

**Lombard Downtown Vision**  
*Visioning Summary*

**March 20, 2009**



## Introduction

Houseal Lavigne Associates was retained by the Village of Lombard to assist in facilitating a community outreach process related to planning for the future of the Downtown. This effort was designed to follow up on previous internal initiatives that began in 2003.

This latest exercise was structured to solicit resident and business owner input on issues pertaining to the Downtown as a whole as well as the former Du Page Theatre and Hammer-schmidt sites. A wide range of issues were discussed ranging from parking and circulation to shopping and dining habits.

Four different Visioning Workshops were held in January and February of 2009. The visioning workshops were supplemented by a project website and online questionnaire that allowed for those unable to attend the meetings to participate in the visioning process.

Considerable effort was made to publicize the workshops and the visioning process. In addition to the website, several press releases were prepared for area newspapers and over 1,300 letters were sent to Downtown business/property owners and residents.

The workshops were facilitated by Houseal Lavigne Associates and Village Community Development staff utilizing an Audience Response System (ARS). ARS allows participants to use a keypad to enter a response when prompted by a question. Audience responses were then integrated into a PowerPoint presentation that directly engaged participants in a "real time" display of results.

Responses to survey questions were used as catalysts to explore larger planning issues. Impromptu questions were also added to the presentations as discussions evolved and more detail was warranted. Overall, the format and content of questions asked were designed to be consistent across all workshop presentations. This allowed for a cross tabulation of responses that helped identify those responses that

represented universal opinions or issues that were unique to a common group of participants (e.g. Downtown business owners).

The first workshop, held on January 22, 2009, was intended for residents living within the downtown area. The Downtown TIF District was used as a starting point for defining Downtown boundaries. Neighbors on the periphery of this area were also invited. Several residents from outside of the designated area attended and participated in the discussion as well. Approximately 49 people were in attendance at the meeting.

The second workshop was held on January 29, 2009 for business and commercial property owners within Downtown Lombard. Questions were specifically geared toward business related issues. Approximately 26 people attended representing a good cross section of business owners.

The third and fourth workshops were open to all Lombard residents. The meetings, held on February 2 and February 10, were structured to solicit the input and opinions of anyone in the Village that did not participate in the first meetings. Those meetings were slightly less attended with 19 and 26 residents respectively.

While the last workshop was held on February 10, the online questionnaires remained available to residents and business owners until March 1. At the conclusion, over 250 residents and 9 business owners completed the online questionnaires. The questionnaires and workshop results were then analyzed individually and cross tabulated to assess the data collectively.

This document is intended to provide context to the Visioning Study by highlighting issues, concerns and potential opportunities raised during the course of conducting the workshops and on-line questionnaires. The Visioning Study is not a final step, but rather a starting point for elected officials and the community to identify strengths, weaknesses, desires and strategies for Downtown Lombard. The results and data from the individual workshops and questionnaires are included in the appendix.



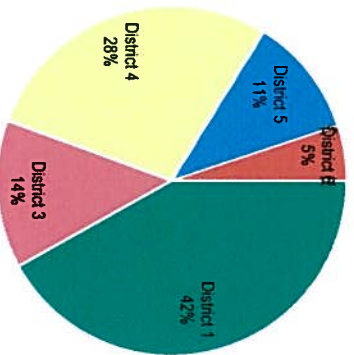


## Attendance and Participation

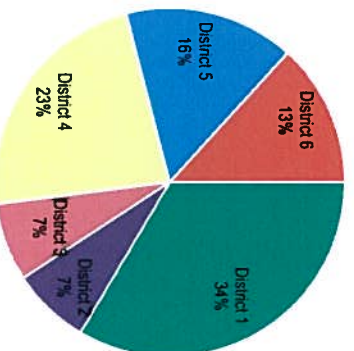
Although the Downtown is primarily in Districts 1 and 4, residents attending the workshops and taking the online questionnaire came from all areas of the Village.

- Residents from Districts 1 and 4 comprised nearly 88% of the Downtown Resident workshop attendance.
- Participants in the community-wide workshops and on-line questionnaire were from a variety of districts, namely District 1 (32.0%), District 4 (22.7%), and District 5 (16.5%).
- While the great majority of business workshop and on-line questionnaire participants operated businesses in Districts 1 and 4, a significant proportion (17.1%) were located in District 3.

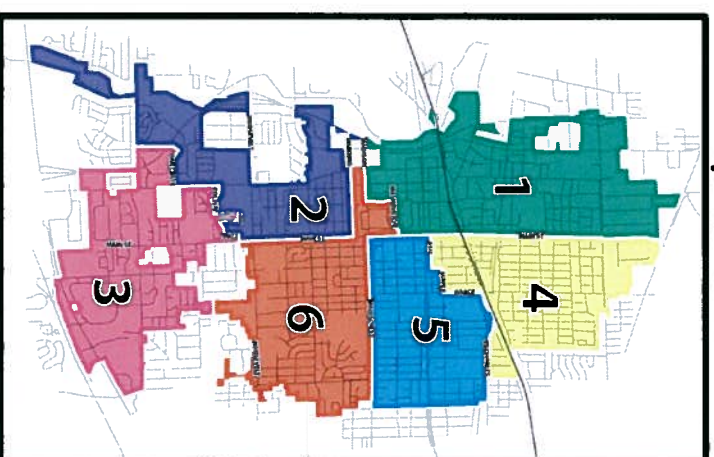
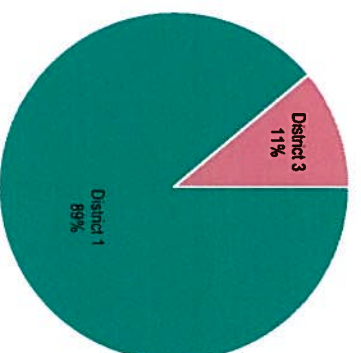
**Visioning Participation by District -  
Workshop Participants**



