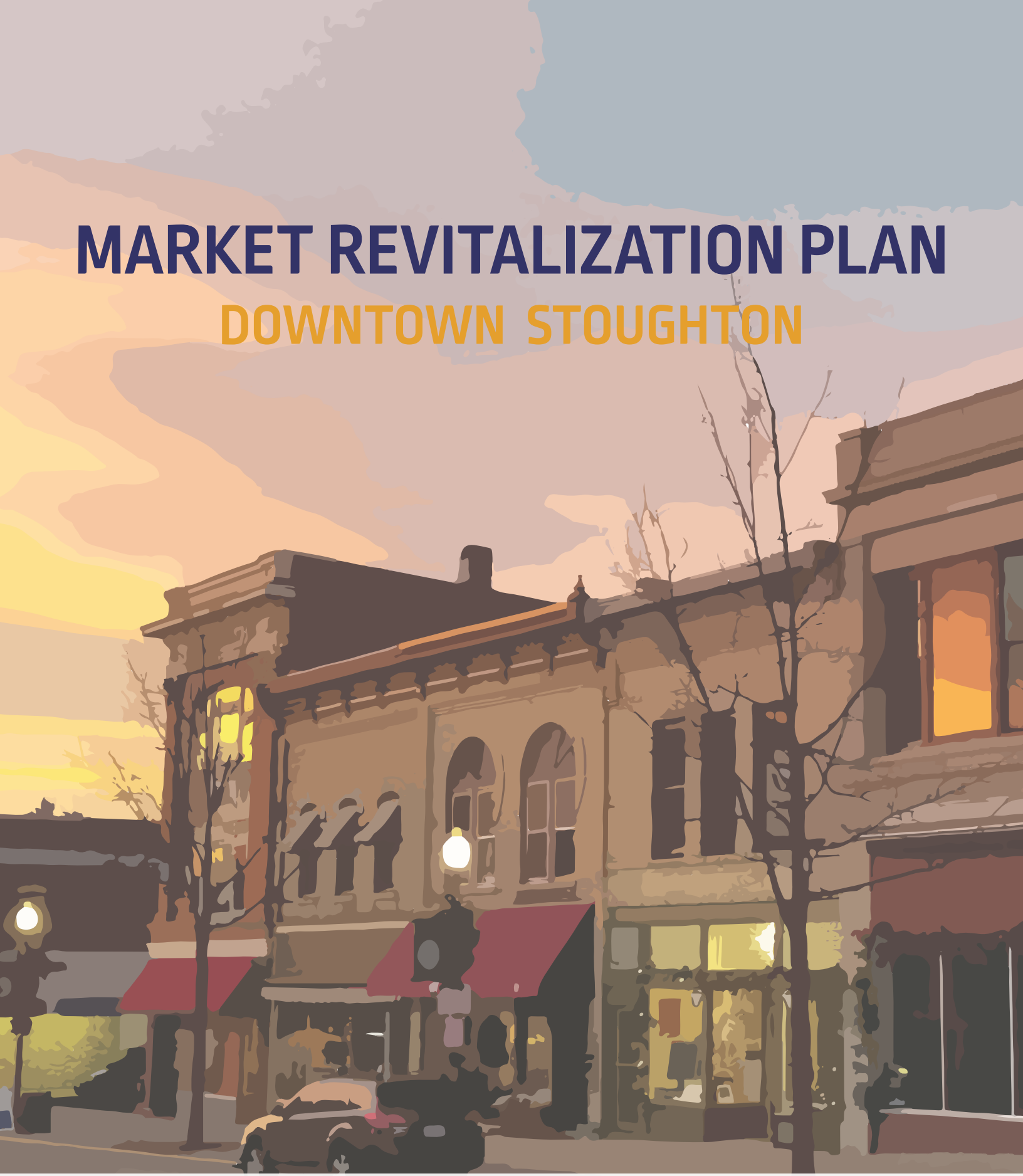
MARKET REVITALIZATION PLAN

DOWNTOWN STOUGHTON



business districts, inc.

AYRES

STOUGHTON
Redevelopment Authority

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 3

Introduction 5

Community Input 7

- Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups 7
- Online Survey 10
- Public Input Meeting #1 14
- Public Input Process Summary 18

Market Analysis 19

- Markets and Demographics 19
- Existing Downtown Businesses 20
- Real Estate Economies 21
- Market Analysis Summary 23

Best Practices In Regional Downtowns 24

Market Recommendations 27

- What to Do Now: 28
- Within 5 Years: 31
- Within 10 Years: 32
- Within 20 Years: 33

Physical Improvement Recommendations 34

- Streetscape Recommendations 38
- Wayfinding and Branding Recommendations 47
- Infill and Redevelopment Recommendations 50
- Parking 54
- What to Do Now 55
- In the Next 5-Years 56
- In the Next 10-Years 57

Partnerships and Funding Opportunities 58

Appendix 1: Online Survey Results 1-1

Appendix 2: Market Evaluation 2-2

Appendix 3: Stakeholder and Focus Groups 3-3

Appendix 4: Public Input Summary 4-4

Appendix 5: Opportunities Mapping 5-5

The following report uses precedent images sourced from Ayres Associates as well as the internet. Images are credited where possible.

Executive Summary

In February of 2019 the Stoughton City Council approved a resolution authorizing the Redevelopment Authority of Stoughton to prepare a revitalization initiative for downtown. With the assistance of Ayres Associates and Business Districts Inc., a planning process was developed to:

- Solicit and collect feedback from downtown stakeholders;
- Identify strategies and opportunities to advance economic development downtown; and
- Update planning for the eastern end of Main Street.

The City's Redevelopment Authority (RDA) established a Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee (DRS) to guide the development of the plan.

Community Input

The project began with a kick-off meeting with the DRS in July of 2019. After that, input was gathered through stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, an evaluation of Stoughton's current market conditions, and a public input meeting. Participants expressed passionate interest in downtown, but they also raised concerns and expressed their desires for a more vital downtown. Business closings, parking management, and aesthetics were raised as concerns. An overall desire for a more active, diverse, accessible, and attractive downtown was expressed.

Market Analysis and Recommendations

Stoughton has many assets including regional arts institutions, unique businesses, regionally recognized events and festivals, historical structures and streetscape improvements. It also benefits from its location in growing regional and local markets. The market analysis examined demographics, existing downtown businesses, and real estate economies. It found that downtown businesses can capture additional sales within larger markets by adapting to changing consumer needs and behaviors. Amending business hours, utilizing technology to a make purchasing easier, and being more welcoming to a more diverse population of both residents and visitors are recommended changes. In addition, it is recommended that City and the RDA coordinate to address issues related to storefront appearance, communication about downtown, and the support of overall sales growth. Additional recommendations are broken down into immediate actions and steps to be taken with five, ten, and twenty years. Detailed recommendations fall under the categories of:

- Stakeholder identification and selection;
- Regional consumer and investor communication;
- Examination of City approval and licensing processes;
- Updated available incentives;
- Business growth programs; and
- A new merchants' organization.

Physical Improvement Recommendations

The development and redevelopment of downtown Stoughton's existing structure can support market revitalization and contribute to the attraction of new businesses, residents, and activity in the downtown. As with the market recommendations, recommendations related to physical improvements in downtown are broken down into what can be done now and what should be done in the next five- and ten-year timeframes. Recommendations are also topical, covering streetscape, wayfinding and branding, infill and redevelopment, and parking. Images of future sidewalk/streetscape experiences for a series of existing streets are provided. To implement a quality wayfinding system, it is recommended that a branding study is conducted and that unique wayfinding components be designed. Examples from other destination communities are provided. Several opportunities for infill and redevelopment exist in downtown, particularly off Main Street. The DRS provided recommendations for buildings that could be remodeled or redeveloped, and these are identified on the project concept plan. Lastly, two types of parking concerns were noted during the process: the concern that there is not enough

parking where it is needed most and that parking regulations do not allow for enough time for shopping. Additional studies examining parking needs and demands, and parking limits are recommended.

Stoughton is a unique community with great potential. Its historic downtown is a destination and there is the potential for substantial business growth with the recommendations outlined in this plan. One of Stoughton's greatest assets is its dedicated citizens who provided input into this process. With a clear understanding of the existing market and customer needs, businesses can make changes to access new customers. The business community, in partnership with the City government, can purse a variety of efforts including physical improvement that can further support the business environment and make Stoughton and even stronger destination. This plan stands as a guide to make those changes happen through a series of timed recommendations based on input from dedicated citizen and downtown advocates.

Introduction

A market-based, downtown revitalization and improvement plan was prepared for the City of Stoughton between July of 2019 through March of 2020. The plan was the developed in response to a February 2019 City Council resolution request by the Redevelopment Authority of Stoughton to prepare a revitalization initiative with the following objectives:

1. Solicit and collect feedback from downtown stakeholders;
2. Identify strategies and opportunities to advance economic development downtown; and
3. Update planning for the eastern end of Main Street.

The City's RDA established a Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee (DRS) to oversee and guide the development of the plan and subsequent recommendations. Members of the DRS included:

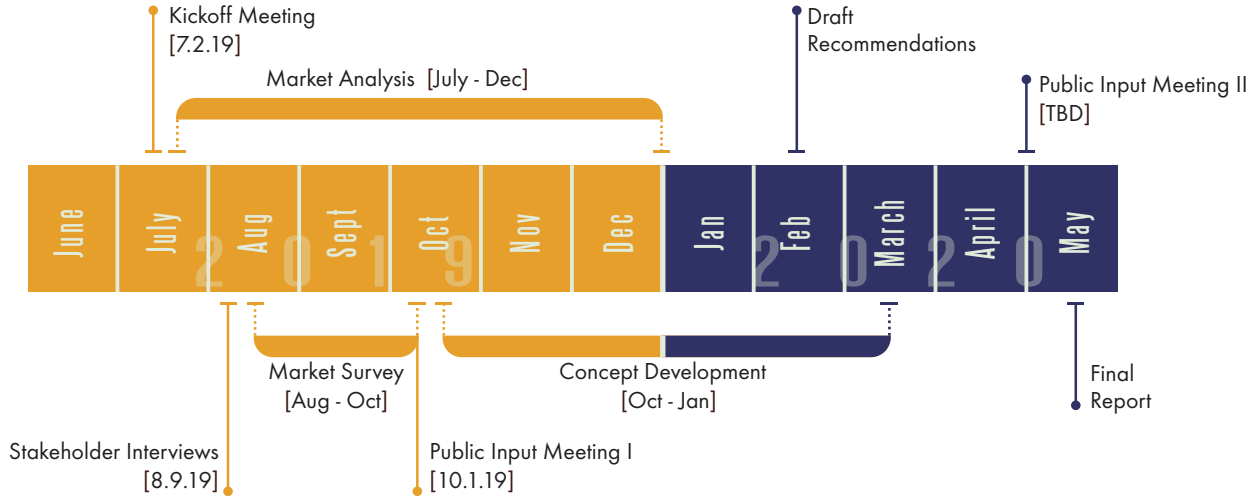
- Phil Caravello
- Joe Crubaugh
- Denise Duranczyk, Chair
- Sharon Mason-Boersma, Secretary
- Peter McMasters
- Jamae Ramsden
- Alan Sheets
- Lukas Trow, Vice-Chair

The following diagram illustrates the project planning process.

The project began with a kickoff meeting in July of 2019 with representatives of the City of Stoughton's DRS. At the kickoff meeting, the project study area was defined, and goals and outcomes of a successful project were identified. The DRS were asked to define project success. Responses varied and included the desire for concrete economic strategies; ways to improve parking; identifying an organizational structure for growth; and a vision for downtown aesthetics. Consistent discussion focused on the desire for tangible, executable recommendations with definable timelines.

Objective 1 of the project, ***Solicit and collect feedback from downtown stakeholders***, was accomplished through a variety of input strategies. Following the kickoff meeting, feedback about downtown opportunities for redevelopment and revitalization as well as concerns and identification of revitalization constraints were collected through stakeholder interviews, an online community survey, an evaluation of Stoughton's current market conditions, and a public input meeting. Findings from these tasks were collected, evaluated, reviewed, and discussed with the DRS and other stakeholders in subsequent meetings.

Several studies were prepared to complete Objective 2, ***Identify strategies and opportunities to advance economic development downtown***. These studies included a comparison of Stoughton's existing market



2019-2020 Study Timeline

with national trends and averages, a review of the spending and purchasing behaviors of respondents to the online survey (as self-reported by respondents), a comparison with other market successful communities nationwide.

Finally, the findings from the community input portion of work were paired with site observations of existing downtown Stoughton's design and arrangement, discussions with members of the DRS and other downtown business owners, and a comparison with national industry standards for downtown design to prepare Objective 3, ***Update planning for the eastern end of Main Street***. Before preparing planning and design improvement recommendations mapping of identified opportunities and needs was prepared and tested and reviewed by the DRS and other stakeholders. Responses and feedback from the opportunities testing led the preparation of final recommendations.
Detailed descriptions of the work introduced above and results including descriptions of how each of the project objectives were met follows. Market and downtown planning recommendations follow.

