Business Operator and Building Owner Survey

In order to better understand the conditions and concerns of businesses in Manitowoc, a survey was undertaken to explore business characteristics, preferences, and ideas on how to improve the downtown area. The following section provides a summary of the survey responses.

Survey Overview

This survey collected data from business operators and building owners that operate in the downtown district of the community. The comprehensive survey was conducted by Mainly Manitowoc, the Manitowoc Main Street program, during the spring of 2009.[1]

The primary purpose of this survey was to explore the issues and opportunities facing the downtown business community. The overall goal of the survey was to find ways to improve downtown Manitowoc, as a place to do business. The survey was broken up into two parts: a business owner's survey and a property owner's survey. The following types of questions were asked:

- Needs and opportunities in the business community;
- Business and workforce data; and
- Market and marketing information.

This survey was based on the standardized business operator's survey instrument developed by the Wisconsin Main Street program. It was modified by the local study committee to reflect research questions specific to Manitowoc.

Mainly Manitowoc mailed a survey to every downtown business. Of the 311 surveys distributed, 34 were completed and returned. Of these, 28 were also "building owners." While the response rate was low, the surveys that were returned provide insight from an interested and involved segment of the downtown district.

[1] Assistance in tabulation and analysis was provided by the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Center for Community & Economic Development (UWEX) under agreement with the Wisconsin Main Street Program. This section was written by Jennifer Keeley Yonda, working with Bill Ryan of UWEX. Work was conducted in cooperation with Jamie Zastrow of Mainly Manitowoc and the Wisconsin Main Street Program.

Needs and Opportunities Assessment

This portion of the report identifies the challenges and needs of downtown businesses as well as the downtown revitalization tools that are most beneficial to business operators. These survey questions also attempt to gain insight into the qualities of the downtown business climate and location.

How satisfied are you with the present location of this business? (Q6)

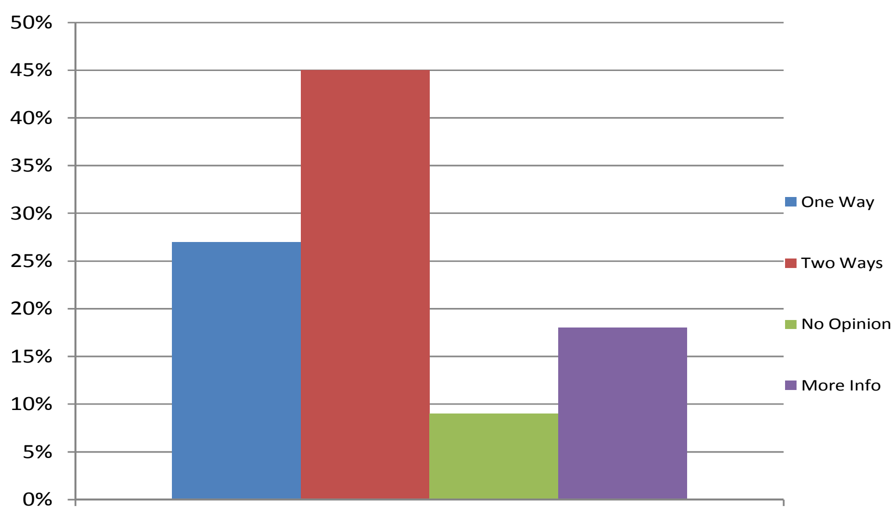
Most business operators were either very satisfied (47%) or satisfied (41%) with their present location. Only 8 percent were unsatisfied and 3 percent were neutral.

What initially attracted you to Manitowoc's downtown district? (Q7)

Geographic location was the biggest (65%) attraction for business operators. Other factors included the price of lease/rent (31%) and market conditions (13%).