**Visioning Participation by District -  
Online Residents**



**Visioning Participation by District -  
Online Businesses**



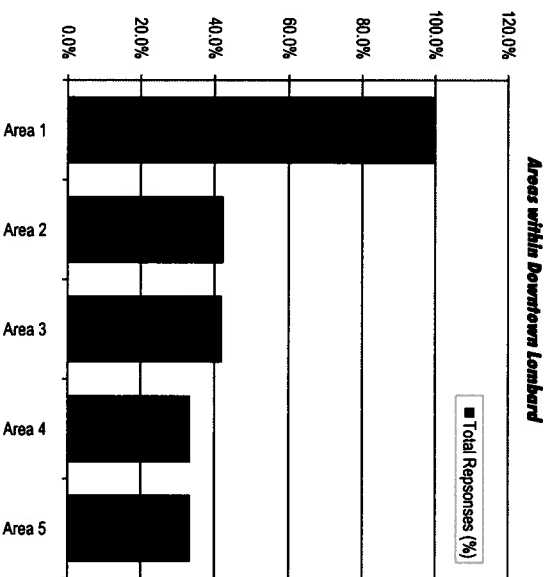
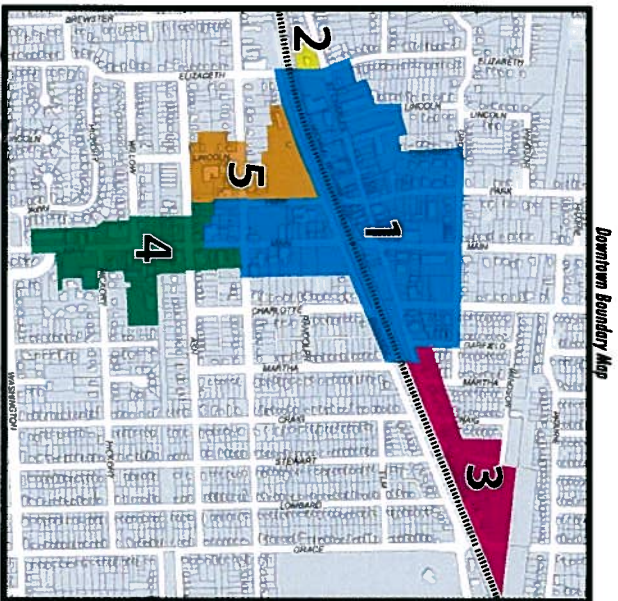
**Village of Lombard Tractee Districts**

## Downtown Defined

Participants were asked to define how they perceive the boundaries of Downtown based on a map with five distinct areas highlighted. An additional question asked whether areas along St. Charles Road east to Westmore/Meyers Road and west to Finley Road, were considered to be part of the Downtown. Nearly all respondents felt that the far east and west extensions were not part of the Downtown. However, with the exception of the core Downtown area highlighted by the TIF boundaries, there was a somewhat mixed view of what constituted the makeup of the remainder of Downtown Lombard.

A higher percentage of Workshop participants than Online Questionnaire respondents indicated that they considered the areas outside of Area 1 to constitute the Downtown. More than half of all Workshop respondents considered Areas 2 through 5 to be part of the Downtown while no more than 40% of online respondents indicated any area outside of Area 1.

For some, the delineation is based on geographic barriers and others on use. While development is spread throughout the area, there are gaps in uses that create a perceptual boundary. As those gaps are filled, the public perception of those areas being part of the Downtown will likely increase.



## Mix of Uses

The majority of residents and business representatives stated a desire for a larger mix of uses in the Downtown. In general, residents indicated that a larger number of businesses were needed to make the Downtown more attractive. Residents stated on several occasions that Downtown Lombard needed more shopping, dining and entertainment establishments in order to bring them to the area more frequently.

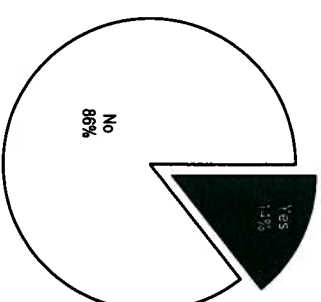
While support of local establishments was indicated, there was not a significant preference as to whether new development should include national or local retailers. However, business owners did indicate a preference to see additional local businesses in the Downtown.

Workshop and Questionnaire highlights include the following:

- Nearly 9 out of 10 participants indicated a desire for a greater mix of uses Downtown.
- 77% of all participants identified a need for attracting a larger mix of retail and dining as the one of the biggest challenges facing Downtown Lombard.
- Further discussion revealed that it was felt that expanding entertainment related uses was also necessary to revitalize Downtown.

The intent of the questions on mix of use was to formulate a starting point for more detailed responses regarding retail, dining, entertainment and office uses. That data follows.

**Overall, do you perceive the current mix of uses in Downtown sufficient?**



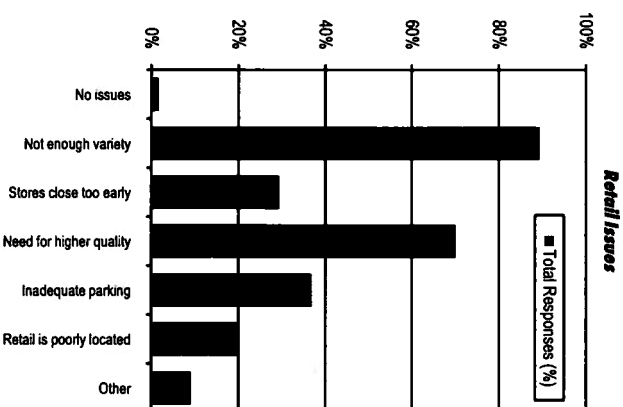
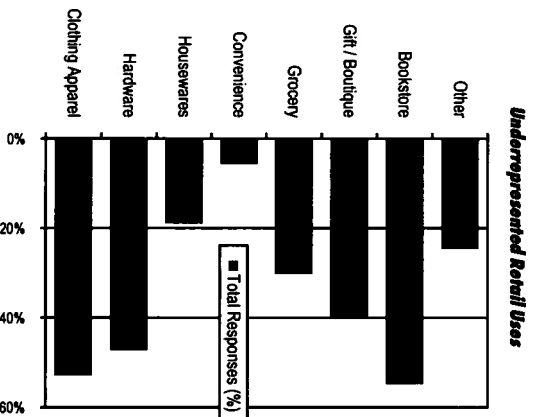
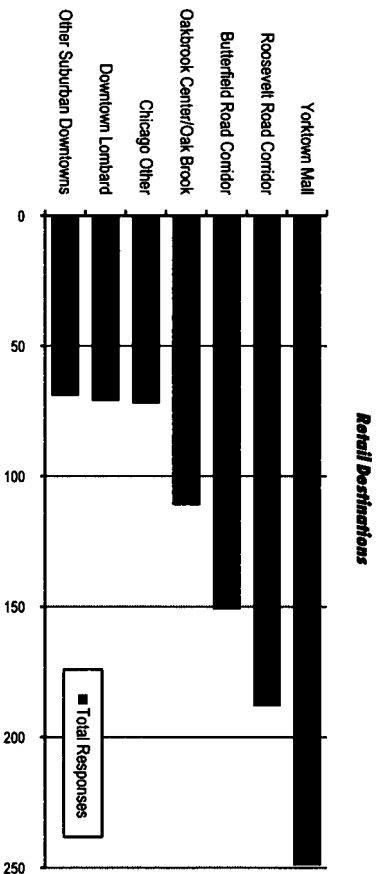
## Retail Uses and Shopping

### Shopping

A lack of variety and a need for additional high quality uses was cited as the main issues facing the Downtown retail environment. A bookstore and clothing/apparel were consistently ranked as the top two retail uses participants believed were underrepresented in Downtown.