Community Input

Key to the development of the City of Stoughton's Downtown Market Revitalization Plan was input from community members. This included input from:

- Downtown business owners;
- Downtown property owners;
- Regional employers;
- Community champions;
- Representatives of the City;
- Residents of Stoughton; and
- Downtown users and visitors.

Throughout the process the DRS served as a sounding board for input strategies and a review of the findings from input sessions. As residents, downtown business owners, and downtown property owners, the membership of the DRS has first-hand knowledge and understanding of many of the needs, concerns, and opportunities identified during the community input portion of the plan.

Three methods were used to collect community input for this plan: Stakeholder & Focus Group interviews, an online Survey, and Public Input Meetings.

Stakeholder Interviews & Focus Groups

Working with the DRS downtown stakeholders and focus group participants were identified for small group interviews. Participants included downtown business and property owners, Stoughton residents, City officials, and representatives from Stoughton's major employers, local arts organizations, and downtown event organizers.

Eight (8) small group, confidential, stakeholder interviews were conducted with downtown stakeholders (conducted on site on July 31, 2019 and by phone in August 2019) and in a stakeholder focus group held on August 1, 2019. Interviews were focused on collecting market-related observations and participant perceptions of downtown, opportunities or constraints; needs; and identification of places, programming or events that are successful.

Comments collected during the interviews were organized in the following categories:

- General Issues & Perceptions
- Businesses & Uses
- Market Context
- Appearance & Design Issues
- Access & Circulation
- Real Estate & Local Incentives
- Events & Activities
- Organization & Partnerships.

The following summarizes participant input and observations during the interviews. See Appendix 3 for the full report.

General Issues & Perceptions

- Recent vacancies are a concern among downtown's business community.
  - While these owners had individual reasons for their business closures, the combined effect creates negative perceptions for residents and visitors.
- In the past, Stoughton functioned as a distinct community with Norwegian roots.
  - The City now serves as an economic component of a larger region and as a Madison suburb.
- Downtown needs to become more welcoming to diverse populations. As the region has become more diverse, so has the City.
  - The Norwegian story now represents one of many stories reflecting the City's history.
- Downtown private and public sector interests need a unified vision for a successful downtown future.
  - The City and its downtown interests are perceived as resistant to change.
  - Implementing any vision will require change.
  - Potential investors indicated that Stoughton needs to become more forward thinking and open to new ideas specific to downtown's future economic growth.

Businesses & Uses

- Downtown's businesses need to recognize that national trends, particularly for retailers, apply to their present and future, and these

businesses need to continuously adapt.
  - This adaptation includes 'omni-channel' marketing and sales. An integrated shopping experience that enables the shopper to access goods or services from a desktop, mobile device, phone, and physical store. When done successfully, the experience is seamless.
- Many downtown retailers close at 5 or 6PM and are not always open during their posted hours.
  - Some participants indicated that the limited store and business hours inhibits purchasing by residents who work in Madison or elsewhere.
  - Downtown's retailers indicated that few customers patronize their stores after 5 and that closing earlier is important to their family lives.
- Too many hobby businesses and unsustainable businesses locate in downtown Stoughton.
  - This type of business has already affected neighboring businesses and has contributed to recent business closings.
- Additional dining options are needed downtown to supplement the current restaurant cluster.
- Additional housing in or near downtown was cited as an opportunity to support downtown business growth.
- There is minimal collaboration among downtown's businesses, including strategic marketing efforts that could benefit multiple businesses.
  - There is minimal communication among downtown's businesses.
- Temporary uses, such as food trucks, pop-ups, or Air BNB-type lodging, are nationally emerging opportunities that could become part of downtown.
  - Local regulations may need updates to support emerging uses.

Market Context

- With few exceptions, existing downtown's businesses are attracting consumers from similar regional market geographies.
- Downtown Stoughton needs new ideas and fresh approaches to increase downtown business revenues and to improve downtown for the future.
  - This will require greater collaboration among all downtown stakeholders.
- Although new Stoughton residents are very committed to downtown and the City, focused attraction of younger residents and families to the community is required.

Appearance & Design Issues

- Downtown needs to look better.
  - This observation encompassed several aspects: cleanliness outside of storefronts, store window merchandising, certain building facades, and vacancies.
  - Alleys, including rear-parking areas, were described as unkempt, poorly maintained, and dangerous in winter weather.
  - The Main Street corridor needs more plantings and greenery to create a nicer overall experience.

Access & Circulation

- Parking enforcement during the day was cited as restrictive.
  - The two (2) hour parking limit in most locations is insufficient if customers want to shop and dine.
- Parking is available but difficult for downtown customers to locate.
  - More informational signage and better, consistent wayfinding would help manage any parking issue.
  - Parking areas located behind Main Street buildings require better signage.

Real Estate & Local Incentives

- Downtown real estate includes a high percentage of owner occupants, or business owners who own their storefronts.
- Rents in leased storefronts are described as 'very high.'
- Regional real estate professionals described the downtown market as good.
- Prospective tenants considering downtown Stoughton lease space are primarily personal services and service-related.
- The range of ground level rents for downtown lease space is difficult to determine, given the high percentage of business owner-occupants. Stoughton's ground level rents are described as negotiable, but generally in the $8-$13 PSF range. Rents allocated (or paid)

by owner-occupants to their buildings vary significantly by property ownership structure and owner tax status. These rents are typically below market rents.
  - Asking rents per square foot (PSF) for vintage ground level lease in the south Madison area are generally $12-$15 PSF with varied add-ons.
  - Asking rents for restaurant lease space in south Madison have a slightly higher PSF, typically $14-$20 PSF.
- Downtown's historic buildings suffer from deferred maintenance and disinvestment.
- Upper story residential rents are the economic driver for property ownership among business owners who own their building.
- Currently available local incentive programs need to be modified.
  - Existing incentives do not match the needs of downtown's property owners.

Events & Activities

- Stoughton's arts and cultural institutions attract large numbers of visitors to downtown annually.
  - For example, before and after Opera House events audiences frequent existing downtown's restaurants.
  - The City is regionally recognized for its arts programming.
- The major downtown festival, Syttende Mai, continues to attract nearly 20,000 each year, providing important exposure to downtown's businesses.
- The Stoughton Community Farmers Market attendance is growing through community and social media networks.
- Downtown has a robust, annual event calendar including new and established events.
  - Some overlap was observed among current events and targeted audiences.
  - No single information source (webpage or other media) is available with a complete schedule of planned downtown events.

Organization & Partnerships

- The partnership between the City and downtown's private sector needs to be strengthened.
  - Roles and responsibilities for the private and public sectors require definition. For example, the private sector needs to better understand local regulatory processes, and the public sector needs to better educate the private sector about these processes.
- Downtown leadership, or a liaison function, is needed to enable collaboration among businesses.
  - Multiple participants cited this need.
- Strong partnerships with multiple local interests will be important to downtown growth and any downtown leadership.
  - Partnerships with downtown's arts and cultural institutions would be beneficial for downtown's future. This could include multiple activities to animate downtown in small ways.
  - The City's major employers could provide access to expertise and potential customers.
- Engaging residents interested in downtown's succeed is most important.
  - This includes engaging parents and young children; building community affinity.

Strategic Implications

Interview and focus group participants recognized that sustained work is required to improve downtown Stoughton's future economy. They recognized that improvement will require time and investment from the private and public sectors.

Downtown has multiple assets within the commercial district but some business approaches and attitudes need to change to promote future success. Most important, all stakeholder and focus group participants expressed a desire for economic sustainability in downtown. Economic sustainability was described by participants as attracting more downtown users, strong businesses, and local investment. The strategic implications of the interviews are as follows:

1. *Downtown must become more welcoming if it is to become economically successful.*

   This encompasses multiple efforts and actions—from welcoming diverse people and families to downtown, to permitting visitors and families to access business restrooms during programmed events downtown,

and to understanding what new downtown businesses need to succeed. Ultimately, being welcoming is the basis for all attraction efforts, whether for new residents, businesses, current residents or employees, and visitors.

2. *Collaboration will be required to ensure future success, particularly among private sector interests.*

   A successful downtown means all interests, private and public, benefit from economic success. As one example, organizers of downtown events should be working together to eliminate any duplication and to ensure event publicity, success and organization.

3. *The roles of the private and public sector need greater definition.*

   Defined roles will establish the context for collaboration. First, the City and Stoughton's RDA should examine their processes, regulations, and approvals to support this plan's implementation and downtown's economic success. Secondly, the private sector needs to strengthen their operations, including customer attraction to their individual businesses and downtown, and to ensure quality improvements to their historic buildings to promote better downtown aesthetic.

Online Survey

In concert with stakeholder interviews an online market survey, Downtown Stoughton Resident/ Consumer Survey, was developed and deployed. This online survey consisted of 18 questions regarding participant demographics, residency, frequency of downtown use and type of use, satisfaction of experiences, and an opportunity for comments. The purpose of the online survey was to identify respondent preferences specific to downtown Stoughton and to inform this plan's strategic recommendations. Respondents were not required to answer any individual survey question. The survey received 1,110 responses beginning on August 6, 2019 until it closed on October 8, 2019.

Some significant findings emerged from the survey. The following is a summary of the overall survey results. Detailed survey results will be provided in Appendix 1.

A survey respondent uses a temporary online survey station, set up during Public Input Meeting #1, at the Legeret.

Demographics

When viewing the demographic questions developed for the survey, the overall respondent pool skewed older compared with the City of Stoughton's population data. When asked to identify their household participant resident and non-residents' responses had a higher percentage of 'I live alone' responses, generally reflecting their higher percentages of older respondents. The non-residents sub-group responses actually skewed older than all responses.

The percentage of aged 25-44 responses exceeded that of the City's percentage of population. The demographics of the respondent pool are shown in the table below.

Answer Choices	Survey Responses	City of Stoughton
Under 20	0.90 %	25.1 %
20 to 24	3.10 %	5.7 %
25 to 34	15.2 %	11.9 %
35 to 44	21.9 %	13.3 %
45 to 54	17.8 %	14.7 %
55 to 64	21.1 %	12.0 %
65 to 74	16.4 %	8.60 %
75 or older	3.50 %	8.70 %

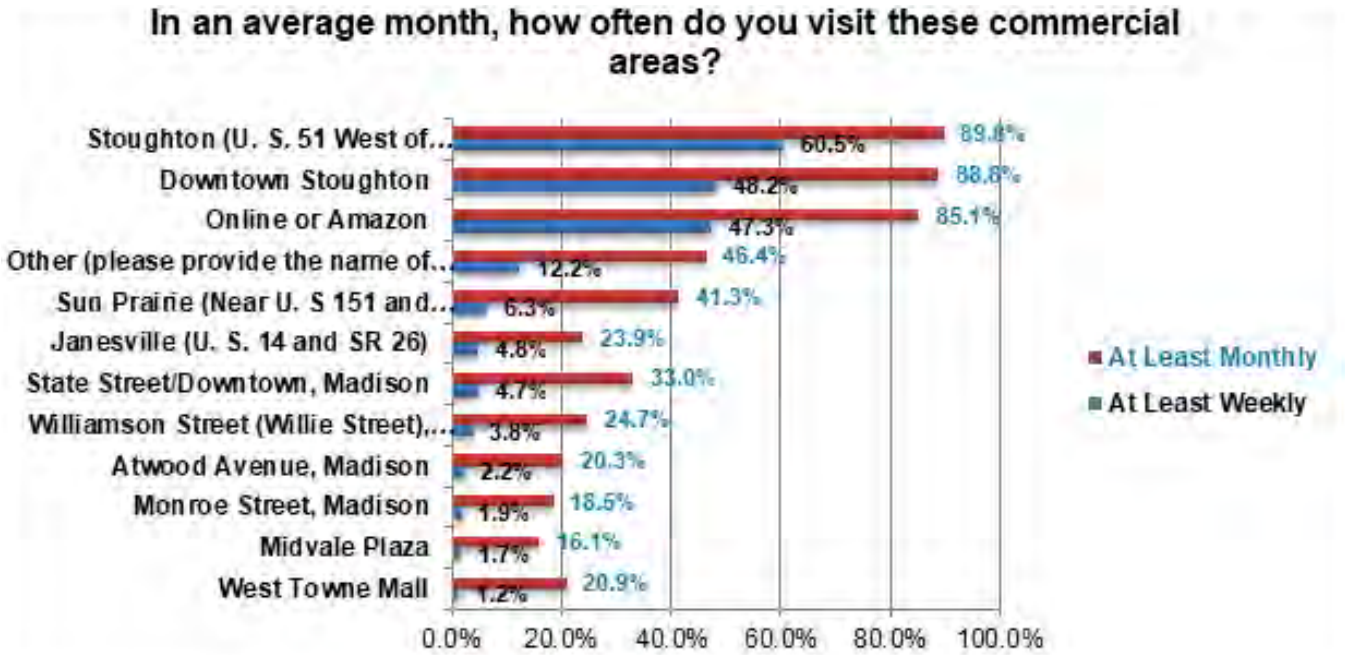
2019 Online Survey Respondent Demographics

86.7% of the aged 25-44 subgroup reported living in a household with multiple people.

