



2014



CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT SURVEY

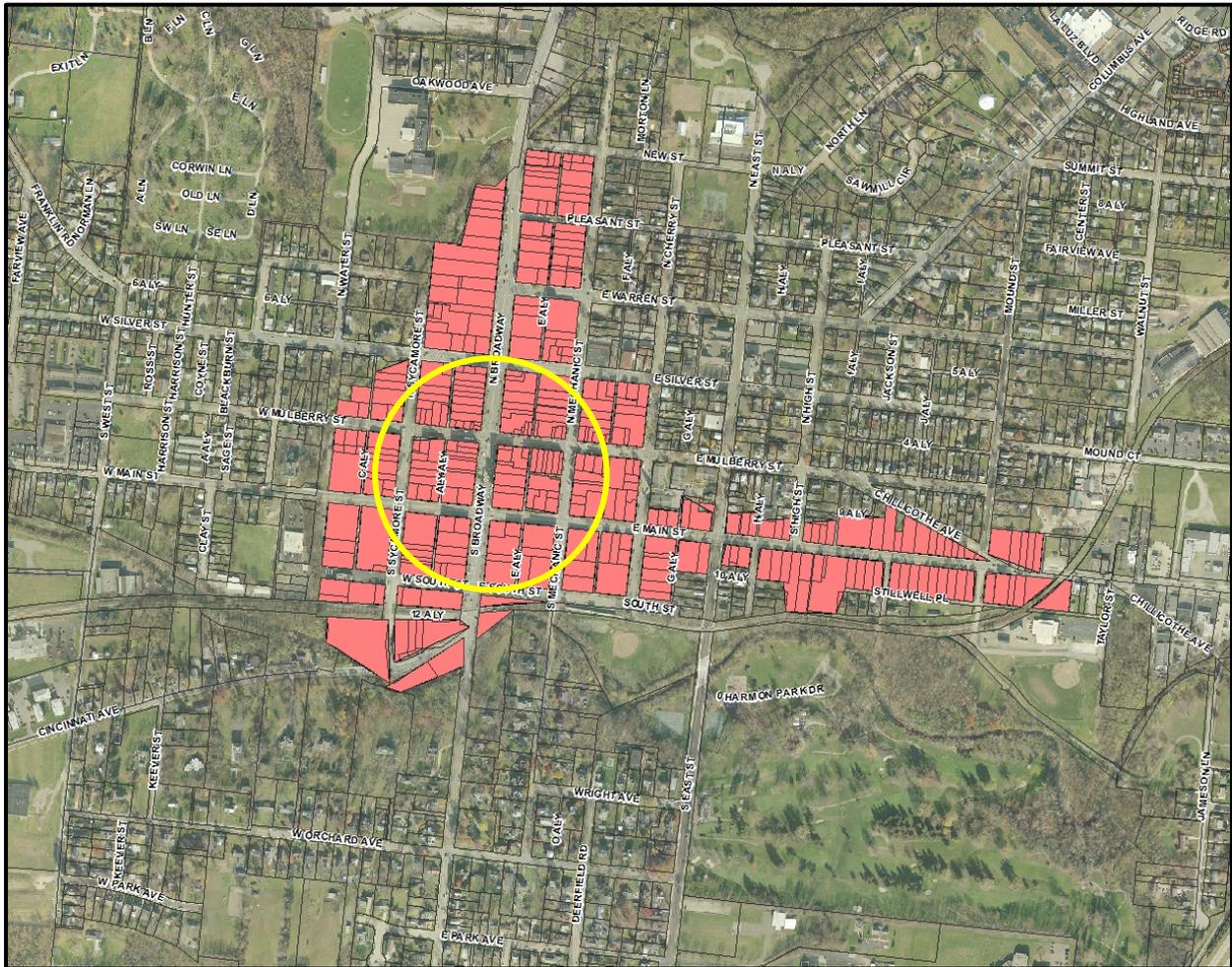
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Central Business District (CBD) survey was conducted in Historic Downtown Lebanon to obtain feedback from the downtown business owners regarding the quality of the CBD. This survey was developed with the assistance of an undergraduate student from Wright State University as part of his internship with the City's Department of Planning and Development. The purpose of this survey is to gather information from key stake holders regarding the conditions of the business environment, physical environment, and the overall success of the CBD. This report summarizes the findings based on the survey.