Stores closing too early and inadequate parking were also identified as issues, but of lesser concern.

- Nearly 90% of participants indicated a lack of variety was an issue facing Downtown retail.
- With the exception of convenience and housewares, all other choices were identified as underrepresented by a significant proportion of participants, underscoring the need for a greater variety of retail across the board.
- Nearly 80% of residents chose Yorktown Mall as one of their top three shopping destinations.
- Residents indicated that they also frequented the Roosevelt Road (60%) and Butterfield (48%) Road Corridors for shopping.
- Downtown businesses perceive Yorktown Mall and Roosevelt Road as their primary competition. Butterfield Road and other suburban downtowns were identified to a lesser degree.



## Restaurant and

### Entertainment Uses

In general, Yorktown Mall and the Butterfield and Roosevelt Road corridors were preferred dining destinations. Residents indicated that they were just as likely to visit other suburban downtown areas as they were to visit Downtown Lombard for dining.

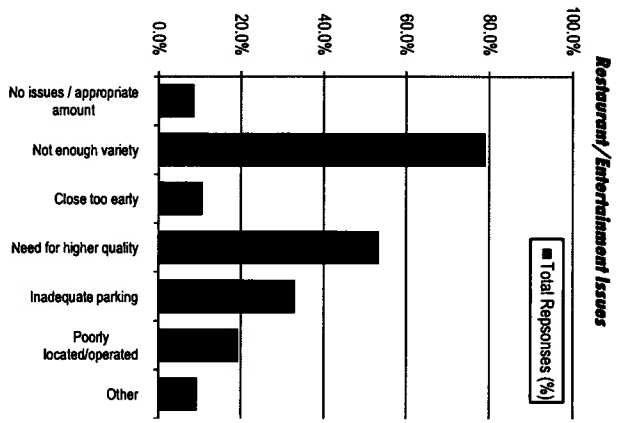
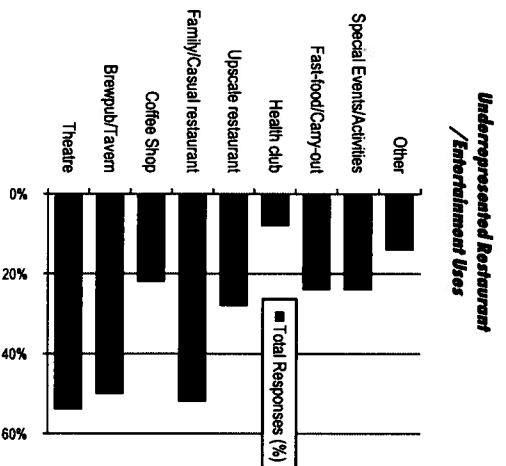
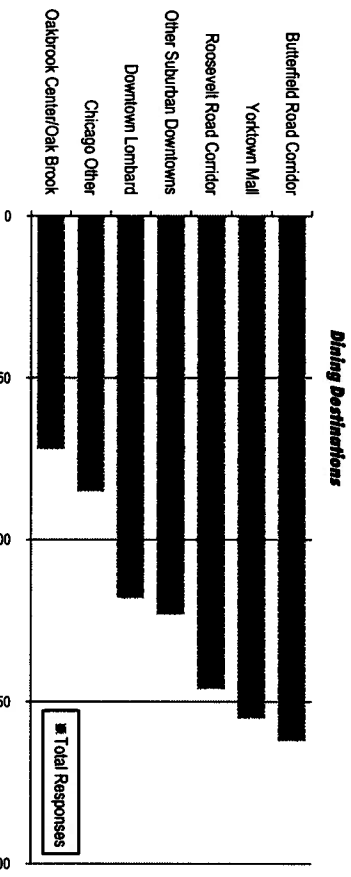
Participants were asked to identify specific types of restaurants and entertainment uses that they would like to see in Downtown. The use most cited as underrepresented in Downtown Lombard is a brewpub or tavern. Other uses with significant recognition included a theatre and family/casual restaurant.

The opinions of Downtown business and property owners were consistent with the opinions of residents.

- Residents indicated that the Butterfield Road Corridor was the most popular dining destination with over 54% listing the corridor within their top three.
- One out of two participants identified 'family/casual restaurant', 'brewpub' and 'theatre' as underrepresented uses within Downtown.
- Over 79% of participants indicated that there was not enough variety among Downtown Lombard's restaurant/entertainment choices.
- Written comments suggested that residents desired more outdoor dining and drinking establishments.
- Some participants suggested attracting a recognizable national or regional chain could help attract additional patrons.

### Quotes from on-line participants:

- "We have great restaurants."
- "[I] would like to see more well known chains and private restaurants to attract more people."
- "[We need to] expand outdoor dining and drink."





