preparations for the Milwaukee Box exercise. This exercise provided participants fake money, intended to serve as a mechanism to quantify what each participant finds as a priority as a future project focus.

This exercise was designed to prioritize participant's opinions, by providing each participant with a total of \$600, one \$100 bill and five \$20 bills. The \$100 bill represented what people felt were the highest priorities. The \$20 bills allowed for flexibility in terms of where participants placed their vote.

To begin the exercise, each group selected a group member to present the initial themes, where ALIGN team members consolidated any over-arching themes as labels onto clear jars.



find out more about the project at: [www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-milwaukee-downtown-road-map](http://www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-milwaukee-downtown-road-map)

# fresh look MILWAUKIE: downtown ROAD MAP project april 27th WALKING TOUR

The photographic activity was designed to engage those who are uncomfortable participating in group discussions, and served as an opportunity for participants to capture areas of interest in downtown Milwaukee.

- 1 A fun, engaging activity to gather opinion about what people like or don't like about specific elements of Downtown, and where they see "hidden gems," i.e. elements with potential to become a greater asset to Downtown Milwaukee
- 2 A walking tour provides an outdoors, interactive alternative that is more casual and creative than the traditional open house or workshop. Having people express their ideas through photos provided specific visual language to be included in the final report & recommendations.
- 3 This activity required fairly little effort on participant's part. We only asked them to identify areas to be photographed and we wrote a brief description/explanation of the photos.



There were a total of seven stops on the route, shown on the map above, and each stop featured between 5 and 10 minutes of group discussion.



### stop #2 [Main Street Block]

**1. What do you like about this area?**

- Walkway
- Small, unique stores
- Cleanly building facade in pavement
- Sidewalk cafe
- Landmarks like, milk, bottles, and cans

**2. What don't you like about this area?**

- Poor signs that not attract eyes
- Weather: some cars
- Dark store fronts/entrances, dark and not inviting
- Lack of green that attracts attention that not draw pedestrian to come in

**3. What are some activities would you like to see here?**

- More shops, including those on closed street
- More of a block party
- More family-friendly events
- Grocery store / food lounge
- Art display

**4. What is the physical character of downtown, how do you feel about it?**

- Historic feel
- Friendly City Hall / Riverfront & the space (the mix of historic development from the street) at the corner
- The street is not very straight. There is a slight curve to it.
- No flat or no sidewalks. No benches, some missing through the street

### stop #3 [Riverfront Park]

**1. What could better connect downtown Milwaukee to the riverfront?**

- Do something in the street level with signs to be more inviting to the walking / running
- Add more parks
- Improving the vegetation along it street
- A walk along the river
- Transit for pedestrian across the river
- More seating
- More area of natural open
- More green space throughout park. Think flower beds
- Riverfront Park grounds themselves, not just other people come down it

**2. What kinds of items would you like to see along Milwaukee street?**

- More public art
- More outdoor cafe or open
- More shops near walkway
- Seating on the sidewalk with low chairs, small tables
- More trees, bushes (the tree in the street)
- Transit for pedestrian across the river
- More seating
- More green space
- More public art/signage
- More shops
- More benches to be able to sit on the park
- More trees to be able to sit on the park
- More public art/signage
- More shops
- More benches to be able to sit on the park
- More trees to be able to sit on the park

### stop #4 [Dogwood Park]

**1. What do you like about this area?**

- View of the river
- Family entertainment - Adams Park, Casanova
- Development
- Public art

**2. What do you not like about this area?**

- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"

**3. What are some activities would you like to see here?**

- More shops, including those on closed street
- More of a block party
- More family-friendly events
- Grocery store / food lounge
- Art display

**4. What is the physical character of downtown, how do you feel about it?**

- Historic feel
- Friendly City Hall / Riverfront & the space (the mix of historic development from the street) at the corner
- The street is not very straight. There is a slight curve to it.
- No flat or no sidewalks. No benches, some missing through the street



### stop #5 [Milwaukee Lumber]

**1. What do you like about this area?**

- Cleanly paved area
- More shops
- More public art

**2. What do you not like about this area?**

- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"

**3. What are some activities would you like to see here?**

- More shops, including those on closed street
- More of a block party
- More family-friendly events
- Grocery store / food lounge
- Art display