The survey results indicate the business owners within the CBD are positive about the economic and physical condition of the Downtown. Historic preservation, local festivals and the tourist train were identified as major contributors to the positive image and the continued success of the downtown.

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lebanon is committed to preserving and enhancing the economic vitality of its historic Central Business District (CBD), and as a part of this effort, the City conducted a survey of key stake holders regarding the quality of the CBD as a visitor destination. As illustrated below, the CBD (as depicted in the Official Zoning Map) is highlighted in red and the Downtown Core is outlined with a yellow circle.



METHODOLOGY

A non-random survey questionnaire, consisting of 30 questions in four categories, was distributed directly to downtown business owners in early March, 2014. The survey categories are; CBD Brand Identity, CBD Business Environment, CBD Physical Environment, and Success of the CBD and Your Business. Respondents were asked to return the survey by mail in a self-addressed stamped envelope or drop it off at the City building. 93 business owners within the CBD received the survey and 44 surveys were returned, resulting in a response rate of 47%.

FINDINGS

The survey results, which are displayed using pie charts, can be found on page 6 of this report, and a copy of the survey questions can be found on page 14.

The demographics indicate a large number of long-standing, small business owners responded to the survey. More than 68% of the respondents have operated their business for more than ten years with 61% having five or fewer employees. The businesses were evenly split between leased and owner occupied spaces. Retail and professional service establishments represent 62% of the responding businesses. 62% of the businesses that responded were located on Broadway.

CBD Brand Identity

Respondents overwhelmingly agree the downtown has a positive image. 87% of the respondents either agree or somewhat agree the downtown has a positive image while only 13% are neutral on this statement. Based on the responses, the positive image can be attributed to the historic preservation efforts and local festivals that bring residents and tourist downtown. 69% of the business community agrees both historic preservation and the local festivals are major contributors to the positive image of the downtown. 67% of respondents agree that the tourist train is a major contributor to the image of the downtown.

CBD Business Environment

The general observations of the business environment are positive. The data indicates there is a satisfactory assortment of businesses and activities to draw consumers downtown. 56% of business owners agree that the mix of businesses in downtown is excellent for attracting consumers to their business. 73% of respondents agree that business owners are welcoming to new downtown businesses. 87% of respondents agree the local festivals are successful in attracting consumers downtown, and 55% agree the train is excellent in attracting consumers downtown.

50% of the owners disagree that the number of vacant storefronts is minimal and has no effect on the downtown. 53% of the owners agree they face out-of-town competition; however. Although more than half of the respondents indicated the train brings additional consumers to downtown, business owners are evenly split and/or undecided on whether the tourist train is well integrated with the downtown businesses.

Physical Environment

Overall, respondents were positive regarding the physical environment of the CBD. The results indicate that the downtown is perceived as safe, walkable, and served with adequate parking, and the historic structures and streetscape are in good condition. 86% of the business owners strongly believe the downtown area is safe and 89% indicated the downtown area is walkable. 82% of respondents agree that the condition of the downtown historic buildings is excellent. 79% agree the streetscape near their

business is excellent. 73% of the business community agrees parking near their business is adequate. 86% of business owners indicate they have not used the downtown parking map located on the City's website.

Success of the CBD and Your Business

58% of respondents agree that the overall downtown performance was excellent and 68% of the business community agrees that their business performance last year was excellent.

Open-Ended Questions

Four of the thirty survey questions were open-ended, which allowed respondents to answer freely and elaborate on responses. The first question asked, "If you could add one type of business downtown, what would it be?" 61% mentioned a business associated with food. The most popular responses were bakery and coffee shop. The second question asked, "How can the City better promote tourism?" The responses to this question focused on some form of advertisement whether it is through signage, magazines, local newspaper circulations, radio, travel agencies, and etc. The third question asked, "What type of enhancement projects and initiatives do you feel would be beneficial to downtown?" The focus of the responses to this question was enhancing the streetscape. Multiple respondents indicated street furniture such as benches, flower pots and planters. The fourth question asked, "What local attractions do you feel are significant and the most beneficial to downtown?" The attraction mentioned the most is the Golden Lamb followed by the train and the festivals in general.