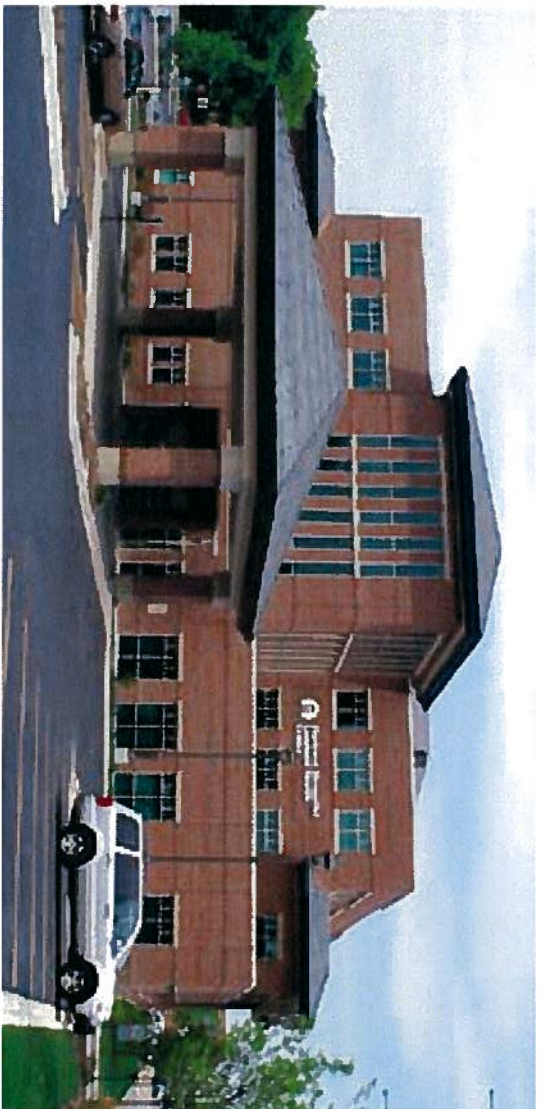
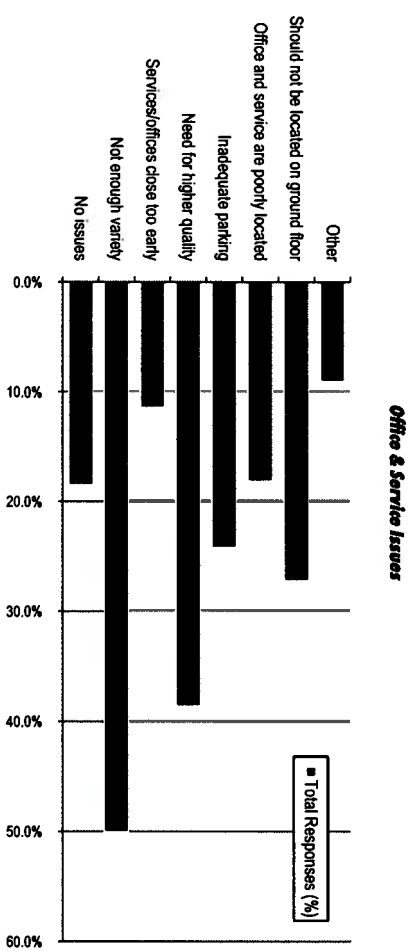
## Office and Service Uses

### Service Uses

According to both residents and businesses, Downtown office uses face similar problems to that of retail, restaurants and entertainment uses. The majority of participants support the opinion that there is a need for more variety amongst office uses as well as a need for higher quality spaces.

A significant proportion of participants also believed that office uses should not be located on the ground floor and that existing office uses were generally not well located.

- 79% of participants identified a lack of variety as a significant issue facing office uses Downtown.
- 40% of on-line participants in the resident questionnaire agreed with the statement that the amount of office use in Downtown is appropriate. Nearly 34% stated that there were too many office uses.
- Some on-line participants indicated that the large percentage of personal service providers detracted from the overall office/service environment.





## Residential Uses

Residential use was not a primary concern of any of the participants. Recently added developments were generally perceived as positive additions to the Downtown.

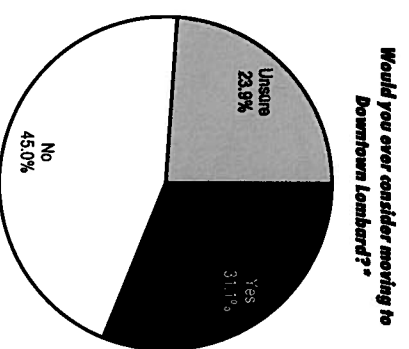
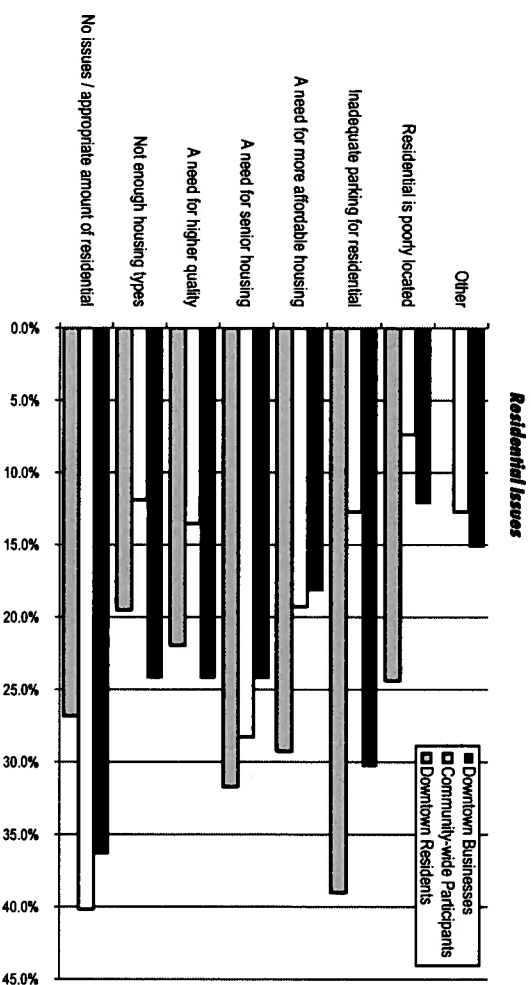
While condominiums and rowhomes were deemed appropriate and acceptable for new development, senior housing was most frequently mentioned as being under represented.

For those residents that do not currently live Downtown, more than half indicated that they would consider a Downtown residence in the future. The percentage was even higher for workshop participants than for the online questionnaires.

- Downtown residents stated that there was not enough parking for current residents and that there was a need for senior housing.
- Downtown businesses shared similar opinions to Downtown residents.
- A significant portion of Downtown residents also indicated there were no issues with residential uses in Downtown.
- Community-wide workshop and questionnaire participants did not express any significant objections to Downtown residential development.
- When non-Downtown residents were asked if they would consider moving to Downtown Lombard to live, 50% of on-line participants indicated 'No' while between 59% and 74% of community-wide workshop participants indicated 'Yes'.
- A need for additional affordable housing was expressed by some, with the highest percentage of those being Downtown Residents.

### Quote from on-line participant:

When current residents of Downtown residents were asked why they chose to move Downtown, one community member responded: "[I] moved to Downtown Lombard, because it is a] Historic neighborhood; [within] walking distance to [the] Library and Liacia Park."



\* Excludes Downtown residents and business representatives

## Special Events

The Downtown business community expressed a desire for additional efforts directed toward increasing awareness of businesses. Overall, there was an expressed desire for additional promotions and special events. Cruise Nights was specifically mentioned by several participants.