After reviewing the 1,110 survey responses, three (3) sub-groups were identified for additional analysis. These sub-groups were:

- Respondents aged 25-44. This group represented 37.1% of all survey responses. Their preferences are particularly important to downtown's future, given their interest in events and experiences. This sub-group is also forming households, either starting or raising families, and spending higher proportions of their household incomes for both reasons;
- Residents of zip code 53589 (Stoughton residents). This respondent group represented 86.3% of all survey responses. Given this high percentage of responses, this sub-group's responses directly correlated with the results from all survey responses; and
- Non-residents (other than zip code 53589).

Main shopping district, downtown Stoughton, 2019.



2019 Online Survey Response

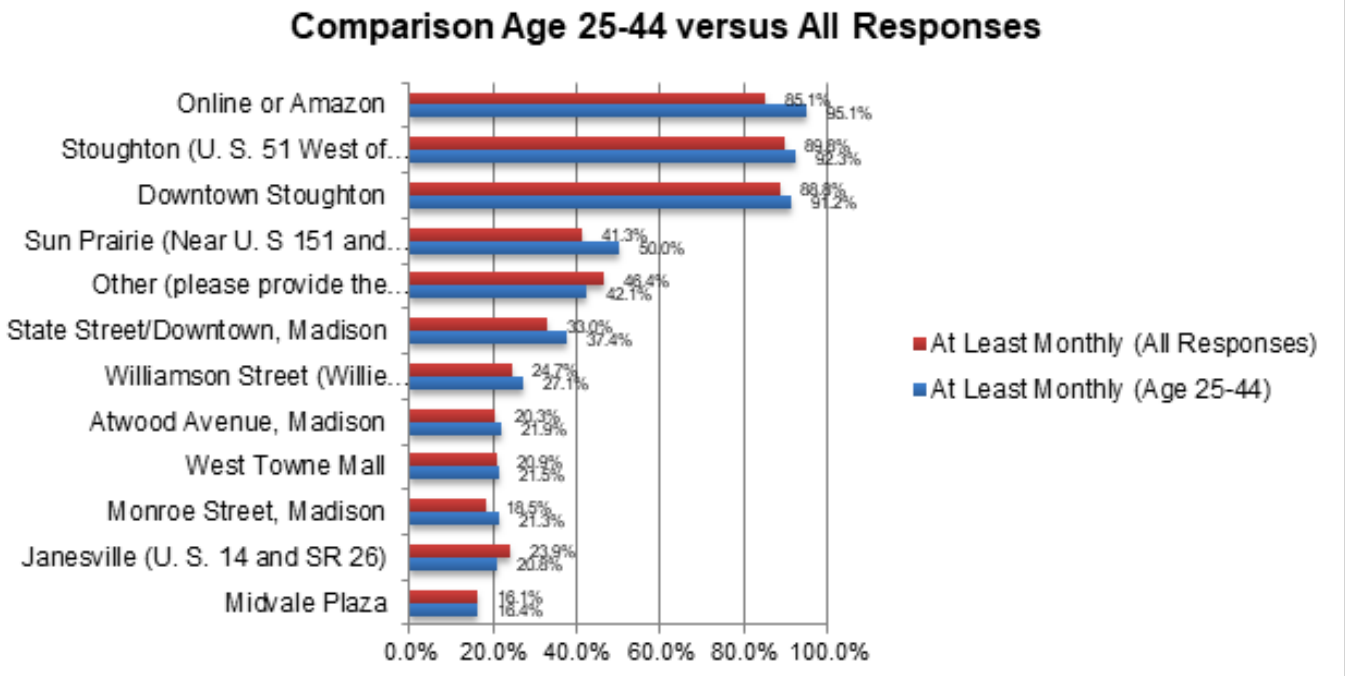
Purchasing

Participants reported participating in online shopping nearly as often as they do physical locations in or around Stoughton. In the comments provided with purchasing questions, respondents described visiting many different locations in and around the region, including downtown Stoughton but also Madison, Middleton, and Sun Prairie.

Younger survey participants particularly those aged 25-44, reported shopping online more frequently than all respondents. However, his population also reported shopping in downtown Stoughton more frequently than all other respondents.

When asked about preferred purchasing times older respondents identified weekday hours as most convenient. However, the population that identified as doing the most shopping downtown identified early evening, shortly after the close of normal business hours (5 pm or later) as most convenient for purchasing. This population also identified weekends shopping times as more desirable than all other respondents. Since this population represents a larger percentage of those willing to participate in downtown purchasing some attention should be directed at this response. Existing businesses that close up at 5 or thereabouts and are not open on weekends, particularly Saturdays (as reported in the survey) may be negatively impacting the economic success of downtown.

Online purchasing of goods and services continues to grow. Survey respondents reported shopping or purchasing online as frequently as in downtown Stoughton.



2019 Online Survey Response

Dining

Approximately one third of the survey participants reported dining out weekly. Almost half of the respondents reported dining out seven or more times monthly. As in purchasing, the 25-44 year-old age class reported higher percentages of dining out compared with all respondents.

Casual dining was the preferred form of dining in downtown and the type most desired as a new, additional dining option. A counter service-type dining option was the second most desired; additional quick service or fast food restaurants were the least desirable.

Perceptions of Downtown Stoughton

All respondents indicated a desire for downtown gathering places. The types of spaces described in participant comments included coffee shops, outdoor dining options, and civic spaces or plazas. Younger respondents expressed particular interest in children's activities, events, or uses; such as food trucks, pop-up experiences or businesses, and temporary uses.

Increasing the casual dining options was a high priority for all respondents. Respondents described multiple unique business categories as opportunities for downtown Stoughton in survey comments.

Respondents recognized downtown's cultural and arts activities as significant opportunities for growth. Events such as, Syttende Mai Festival was described favorably by all survey respondents.

The aged 25-44 respondents reported attending the Farmers Market, Small Business Saturday, and other retail promotions in higher percentages than all respondents do. Recognizing the importance of this age group's spending power on downtown's economic future will be fundamental to the district's long-term success.

Finally, most survey respondents (68.1%) visit downtown Stoughton for 30 minutes to 2 hours. This is a positive characteristic. Extending the time spent downtown by residents and visitors will also remain important to sustained business success.

Strategic Implications

The survey results provide a picture of what respondents think or report about themselves, not why they think the way they do or the actions they take. The results illustrate respondent behaviors and attitudes about downtown Stoughton's shopping and dining options and about overall experience. In addition, the results suggest possible growth opportunities by identifying businesses or business categories that could affect additional purchasing in downtown Stoughton. Overall, survey respondents were very direct in their observations about their downtown Stoughton experience and the kinds of actions needed to improve downtown. The strategic implications of the survey are as follows:

1. *Stoughton's residents and visitors are regularly patronizing downtown's businesses.*

   Downtown is perceived as having multiple opportunities and assets, as a traditional, historic commercial district but cultivating the kinds of experiences that capture consumer loyalty and spending will remain important to future growth. Understanding how to meet the needs of new and potential downtown customers will be critical to growing the downtown economy.

2. *Improving the appearance of existing downtown structures will require joint public and private sector efforts.*

   Determining what actions and programs, including updated incentives, represent the best investment options for the private and public sectors will require evaluation and collaboration.

3. *How and when businesses operate is as important as what they offer.*

   Improving downtown business operations represents one opportunity to immediately impact downtown's economy. Developing and promoting strategies that allow a business to have longer physical operation hours as well as off-hour digital access is key to long-term growth.

4. *Recognizing the significance of the 25-44 aged consumer group.*

   In hours of operation and in types of businesses (heavy hobby businesses) the downtown is not doing all it could to promote or attract the population with the largest spending habits and interest. Instead, currently downtown is catering to a mostly retired, fixed income population.

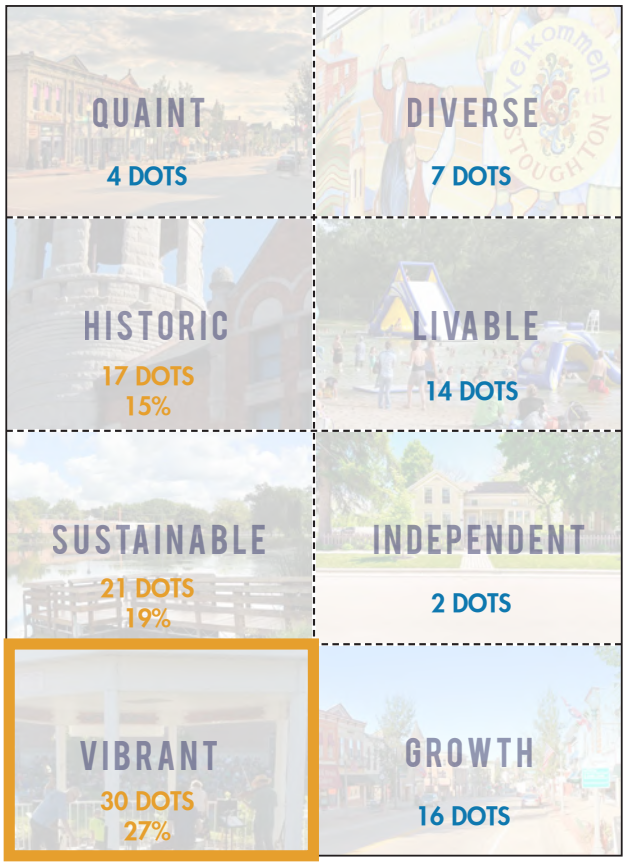
Public Input Meeting #1

On October 1, 2019 the Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee of the RDA hosted an Open House at the Legeret in downtown Stoughton. Based on sign-in sheets, approximately 50 members of the community participated. At the meeting participants were asked to provide feedback and information at five stations. The stations varied in their content and method for soliciting responses. The stations included a Values Board, Vision Board, Visual Preference Survey, an Open Space Comments Area, and Map of the project study area and surrounding vicinity. Each station included a host who in addition to answering questions, provided a brief description of the station's purpose and how participants should indicate their preferences and comments. A description of the stations and responses follows.

Participants of Public Input Meeting #1 review the Visual Preference Survey boards.

Values Board

The first station was allowed participants identify two one-word value terms that best described Stoughton. Using colored dots, participants were asked to choose between eight terms and place their dots on the two terms they felt best described Stoughton. The eight terms were vetted and determined with the DRS prior to the meeting. The terms were: Quaint, Diverse, Historic, Livable, Sustainable, Independent, Vibrant, and Growth. Participants were given the opportunity to provide additional comments with post-it stickies anywhere on the board. More than 50% of the respondents identified downtown Stoughton with the term, Vibrant.



Summary Values Board Public Input Meeting #1 responses.

Vision Board

The vision board presented participants with six terms or phrases representing where redevelopment efforts should be focused. The six categories included: Housing, New Businesses, Signage, Parks & Open Space, Events, Parking. Participants were asked to place a colored dot on the category they felt required the greatest focus for revitalization of Stoughton's downtown. 60% of respondents identified New Businesses as most desired for revitalizing downtown.

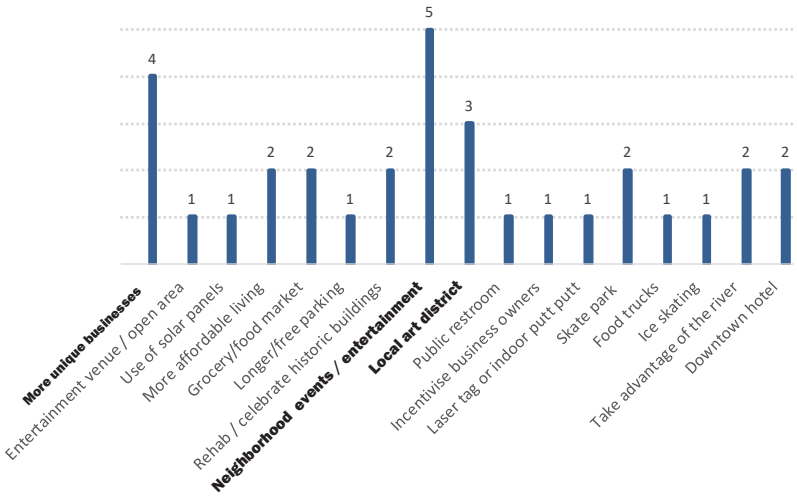
Summary of Vision Board Public Input Meeting #1 responses.