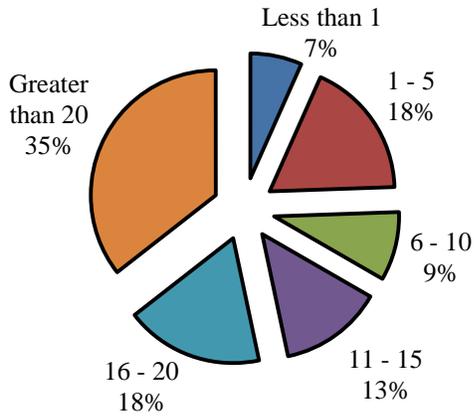
CONCLUSION

Overall, respondents provided positive feedback regarding the City's historic preservation, local festivals, and tourist train which contribute to the positive image of the downtown. Lebanon's downtown area is perceived as being safe, walkable, and served with adequate parking.

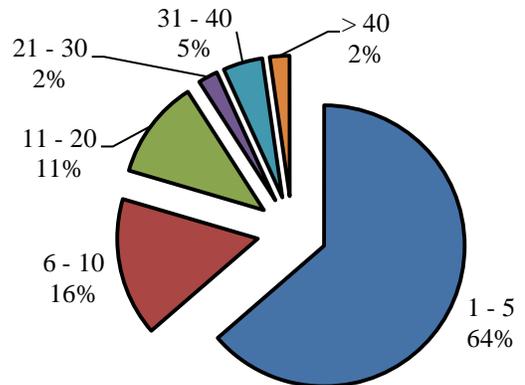
The business community provided positive feedback regarding the overall conditions of downtown, however, some concerns were identified by respondents. The business community felt there is a good mixture of shops; however, there should be additional dining options to attract consumers downtown in the evenings. Also, the business community indicated that the number of empty storefronts affects businesses. Additional advertisement of the downtown and local activities is desired to further promote tourism. The business owner's responses suggest the City would benefit from additional streetscape enhancements.

SURVEY RESULTS

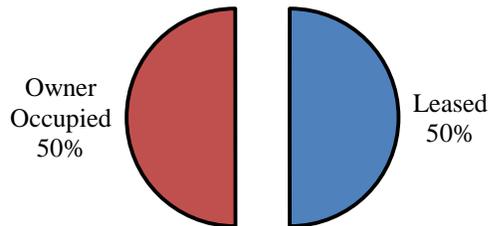
Q-1. Number of years you have run the business:



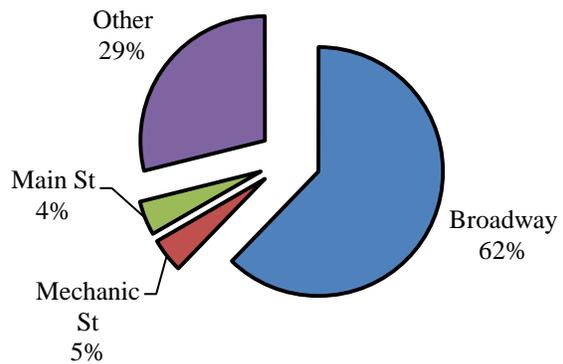
Q-2. Number of employees:



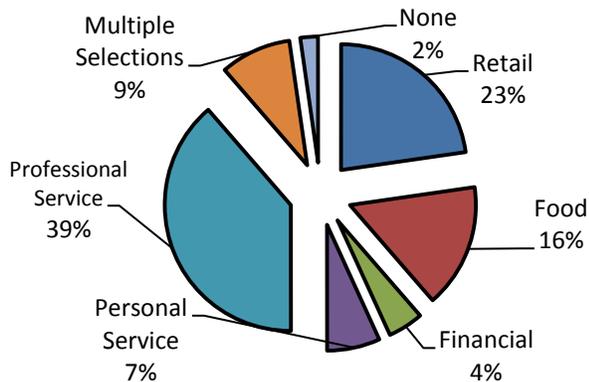
Q-3. Business location is:



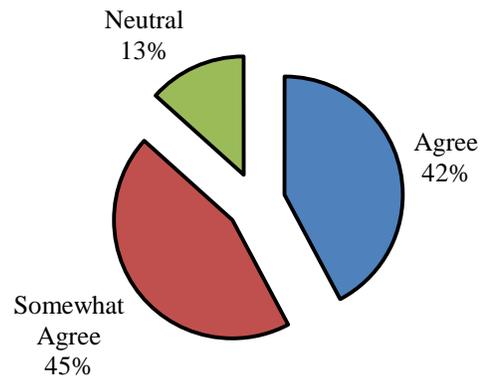
Q-4. General location of business:



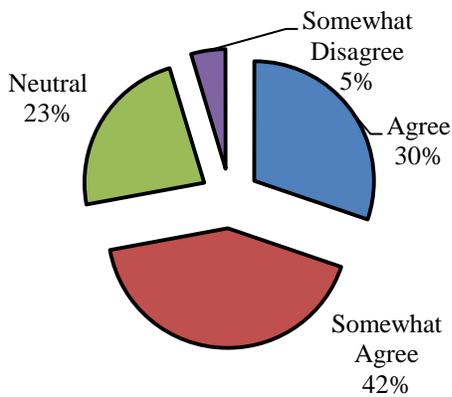
Q-5. Business Type:



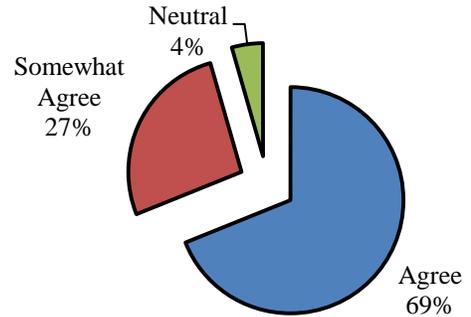
Q-6. Downtown has a positive image:



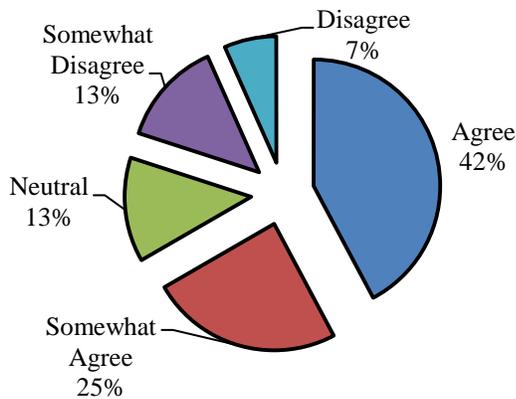
Q-7. Downtown business owners and local government present a constant image of downtown:



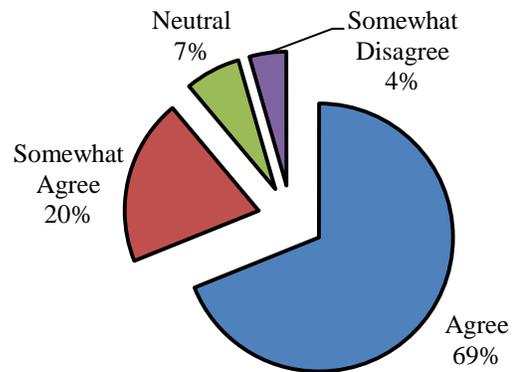
Q-8. Historic preservation is a major contributor to the downtown image:



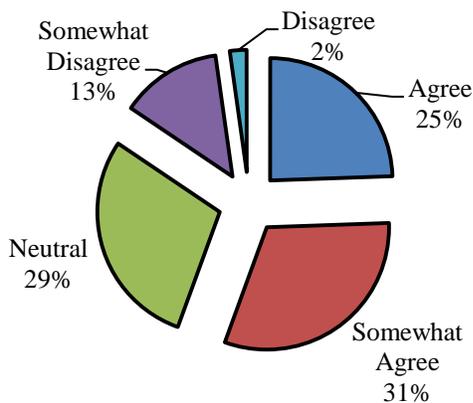
Q-9. The train is a major contributor to the downtown image:



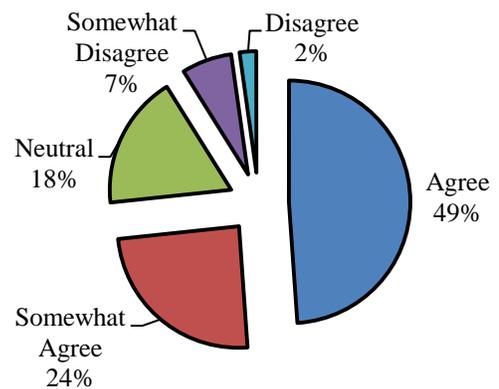
Q-10. The local festivals are a major contributor to the downtown image:



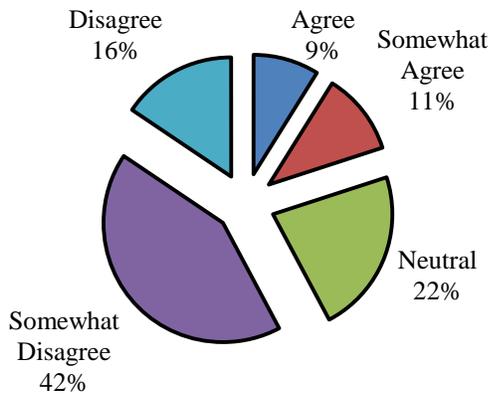
Q-11. The mix of businesses in downtown is excellent for attracting consumers to my business:



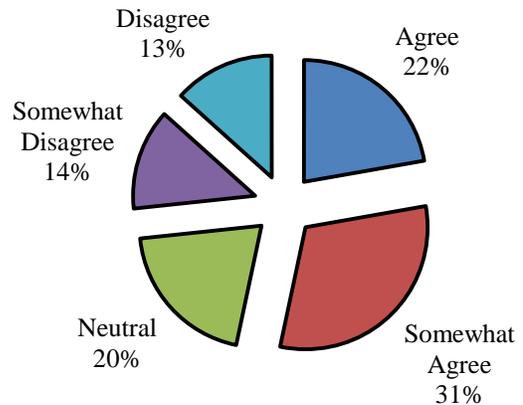
Q-12. Downtown business owners are welcoming to new businesses:



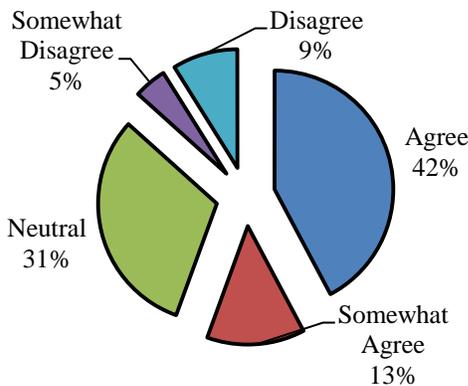
Q-13. The number of vacant storefronts is so low that it has no effect on downtown businesses:



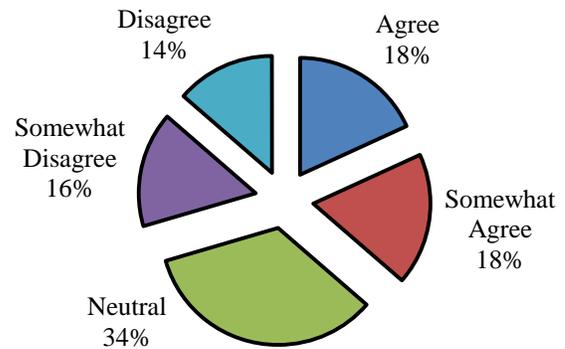
Q-14. My business faces considerable out-of-town competition:



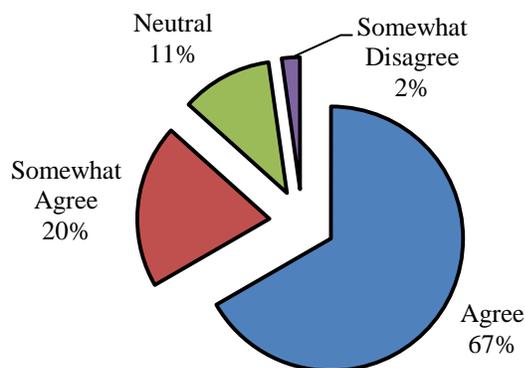
Q-15. The train is successful in attracting consumer's downtown:



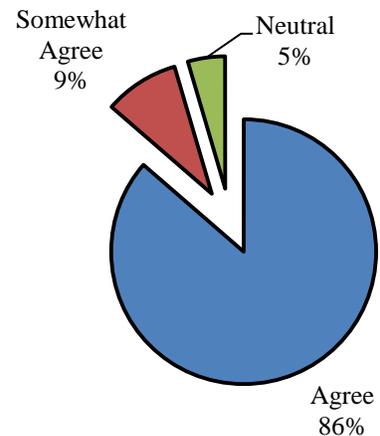
Q-16. The tourist train operations are well integrated with the downtown businesses:



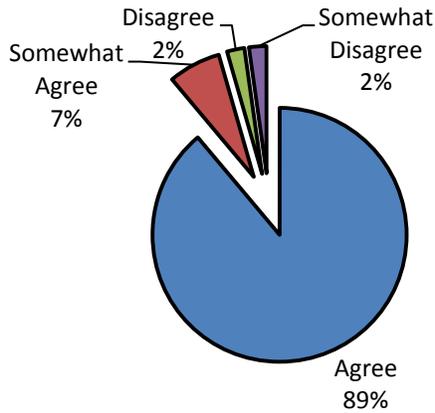
Q-17. The local festivals are successful in attracting consumers downtown:



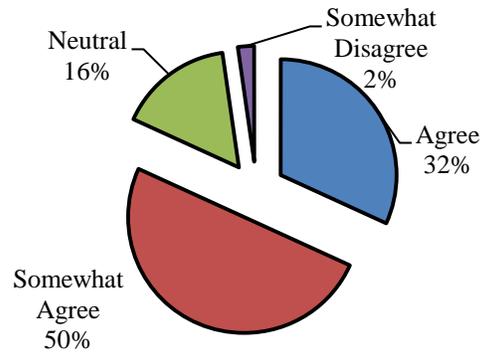
Q-18. The downtown area is safe:



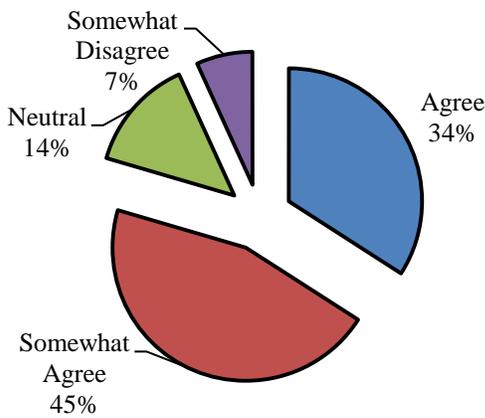
Q-19. The downtown area is “walkable”:



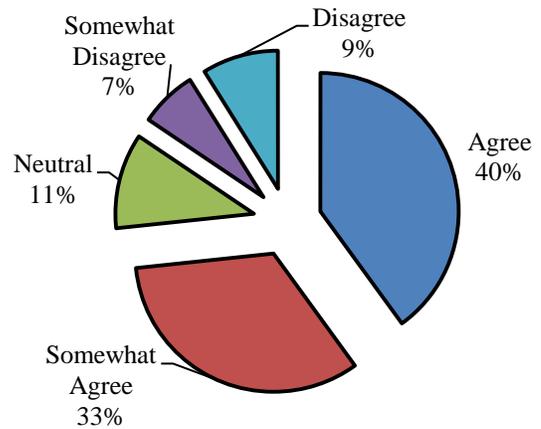
Q-20. The condition of the downtown historic buildings is excellent.



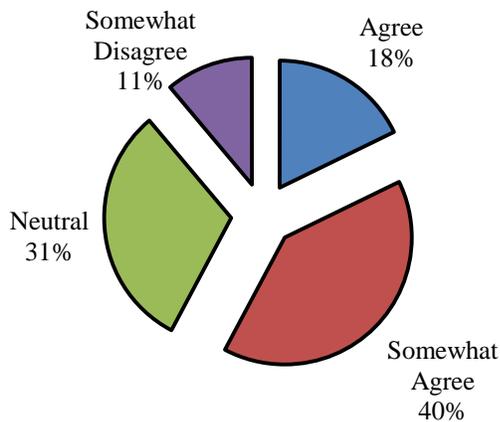
Q-21. The streetscape appearance near my business is excellent:



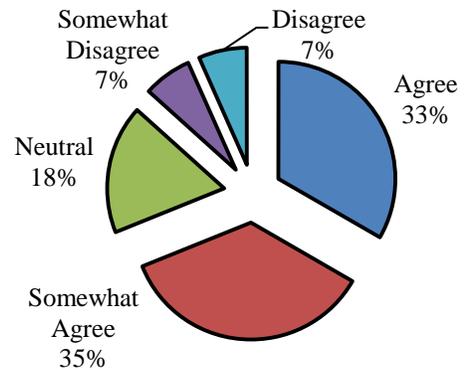
Q-22. The parking availability near my business is excellent:



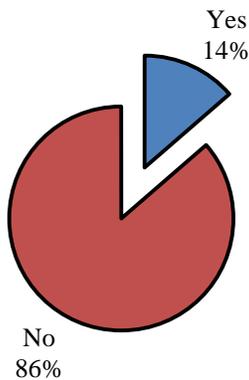
Q-23. The overall downtown performance last year was excellent:



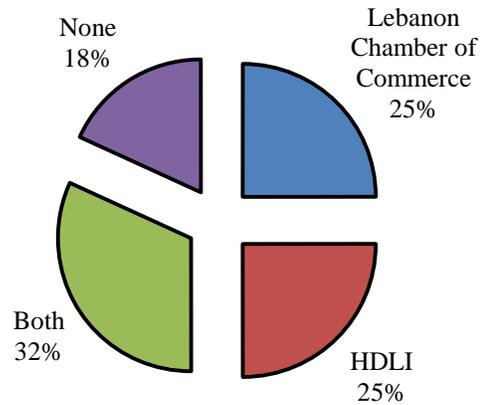
Q-24. The overall performance of your business last year was excellent:



Q-25. Have you used the downtown parking map located on the City’s website?



Q-30. Which organizations do you belong to? (Check all that apply)



Q-26. If you could add one type of business downtown, what would it be?

- Mom & pop Italian food (4 responses)
- Inexpensive family restaurant
- Restaurant
- Anchor store
- Coffee shop (7 responses)
- Bar
- Bakery (8 responses)
- Craft/fabric store
- Hotel with meeting rooms
- Trendy housing (apartments) downtown for young professionals
- Larger classic music venues
- Arts & crafts
- Sewing
- Kids clothing/toys
- Good restaurant/entertainment to bring people downtown in the evenings (2 responses)
- American eatery
- Large strip mall with well-known chain stores (Hobby Lobby/crafts)
- Boutique
- Bank/savings & loan
- Specialty automotive hobby
- Arcade
- Something to appeal men and teenagers
- Retail upscale dining entertainment – diversify
- Chico’s (women’s clothing)
- Ready-made sandwiches or Subway
- Coffee house with books
- A deli with outdoor seating
- Movie theater

- Small scale general retail (Walgreens, CVS)
- Late night eating establishments
- Restaurants that would be open later
- Family restaurant for dinner
- Drug store
- Panera Bread
- Fine eating establishments and/or art galleries

Q-27 How can the City better promote tourism?

- Keep the train
- Stop approving demolition of historic buildings
- Become a Certified Local Government (CLG) to receive funds, grants and support from the Ohio Preservation Office (OHPO)
- Promote local businesses to residents
- Get residents to shop in Lebanon
- Radio advertising
- Ohio Magazine
- Midwestern publications
- Signs on the interstate
- Advertise & help businesses owners know where to advertise
- Work with businesses every day of the year and not just at festivals & holidays
- More weekend activities
- Move the Farmer’s Market to E. Mulberry to better promote the downtown
- Centrally locate a tourist info and restroom facility at Main and Broadway (Christmas Tree Park)
- Social media
- Marketing to surrounding communities
- Being less racist towards African Americans
- “Brand” as an antique shopping town is losing, as are the popularity of antiques (focus on driving the right storefronts that complement the already vast amount of visitors)
- More education on what downtown businesses offer
- Promote teen-friendly hangouts
- Advertising & promotions – interstate rest area (statewide)
- AAA
- Travel agents
- Put money into a consistent ad campaign promoting HDLI
- Help Fair Board develop convention space at the fairgrounds
- Allow businesses additional signage
- Hang flower pots from every lamp post
- Signage across main road of Broadway
- Rather than have train take passengers to Mason, bring passengers from Mason to Lebanon and give them 2 to 3 hours to eat and shop
- Reduce the number of empty storefronts
- Clear the streets and sidewalk in the winter
- Add downtown hotel rooms and festivals
- Start an Arts Festival (painters)
- Have a chef cook-off

- Allow more movies to be filmed in Lebanon
- Our audience comes from Dayton, Mason, West Chester, Cincinnati as well as Lebanon
- Continue to support the Lebanon Chamber of Commerce
- Always have a rep on the Chamber Board
- Increase lodging
- Commercial to promote everything Lebanon has to offer
- Develop a parking garage
- Social media to target young age groups
- Banners across Broadway to announce events
- More local support from the Lebanon citizens
- Radio ads
- Outreach programs
- Advertise in travel magazines

Q-28. What type of enhancement projects and initiatives do you feel would be beneficial to downtown?