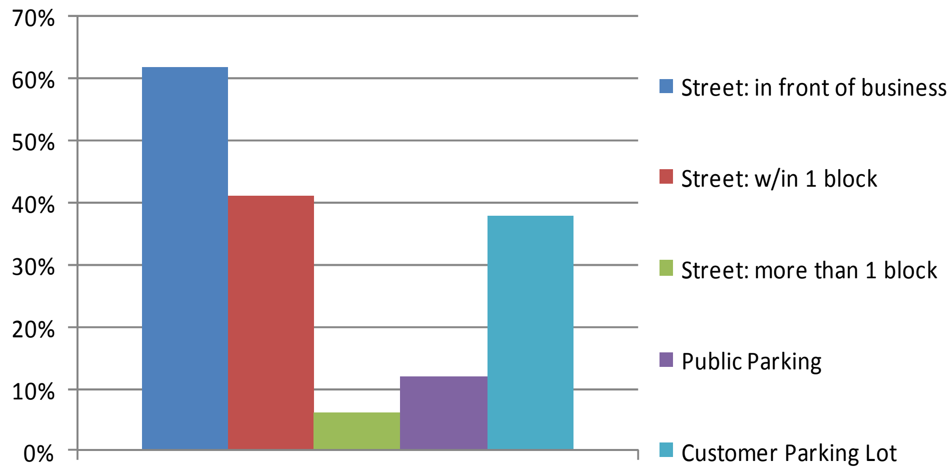
Do you think 8th and 10th streets should be one way, two ways, or no opinion? (Q8)

Almost twice as many business operators think these two streets should be two ways verse one way.



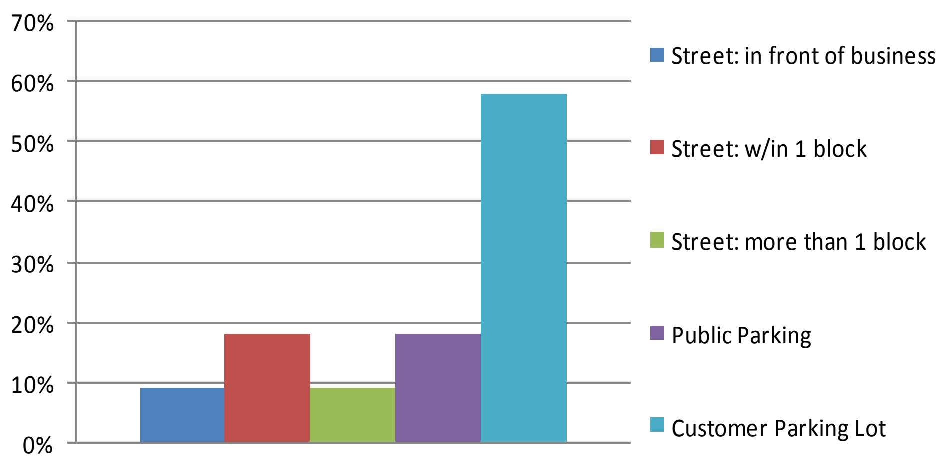
Where do your customers typically park? (Q24)

Business operators believe that customers are typically able to park on the street in front of their business (62%) or within one block (41%) of their business.



Where do you and your employees typically park? Q25)

Business operators reported that most employees park in a customer parking lot that the business either owns or rents.



Do you have plans to expand, reduce operations or relocate your business in the foreseeable future? (Q29)

Half (52%) of the business operators had no plans for any such changes. 36 percent of the respondents did have plans to expand products, services or square footage. Finally, 6 percent answered that they were planning to reduce their products, services or square footage or were planning to sell their business.

Are you considering any improvements to your business space? (Q30)

More than half (62.5%) of the respondents are not considering any improvement to their business space, the other 37.5 percent are.

Are you currently dealing with any business challenges? (Q31)

Below is a chart with the response rates of all the business challenges. The current trend of decreased consumer spending was identified by half of all respondents.

Business Challenge	Frequency of Responses
Decrease in consumer spending	17
Out of town competition	9
Health insurance costs	9
Utility costs	8
Parking	8
Other	7
No problems	6
In town competition	6
Personal costs	5
Other insurance costs	5
Financing	4
Vandalism	3
Product costs / availability	3
Shipping transportation costs	3
Shoplifting / Theft	2
Difficulty recruiting employees	1
Rental rates	1

Which *existing* incentives or assistance programs have you used or plan to use (Q32 A)

25 out of the 34 respondents did not answer this question. Of those who did answer, there was interest in:

- Small Business Administration Small Business Guarantees (4 respondents)
- City of Manitowoc Commercial Revolving Loan Fund (2 respondents)
- Economic Development Corporation of Manitowoc County (2 respondents)
- Tax Increment Financing TIF (1 respondent)
- SCORE Green Bay Chapter – Manitowoc Branch (1 respondent)

Which *potential* incentives or assistance programs would you use? (Q32 B)

Only 13 of the 34 respondents answered this question. Those who did answer seemed interested in using some of these programs.