Several comments were recorded on this board. The most common suggestion was to have more neighborhood events to bring more users from the community and surrounding area to downtown Stoughton. The next most common suggestion was attracting more businesses to the City. Proposed businesses included coffee shops and book stores. Another popular idea expressed in the comments was to turn downtown into a local art district, incentivizing business owners to rent space for art installations, or increasing the presence of murals, sculptures, and art live-work opportunities.

Visual Preference Survey

Public Input Meeting participants were next presented with boards illustrating possible aesthetic, building, material or design outcomes in 8 categories: Welcome Center & Public Facilities, Streetscape/Artscape, Events, Signage & Wayfinding, Business & Dining, Art & Gateway, Parks & Open Space, and Parking. Participants were provided with two dots per board and asked to mark the images that they felt best represented their desired vision or aesthetic for the services presented on the board.

Generally, participants preferred images that illustrated classic 3 to 4-story brick or stone buildings with 50% or more of the streetside façade dedicated to windows. Images that illustrated open air dining and sidewalk seating were preferred over other streetscape experiences or events. Streetscapes with large, easily readable 'you are here' type signs, a healthy tree canopy, and a clear pedestrian corridor between building faces and streets were most desired. Images that included street trees were preferred over aesthetically pleasing (ordered and well-kept) streetscapes without trees. Images without above ground utility lines were preferred. Classic, Americana-type images of downtowns or streetscapes were preferred



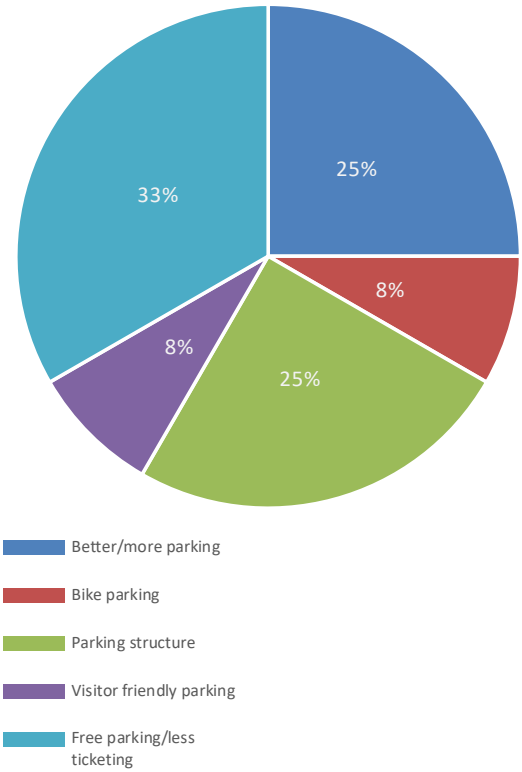
over more contemporary aesthetics. Images portraying food types events (food trucks, outdoor dining) were selected more often than images of other types of street or programmed events.

A summary and presentation of the preferred visual preference survey images can be found in Appendix 4.

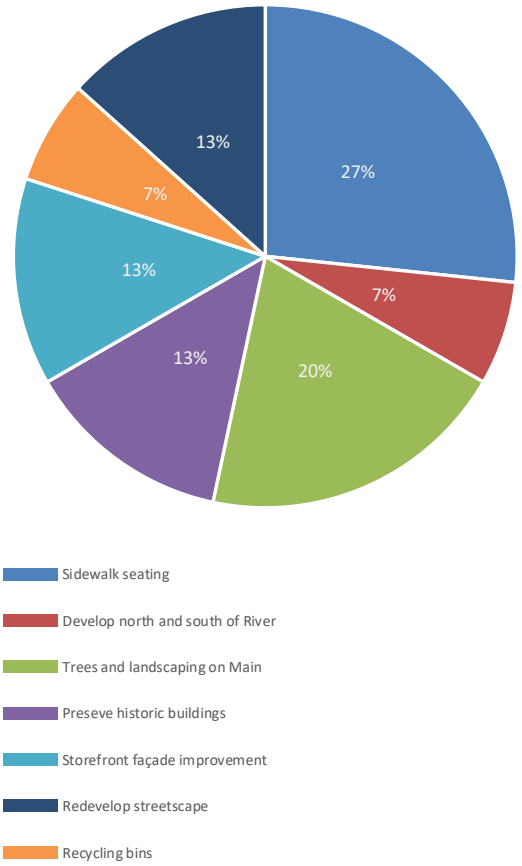
Open Space

This station included one board where participants could post a free-flow of comments using post-it notes in eight categories: Parking; Streetscape; Artscape; New Businesses; Housing; Events; Parks & Open Space; and Signage.

Comments were organized and lumped based on comment type by category. Under the Parking category the most prevalent type of comment was the need for more and better parking in the downtown. In the Streetscape category the predominant comment was the desire for sidewalk seating. An overwhelming number of comments were directed at finding locations and places for murals in the Artscape category. Comment themes in the remaining categories were more varied and not as easy to organize under major themes, ideas, or headings. In the New Businesses category comments trended strongly to food and food related businesses and services, including foot trucks, co-op, and coffee shop. Comments in the Housing category were focused on urban types of living opportunities: condos, apartments, and lofts were mentioned frequently. In the Events category the dominant theme was an expressed desire for more space for music, farmer's market, or other events. Parks and Open Space comments were clustered around the River, boardwalk opportunities, gardens and the planned whitewater course. Finally, in the Signage category most comments were directed at the need to improve and add signage and kiosks that defined the community in the downtown.



Categorized summary of Public Input Meeting #1 parking comments from the Open Space Board.



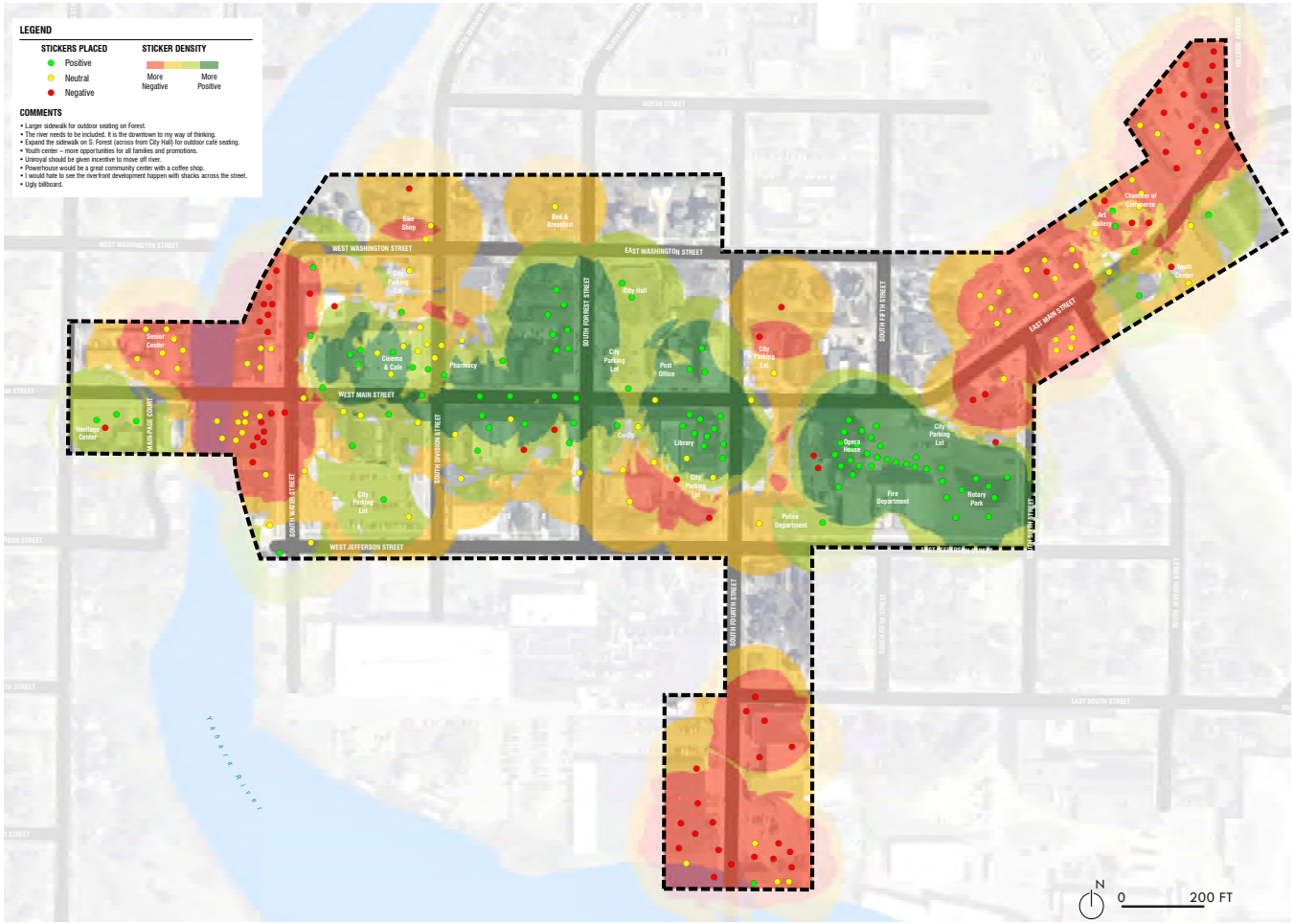
Categorized summary of Public Input Meeting #1 streetscape comments from the Open Space Board.

Area Preference Map

The last station was a scaled map of the project study area. Participants were asked to place a green dot on areas that are working and successful in the downtown; a yellow dot on areas that with a little improvement and would work well; and a red dot where there are areas that aren't working or need to be redone. A heat map was developed illustrating the positive to negative areas within the project study area. Generally, Main Street scored positively from Water St to S 6th St. Beginning at the River on the west to almost the railroad tracks at the east end of Main the scores dropped off significantly. One block off of Main in all directions from Water to S 6th St the preferences declined with the exception of Forrest St from Main to Washington and a very favorable concentration around Rotary Park at 6th and Jefferson.
The heatmap generated from responses is shown below.

Strategic Implications

Stoughton is a well-loved, historic community, with a population that views the City as Vibrant. Capital improvements and revitalization work should be focused on improving the access and the impression of downtown, expanding the positive qualities and influence of Main Street minimally one block to the north and the south, and identifying new businesses, building remodels, and infill development that fits the character of the City.



Heat map of downtown Stoughton and the project study area. Green represents areas that participants from Public Input Meeting #1 identified as areas that are working and are not in need of improvement. Areas in yellow represent areas where some work is needed to make the conditions better. Areas in red represent portions of the study area participants identified should be redone or raised. Individual dots above indicated the location of dots placed by participants.

Public Input Process Summary

Stoughton residents demonstrated a passionate interest in their downtown. While on a whole most found the downtown to be an attraction to the community, nearly all recognized areas for improvement. Recent business closures weighed heavily on the minds of many and were expressed routinely in several input session in various ways.

The most commonly expressed concern in all of the input session and data collection devices (interview, survey, and meetings) was the desire for new and more businesses downtown. Although not expressed in this term, participants described an animated downtown, active businesses, active downtown residents, active dining, and active streetscapes. Outdoor dining and sidewalk dining/seating were identified repeatedly as desirable in the downtown. Many participants recognized the need to improve access. This sentiment was recognized in several ways. There were many discussions and comment in all of the input mechanisms expressing the need to improve the parking situation downtown. The sentiment wasn't a concern for a lack of parking but a concern regarding the regulating of parking and time constraints. A few residents also commented on a perceived sense of diminished safety when downtown users parked a block or more off of Main Street. These streets may be perceived this way due to a lack of ambient lighting, adjacent sides of buildings, sporadic vacant lots, and the lack of vibrant spaces.

The Opera House, downtown Stoughton, 2019.

Comments regarding the aesthetics and the character of streets and sidewalks immediately off of Main relate to the concerns regarding safety. The conventions of design that define the character of Main St (street trees, lighting, benches), stop at Main St. In addition, many expressed the desire to find a way to express and showcase art in the downtown. Murals were a popular, although application may be limited based on the building type, size, and historical value.

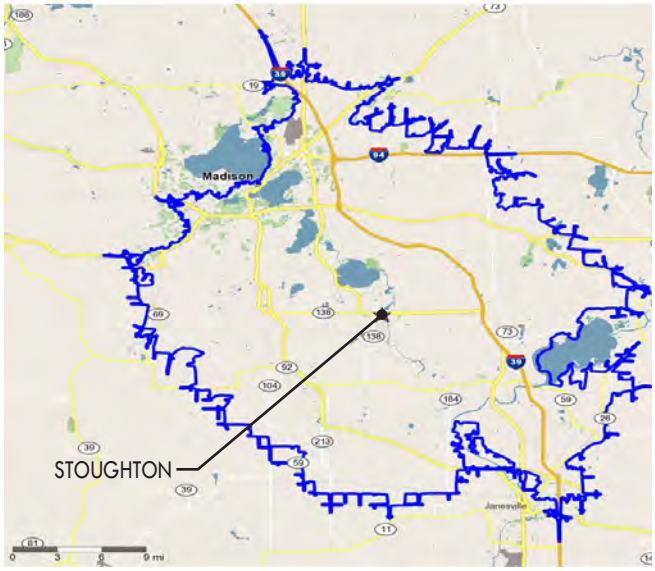
Creating a more inviting downtown was expressed by many. This included the desire to make getting around downtown and orienting in downtown easier. Wayfinding, access to facilities, and places where people could gather in the downtown were all identified as opportunities through the input process.

