

# Staunton Downtown Development Association's Customer Perception and Behavior Survey Summary Remarks

January 25, 2017

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The following points present the consultants overarching conclusions based on the survey data from Staunton Downtown Development Association's Customer Perception and Behavior Survey Summary. They represent the opinions of the consultant based on experience in evaluating survey data in communities. The following points represent "highlights" of the data and can serve as an executive summary of key findings.

- The survey had a high participation rate. While the survey was not intended as a random sample, 871 respondents represents a large response number when compared with similar surveys. In our experience, only one jurisdiction had a larger number of participants and Staunton had a 3.5% participation rate based on the population of the City. It is important to note, however, that the survey was not limited to City of Staunton residents.
  - To that end, 9.3% of the respondents indicated they lived in Downtown Staunton, and additional 37.5% lived in the City, 24.7% lived in Augusta County, and the balance were students, residents of Waynesboro, and from other locales.
  - 78.4% of the respondents were women. Women drive 70-80% of all consumer purchasing decisions nationally.
  - The age and race of the respondents mirrors that of the broader population and serves as an indicator that the survey has representation from a broad base of the population.
  - Overall, the attitudes toward downtown Staunton are very positive. Out of 10 factors downtown ranked at or above 4 on a 5 point scale in customer service, variety of dining options, and quality dining options. Downtown ranked above 3.5 in business variety, shopping options, exciting events and activities, and variety of family dining. Downtown ranked above 3 in preferred shopping location and variety of entertainment. Only one factor, nightlife, factored below 3 at 2.9.
  - Downtown Atmosphere also ranked high with 13 out of 15 factors ranking above 3.0 and 6 ranking at 4.0 or above. Only "the reason I moved to Staunton" ranked below 3.0 at 2.8.
  - Downtown functionality had very high indicators as well. The top indicators were safety at 4.4, walkable at 4.3, attractive buildings at 4.3, safe at 4.1, clean at 4.1, and attractively landscaped at 4.1. Lower factors were bike friendly at 3.0, enough green space at 3.0, affordable living at 3.2, and convenient pet stations at 3.1
  - While many respondents indicated ranked parking above average (3.0), the open ended comments section of the survey had many comments about parking availability, timing, convenience, and related issues. Overall parking issues scored in the 3.0-3.9 range with adequate vehicle signs ranking highest, and conveniently located charging stations lowest.
  - 56% of respondents shopped downtown at least once a month and 68% dined downtown at least once a month.
  - The favorite business in downtown Staunton is Bufferbellies.
  - The most popular locations outside of downtown Staunton to shop were major big box stores in Waynesboro.
  - The Farmers Market was the most popular event in downtown Staunton with the American Shakespeare Center as a close second.
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- Green space emerged as a major issue with many open ended comments about adding green space and 52% of respondents indicating that they would spend more time downtown with dedicated green space. The comments offer up a broader definition of green space from small pocket parks, to broader sidewalks, to plazas and gathering spots that are not necessarily all “green.”
  - 24.8% of respondents received the “Downtown Lowdown” from the SDDA and 17.7% of the respondents had the Downtown Discount Card. (an additional 50.6% wanted the Downtown Discount Card but didn’t currently have it.)
  - Content from Friends’ Facebook pages was the number one digital format that respondents received information about downtown Staunton at 44.8%, the SDDA Facebook page ranked high at 35.8%.
  - An evaluation of the open ended question about needs in downtown Staunton revealed that Green Space and parks ranked number one, Parking issues ranked two, and more restaurants/dining options ranked three.
  - The number one response on the open ended question “Please indicated anything you would like to add about Downtown Staunton not already covered” was “Love Downtown Staunton.”
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