Incentive or Assistance Program	Frequency of Responses
Wisconsin Main Street Program Business Assistance	7
Sign Grant	**6**
Building Interior	6
Façade Improvement Grant or Low-Interest Loan	5
Wisconsin Main Street Program Design Assistance	4

Would you or an employee of your business have interest in attending the following business training workshops if held locally? (Q34)

Below is a table displaying the frequency with which respondents answered the question. The column "Total Respondents Answered this Question" tallies the number who answered. Advertising and marketing was identified often as a topic of interest.

Workshop	Yes	Maybe	Don't Know	No	Total Respondents Answered this Question
Advertising or Marketing	11	7	1	9	28
Window Displays or Interior Design	6	7	2	12	27
Internet or E-Commerce	6	8	1	11	26
Competing with Big Boxes	3	6	3	14	26
Financial Management	4	5	6	10	25
Business Planning	4	9	4	7	24
Hospitality Training	3	7	2	12	24
Business Market Analysis	6	7	2	9	24
Employee Hiring or Training	1	5	4	13	23
Customer Service	3	10	2	8	23
Bilingual / Diversity Training	1	3	1	18	23
Inventory Management	5	4	2	14	25

How would you rate the following facilities and services in downtown Manitowoc? (Q35)

Below is a table showing the frequency with which business operators rated the listed facilities and services in the Manitowoc downtown district. The library, arts, and public safety were rated excellent by many of the respondents

Facility / Service	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Public Library	14	14	1	0	1
Access to the Arts	10	15	3	0	3
Fire Protection	10	18	1	0	1
Police Protection	10	19	3	0	0
Public Meeting Facilities	6	15	6	0	5
Garbage Collection	5	18	4	0	3
Community Events	4	17	8	1	1
Sidewalk Conditions	4	18	10	0	0
Snow Removal	4	14	9	5	0
Litter Control	3	10	12	5	0
Street Maintenance	3	18	9	1	0
Transit Options	3	21	3	0	5
Bicycle Access	2	10	13	1	4
Pedestrian Friendly	2	14	8	6	0
Recycling Services	2	18	3	3	5

How would you rate the following features in the Manitowoc Downtown District? (Q36)

The table below shows the frequency with which business operators rated the listed features of the Manitowoc Downtown District. While many of the public improvements like signs and sidewalks were rated good, vacant lots and buildings were rated poor.

Feature	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Street Signs	4	19	7	0
Sidewalks	3	20	9	0
Lighting	2	17	8	2
Historic Character	2	16	11	1
Overall Layout	1	14	16	2
Business Mix	0	5	20	7
Building Appearance	0	7	18	6
Business Signs	0	13	17	1
Parking Availability	0	9	10	10
Traffic Flow / circulation	0	11	15	4
Trees / Streetscape	0	14	10	6
Vacant Lots / Buildings	0	1	15	15

How strongly do you agree or disagree with these statements? (Q37)

The frequency with which business operators agreed is listed in the table below. The responses indicate a strong commitment within the business community to supporting the local economy and providing excellent customer service.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Some-what Agree	Neutral	Some-what Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I always direct customers to other area businesses	22	9	0	0	0
Employees of my business show great customer service	21	8	2	0	0
I always try to buy products and services locally	19	9	4	0	0
I would support a new retail promotions event	14	8	12	0	0
I feel safe downtown at all times	11	14	5	0	0
My business is open when customers want to shop	11	9	8	2	1
My window and store displays help my business	10	14	3	1	1
Downtown is an excellent place to have a business	7	18	2	3	3
The look and feel of downtown helps my business	4	11	11	3	2
Traffic flow is a positive impact on my business	3	10	11	5	4
I feel that Downtown Manitowoc is pedestrian friendly	1	16	9	5	1
I am happy with the level of local business regulations	0	6	17	4	4
The Downtown attracts sufficient pedestrian traffic	0	5	9	14	5

Business and Workforce Data

Information gathered in this section of the survey focuses on tenancy, length of ownership and the number of jobs available to the workforce.