**4. What is the physical character of downtown, how do you feel about it?**

- Historic feel
- Friendly City Hall / Riverfront & the space (the mix of historic development from the street) at the corner
- The street is not very straight. There is a slight curve to it.
- No flat or no sidewalks. No benches, some missing through the street



### stop #6 [Monroe & 21st]

**1. What do you like about this area?**

- View of the river
- Family entertainment - Adams Park, Casanova
- Development
- Public art

**2. What do you not like about this area?**

- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"

**3. What are some activities would you like to see here?**

- More shops, including those on closed street
- More of a block party
- More family-friendly events
- Grocery store / food lounge
- Art display

**4. What is the physical character of downtown, how do you feel about it?**

- Historic feel
- Friendly City Hall / Riverfront & the space (the mix of historic development from the street) at the corner
- The street is not very straight. There is a slight curve to it.
- No flat or no sidewalks. No benches, some missing through the street



### stop #7 [North Main Street]

**1. What do you like about this area?**

- View of the river
- Family entertainment - Adams Park, Casanova
- Development
- Public art

**2. What do you not like about this area?**

- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"
- Do not want "Breweries,"

**3. What are some activities would you like to see here?**

- More shops, including those on closed street
- More of a block party
- More family-friendly events
- Grocery store / food lounge
- Art display

**4. What is the physical character of downtown, how do you feel about it?**

- Historic feel
- Friendly City Hall / Riverfront & the space (the mix of historic development from the street) at the corner
- The street is not very straight. There is a slight curve to it.
- No flat or no sidewalks. No benches, some missing through the street

## SUMMARY

The walking tour provided feedback that suggests the degree to which the fundamental concepts of the Framework Plan are still relevant to the present-day Milwaukee community, as outlined below.

### 1. Reconnecting Milwaukee to the River

In light of the planned future pedestrian connection across McLaughlin that is part of the South Downtown Concept Plan and the adopted plan for Riverfront Park, the group suggested focusing on improving Downtown Milwaukee's identity and visual appeal from McLaughlin Blvd. Potential solutions included signage and festive lighting.

The group agreed that the buildings along McLaughlin Blvd should be eye catching and capitalize on the riverfront view. Examples of desired services included a bike or kayak shop, and a restaurant featuring patio seating or roof area seating to capitalize on the riverfront view.

### 2. Strengthening the Main Street "retail armature"

The walking tour participants provided feedback regarding the specifics and streetscape they would like to see in downtown Milwaukee. Along Main Street, participants generally felt that uses should include services such as a bike shop, shoe repair, and others that meet daily needs. Participants also stated a strong preference for a brew pub. Participants preferred locally owned businesses to chain businesses in order to promote Milwaukee's unique identity.

Additionally, participants felt that the wider sidewalks along some sections of Main Street (those that had been rebuilt to the current standards) are a good addition to the downtown, but prioritized additional

### 3. Revitalization of historic buildings

The participants suggest that uses that aren't typically found in downtowns, such as Milwaukee Lumber, add a historic charm to the area and do not interfere with the pedestrian experience. Generally, participants felt the design of the buildings "fit" within Downtown Milwaukee. When asked what should replace Milwaukee Lumber if the store decided to locate outside of the downtown, participants indicated that they would like to see business that provided services such as a grocery store.

### 4. Creating anchors and attractors, such as a grocery store or arts/entertainment/office campus

Participants stated a strong desire for a grocery store in downtown, which supports the concept of a grocery store as an anchor. Overall, participants felt that downtown residents don't have access to daily necessities. Participants also felt that they did not want to see more convenience stores such as those found at the gas stations. Participants were generally supportive of the future light rail station and the Adams Street Connector, and suggested that temporary uses such as food carts, and eventual permanent uses such as an ice cream store would draw the attention (and business) of light rail users.

### 5. Designing new buildings that harmonize with the town's character

Participants appreciated recent facade improvements to several buildings in downtown Milwaukee. North Main Village is the only building to be constructed in downtown in the 2000s, but participants did not discuss its design.



# fresh look MILWAUKIE: downtown ROAD MAP project community SURVEY

ALIGN planning collaborated with the City of Milwaukee to draft a survey to gather quantitative and qualitative data to complement findings from other community engagement activities.