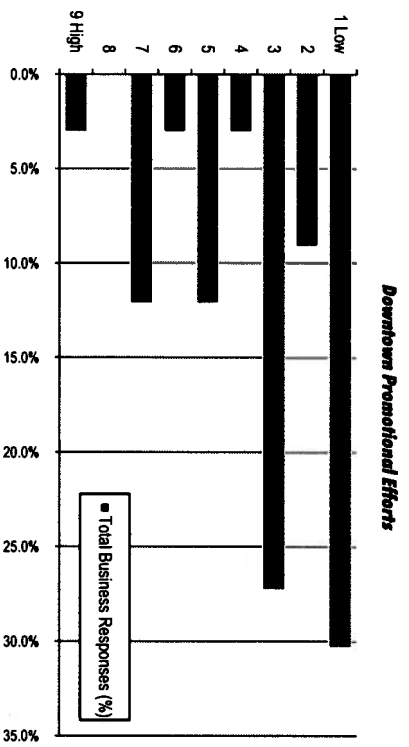
The following Special Events were highlighted:

- Art Fair
- Lilac Time
- Cruise Nights
- Spooktacular
- Farmers Market
- Jingle Bell Jubilee

It is important to note the delineation between promotions/special events and promotional efforts. While promotions and special events do, in fact, promote Downtown by attracting people to the area, promotional efforts are largely a joint effort of several entities. The Village, along with other various entities such as Lombard Town Centre, should continue to work together on special events and Downtown promotional efforts.

### Quote from on-line participant:

"In summer we walk down for Cruise Nights and other events."



## Parking

Parking was separated into commuter and business parking in order to make a distinction between their different needs and audiences. Overall parking was not considered to be problematic, but business owners did indicate a desire for better located business parking, though a viable solution was not presented. Some business owners stated that lack of availability was the largest factor regarding business parking.

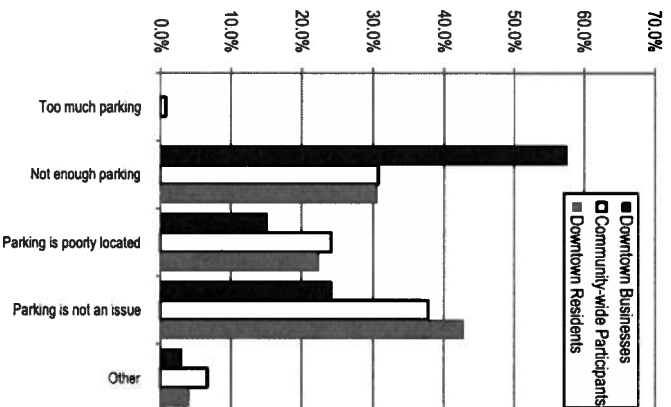
### Resident Opinions:

- Nearly half of all residents indicated that non-residential parking was a non-issue.
- Residents indicated that any issues with business parking were related to a mix of poor location and the amount of spaces.
- The location of commuter parking was considered a slightly greater factor

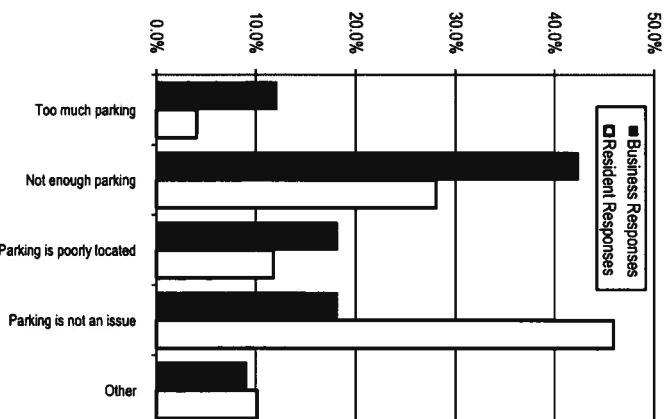
### Business Owner Opinions:

- When asked if parking was an issue, 62% of business workshop attendees indicated that there was not enough parking in the Downtown, while only 24% said that it was not an issue.
- There was a feeling among some workshop attendees that there was too much parking dedicated to commuters and not enough for business.

**Retail and Business Parking Issues**



**Commuter Parking Issues\***



\* Downtown residents were not asked about issues specifically related to commuter parking.



## Circulation and Access

Downtown residents expressed the strongest concern over circulation and access particularly at key intersections. This may indicate that roadways are generally configured to facilitate business and commuter traffic which may make it more difficult for local traffic to enter/exit and traverse through Downtown.

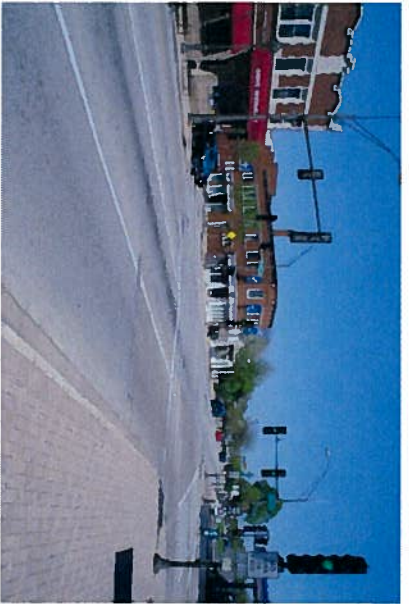
Downtown Business owners shared the opinion of Downtown residents that circulation and access is problematic. Not surprisingly the two groups have similar views in that they have the most experience in dealing with those issues.

There was a desire by participants to have a pedestrian underpass. The intent of the crossing would be to safely navigate pedestrians from the north and south sides of the tracks.

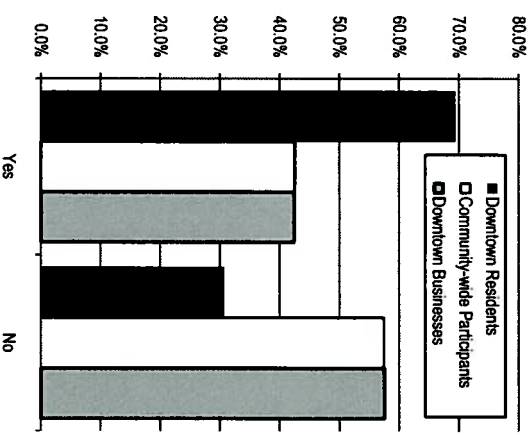
- Community-wide residents were evenly split in identifying circulation and access as an issue.
- At the February 10 community-wide workshop, pedestrian connectivity was indicated as a significant issue by 75% of participants.
- The majority of Downtown businesses indicated that additional pedestrian traffic and complimentary uses should be strongly considered as the Village solicits new development in Downtown Lombard.

### Quote from community member:

"By creating a unique, convenient, safe and pleasant place for people, restaurants and retail shops will rush to be a part of the scene." [Emphasis added]



Is overall circulation and access a problem in Downtown?