What is the type/nature of your business? (Q2)

The list below is how the business operators described their own businesses.

- Salon
- Marketing
- Coffee shop
- Women's consignment shop
- Florist/gift shop
- Restaurant
- Tattoo & body piercing
- Candy store with restaurant
- Staffing service
- Compounding pharmacy health supplement
- Service
- Retail, compact discs, records, DVD's, apparel, posters
- Martini bar
- Cigar lounge
- Driving school/ instruction
- Tavern
- Interior design, supplying designs, consulting and products in this field
- Financial
- Retail/ wholesale auto parts supplier
- Pizza, chicken and hot Italian sandwich rest.
- Retail supplements, natural food, natural home health care gourmet imports
- Movie theater
- Home brew supply store (to make beer, wine, soda coffee, loose tea)
- Golf retail
- Sports cards and Frisbees custom embroidery
- Bar and grill
- Resale, novelties, small restaurant
- Wholesale plumbing and heating distributor
- Sales and service of major appliances and general repair
- Retail camera sales, printing and enlarging and photo studio
- Retail gift and decor
- Funeral service
- Vintage clothing and accessories for guys/gals/kids

What is the total size of your business space? (Q3)

The median business space is 1,800 square feet. The average of the business spaces is 2,436 square feet, though this is with an outlier of a business with 10,000 square feet. Without this outlier, the average is 2,156 square feet.

How many years has this business been in operation? (Q4)

The sampled businesses have been in operation for anywhere between 1 and 160 years. The median age of a business is 14.5 years. The average age of a business is 27.5 years.

How many years have you been the owner of this business? (Q5)

The median length of time these owners have owned their business is 8.5 years. The average length of time is for 10 years.

How many jobs did this business provide in 2008, including owners who work in the business? (Q26)

Below is the median and average full-time and part-time number of jobs these businesses provide, in both the busiest time of year and in the slowest time of the year.

At busiest time of year:		*At slowest time of year:*	
Median Full-time:	2	Median Full-time:	2
Average Full-time	2	Average Full-time:	2
Median Part-time:	3.5	Median Part-time:	2.5
Average Part-time:	5	Average Part-time:	4

What is the main reason for any fluctuation in the number of jobs this business provided in 2008? (Q27)

20 out of 34 respondents answered this question, with 14 business operators choosing not to answer it. Out of those who did answer the question, the following reasons were provided for the fluctuation in the number of jobs in 2008:

- Seasonal Business (6 respondents)
- Business Decline (6 respondents)
- Business Growth (4 respondents)
- Other (4 respondents)

Market and Marketing Information

The purpose of this portion of the survey is to collect data regarding store hours, busiest shopping times, sources of advertising, complementary and competitive businesses, and target markets. This information can help point to possible changes in downtown activities and economic development to improve foot traffic, success among businesses, and to increase the overall economic vitality of the downtown area.

What are the peak season hours of operation for this business (May - September) (Q9)

Most businesses open at the same time every day they are open, which is sometime between 7 and 10 AM. Some businesses that are open on Sundays do open a little bit later than usual. Businesses tend to close between 5 and 10pm, with some businesses staying open later on Friday evenings and some businesses closing earlier on Saturday afternoons. There are a few businesses that stay open much later on Friday and Saturday nights.

What are the off-peak season hours of operation for this business (October - April)? (Q10)

Businesses tend to open and close about the same times in off-peak as they did in the peak season (opening between 7 and 10 am and closing between 5 and 10 pm).

How important is the operation of the Badger Carferry on your business? (Q11)

Twenty-three and a half percent (23.5%) of the business operators reported that operation of the Badger Carferry is very important, and another 23.5 reported that it is somewhat important to their business. Forty-one percent (41%) of business operators say the Badger Carferry is unimportant.