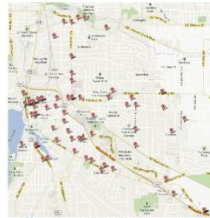
This survey was a community engagement effort for the Fresh Look Milwaukee: Downtown Road Map ("Fresh Look Milwaukee") project, and was intended to engage Milwaukee community members both within and outside of the downtown area. The results of the survey provide a basis for determining whether the current plans for downtown align with the community values and desires.



- 1 residents could complete the survey online at [www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-downtown-milwaukee-project](http://www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-downtown-milwaukee-project)
- 2 or return it in person or by mail to  
6101 SE Johnson Creek Blvd, Milwaukee, OR 97206
- 3 or use one of two drop boxes provided at  
City Hall or Ladd Library

## SUMMARY of Findings

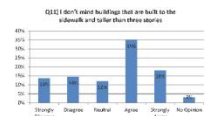
The following summarizes the key findings based on areas of agreement, divergence and disagreement. An overarching theme that emerges is the desire for both variety and amount of retail and service businesses in Downtown Milwaukee, namely a grocery store.



### AREAS OF AGREEMENT:

**Increasing the variety of shops and things to do in Downtown Milwaukee**  
Responses indicate that visits to downtown are mostly on a weekly basis. Results from Q8 suggest that 56% visit on a daily basis. Results from Q9 suggest that most respondents visit Downtown Milwaukee to shop on a weekly basis, or less (67%). Lastly, events in downtown draw visitors on a monthly basis, or less (46%).  
In response to this, respondents indicated they would visit downtown more often if there were an increase in the variety of shops and services. Results from Q25 indicate that 71% would visit downtown more often if there were more variety of places to shop. Additionally, 60% of

responses from Q25 indicated increased desire to shop downtown more if there were more places to shop. Further, 36% of the written responses to Q25 presented an overarching desire for increasing the variety of places to shop, particularly one for the basic needs, commercial places (i.e. clothing shop) and a grocery store.  
The support for a grocery store also emerged throughout the survey. Results from Q25 indicated that 56% expressed desire for a grocery store, which would increase their desire to visit downtown more often. Further, the 46% of the written responses from Q25 and 31% of the written responses from Q38 presented an overarching desire for a grocery store. The significance of Q27 and Q38 should be considered



### AREAS OF DIVERGENCE:

**Parking in Downtown**  
In regards to parking in Downtown, there was some concern raised throughout the questions. Results from Q4 indicate that 64% agree that they can find parking in downtown. Additionally, 12% of the written responses from Q22 stated desire for more parking. Lastly, 23% of the responses from Q25 and 21% of the responses from Q26 indicated they would shop or visit downtown more often if there were more parking, respectively.

**The need for wider sidewalks**  
Respondents of Q5 were divided, as half agreed and the other half disagreed that they would trade on-street parking for wider sidewalks. However, 65% of the responses from Q31 indicate that wider sidewalks with outdoor seating make up a vibrant downtown.



**Ground level Use and Design**  
In terms of applying design standards, such as wider sidewalks and windows to other streets in Downtown Milwaukee, responses

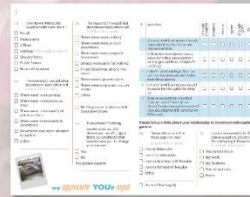
indicated mixed opinions. Q3 indicated a range of 39% to 44% of those who supported applying design standards to Main Street, McLaughlin Blvd and 21st Ave. However, there was also a range of 21% to 30% who indicated neutral opinions on this matter. Conversely, responses from



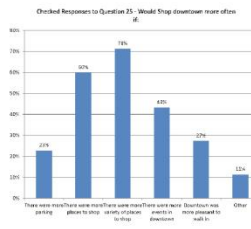
Online  
hard-copies



find out more about the project at: [www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-milwaukee-downtown-road-map](http://www.ci.milwaukee.or.us/planning/fresh-look-milwaukee-downtown-road-map)



## 47 questions!



Analyzed  
over 130  
surveys  
(online & hardcopy)

to a high degree, given that the responses were open ended and not structured like the other survey questions.