- Plan & promote the shoe factory block
- Policed parking
- Block off E. Mulberry and make it a walkable area
- Big flower pots/hanging baskets similar to those in Olde Montgomery, OH
- Spring event (April-May)
- Lebanon isn't consistently attracting business from out-of-town people
- Lebanon has lost its luster as the county seat
- Cleaning up vacant properties (by enforcing ordinances on landlords)
- City Vehicle Parking uses too many spaces in main parking lot
- 2 hour parking lots should be enforced and not used for all day employee parking
- Flower pots should not be used for cigarette containers
- Work out green arrow/no turn on red options to make intersections safer for pedestrians
- Lower speed limits downtown; make downtown more of Lebanon's community center, not just tourism (like Yellow Springs)
- Good restaurants/entertainment destinations to bring people downtown in the evenings
- More benches to encourage people to walk to businesses and sit
- Look at Brown County, IN (that town has people out with pets walking in & out of shops)
- Arrange benches to encourage conversation
- White lights are needed on buildings or trees
- More organized events
- Lighting, music, and recommended operational hours all enhance the experience
- Connect the train to mall, racino
- Town needs a direction of marketing to lead HDLI/Chamber
- Building restoration, more walker friendly, promote bike trail to downtown, improve/vacate back alleys to encourage more development
- Beautification, more green space, ambience, historical projects (i.e.- historical sign project)
- Promote art shows on South Street (don't have all festivals on Mulberry Street), farmer's market on South Street
- More parking, allow 2 top tables outside w/o a lot of red tape, promote a restaurant district on Mulberry (between Broadway & Mechanic) & block off after 5 pm (like Louisville's Off Fourth)

- Bike racks, more outdoor seating, better signage at corners to act as an “ambassador” or “docent” to city, couple of downtown map kiosks, WiFi.
- Large music festival
- Reception hall, multiple small scale entertainment venues to attract younger/after dinner crowd/restaurants
- I wish the city had the money to help a business owner willing to spend money to improve property downtown - also, I believe we need to be unique (i.e. - an artist business community or a culinary destination including a brew house, etc.)
- Better snow removal on sidewalks
- Street surface improvement
- Development of Lebanon fairgrounds for concerts and events. We need more hotel rooms to keep people staying in Lebanon
- Better parking for employees and visitors
- More sidewalk promotion & longer business hours.

Q-29. What local attractions do you feel are significant and the most beneficial to downtown?

- Christmas Parade (4 responses)
- Festivals (8 responses)
- Food
- Train (12 responses)
- Availability of restrooms, parking and events
- Antiques in Waynesville
- Antique show at the elementary
- Valley Vineyard
- Ft. Ancient parade
- Golden Lamb (14 responses)
- The parks
- The library (2 responses)
- The Ice Cream Parlor (6 responses)
- Historic Character
- Apple Fest
- Festivals (except Country Music Fest)
- Should have kept the Arts Fest
- None
- Organized events that bring the community and business owners together
- Boutique shopping experience
- More focus on historic icons
- Summer block parties
- Museum (2 responses)
- Carriage Parade (2 responses)
- Farmer's market (2 responses)
- Unique shops, kind & mannerly shop clerks
- 3rd Friday festivals – 2 days would be even better but “insurance” & patrolling would be expensive (2 responses)
- Girl’s Night Out
- The Breakfast Club

- LCNB & other banking
- Numerous retail (antiques, etc)
- Horse Parade
- Golden Turtle
- Quilt show
- Historic downtown district
- Theatre
- Vibrant business
- Warren County Historical Museum
- Blues Festival (2 responses)
- Country Music Festival
- Hopefully Lebanon fairgrounds
- Conventions & lunches at the history museum

2014 Central Business District Survey

Select the option that comes closest to your opinion of the following statements concerning the CBD

CBD Physical Environment	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
18. The downtown area is safe	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
19. The downtown area is "walkable"	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
20. The condition of the downtown historic buildings is excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
21. The streetscape appearance near my business is excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
22. The parking availability near my business is excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

Success of CBD & Your Business	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
23. The overall downtown performance last year was excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1
24. The overall performance of your business last year was excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> 5	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 1

25. Have you used the downtown parking map located on the city website? Yes No
26. If you could add one type of business downtown, what would it be? _____

27. How can the city better promote tourism? _____

28. What type of enhancement projects and initiatives do you feel would be beneficial to downtown? _____

29. What local attractions do you feel are significant and the most beneficial to downtown? _____

30. Which organizations do you belong to? (check all that apply) Lebanon Chamber of Commerce HDLI
 Other(s) _____

Thank you for your time!