What percentage of annual sales do you estimate your business attributes to local residents, tourists/non-locals (non-carferry), tourists/non-locals (carferry), internet sales? (Q12)

Business operators on average attributed 80 percent of their business to local residents, 9 percent to tourists/non-locals (non-carferry), 4 and a half percent to tourists/non-locals (carferry), and 3 percent to internet sales.

Approximately how many customers/clients visit this business per week? (Q13)

The following table illustrates the number of clients per week the business operators reported.

Customer/Client Visits Per Week	Percent Response
25-50	27%
50-100	24%
100-500	33%
500-1,000	9%
Over 1,000	6%

What is the busiest day of the week for this business? (Q14)

Friday is the busiest day of the week for 38 percent of the businesses. Saturday is the next busiest day of the week (20%). After Friday and Saturday, Monday, Thursday and “None” tied for third place (with a 11% response).

During a typical week, what are the three busiest times for your business (Q15)

The busiest morning was Saturday with 11 of the operators selecting this day, followed by Monday (9). Friday (15), followed by a tie for Thursday (11) and Saturday (11) are the busiest afternoons for the Manitowoc business operators. As for after 5pm, operators found Friday (10) to be the busiest day, followed by Saturday (6).

What are the *three* busiest months of the year for your business? (Q16)

December is reported to be the busiest month of the year for most of the operators, with 19 operators marking this month. July was the runner up with 13 operators selecting this day. August had 11 operator votes and November and June both had 10 votes.

When do you typically plan major sales/specials for this business? (Q17)

Fifty-two percent (52%) of business operators have major sales and specials in December, 43 percent have them in July and 34 percent have them in November.

In the last two years, which of the following events increased foot traffic or sales?(Q18)

The table below shows the number of respondents who felt that each of the events increased their foot traffic or sales volume.

Manitowoc Event	Frequency of Responses
Memorial Day Parade	0
Garden Fair	2
Maritime Bay Bike Classic	0
St. Patrick’s Day Parade	6
Capitol Civic Centre Shows and Events	4
Santa Saturdays	1
Riverwalk Festival	2
Krazy Satur-Daze	10
Showtime Summer Performance on a Barge	0
SputnikFest	4
Lakeshore Holiday Parade	12
Kiwanis Car Show	1
Rotary Lobsterfest	0
Farmers Market	6
Balloon Glow/Thunder on the Lakeshore	3
Metro Jam	3
4th of July Fireworks	3
Acoustic Fest	3
Lakeshore Weekend for Kids	1
Octoberfest/ Manitowalker	7

Describe the average customer to this business. Q19)

Business operators described their clients as male (58%), between the age of 35 and 44 (44%) and with an income of $30,000 to $50,000 (48%).

What businesses are your strongest competitors? (Q20)

A variety of businesses were listed as the competitors to the surveyed business operators:

- Jenn's Java
- Lynn's Classic Closet, Kohls
- The Flower Gallery, Roorbachs, Shoreline
- McDonalds, Burger King, Taco Bell, Cousins
- Tatoo shops in Green Bay
- Engstrom, SEEK
- Champion, GNC
- None
- Wal-Mart, Shopko, internet, Amazon.com, Best Buy
- Courthouse Pub, Harborside
- Book World, internet tobacco wholesale
- None in area
- Furniture stores
- Auto Zone, Advanced Auto Parts
- Tony's, Papa Johns, Pizza Hut
- Festival Foods, internet discount vendors
- Out of town movie theaters
- Online
- Golf Gallery, E-bay, Mr. Golf
- None
- Saucy's, Bull Pen
- Game Stop, L&B Pawn shop
- Menards, Fleet Farm, Lowe's
- Greenwoods, Lang's, Sears, Menards, Lowe's
- Internet, Wal-Mart, Walgreens
- Flamingo Gallery, Timeless Treasures
- Hobby Lobby, Honey Pot, Rustic Touch
- Other funeral homes
- We have none. We are the only Vintage store

What is the main competitive edge of your business? (Q21)

Below are the main competitive edges business operators felt their business had:

- Service (17)
- Uniqueness (12)
- Quality (10)
- Location (10)

What three downtown businesses complement your business the most? (Q22)

Business operators listed these businesses as complementary. Businesses listed more than once are labeled so after their name.