Lastly, respondents generally agree that the following elements make a vibrant downtown:

- Increased variety of shopping options (92%)
- Increased variety of dining options (82%)
- Places to quickly eat and shop during a workday (75%)
- A destination for meeting daily needs (i.e. grocery shopping) (80%)



in English &  
Spanish

Q9 indicated support (65%) for ground level businesses to have windows that one can see into as they travel by.

Further, the results for Q11 indicate mixed opinions. Half of the respondents (53%) indicated support for buildings that are built to the sidewalk and taller than three stories. Less than half (28%) disagree or felt strongly in regards to the question.

In terms of ground level uses, responses indicated mixed opinions. In regards to uses on ground level uses on Main Street, Q20 indicated that half (50%) of the respondents supported office development. Further, responses from Q24 indicated divided opinions, where half (53%) supported the desire for ground level businesses to be open to the public. However, 45% of responses from Q23 indicate that the use type of ground

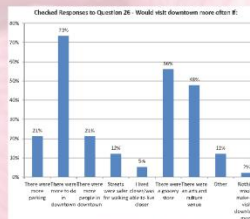
level business does not matter, provided it still provides a pleasant pedestrian experience. Additionally, responses from Q23 indicated support for a mix of both office and high traffic retail (33%).

### Challenges to businesses in Downtown

In terms of challenges for downtown businesses, respondents indicated desire for an increased variety of retail and services that fulfill daily needs. In Q22, 20% of the responses provided indicated responses of "other," of those written responses, 44% believe that the biggest challenge for downtown businesses is the need for retail and services which fulfill daily shopping needs. Half of those responses cited examples of other destinations which people go to fulfill their shopping

### Continue providing support for public spaces

Public spaces should be considered in future development of Downtown Milwaukee. Results from Q2 indicate that most respondents (63%) would visit downtown more often if there were more public spaces to visit or use. Results from Q13 indicate support for pedestrian-oriented "pocket parks" and plazas as part of new development in downtown Milwaukee (72%).



### Needs, namely the Milwaukee Market Place

Lastly, 11% of the written results from Q39 indicated that in order to realize some of the desires from Q28, respondents expressed a unified business voice with a strategy to increase marketing and attract outside investment. Additionally 10% of the written response suggested that incentives and funding would also help progress efforts for realizing desired development, namely a grocery store.



# fresh look MILWAUKIE: downtown ROAD MAP project april 30th BUSINESS KLATCH

This event was open to downtown business owners and available as a morning or evening session. An online scheduling platform, Doodle, was used to identify times of availability for events. Over 150 letters were left with businesses in addition to personalized emails sent to businesses licensed by the City of Milwaukee, within the Downtown Study Area.

## Business Owners

- shared their experience in downtown Milwaukee
- shared barriers they experience
- told us what they would like to see

ALIGN Planning has interviewed several business owners, and heard different things from each individual. The Business Owners Coffee Klatch was an informal gathering held by ALIGN planning and the City of Milwaukee that allowed for business owners as a whole to discuss issues, identify common issues and propose solutions to a specific issue, which are ultimately shared with one another.



### discussion QUESTIONS

#### Business Owner Issue Identification

1. As a business owner in Milwaukee, do you also happen to live in the city?
2. What is it about Downtown Milwaukee that attracted you to do business here?
3. Where else have you considered opening up a business?  
- How does Milwaukee stack up to those other places?
4. How will light-rail impact your business?
5. Is parking an issue for your business? If so what kind of challenges does it present?
6. Feedback from our outreach activities suggests that community members believe a unified business vision for downtown would have a really positive impact on the city's image.  
- Do you think this vision exists? If not, why?

#### Solution Seeking

1. An initiative that could help resolve that issue (e.g. Improvement district)?
2. What would it take in Milwaukee to make that happen?
3. How would this impact your business in Milwaukee?



### Responses to INITIAL ISSUE questions

Overall, attendees identified the following key issues:

- Parking challenges
- Lack of a unified business vision
- Potential impacts of light rail (PM session)
- Lack of foot traffic for customer base - outside of events such as the Farmers market. (PM session)

17% of all business owners believe they will not experience any impacts due to light rail, as they are located at the North end of the town.

Is parking an issue for your business? If so what kind of challenges does it present?