Market Analysis

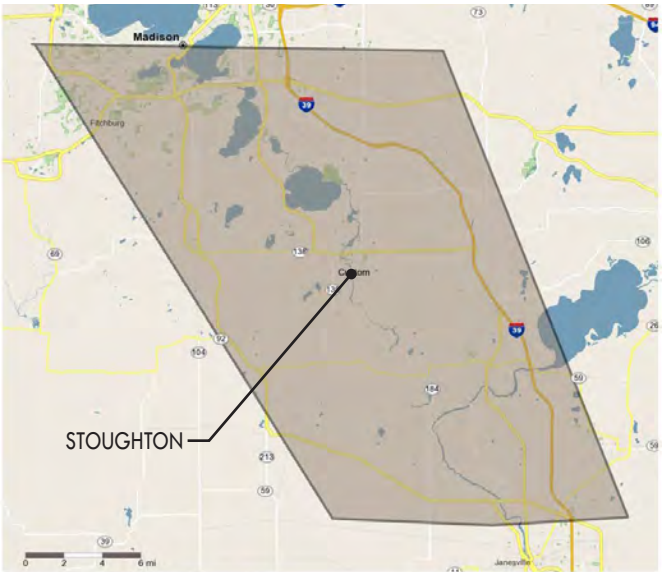
Downtown Stoughton has multiple characteristics that make the community unique, including regional arts institutions, unique businesses, regionally recognized events and festivals, and largely intact historical structures and streetscape. These characteristics of Stoughton are market assets. In addition, to the assets listed above Stoughton is squarely located in a growing regional and local market. The following demographic data considers downtown Stoughton's primary markets. See Appendix 2 for the full evaluation.

Markets and Demographics

- .5-Mile, or Pedestrian, Market: This market includes nearby residents and employees who can easily walk to downtown Stoughton.
- 5-Minute, or Convenience Drive, Market: Located within a 5-minute drive or a 10-minute bike ride to downtown Stoughton, these residents and employees can readily access downtown's businesses. Like nearby residents, they frequently patronize downtown businesses.
- 30-Minute, or Destination, Market: This geography (see map below) represents the destination market for downtown Stoughton. This market has increased in importance with the advent of online ordering and mobile phone use. For most consumers, 30-minutes represents the drive time for same day pick-up of an online purchase. 'Near Me' searches are also important for consumer restaurant selection and in determining whether to attend an event.
- Custom Market: Downtown's business owners described this geography as the market for most of their customers during stakeholder interviews. (A map of this market follows the 30-minute drive time map.)
- City of Stoughton: The City's demographics are shown for comparison purposes. Residents of any community identify with their downtown and represent an important component of downtown business revenues. For Stoughton, much of the City is located within 5-minutes of downtown.



30 Minute 'Near Me' Market Map, 2019.



Custom Market Map, 2019.

Overall, downtown Stoughton's markets are strong and growing, particularly the 30-minute 'Near-Me' Market which includes Madison and adjacent communities. This market's population skews younger (even excluding the university population) than Stoughton and has a higher income than the average Stoughton resident, and its population is growing. One measure of this market's household spending power is the estimated spending for dining, or food away from home. The 'Near-Me' market spending on dining and food away from home is almost 30 times larger than that spent in

	.5 Mile Pedestrian	5 Minute Drive Convenience (or 10 Minute Bike Ride)	30 Minute 'Near Me' (Destination)	Custom Market	City of Stoughton
Total Population	2,938	12,047	350,366	230,711	13,518
Total Households	1,336	5,104	147,654	96,519	5,574
Average Household Size	2.20	2.36	2.37	2.39	2.43
Population Density (per mi²)	3,732.74	2,458.94	472.75	509.19	2,638.73
Projected Population Change by 2023	0.7%	2.9%	5.1%	4.0%	2.9%
Median Age	39.7	40.7	35.0	34.1	40.6
Employees	1,772	4,905	233,728	147,066	4,816
Jobs Per Household	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.5	0.9
Average Household Income	$72,399	$77,054	$84,030	$90,861	$79,166
Median Household Income	$61,174	$66,707	$65,805	$68,003	$68,310
Per Capita Income	$33,238	$32,909	$35,698	$38,377	$32,875
Renter Occupied Housing Units	38.9%	35.4%	42.1%	44.1%	33.6%
Estimated Spending: Dining	$4,241,600	$17,147,552	$500,960,491	$301,082,334	$19,285,148

Downtown Stoughton Markets, 2019.

Stoughton's 5-Minute Market. When compared by population the average person in the 5-Minute Market is spending nearly as much on dining out as an individual in the 'Near-Me' Market ($1,423.38/annually, 5-Minute Market; $1,429.82/annually, Near-Me Market), the question is, what is needed to attract more of the individuals from the Near-Me Market to spend in downtown Stoughton?

Expanding the definition of who is a downtown Stoughton's customer is important for the downtown's economic future and the creation of a downtown that is welcoming to all. An expanded customer definition recognizes the importance of differing types of downtown users. This includes employees from local business, consumers from a growing region, and acknowledges the importance of 'families' as a target market audience in Stoughton.

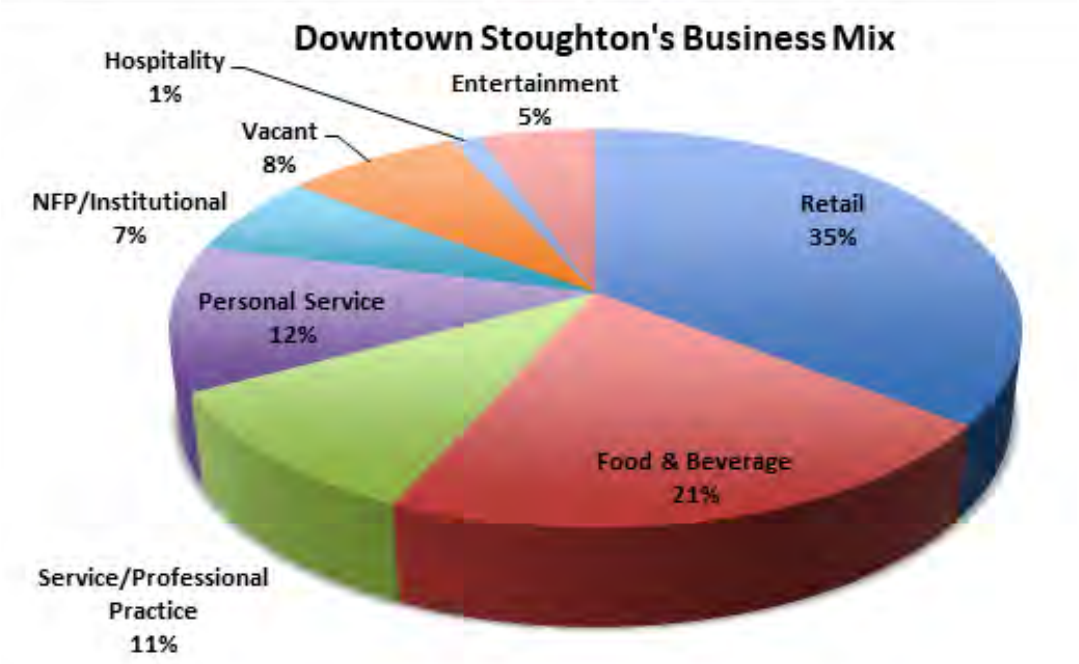
	City of Stoughton	30 Minute 'Near Me' (Destination)	Custom Market
White	94.8%	82.9%	80.5%
Black	1.2%	5.8%	6.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.7%	4.7%	6.7%
Some Other Race	0.4%	3.2%	3.6%
Two or More Races	1.7%	3.0%	2.9%
Hispanic Ethnicity	1.7%	7.5%	8.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	98.3%	92.5%	91.9%

Downtown Stoughton Race & Ethnicity Markets, 2019.

According to Experian's psychographic data, 37.3% of Stoughton's households are described as 'Flourishing Families.' Increasing the emphasis on family-friendly, spaces, dining, and activities downtown will promote downtown as Stoughton's gathering place and attract new businesses. This strategy can also attract families from nearby towns or the region to Stoughton.

Existing Downtown Businesses

The following chart of Stoughton's current business mix is based upon information provided by Stoughton's Redevelopment Authority (RDA). Currently, the largest component of downtown's business mix by business unit is retail. This is an advantage to downtown Stoughton and another important downtown asset. Sustaining this component of the mix will require concerted efforts to support business growth (programs, expansion, and recruitment) by private and public sector interests. Retail sector trends indicated retailers in downtowns and elsewhere now occupy smaller spaces, and store footprints; and operate fewer stores.



Downtown Stoughton Business Mix, 2019.

Nationally and regionally, those business categories seeking lease space, opening, and succeeding in traditional downtowns include health, wellness and personal service businesses and food and beverage businesses, specifically restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty food businesses. These growing downtown uses (in some communities, small office users are growing) are also important for attracting increased, regular foot traffic in a downtown and attracting other businesses.

Real Estate Economies

The study prepared a 'back of the envelope' calculation to test downtown Stoughton's current real estate market against the 'Near-Me' Market. The assumptions used to develop these calculations are based on three (3) information sources--stakeholder interviews with regional real estate professionals, published sources about downtown real estate sales, and data from real estate listings for the south Madison area, including Stoughton.

Commercial rents are a function of commercial activity in any district. Lots of commercial activity means more business revenues and higher rents, given business interest in locating in that district. Commercial districts, including traditional downtowns, with higher rents also generate higher sales per square foot. The resulting higher returns to business owners and property owners enable reinvestment.

Hypothetical Scenario 1

The study prepared two hypothetical scenarios to test the real estate market. The first hypothetical scenario imagines a ground level business occupying 1,200 square feet (SF). Suppose this business generates $300 in sales per square foot (SPSF); $300 SPSF is an accepted national average for retail sector sales. For any given Ground level business, nationwide; Ground level rents typically represent 5-8% of total sales from the business. In this scenario then, a ground level business generating an average of $300 SPSF, with annual rents at 5% and 8% of total sales could expect rents to be between $18,000 and $28,800. For a 1,200 SF business, the annual rents equate to $15 and $24 rent per square foot (RPSF).

When the average annual rents of 5% and 8% are applied to a 1,200 SF ground level storefront in downtown Stoughton's using the reported rental rates of $6 to $10 RPSF, the average estimated sales per square foot range from $75 SPSF to $200 SPSF, significantly lower than the national average of $300 SPSF. This suggests room for growth in the Stoughton market. See table below.

Storefront SF	National Average Sales PSF	Annual Sales	Annual Rent @ 5% of Sales	Rent PSF @ 5%	Annual Rent @ 8% of Sales	Rent PSF @ 8%
1,200	$300	$360,000	$18,000	$15	$28,800	$24

Hypothetical Downtown Storefront: National Average Sales, 2019.

Storefront SF	Estimated Rent PSF	Annual Rent	Annual Sales (Rent as 5% of Sales)	Estimated Sales PSF	Annual Sales (Rent as 8% of Sales)	Estimated Sales PSF
1,200	$6	$7,200	$144,000	$120	$90,000	$75
1,200	$10	$12,000	$240,000	$200	$150,000	$125

Hypothetical Downtown Storefront: Stoughton Ground Level Rents, 2019.

Hypothetical Scenario 2

The second hypothetical scenario prepared for this project tested the rental income for an imagined 2-story building in downtown Stoughton. The first floor and second floor are each 1,200 SF. In this scenario the imagined building includes one ground level commercial space and two (2) second floor apartments. Again, the current reported market rents of $6 and $10 RPSF were used. The $6 RPSF represents the cost for an owner-occupant, or a business owner who also owns their building allocated as rent. Whereas the $10 RPSF represents the rent paid by a ground-level tenant. In addition, the scenario uses the reported apartment rental rate of $12 RSPF for the second story apartment. Finally, in this scenario the study also assumed that the owner has a $165,000 mortgage on this property.

This scenario supports two (2) points made in this plan's stakeholder interviews: (1) that residential rents are often supporting building debt service; and (2) that minimal cash flow is available for building improvement at these lower rents and sales PSF. The apartment rental is expected to generate $14,400 annually. When other building expenses are taken out of the annual rental income it is the apartment rental that provides sufficient income for the building, not the commercial space. See adjacent table.