## Appearance and Attributes of Downtown

Overall, respondents assigned a low rating to the physical appearance of Downtown. While beautification efforts may improve public perception somewhat, the most significant factors influencing the appearance of Downtown Lombard are the condition of existing structures and the need for new development. Business owners tended to view the appearance slightly more favorably than residents.

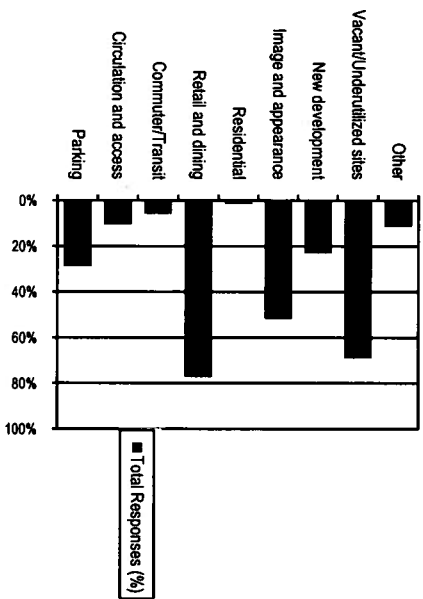
Attracting new development and rehabbing/reusing existing buildings were indicated as the primary actions to best improve its appearance. Streetscape and façade improvements were also often selected.

Glen Ellyn, Elmhurst and Naperville were consistently listed as a top choice amongst residents as a desirable Downtown.

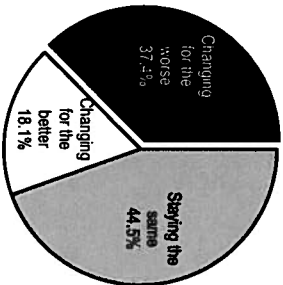
Few residents and businesses believed that Downtown Lombard was changing for the better and were evenly split as to whether things were staying the same or changing for the worse.

- The appearance of Downtown Lombard received an average rating of 3 out of 9 by residents.
- Businesses viewed Downtown in a slightly more positive light and gave it an average rating of nearly 4 out of 9.
- Nearly one in two participants indicated that the overall condition of Downtown Lombard was staying the same.

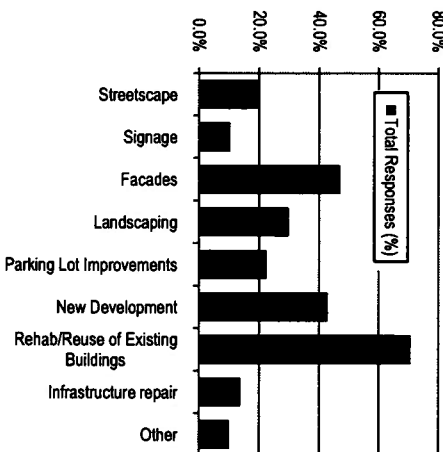
### What are the biggest issues and challenges facing Downtown Lombard?



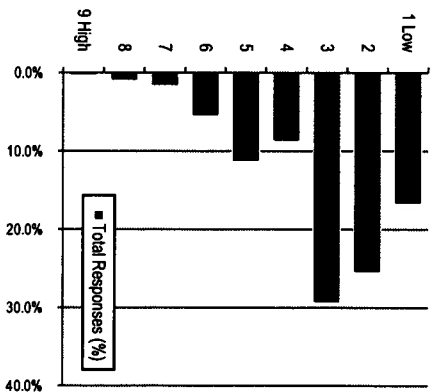
### Overall, Downtown Lombard is...



### Improvements to the image and appearance of Downtown could best be achieved by the following:



### How would you rate the overall appearance of Downtown Lombard?



## Business

Most business responses were solicited through the workshops with 26 attendees. The Online Questionnaire received a total of 9 business respondents. Approximately 70% of Workshop attendees' businesses were located within the Downtown TIF District (Area 1 on the Downtown map). The remaining businesses were located in Areas 3 and 4. Approximately two-thirds of participating business owners rent their buildings.

The Downtown environment, proximity to Metra and access to an established customer/client base were stated as factors influencing business owner's decisions to locate to the area.

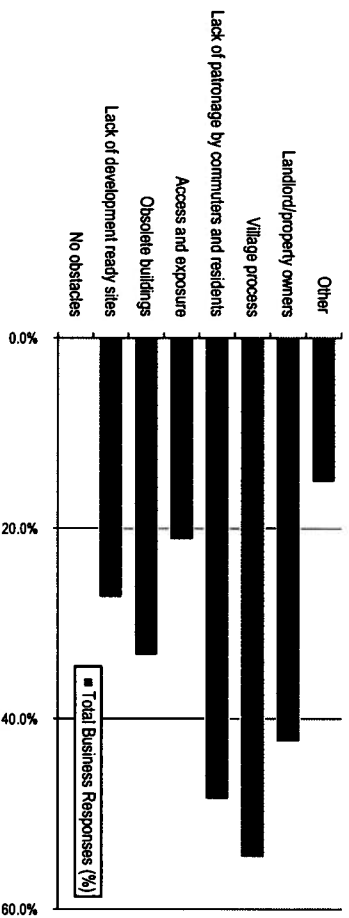
In terms of competition, Yorktown was perceived to be the biggest competitor to Downtown business. The Roosevelt Road and Butterfield corridors were also highlighted as were other suburban downtowns.

According to participants, the two most important factors that the Village should consider in attracting new business were pedestrian orientation and compatibility of uses. This is an indication of a desire by the Downtown business community to create a destination environment where visitors can easily walk between locations. Only 4% of respondents indicated that sales tax generation should be a Village goal in attracting new business.

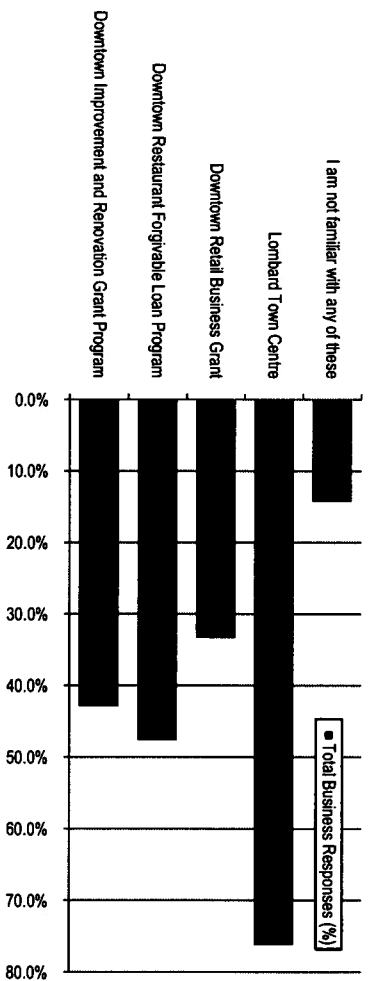
Business owner concerns and issues were fairly consistent with those of residents. The three highest rated concerns were:

- Vacant/Underutilized sites: 72%
- Lack of Retail and Dining: 68%
- Image and Appearance: 64%

**Obstacles to Attracting New Development**



**Familiarity with Programs**





In that a majority of participants rent, 56% indicated problems with landlord related issues. It should be noted that some were issues with neighboring properties. Lack of upkeep and attention to such things as snow removal by absentee landlords was highlighted.