76% of all business owners that participated believe that

there is a parking issue for business owners. Concerns were specifically in regards to the lack of employee parking - largely in part due to the "parking shuffle" game with the 2 hour zones and constantly having to rotate spots.

17% state that they are experiencing impacts to parking due to light rail construction. Feedback from our outreach activities is that community members feel like a unified business-driven vision for downtown would have a really positive impact on the city's image. Do you think this vision exists? If not, why?

Overall, 64% of participants believe there isn't a unified business vision but have a desire for such. The challenge in accomplishing such a task was establishing communication

between business owners.

- In the morning session, 5% of business owners revealed efforts to unify businesses but noted that the "piecemeal" efforts were not working
- In the afternoon session, 42% of participants cited difficulty in terms of communications with ongoing efforts of the business associations.

Additional Experiences Shared and Issues Identified not associated with questions:

- 11% of business owners shared positive experiences with the City's financial impact of SDC and PAR fees, recruitment of "quality" businesses, and communications with the city

17 downtown  
Milwaukee business  
owners participated

### Transition - Summary of FEEDBACK

While there are some differences in experiences, both parking and a shared business vision are common concerns. Carine suggested that the group discusses solutions that businesses working together can implement.

One participant requested a City response to issues, regarding timing of implementing solutions to issues raised. Steve Butler provided information regarding the Commercial Core Enhancement Program, which includes a "retreat" of downtown codes and policies. Steve also commented that the best way for the City to work

together with businesses is for them to have a single business association.

All those in the afternoon session agreed on the following as issues:

- There is a lack of foot traffic, outside of the traffic generated by events such as the Farmers market.
- In regards to vacancies, was discussion of landlords who charge rents that they believe are too high for downtown.
- Parking is an issue for business owners, namely the lack of spaces available.



### SUMMARY

#### ATTRACTIVE FACTORS OF DOING BUSINESS in Downtown Milwaukee

Most business owners (47%) that work in Milwaukee do not live within the city. However, business owners are attracted to Downtown Milwaukee because of reasonable rents (88%), the opportunity for growth in downtown (41%) and personal preference (41%). For those that have considered opening a business elsewhere or have in the past, responses suggest that Downtown Milwaukee is less expensive in comparison to areas such as Cresham or Portland. Additionally, participants shared positive experiences with a city-led facade improvement program (11%).

#### ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Participants identified three main issues:

- Parking, in regards to space availability for employees and lack of a mechanism to establish spots (i.e. parking permit)
- The lack of foot traffic for a consistent customer base (PM session)
- Desire to create a unified business vision

There is a divide between how light rail will impact 33% of the business owners. Of those impacted, 17% consider light rail an opportunity to make Milwaukee a shopping destination. Others indicated impacts related to construction, as their business is located in the construction area (11%). Lastly, 17% of business owners believe

they will experience no impacts due to being located at the north end of Downtown Milwaukee.

A majority of business owners indicated that parking is an issue in downtown for business owners (76%). The primary concern raised is the lack of dedicated spots for on-site parking for employees. Other concerns include hardships endured by customers, due to parking far from the business they are visiting.

Overall, 64% of business owners indicated a desire to create a unified business vision; 5% acknowledged that efforts were already in place. However, the afternoon session indicated that some of the barriers include getting business owners to be more cohesive and communicative with one another (41%).

2 sessions:  
8 AM and 6 PM

@ the Pond  
House

#### SOLUTION SEEKING

In regards to parking, business owners shared ideas and options to address parking needs. Among those discussed, the potential solutions included signs that would better clarify the 15 minute block rule, and/or the extension of restrictions to Saturday for addressing traffic generated by weekend events. Permit parking was also a desired option to address the issue of employee parking. 11%



of the business owners also discussed possibilities of renting out spots, though the challenge is the availability during normal working hours.

Lastly, 11% of the participants in the afternoon session agreed that there needs to be more business cohesion and better communication between business owners in regards to organizing a business association.

17% of business owners also indicated that more cohesion may be attractive to bringing more business owners to Downtown Milwaukee.