- Al's Transmissions
- Beernsten's
- Bicycle and Fitness Co
- Book World (2)
- Capital Civic Center (5)
- Champion Vitamins
- Coffee shops-both (2)
- Courthouse
- Courthouse Pub
- Dr. Freud's (4)
- Farmer's Market
- Flower Gallery (3)
- Gift/floral
- High school
- Harborside (2)
- Jenn's Java
- Kids Gear
- Legend Larry's
- Library
- Local Restaurants (2)
- Mad Hatter
- Manitowoc Heating and Refrigeration
- Maritime museum (2)
- My Parent's Basement
- Modern by Megean
- Natural Market
- None (2)
- On Second Thought
- Persimmons
- Ramirez Auto Repair
- Shoreline Flowers
- The Strand
- Timeless Treasures (3)
- Tri-Motor Service
- Westlake Golf
- Wild Iris
- Wisconsin Maritime Museum
- YMCA

What new businesses would you like to see in the district? (Q23)

A variety of businesses were listed, the most common being restaurants of some kind (12) and clothing stores (8). Below is a comprehensive list of the categories.

- Anchor store
- Anything other than city buildings, banks and bars
- Bakeries
- Bakeries - bread
- Children's gym/play center/ museum-indoor
- Children's store
- Clothing - variety/dept or poster store
- Clothing, shoes (4)
- Clothing - ladies (2)
- Clothing - ladies formal
- Entertainment-theatre, tec.
- Galleries
- Ice cream shop
- Linen and bath shop
- Meat market
- Party supplies
- Restaurant - breakfast/lunch
- Restaurant - ethnic (Mexican, Indian)
- Restaurant - natural
- Restaurant - open for breakfast
- Restaurant - sandwich shop
- Restaurant - seafood
- Restaurant - vegetarian
- Restaurants (5)
- Specialty wine and cheese
- Tourism oriented
- Tourist boutique attractions
- Used bookstore

What percentage of your gross sales do you spend on advertising your business? (Q28)

Both the median and the average percent of gross sales operators spend on advertising is 5 percent.

How important is revitalization of the core downtown (8th St. and Washington St.)? (Q33)

The revitalization of the core downtown (8th St. and Washington St.) is an important issue for the business operators.

Level of Importance	Frequency of Responses
Very Important	24
Somewhat Important	8
Unimportant	1
Neutral	1

Additional comments or suggestions offered (unedited)

- We need some charm! Fill the empty locations, revamp and rent out!
- When looking to upgrade downtown, I think it is important to not forget about the look of some of the side streets and parking off the main drag, eg, behind Studio 8; edge of the parking lot has a metal divider that is ugly and bent. Same thing on some of the parking lots between 8th and 9th near Kwik Trip.
- Let the Big Box Stores invade the I-43 shopping area. In my opinion, or more correctly, what I miss about my old neighborhood in Chicago, is a variety of boutique shops downtown. Too many shops attempt to be everything to everyone and that usually winds up on a great big "Going out of Business" sale. Pick our niche and celebrate like mad when out get there. Downtown business try to cut into one another's customer base and that really doesn't help. We need to define our roles as small business and be the best at that role.
- I think any program should set some goals. Then develop a plan to earnestly implement it. 1. Seek out individuals that are looking for a great place to live. 2. Start a new business 3. Semi-retire in a safe environment 4. Raise a family.
- Although we have adapted, the fact that the 1000 block of S. 11th St is one way does present some challenges to both customers and our delivery people. It's a pain in the butt to have to pull out on the Washington St. every time we go somewhere. Also, there are still many people who pull onto 11th St off of Washington every day oblivious to the "Do Not Enter" sign. I opposed the one-way idea for this street from the beginning, but it was too little, too late. The two biggest proponents of this lame-brained idea (the former police chief and city engineer) are no longer employed by the city of Manitowoc.
- More positive highlights of downtown business-special showcase section in paper.
- My business sells to the professional contractor and manufacturers, we do not sell retail. I am interested in seeing the downtown thrive with more stores not just city buildings, apartments, banks, bars, etc., even though this would not increase my business.
- Again, as retail spaces have been promoted away from Main Street, 10 to the Harbor town area traffic has been taken away from Main St with less traffic the business is worth less so property taxes should be reduced accordingly.