	SF
Ground level commercial	$6
Rental apartments (2)	$12

	Estimated Rent PSF*	Annual Rent	Estimated Rent PSF	Annual Rent
Ground level commercial	$6	$7,200	$10	$12,000
Rental apartments (2)	$12	$14,400	$12	$14,400
Building Rental Income		$21,600		$26,400
Expenses (20% of Rental Income)		$4,320		$5,280
Annual Real Estate Taxes		$4,000		$4,000
Net Income		$13,280		$17,120
Debt service (Assumes $165,000 mortgage at 4.5% with 25 year amortization)		$11,040		$11,040
Debt Service Coverage (Net Income/Debt service)		1.20		1.55

Hypothetical 2-Story Downtown Building, 2019.
*Assumes allocated rent by an owner-occupant.

Market Analysis Summary

Downtown Stoughton businesses can compete and capture additional sales from consumers within larger markets, such as the 'Near-Me' Market studied for this project. To attract consumers from this larger market, downtown businesses need to adapt to changing consumer needs and behaviors. Adapting to these changing behaviors includes amending business hours to accommodate consumer needs, utilizing technology to make purchasing easier for consumers, and recognizing that downtown customers include both residents and visitors, as noted in the Resident/Consumer Survey results.

These same larger markets also exhibit greater racial and ethnic diversity than the City of Stoughton and downtown's pedestrian market (.5 mile radius) or convenience drive time market (5 minute drive). Increasing population diversity is a national trend, regardless of community size. This trend resembles the national trend of increasing population diversity in all types of communities. With the opportunity to serve this more diverse population, welcoming all customers will ensure that downtown Stoughton and the City not only attract more customers but also become a desirable place to work, to open a business, and to live.

Consumer behavior is changing and businesses need to adapt to this change.

Downtown Stoughton can also improve its business and real estate economics. Although downtown's overall sales are currently challenged, improved operations by downtown businesses can support incremental growth and reinvestment. To attract more and stronger businesses, downtown's storefronts require investment. Investment is also necessary to attract residents and employment. Local incentives can be adapted to address the most needed improvements to downtown's buildings. Working together, downtown's property owners and the City/RDA can begin to address three (3) issues: improving building appearance and potential tenancies; communicating Stoughton's commitment to strengthening it's downtown; and indirectly, supporting overall sales growth in downtown Stoughton.

Best Practices In Regional Downtowns

Understanding what activities and strategies have helped other traditional downtowns and similar communities begin and succeed in their downtown revitalization work can provide context for the City of Stoughton as it initiates this process. The communities examined for best practices, like Stoughton, are unique in their histories and their economic opportunities. How these communities focus on their downtowns identifies strategies and actions that could be adapted and implemented by Stoughton's private and public sector interests. For Stoughton, beginning the revitalization process can be overwhelming. Understanding how local downtown revitalization work has evolved over time is also instructive.

During the interviews and focus groups, Stoughton's downtown stakeholders were asked to identify downtowns in the area regionally, or nationally that represented good models for Stoughton. The downtowns identified were located mostly in the Midwest and included small communities and suburbs. The downtowns most frequently cited by these plan participants were Mt. Horeb and Monroe in Wisconsin and Galena in Illinois. Given these three (3) communities have smaller total populations (between 3,200 and 11,000) than Stoughton, two (2) additional communities were examined—Saline, Michigan (population 8,800) and DePere, Wisconsin (population 23,000). Both communities have established, successful downtown programs.

All of the five (5) downtowns were examined to understand two (2) issues:

1. What worked best in initiating their downtown revitalization work, and
2. How each community and its downtown interests are addressing local economic change.

In addition to this research on the community and its downtown work, local representatives from four (4) of the communities were interviewed to learn how their local revitalization effort began, the strategic focus of their current work, and what they consider their greatest downtown successes and challenges.

The common efforts in these communities emphasize strategic work--short-term and long-term, in four (4) inter-related areas:

- Organizational (including identifying partners and resources);
- Downtown business growth;
- Downtown's physical environment and appearance; and
- Marketing (including business promotions, brand identity, and special events).

The common best practices identified in these downtown districts include:

- A downtown organization exists with a defined role as the advocate for downtown's private sector interests. These organizations were varied in type, structure and budget, from small, or informal, merchant organizations to stand-alone non-profits, including Main Street organizations and Business Improvement District (BID) funded organizations.
- The downtown organization recognizes that an ongoing, strong partnership with the public sector is critical to addressing large and small downtown issues. Also, partnerships with other local entities, including major local institutions and employers, ensured shared resources, access to funding and expertise, and broader marketing.
- In addition to downtown's business owners, property owners and the real estate community are actively engaged in revitalization.
- Downtown organization leaders observed that there would always be business and property owners that neither participate nor collaborate, regardless of the organization's age or beneficial programs.
- The downtown organizations built their operating capacity and credibility over time. This included identifying funding or resources for their programs and activities in a strategic way. Creative thinking was key to their successes.
- Partnerships with local or regional

Downtown DePere, Wisconsin

organizations with economic growth as a mission are important for business growth. The best practices in the researched communities and their organizations, examples include:

- A partnership with the area Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide one-on-one services to downtown's business owners and to identify potential downtown tenants based upon business assistance provided by the SBDC;
- Incentives structured to attract and support new business types or mitigate the cost of meeting local regulatory requirements;
- Temporary uses were used for multiple purposes, including showcasing individual ground level vacancies and as a marketing opportunity to create consumer interest in what is new and changing in their downtown;
- Events targeted to support specific downtown business clusters;
- Access to additional funding sources locally through Tax Increment Financing Districts (TID or TIF) or through programs, such as Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation's (WWBIC's) Kiva funding program.
- Business recruitment is conducted as a partnership effort, including the property owner/representative, downtown organization, City staff, the local Chamber of Commerce, and others.

- Downtown organization leaders indicated that most of their downtown businesses had strong online presences, reflecting each business' identity or personality. For these businesses, their online presence helps create their consumer experience and contributes to the overall downtown experience.
- Telling downtown's story in multiple ways was the basis for all downtown events, regardless of size and scope. All of the communities researched host heritage events, similar to Syttende Mai. Galena serves as an interesting example. The city (population 3,200) is known as a regional shopping destination, but there are five (5) equally important aspects to their downtown story. They include: Galena as part of the larger Driftless region; the connection to the Mississippi River and the Dubuque area; the association with nine (9) prominent military generals, including President U. S. Grant; the connection to outdoor recreation trails and venues; and downtown's architecture.
- When residents identify with their downtown, visitors have enjoyable experiences downtown. All of these communities know that their residents also patronize downtown businesses. These towns recognize a range of local stories that represent facets of their community or connect with other groups within their community. This can include engaging high school students in certain

downtown programs or promoting local immigrant-owned businesses. Their goal is to make downtown welcoming to their entire community.

- Appearance sells. Businesses, buildings, and streets must be well maintained. In these best practices communities, focusing on sidewalk vitality was a current trend that helped cultivate their downtown's experience. This trend was considered the logical next step, given other ongoing downtown physical improvements and real estate development.
- Each downtown examined included multiple historic properties. These included individual landmarks, historic districts, or National Register district. Collectively, these properties represent the physical aspect of that community's story. They also reinforced each downtown's unique experience, its local businesses, and its market or brand position. Each downtown organization also worked with their City's design review or historic preservation boards or commissions. In turn, these boards and commissions recognized the economics of downtown building ownership and helped identify potential local incentives needed to facilitate historic rehabilitations, based upon their review of proposed projects.
- These communities and their downtown organizations recognized that consumers visit their downtowns because of the district's local businesses and how their downtown makes consumers 'feel' during a visit. Making information about downtown readily available to residents and visitors (and investors) in multiple ways using all media was strategic to attraction and routinely updated and improved. The emphasis in all of their downtown communications was on the consumer's convenience and understanding. Parking was one example. Great parking is never the primary reason people choose to visit any downtown, but consumers need to readily understand where to park.
- All downtown events are well promoted and were organized by multiple partners. In addition, downtown fitness-related events were often organized with local health care providers or hospitals. The annual downtown events calendars were coordinated and available to residents and visitors through multiple media outlets.
- Business types succeeding in these downtowns vary, as did their current business mix. Regional destinations, such as Galena, had larger retail components. Service businesses and restaurants continued to seek suitable downtown locations.

Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton

- A downtown organization, such as Stoughton's merchant group or any new downtown organization, could gradually assume the role of downtown champion. In the interim, the City and downtown's economic interests will need to define the initial roles in the revitalization process.
- To achieve future success, downtown Stoughton's interests need to collaborate in an integrated and sustained way, recognizing that downtown revitalization is an ongoing process.
- Communications, information, and downtown-related media need to be coordinated, easy to search (including mobile enabled), and user focused.
- Downtown Stoughton's historic character and resources can be more affectively used in differentiating the downtown district. Each of successful districts researched, particularly those cited by plan participants, consider their history and built environment as one of their district's competitive advantages.
- Most of the independent businesses located in these communities have created their community of customers and share those same customers with the district's other businesses. They are also using multiple marketing techniques to expand their customer bases.

Market Recommendations

Downtown Stoughton has multiple assets—historic character, successful independent businesses, regional cultural institutions, and residents who, based upon this plan's survey results, truly care about their downtown. Building upon these assets will serve as the foundation for future market and development growth.

For Stoughton's downtown stakeholders, the key questions are:

- How does revitalization start?
- What strategies and tactics, or actions, will foster economic success over the long-term?
- How can the downtown economy be positioned to adapt to the market change in all uses—retail/restaurant, services, employment, and residential?
- How can downtown become a source of pride and identity for residents, a place of opportunity for investors, and a singular experience for visitors?

The answers to these questions appear daunting when considering how to begin.

This Downtown Stoughton mural is a source of pride and identity for residents. Image: City of Stoughton

The first step for downtown Stoughton is preparing and organizing to implement this plan. Key to this preparatory work is strengthening the ability of downtown's public and private sector interests to work together by focusing on shared economic interests. This downtown collaboration will not only be long-term, but it will require coordination, communication, creativity, and flexibility. Applying either nostalgia for how things 'used to be' or old market tactics and assumptions to address rapidly changing markets and consumer behaviors only inhibit progress.

Preparation for implementation also means that:

- All stakeholders are vested in downtown's success;
- Each of downtown Stoughton stakeholders has a defined role in downtown's revitalization;
- With their downtown revitalization roles defined, each downtown stakeholder assumes responsibility and accountability for their role in downtown's success;
- Public and private sector interests act strategically and embrace real solutions as partners.

On a practical level, sharing resources and organizing actions ensures that implementation occurs. Too often in commercial district revitalization efforts, complaining becomes the default (and easiest) position for many downtown stakeholders. Frankly, downtown revitalization work is hard enough. Only concrete and visible action moderates complaining. Focusing on the future through purposeful and strategic actions is the alternative.

The following strategies describe actions needed to organize the City and RDA's downtown work. The initial section, entitled 'What to Do Now,' represents first steps to start downtown Stoughton's revitalization. The actions provided in each section broadly address organizing, marketing, and growing Stoughton's downtown over the next twenty (20) years. These strategies and actions will help all downtown stakeholders capitalize on downtown's assets and opportunities.

When combined with this plan's physical design and development recommendations, these actions will prepare downtown Stoughton for the businesses and the development of the future.

What to Do Now:

These initial efforts are structured to organize for revitalization and to enable early, smaller scale successes. The objective is to build capacity and relationships among downtown's public and private sector interests to ensure action.

Revitalization Structure, 2019.

1 Defining roles and responsibilities among downtown's stakeholder groups, and identifying downtown's champion.

- Identify downtown's champion. The lead entity could be the City, the RDA's Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee, or a division within the Chamber of Commerce. Once the lead organization is identified, this lead organization must develop a work plan to assign these initial tasks to the best individuals or entities for completion. Accountability and task completion timeframes must be part of this work plan. The lead organization will need to ensure that the assigned tasks are completed and that focus on downtown's revitalization is sustained. As the initial work, specified in this section, is completed, the lead entity should also consider creating one full-time staff position dedicated (and funded) for the downtown work described below. Successful, long-term downtown revitalization efforts uniformly require knowledgeable paid staff.
- Assemble a downtown business inventory, a downtown property owner database, and a list of vacancies as baseline data.
- Support the organizing efforts of downtown's merchants.
    - With the Stoughton Area Chamber, identify how the merchants and the Chamber can work together in the future. This includes understanding how downtown's businesses fit within Chamber programming, including tourism plans, and where their objectives diverge. The goal of this ongoing conversation is to define what downtown's merchants can do, what the Chamber can do, and how to ensure complementary future efforts;
    - With downtown's merchants, discuss their future plans for their downtown businesses and properties, if they own their building. Identify any expansion plans or possible plans for new business concepts or openings by current businesses;
    - With downtown's businesses, identify names of regional businesses potentially interested in a downtown Stoughton location. Downtown's merchants should be encouraged to provide names of potential businesses complementary to the current downtown mix. Merchants can also ask their vendors for suggestions of potential area businesses seeking to add locations in the region. Both sets of names represent initial downtown recruitment targets.