# fresh look MILWAUKIE: downtown ROAD MAP project one on one INTERVIEWS



This following is a synthesis of results from a total of 30 interviews, conducted by the ALIGN planning team. The respondents represent a wide variety of groups, some representing more than one. The groups that was outreached to include:

The interviews present an opportunity to get a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the interviewee's experience with downtown Milwaukee. The interviews were informal and often one-on-one with a ALIGN team member.

Contacted **50+**  
**community**  
**members**

for one-on-one interviews

- **d**owntown business owners
- **n**eighborhood district representatives
- **C**ity officials
- **r**esidents of Milwaukee
- **r**epresentatives of minority groups
- **a**rtists
- **e**lderly
- **d**isabled

### What are the top three things you most appreciate about Downtown Milwaukee?

The majority of respondents shared the same sentiments in regards to the characteristics they most appreciated in downtown. The food and local restaurants was the most frequently mentioned (50%). Others shared their appreciation for the small places to visit in downtown, particularly the Leading Library, parks or even City Hall (35%).

Respondents also indicated appreciation for the small town character of downtown Milwaukee, particularly the size in comparison to larger downtown areas, such as Fortland, and feeling safe on the street (25%).

Talked to **over**  
**200** Milwaukee  
**community**  
**members!**



### OUTCOME

Among the obstacles mentioned to preventing positive things in downtown, there were three overarching themes: overly restrictive zoning regulations, lack of business vision and initiative, and negative perceptions from the Milwaukee community.

Lastly, respondents mentioned that some of the Milwaukee community is 'stuck in the past', holding grudges against the city and former political figures. As a result, this has hindered progressive actions and fragmented the business associations into three groups. Further, some of the Milwaukee Community have a sense of NIMBYism for future development in downtown, particularly the light rail. Thus, achieving community consensus both in the business realm and citizens has often become a subject of contention.

Other qualities of this appreciation include that respondents felt downtown Milwaukee was less busy, congested and had a more community feel to it.

Other things appreciated by respondents include the proximity of Downtown to nearby cities (85%), the farmer's market and other events such as Milwaukee Daze or First Friday (85%).

Additionally, respondents indicated appreciation for Riverfront Park (14%) and the Milwaukee people, in terms of its friendly aura (14%).

### What are three things that are missing or one challenge areas in Downtown Milwaukee?

Overall, respondents agree that one of the things missing from downtown is a grocery store, to support daily needs (46%). Other respondents (25%) suggested that downtown Milwaukee needs to be more of a destination, as it lacks that special draw to attract visitors, as opposed to going to fulfill their shopping/daily needs at more convenient locations (i.e. Cacklemas Town Center).

Respondents were also concerned with the negative perceptions of both the city and persons involved in past tensions - as a consequence, respondents suggested there is difficult in moving forward (25%).

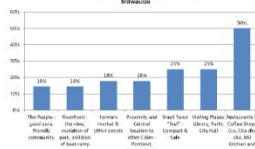
### KEY OUTCOMES:



As suggested by the results from the interviews, the small scale of Downtown Milwaukee is an attribute worth preserving, as part of future development. The small scale provides an environment that is less congested and more community focused. Downtown Milwaukee has great potential with the addition of a future light rail station and as the South downtown concept plan becomes more realized.



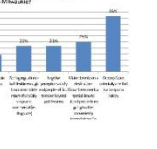
Interview Responses: Top 3 things you most appreciate about Downtown Milwaukee



Others also suggested that the zoning regulations as it currently stands, is not flexible enough to accommodate the desire for mixes of specialty shops and commercial stores, such as a drug store (25%).

There were other concerns raised as well. Among those concerns include the desire to address parking issues, due to concerns of increased traffic from light rail or the 'parking shuffle' game (4%). The lack of a unified business vision to attract more investors and developers (4%), the desire for more upscale restaurants (14%), and the desire to fill downtown vacancies (15%).

Interview Responses: Top 3 things that are missing or one challenge areas in Downtown Milwaukee



Although the farmers market generates a successful turnout, it is clear that beyond events such as this, there isn't much left to do in downtown Milwaukee. One part of this issue is due to the nature of restaurants, as people visit on a short term basis. The other part of this is due to the lack of retail development, which was damaged by difficult economic times and currently not compelling enough to attract more of a customer base.