Despite expressed uncertainty about the future, nearly all workshop attendees indicated that they would like to remain Downtown. While 51% of business owners said that they were unsure as to whether they would still be Downtown, (due to business and financial issues) in the next three years, 96% stated that if given a choice they would remain.

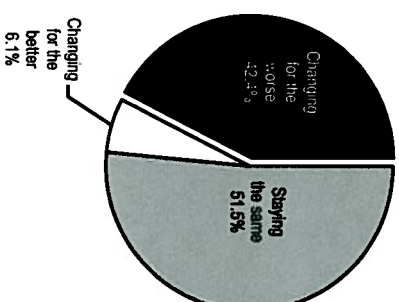
In that the economy is the primary issue of concern, business owners expressed a desire to work with the Village to help stimulate the business climate.

Most business owners indicated a familiarity with available assistance programs including grants and loans. Only 14% of all participants indicated that they were not familiar with any of the available programs.

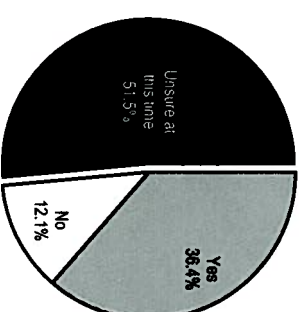
In addition to available assistance programs, it was indicated that regulatory policies including zoning, permitting, sign ordinance, and code enforcement should be evaluated to see if there may be potential for modifications to further assist the business community.



**Business in Downtown Lombard is...**



**Do you think you and/or your business will still be located in Downtown Lombard in the next 3 years?**



# Village Controlled Sites

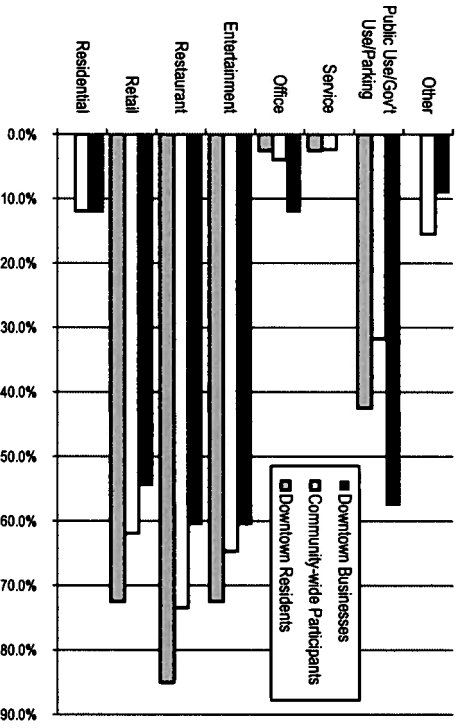
## Former Du Page Theatre Site -101 S Main Street

The former Du Page Theatre site is a very important part of the future of Downtown Lombard. As has been the case for several years, viewpoints on what to do with the site vary. The site is large enough to accommodate a variety of development, but clearly development for development sake will not be acceptable to the community.

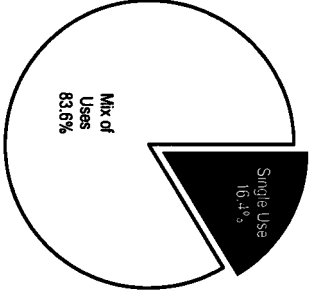
- Businesses owners and residents alike indicated that a mix of uses was preferred for the former Du Page Theatre site.
- Retail and entertainment uses were emphasized with a theatre component receiving strong support. Residential was discussed as a potential use, however it did not receive as much support, particularly from Downtown residents.
- If residential were included in a mixed use development, condominiums and senior housing were stated as preferences.
- A height preference of three stories was stated by the majority of respondents.



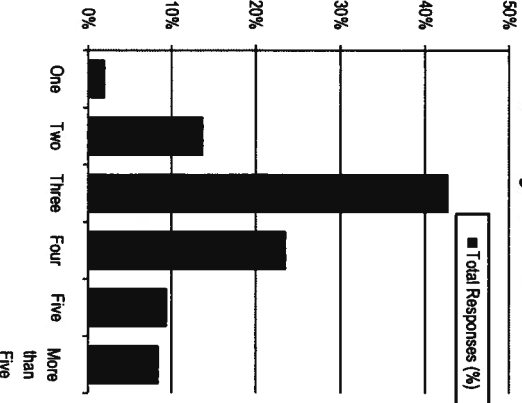
Preferred Uses - Former DuPage Theatre Site



Should the Former DuPage Theatre Site be developed as a Single Use or Mix of Uses?



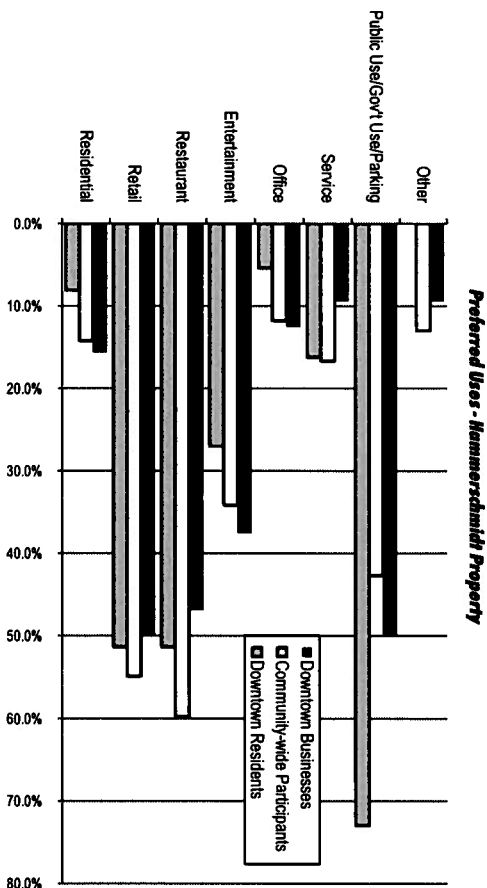
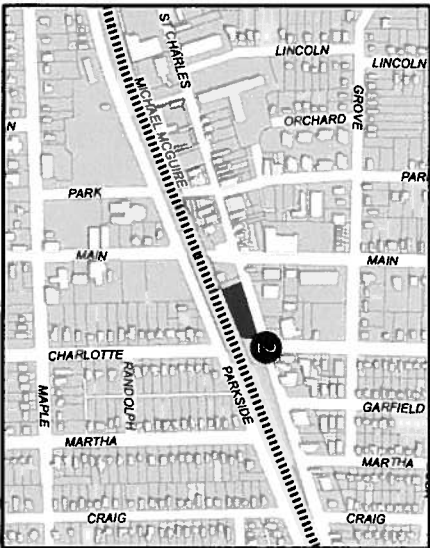
Preferred Height - Former DuPage Theatre Site