- Meet with downtown's property owners (non-owner occupants), meeting first with any owners and their brokers with vacant storefronts. Identify:
  - Businesses or business types looking at their vacant spaces and their tenanting plans for their properties;
  - Available spaces suited to specific uses, such as restaurants;
  - Their long-term objectives for their properties;
  - Their observations about trends affecting the tenanting of their properties;
  - Their perceptions about any changes to downtown incentives;
  - Best methods for future communication and organizing to better understand how to facilitate the tenanting process.
- Meet with the leadership of major institutions in/near downtown, including major employers, the library, and downtown's cultural entities, to:
  - Identify any of their current programs or initiatives that can help downtown's economy grow. Any entrepreneurship activities or programs available at the library are one example;
  - Consider any temporary programs to activate vacant downtown spaces through arts events or art displays;
  - Identify partnership opportunities, including other possible partners;
  - Identify potential resources and expertise needed for future downtown work;
- Review the list of contacts from this plan's resident/consumer survey to identify potential volunteers, or contacts with specific expertise, to assist downtown's champion in downtown work;
- Based upon the above convening activities, obtain agreement from each group about how their roles in downtown change and how they will support downtown's champion.

2 Providing coordinated communications about downtown Stoughton to regional consumers and investors.

- Review the downtown-related electronic and social media and print marketing materials from the Best practices communities cited in this plan document;
- Improve the quality, availability, and accessibility of web-based information about downtown Stoughton on the City and Chamber websites. In addition to search terms and mobile enabled, this information should include a consolidated event calendar, a complete downtown business list and map (also available as a PDF download), and parking information with a map showing parking locations and

Public Parking Map, Saline, MI. Image: BDI

any time restrictions in each location. This information should be updated quarterly;
- Provide detailed information on all available downtown properties on the City and Chamber websites. In collaboration with local commercial brokers, this information should be updated monthly;
- Develop detailed work plans for each event held downtown, including a

marketing/communications plan for each event. Combine any duplicative events. Monitor each event's results, using relevant event evaluation criteria to determine whether the event is funded and/or meets sponsor criteria;

- Initiate a strategic public relations effort to communicate successes in downtown Stoughton, including business and partnership successes and telling downtown's story beyond Syttende Mai;
- Seek out assistance from other area institutions, including internship opportunities with other nearby institutions. For example, Edgewood College has current funding to support unpaid internships for undergraduates. Madison College also supports internships and work study options. Stoughton High School's DECA program is another resource.

3 Examine City approval or licensing processes that impact new businesses occupying downtown spaces. During this plan's interview process, both applicants and City officials expressed frustration about each other. Clearly communicating application requirements and timelines to applicants is key. Multiple communities, including most of those highlighted in the Best Practices section, provide online application forms, lists of the projects requiring review and why, and diagrams of each review and application process. Information about the deadlines for review by the appropriate local boards should also be noted. All of this should be easy to find on the City's website and presented clearly to ensure potential applicants understand what is required. In turn, downtown applicants must responsible for learning what actions require local review, submitting complete applications, understanding deadlines for review, and when inaction will result in an expired application.

4 Related to the above review, refine or update available downtown incentives, given business and property owner needs. Successful local incentive programs are structured to address the issues specific to any downtown's properties. In some communities, façades may need improvements; in other towns, tenant spaces may need improvements to attract stronger tenants. In downtown Stoughton, the RDA, with the City and WWBIC, offer a revolving loan program. Considering how this incentive may be used in revitalization should incorporate the following steps:

- Review data about the loan program—who has obtained a loan, when, for how much, and the resulting project;
- In the property owner conversations described above, review three (3) questions--why or why not building owners would apply for this incentive, what changes the owners would make to use the loan program, and how owners use this incentive in tandem with other financing resources to fund improvements;
- Consider whether the revolving loan is the best incentive. Other communities offer loan programs, matching grants, small grants for awnings or signage, or a combination these programs. Incentives offered in the Best Practices communities can serve as initial examples, and WEDC's Main Street and Connect Communities staff can provide additional examples, if needed;
- Refine the existing revolving loan program, as needed;
- Publicize the updated program routinely to ensure it is used, and publicize successfully completed projects.

5 Develop a comprehensive business growth program with the following elements and partners:

- Partner with UW-Madison's SBDC to provide business support services. Expertise in digital marketing and management for growth are two (2) examples of potential services. Direct assistance to business owners to enhance their individual skill sets to better operate their businesses should also be part of

any comprehensive program. The SBDC's start-up and entrepreneurial programs represent one potential source for new downtown tenants as ground level businesses or small employers. Finally, interns may be available for projects needed to enable implementation;

- Develop a partnership with WWBIC's Madison office to provide business support services and access to funding, such as through Wisconsin's Kiva program. WWBIC, like the SBDC, is a potential source for ground level tenants and small downtown employers;
- Identify any potential resources or partnerships with organizations, such as WEDC's Connect Communities program, FaB Wisconsin, or Madison Region Economic Partnership (MadREP);
- Include business succession services as part of this comprehensive system;
- Integrate these programs at the Stoughton downtown level to provide ongoing support to new and established businesses.

6 Work with the newly formed downtown merchants organization to extend operating hours for downtown businesses, as appropriate. Unlike shopping center tenants, downtown businesses are not required to be open for prescribed hours. For any downtown, extending hours presents significant challenges. For downtown retailers, the biggest challenge is altering well-established customer behaviors. Another challenge is the need for a long-term commitment to changing operating hours. Often, downtowns or certain businesses will add hours for a short time period, such six (6) months. This rarely works. Only with a time commitment (at least 18 months) and aggressive and coordinated publicity about any hours change can it succeed. To begin this process, the merchants organization can:

- Share the Resident/Consumer Survey Results about business operations with all downtown business owners'
- Ask individual businesses to identify potential days to add 1 or more evening hours and jointly publicize those efforts;
- Discuss each merchant's operating hours, and determine if neighboring businesses can jointly open additional hours;
- Heavily promote any changes to operating hours. The businesses, the City and the downtown leadership must actively promote the hours change consistently and strategically;
- Evaluate successes, and consider whether

Within 5 Years:

These recommendations build upon the relationships and processes created to begin revitalizing downtown Stoughton.

- Initiate a formal downtown business recruitment program, including relevant materials describing the benefits of locating in downtown Stoughton. Specific to downtown recruitment, non-target businesses operated by knowledgeable and experienced owners selling quality products or services are often passive recruitment targets. These businesses are welcome additions to any downtown.

Reach out to potential recruitment prospects and educate them about downtown Stoughton's opportunities and local incentives.

- Prioritize currently available tenant lease space, given potential users.
- Identify potential businesses for available ground level spaces from the following categories:
    - Casual dining. This plan's survey results indicate the local desire for varied cuisines. Formats, such as coffee shops with entertainment, were also noted. In recruiting these businesses, the available space must be suitable for restaurant build-out, and any potential owner needs industry experience;
    - Specialty foods. This category could include vendors selling products at Stoughton's or other area farmers markets. A group of business owners could potentially occupy a larger space. The Madison region's position as a food hub should aid in identifying potential prospects;
    - Businesses offering classes. Knitting and related craft stores are an obvious example, but this category encompasses multiple business types and is family friendly;
    - Gift stores with complementing the existing downtown business mix;
    - Independent book stores located in downtowns at least 30 minutes from downtown Stoughton;
    - Businesses appealing to children and young adults, such as games, toys and comic books;
    - Specialty retailers with a strong online presence and operating at least one store;
    - Entertainments venues, including venues with children and teen activities;
    - Small employers add to downtown vitality. Partner organizations, such as the SBDC, can potentially assist.
- Contact potential recruitment prospects and quantify their interest: recognizing that recruitment takes time. Educate them about downtown as an opportunity and any updated local incentives;
- Assuming interest, collaborate with the property owner and the City to facilitate the new business opening;
- Consider a business plan competition for priority business categories interested in specific downtown locations;
- Use each new business opening as an opportunity to publicize downtown change;
- Support and facilitate the growth of other downtown uses, including upper story residential development (new and existing units), new residential construction respecting downtown's historic character and resources, and temporary uses, such as AirBNB units.

- Consider a formal, standalone downtown organizational structure.
    - Determine if such an organization is necessary, its organizational structure, and its Internal Revenue Service non-profit tax status;
    - Evaluate whether Stoughton's downtown revitalization effort can benefit by applying to the Wisconsin Main Street program;
    - Evaluate the potential for a downtown BID to provide sustainable funding for Stoughton's downtown revitalization effort;
    - Complete this organizational review, and develop a 5-year strategy for the new organization, as appropriate.
- Formulate downtown benchmarks to measure progress. Basic metrics include business mix data, new/expanding/closing business data, and investments in downtown, specifically buildings rehabilitations and new construction.
- Identify initiatives in conjunction with downtown merchants to enhance the downtown Stoughton experience.
- Improve downtown's marketing media and materials, as needed.
- Continue downtown's current successful event calendar, evaluating downtown's events annually. The calendar should include a combination of business promotions, image building, and special events. Events should continue to communicate downtown's many stories.

Within 10 Years:

With downtown Stoughton's revitalization in process and succeeding, managing downtown for the future becomes more important. The reality of any downtown revitalization effort is that the work is never done. The revitalization is not always

an upward trajectory. Flexibility in responding to market change is important to downtown's stability.

- Sustain and expand the downtown business growth initiatives, described above.
- Strengthen and expand downtown's partnerships, including with the City of Stoughton. This includes strengthen Stoughton residents affinity with their downtown.
- Reinforce downtown's position in the Madison region in all media.
- Monitor downtown's benchmarks, and refine these metrics as needed.
- Continue to support quality new development in and near downtown.
- With increased credibility, begin to identify additional funding sources, such as grants for specific programming, to expand Stoughton's downtown work.

Within 20 Years:

This timeframe is hard to predict. For downtown Stoughton, retaining the focus on downtown and importance to the City will sustain future growth.

- Continue to adapt programs and actions to downtown's changing needs.
- Monitor the district's benchmarks annually, and adapt as needed.
- As noted above, communicate downtown's successes routinely.
- Revise downtown's strategic initiatives to meet changing markets.

These actions will help downtown Stoughton grow over time. Within each timeframe, these recommendations incorporate four (4) different types of actions—organizing and completing revitalization work; marketing and promoting downtown as a place where people, residents and visitors, want to spend time and money; supporting business growth in all downtown uses; and creating a unique environment that conveys Stoughton's many stories. The actions also provide a context for getting Stoughton's downtown work done. When implemented incrementally, all of these actions create additional market-supported opportunities, given Stoughton's multiple assets.

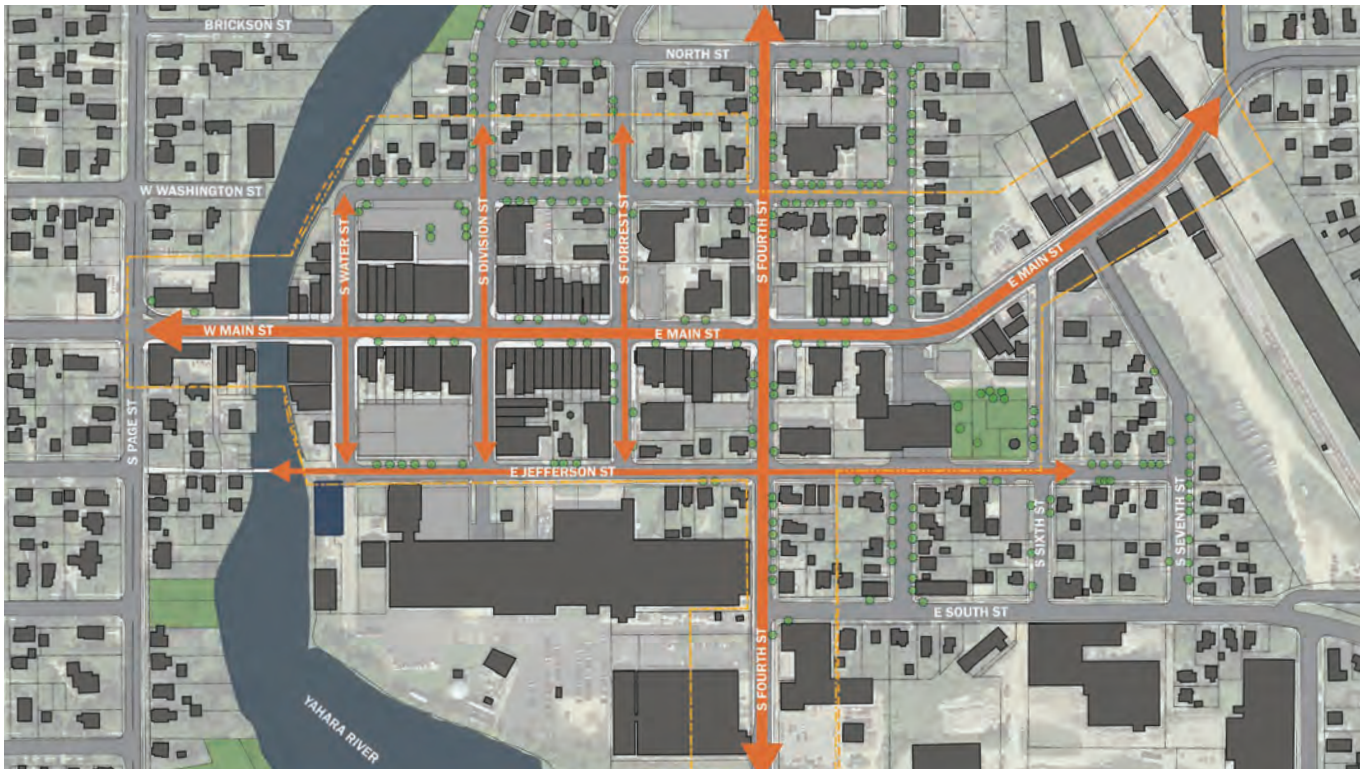
Physical Improvement Recommendations

Physical improvements, development and redevelopment of downtown Stoughton's existing structure can support market revitalization and contribute to the attraction of new businesses, residents, and activity in the downtown. A community's aesthetic impacts business, consumer, developer, resident, and visitor impressions of a place. Community's with higher aesthetic scores support higher cost for goods sold and increase consumer willingness to pay scores.