Two actions have been suggested by the interviews to help alleviate the lack of retail. On part of the city, it was suggested current zoning regulations do not allow for any other uses outside of retail, thus leaving most of the retail storefronts vacant. Consequently, the lack of tenants has prevented some business owners from expanding or improving their

building, thereby presenting the downtown with a negative perception. While the vision of a ground floor restaurant and retail requirement is desirable, it is not currently realistic. Rather, an interim plan is necessary to alleviate this, it was suggested that businesses to promote more active uses on Main Street, in hopes of eventually generating the necessary density to support ground floor retail and restaurants.

The other action that was made clear is the lack of funding mechanisms to provide services for businesses, yet most owners don't wish to contribute. To alleviate this, it was suggested that business owners should be more cohesive and work together to form a business community plan, which is realistic to current economic conditions. The idea is that if business

### QUESTIONS asked

1. What is your relationship to downtown?
2. How do you travel to downtown?
3. What are characteristics/strengths of downtown that you most appreciate?
4. What are your top three opportunities to build on strengths of downtown? Why?
5. What are three things you think are missing in Downtown OR three challenge areas that need improvement?
6. What are the three biggest obstacles to getting positive things to happen in downtown? Why?

### What are the top three opportunities to build on strengths of Downtown Milwaukee?

Most respondents shared that one of the top opportunities in downtown Milwaukee is to build on the momentum of the future light rail station and concepts from the South Downtown Concept Plan, particularly the Adams Street Connector project and Dogwood Park (36%). Reasons given include: it would provide more amenities and attract travelers to visit downtown Milwaukee more often.

Other responses were oriented to bringing more mix of retail and service businesses to downtown, including a grocery store (25%). Respondents also recommended lightening up the zoning restrictions, in order to encourage a mixture of uses and attract more residential developers (25%).

Held one-on-one  
**interviews**  
with **30**  
**stakeholders!**

### What are the three biggest obstacles to getting things done in Milwaukee?

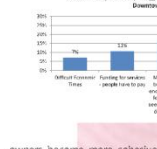
According to the responses, the biggest obstacle of getting things done in Milwaukee is getting past negative perceptions, as some are due to no desire for changes and others for fear of the unknown (25%). An example provided by respondents include the light rail, in regards to how some do not desire it, yet reasons are linked to their fear of the unknown.

Another obstacle was the 'roadblock' that are imposed by regulations (25%). Respondents suggest that regulations are generally too prescriptive and are not sensitive to market realities, particularly the current economic conditions being volatile to support retail. Respondents suggested that to alleviate this, loosening the regulations to allow for more variety would

better serve the Downtown. Respondents who were developers also cited concerns for pending out potential residential developments, due to perceptions of costly design regulations.

Respondents also suggested that there is a lack of marketing and branding to attract more foot traffic, which is necessary to attract the needed density

Interview Responses: Top 3 biggest obstacles to getting things done in Downtown Milwaukee



uses that still promote active ground uses, rather than be too prescriptive with restaurants and retail, which is suggested to be narrowly defined. Without this, the city will be relying on any density generated by the light rail station, to which the effects are unknown and may be limited.

In summary, the interviews provide a backdrop to the current economic conditions of downtown Milwaukee. Business owners will need to provide support amongst themselves and band together in order to set forth goals and mechanisms to achieve their objectives. However, the city should also consider incentive strategies to attract developers, which can be non-monetary in nature, such as the lifting of certain restrictions. The city should also consider an interim solution to lift development restrictions on Main Street for

Respondents also recommended ways to capitalize off existing momentum in the downtown. Among these options were to build on the art community, by encouraging more public art and potentially allowing for spaces to be available for some sort of gallery (25%). Other responses suggested focusing on attracting the influx of parents drawn by the Waldorf School, by providing more family friendly activities in downtown Milwaukee (85%).

Lastly, there was much overlap in terms of other opportunities to build on the strengths of Downtown, such as the views of the riverfront, need for more residential with ground level store fronts, or other types of activities in downtown (14% for each).



to support the desired urban amenities, such as a grocery store (85%). Additionally, respondents suggested there is a lack of funding mechanisms to provide services, as most business owners in downtown don't want to pay (15%). Without this initiative, the downtown is essentially relying on anticipated density from the future light rail, in order to provide the demand necessary for businesses to thrive.