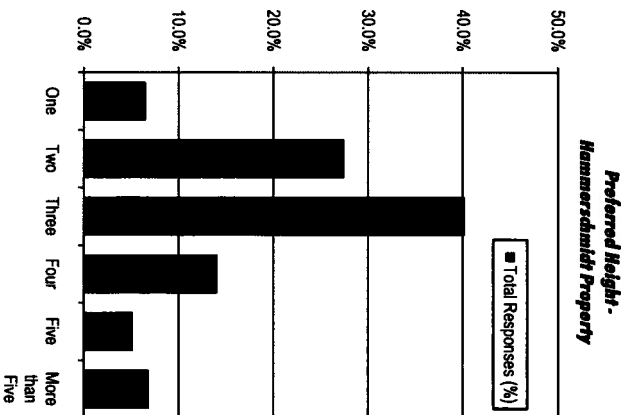
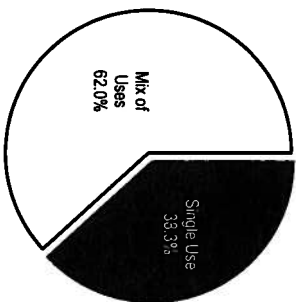
**Hammerschmidt Property - 21 E. St. Charles Road**

For study purposes the Hammerschmidt property was identified as the vacant parcel situated west of the parking lot and east of the gas station. The entire site measures only approximately 0.83 acres, so development options would be much more limited than that of the former Du Page Theatre site.

- Participants were split in stating a preference as to whether the site should be developed with a mix of uses or as a single use.
- Public use was generally the favored use for the site while residential and office uses were identified as being less appropriate.
- Parking was stated most often as a preferred use
- Generally a height preference for development on the Hammerschmidt Property was between two and three stories, though some indicated that, depending on the development, a height of five stories or more may be acceptable.



**Should the Hammerschmidt Property be developed as a Single Use or Mix of Uses?**





## Summary

The Community Vision Workshops and Questionnaires provided insight into the issues, both real and perceived, of a cross section of the community. Feedback on the process was overwhelmingly positive and residents and business owners expressed an appreciation for the Village's interest in soliciting their opinions. Public confidence, however, in potential outcomes would best be described as cautiously optimistic.

Overall, the use of keypad polling technology was supported by workshop participants. When asked to rate the use of the technology, over 70% of participants submitted a rating of 7 or higher.

It will be important for the Village to follow up with residents and business owners to assure them that their participation is important and to gain support for future initiatives. Some issues can be addressed without significant expenditures, particularly those that are more administrative. It will also be important that subsequent studies continue to include community outreach, particularly if a Downtown Plan is pursued. The good will achieved through the Visioning Sessions needs to be continued.

As stated in the Introduction section, this Downtown Visioning exercise is not a final analysis. The Visioning is the beginning of ongoing community wide input in crafting the future of Downtown Lombard.

### Quote from community member:

"Now is the time to create the infrastructure that will encourage the development of a pedestrian friendly 'town center' that will be the envy [o]f suburban communities everywhere."



## Appendix

### Question Types

Workshop surveys and on-line questionnaires were primarily comprised of three types of questions. A brief review of these question types will aid in understanding the subsequent results summary and associated charts and tabular data.

**1 Choose 1:** Participants are asked to select one choice from a list of options. These questions typically include 'true/false' or 'yes/no' answers or a rating range. (E.g. give a rating of 1 through 9)

**2 Choose 3:** Participants are asked to select up to, but no more than, three statements with which they agree. These choices do not have to be done in order of preference and receive equal weight. As an example, residents were asked to select the three most significant issues facing Downtown Lombard.

**3 Rank 3:** Rank questions are similar to Choose 3 questions in that they allow for up to three selections to be made. The participants selections must be made in order of preference and receive a weight based on their order. The first choice is given a weight of three, the second a weight of two, and the third choice a weight of one. A point total is calculated for each choice of a given question using the cumulative sum of the number of times an option was chosen first, second, or third multiplied by the corresponding weighting factor. For example, if an option was selected twice as a top choice, once as a second choice and once as a third choice it would receive a point total of 9 (Top Choice:  $2 \times 3 = 6$ ; Second Choice:  $1 \times 2 = 2$ ; Third Choice:  $1 \times 1 = 1$ ; Total:  $6 + 2 + 1 = 9$ ). Ranking results can be displayed to indicate a given choice's point total, the number of times it was selected, and the number of times it was selected as a top choice. An example of a Rank 3 question asked participants to rank their top three dining destinations.

### On-Line Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were utilized in the Downtown Visioning effort and were intended to allow anyone in the Village to participate in the process, even if they were unable to attend a meeting or workshop. One questionnaire was targeted at Village residents while the other was intended for businesses in Downtown Lombard. These on-line questionnaires were intended to mirror the format and content of questions asked during community workshops. They included both multiple choice and open ended questions and were designed to be completed within ten to fifteen minutes. Hard copies of the on-line questionnaires were also made available at the Village Hall.

An **On-Line Resident Questionnaire**, which consisted of 61 questions, was posted on the project website from January 22 to March 2, 2009. The questionnaire was accessed by 253 residents and was fully completed by 211 (83.4%) residents.

An **On-Line Business Questionnaire** for was posted on the project website from January 29 to March 2, 2009. Nine members of the Downtown Lombard business community accessed the business questionnaire, eight (88.9%) of which fully completed the questionnaire which consisted of 34 questions.

### Summary Documents

**Downtown Residents Workshop - January 22, 2009**

**Downtown Business Workshop - January 29, 2009**

**Community-Wide Workshops - February 2, 2009**

**Community-Wide Workshops - February 10, 2009**

**On-Line Resident Questionnaire - February - March, 2009**

**On-Line Business Questionnaire - February - March, 2009**