Building Owner Survey (additional questions)

The purpose of this portion of the survey is to get an overall picture of your downtown properties and property owner perspectives. By analyzing this information, we can begin to understand what is and is not working as well as the needs and desires of the property owners, and begin to increase the overall economic vitality of the downtown area.

What is your building space size? (Q1)

19 out of 28 property owners listed the size of the building space (with one owner listing two properties). The building sizes ranged from 750 to 46,000 square feet. The median size was 3,500 square feet.

Lot Size in Square Feet
1,125
1,500
2,000
2,000
3,800
5,000
5,000
7,500
15,000
35,000
36,000
½ city block

Building Size in Square Feet
750
1,200
1,400
1,500
1,800
2,200
2,250
3,000
3,465
3,500
3,500
3,800
5,000
5,000
5,500
5,700
6,000
10,000
20,000
16,000

What is your lot size? (Q2)

13 out of 28 property owners listed their lot size. Lot sizes ranged from 1,125 to 36,000 square feet. The median size was 5,000 square feet. One property owner listed their lot size as half a city block; this answer is not part of the above calculations.

How many years have you owned this property? (Q3)

Respondents have owned their property anywhere from 1 to 25 years, with one outlier having owned their property for 88 years. The median number of years is 10.5.

Years Owned the Property	Number of Respondents
0 to 5 years	13
6 to 10 years	3
11 to 15 years	5
16 to 20 years	4
25 or more years	3

Is this your only commercial property? (Q4)

For 71 percent of the respondents, this was their only commercial property.

Do you operate a business on this property or rent or lease to another business? (Q5)

Most of the respondents (68 percent) operate a business on their property; otherwise they lease the space to another business (29 percent).

Please describe the primary use of your property (i.e. food preparation/service, office, retail, etc). (Q6)

Most of the properties are being used as retail. Some are also being used as offices, and a few apartments. There were a couple listed as entertainment including a movie theater, bar/grill and coffee shop.

What initially attracted you to buy property in the Manitowoc Downtown District? (Q7)

Property owners were primarily attracted to their property because of the price of the property (61%) and the geographic location (57%).

Is the access to your facility and parking sufficient? (Q8)

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the respondents felt like there was sufficient access to their business and parking.

How many commercial spaces do you have in this building? (Q9)

Most property owners (14 respondents) had one commercial space in their building. A few properties had 2 or 3 commercial spaces, one owner had 8 commercial spaces, and owner had 15 commercial spaces.

How many commercial renters have you had in the last 10 years? (Q10)

The following chart shows the number of renters the respondents experienced over the last 10 years.

Number of Renters in Last 10 Years	Number of Property Owners
0	1
1	5
2	2
3	2
4	0
5 or more	4

How many residential units do you have in this building? (Q11) How many residential renters have you had in the last 10 years? (Q12)

Respondents reported, for the most part (16 out of 25 respondents), not having any residential units in their buildings. Property owners with residential units, have had anywhere between 0 and 17 renters in the last 10 years.

Property Owner	Number of Residential Units	Number of Renters in Last 10 Years
1	1	0
2	1	0
3	1	0
4	1	1
5	1	5
6	2	12
7	2	15
8	3	3

9	4	17

Are you considering any improvements to this property? (Q13)

Of those responding, 54 percent reported that they were considering improvements to their space. Thirty-six percent (36%) of the respondents were not considering any building improvements and 10 percent did not answer.

Are you experiencing any of the following challenges with your property? (Q14)

By and large property owners are not experiencing many challenges with their property. Twenty-nine percent (29%) of the property owners felt like building appearance is a challenge and 25 percent felt like building upkeep and maintenance was a challenge.

Have you had any difficulties filling vacancies? (Q15)

A quarter of respondents are having difficulties filling their vacancies.

Are you experiencing any of the following challenges with your property? (Q16)

Twenty-five percent (25%) of property owners feel it is challenging to find a quality renter. Once a quality renter is found only 14 percent have trouble keeping that renter.

Have you had any problems with crime such as vandalism or burglary within the last 12 months? (Q17)

Out of the property owners who responded, 24 percent have had some kind of crime problem in the last 12 months.

How important is the revitalization of the core downtown (8th St. and Washington)? (Q18)

Revitalizing the core downtown is very important to 26 percent of the property owners and somewhat important to 42 percent of them.

Do you think 8th and 10th streets should be one way, two ways, or no opinion? (Q19)

Forty-two percent (42%) of the respondents think 8th and 10th street should be two way streets; 35 percent think they should be one way streets.

Which *existing* incentives or assistance programs have you used or plan to use for this business? (Q20 A)

Most property owners (79 percent) did not respond to this question. Out of the 6 who did respond, 50 percent of them have or plan to use the Small Business Administration Small Business Guarantees, and 33 percent have or plan to use the Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Which *potential* incentives or assistance programs would you use for this business? (Q20 B)

Over half (68 percent) of the property owners did not answer this question. Of the 9 who did, 56 percent would use the Wisconsin Main Street Program Business Assistance and the Façade Improvement Grant or Low-Interest Loan. Forty-four (44%) of the respondents would use the sign grant.

What type of products and services would you like to see offered by the Mainly Manitowoc, Inc? (Q21)

Below is a summary of the 8 written comments:

- Improve the appearance of the downtown; tear down, or improve neglected buildings
- Make the downtown more tourist friendly
- Hold more events (Krazy Satur-daze Sales) throughout the summer months (on Wednesdays, as Saturdays are already busy)
- Bring in more businesses / more restaurants
- I'm not sure…I'd like to learn more
- City Planning Department make a commitment to Downtown

Below, please share any additional comments or suggestions you may have on Part 2 of this survey. (Q22)

Below is a summary of the 8 written comments:

- High property taxes (makes it difficult to make money)

- Do a traffic study on 8th and 10th streets to see if it's a good idea. I think it would slow the traffic down, and create a more pedestrian friendly environment, and increase business hopping.

- Utilize the area where the Farmers Market is located. Have events every night from June 1st to Sep. 1st.

- Putting on a function from a private business owner's perspective is not worth the hassle! From 2001 to 2007 I hired a Wisconsin Rock Band and provided refreshments, but quit doing it because of the hassle and cost affiliated with the city, which made it unprofitable. They also charged overtime rates to deliver the blockades because it was held on a Saturday, even though they delivered them on Friday and picked them up on Monday.

- Many of the buildings are in need of a good deal of work and discourage more upscale uses of nearby properties.

- The bench on our street corner is not used. It's in the way for snow removal. It is not maintained.

- We are always happy to see new businesses join the downtown. A real downtown should look and feel like it happened over time and changed with the wants and needs of the consumer. I am against a downtown with matching signage and cookie cutter store fronts that all look the same. Having said that, how does the community attract viable businesses to the downtown in these economic times?

Conclusions

The following are some of the key findings from the business operator and building owner survey.

- 89 percent of business operators are satisfied with their downtown location.
- a majority of business operators and property owners believe that 8th and 10th Streets should be two-way
- Customers are typically able to park within a block of the respondent's business
- over one-third of respondents have plans to expand products, services or square feet.
- Decreased consumer spending is the single biggest challenge facing the business community.
- Training workshops related to advertising and marketing (among others) would be of interest to respondents
- The public library, arts, and public safety services were rated good or excellent by a large majority of the respondents
- The condition of vacant lots and buildings was rated poor by many respondents
- The downtown business community has a strong commitment to buying local and providing excellent customer service.
- Downtown business operators reflect longevity in the community with the median age of a business of 15 years and average age 28 years.
- While local residents account for 80 percent of respondent's sales volume, tourism is nevertheless important contributing in excess of 10 percent.
- Almost half of the respondents reported that the car ferry is somewhat or very important to their business
- Various events increase foot traffic or sales volume, especially Krazy-Satur-Daze and the Lakeshore Holiday Parade
- The main competitive advantages of downtown businesses are believe to be service, uniqueness, quality and location.
- Respondents would like to see additional restaurants (various categories identified) and clothing stores.