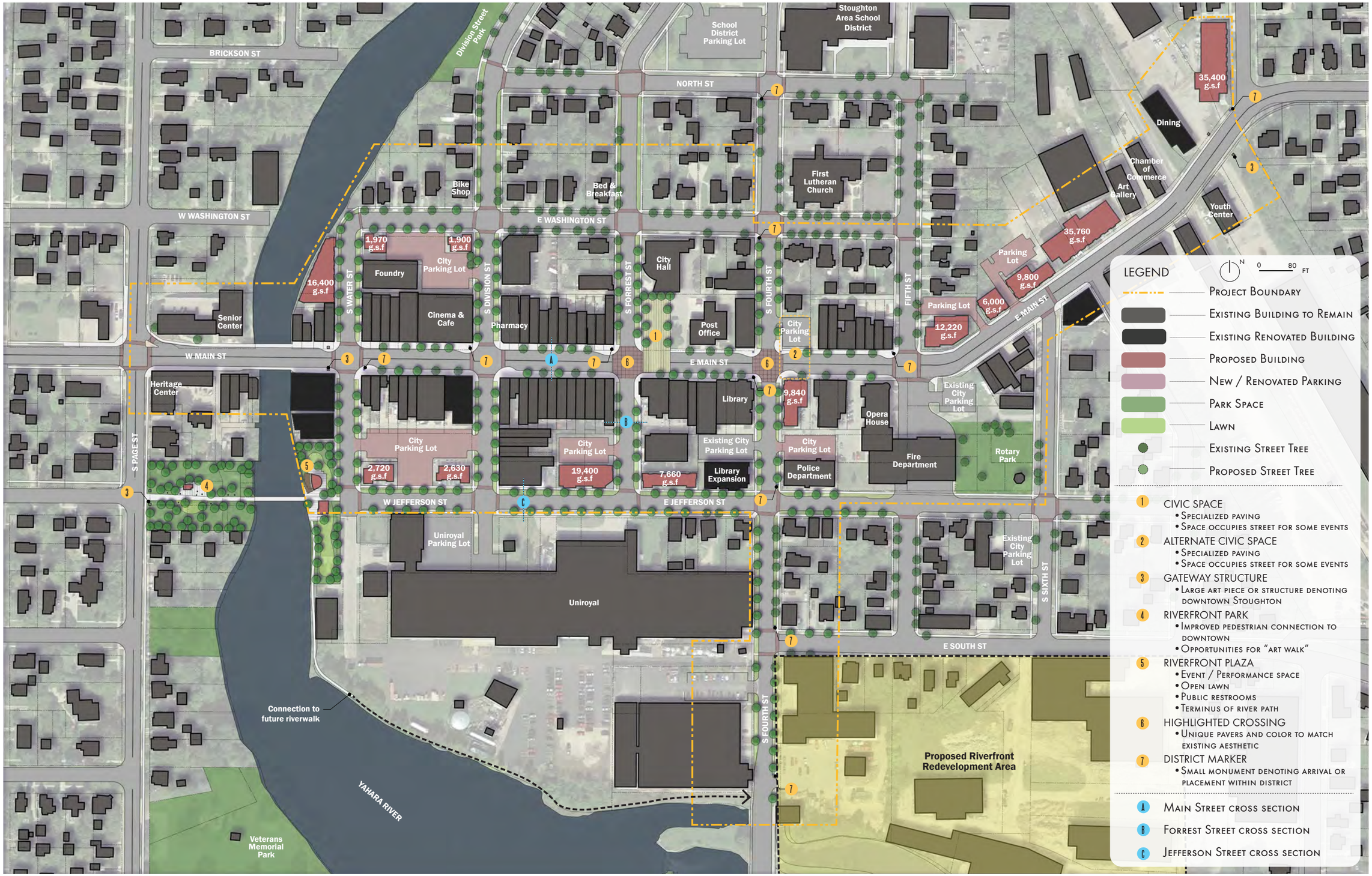
Stoughton's downtown core has a well-preserved small city grid and development pattern structure. Unfortunately from 6th Street to Hillside there are blighted areas which require re-development. Therefore, recommendations for re-development in this area are more extensive (see maps on page 35-36). Physical improvements to this area should follow the recommendations below.

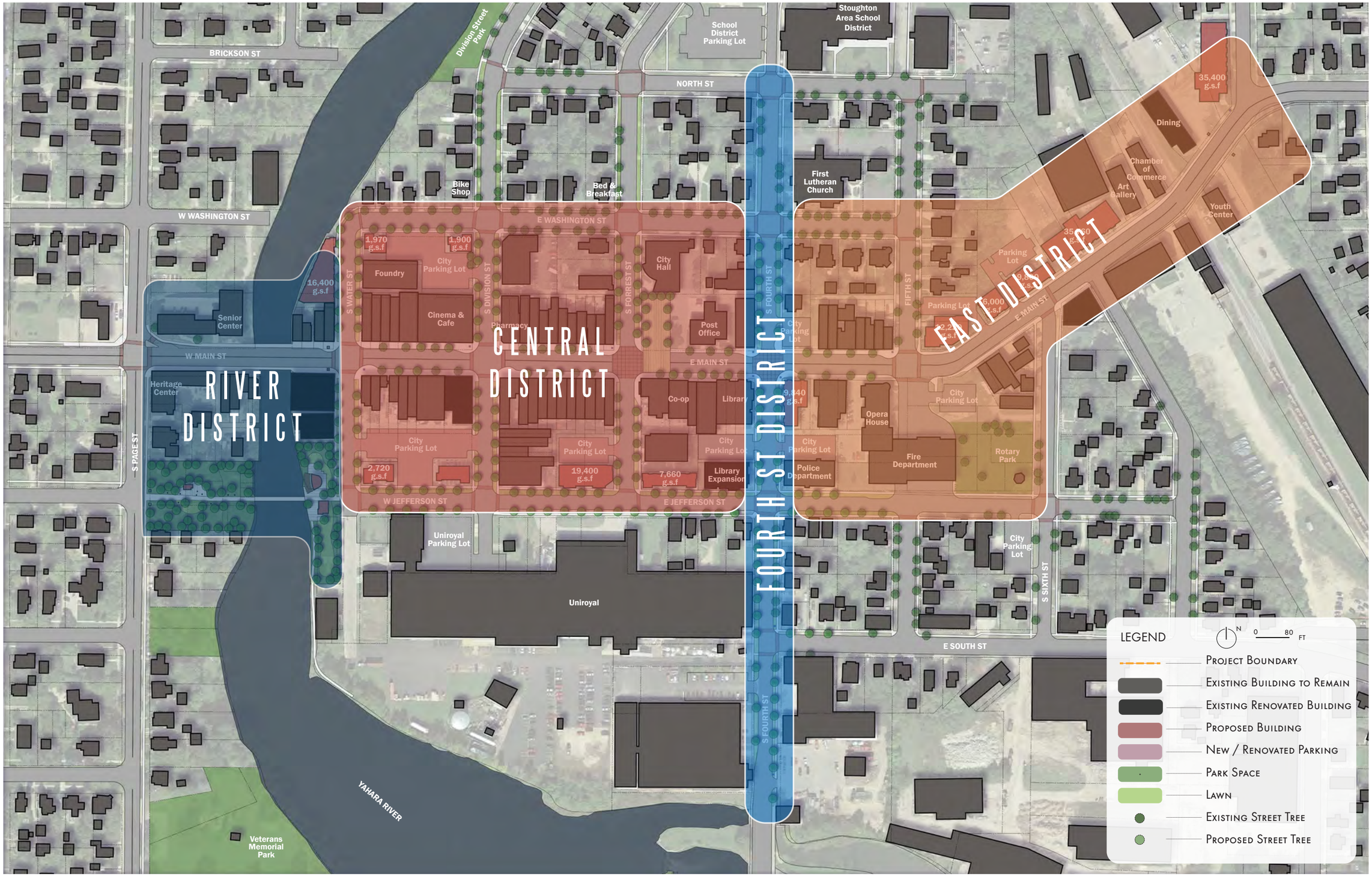
Unlike other communities of a similar age, Stoughton has been able to preserve much of its historical development patterns and structures. The established grid and preserved development structure provide a nice system for improvements within the downtown core. The purpose of the recommendations that follow is to build on the existing aesthetic character of the downtown core. After reviewing downtown's structure and appearance, this project identified the primary ways to promote market success in downtown Stoughton are through strategies that increase the levels of animation in the downtown core.

There are times on a typical business day when downtown Stoughton can be busy, but except for special events, downtown is not often animated. The distinction being, during a normal day motorized and non-motorized circulation, traffic and people moving from place to place can be heavy. Not surprisingly, these activities are heaviest during morning and evening commuting periods. However, downtown Stoughton isn't animated with a steady bustle of people moving in and out business or stores, along sidewalks, dining on the street, or street living. This last idea will be explained later in greater detail. A busy downtown does not necessarily attract new businesses, consumers, or visitors however, an



Downtown Stoughton's grid structure allows for phased improvements.


BRICKSON ST
Division Street Park
School District Parking Lot
Stoughton Area School District
NORTH ST
W WASHINGTON ST
E WASHINGTON ST
Bike Shop
Bed & Breakfast
First Lutheran Church
Dining
Chamber of Commerce
Art Gallery
Youth Center
35,400 g.s.f
35,760 g.s.f
1,970 g.s.f
1,900 g.s.f
City Parking Lot
Foundry
16,400 g.s.f
S WATER ST
S DIVISION ST
S FORREST ST
City Hall
S FOURTH ST
FIFTH ST
Parking Lot
9,800 g.s.f
6,000 g.s.f
12,220 g.s.f
E MAIN ST
Senior Center
Cinema & Cafe
Pharmacy
Post Office
W MAIN ST
Heritage Center
Library
9,840 g.s.f
Opera House
Existing City Parking Lot
S PAGE ST
2,720 g.s.f
2,630 g.s.f
19,400 g.s.f
7,660 g.s.f
Library Expansion
Police Department
Fire Department
Rotary Park
W JEFFERSON ST
E JEFFERSON ST
Uniroyal Parking Lot
Uniroyal
S SIXTH ST
E SOUTH ST
Connection to future riverwalk
YAHARA RIVER
Veterans Memorial Park
Proposed Riverfront Redevelopment Area
LEGEND
N
0 80 FT
Project Boundary
Existing Building to Remain
Existing Renovated Building
Proposed Building
New / Renovated Parking
Park Space
Lawn
Existing Street Tree
Proposed Street Tree
1 CIVIC SPACE
• Specialized paving
• Space occupies street for some events
2 ALTERNATE CIVIC SPACE
• Specialized paving
• Space occupies street for some events
3 GATEWAY STRUCTURE
• Large art piece or structure denoting downtown Stoughton
4 RIVERFRONT PARK
• Improved pedestrian connection to downtown
• Opportunities for "art walk"
5 RIVERFRONT PLAZA
• Event / Performance space
• Open lawn
• Public restrooms
• Terminus of river path
6 HIGHLIGHTED CROSSING
• Unique pavers and color to match existing aesthetic
7 DISTRICT MARKER
• Small monument denoting arrival or placement within district
A Main Street cross section
B Forrest Street cross section
C Jefferson Street cross section

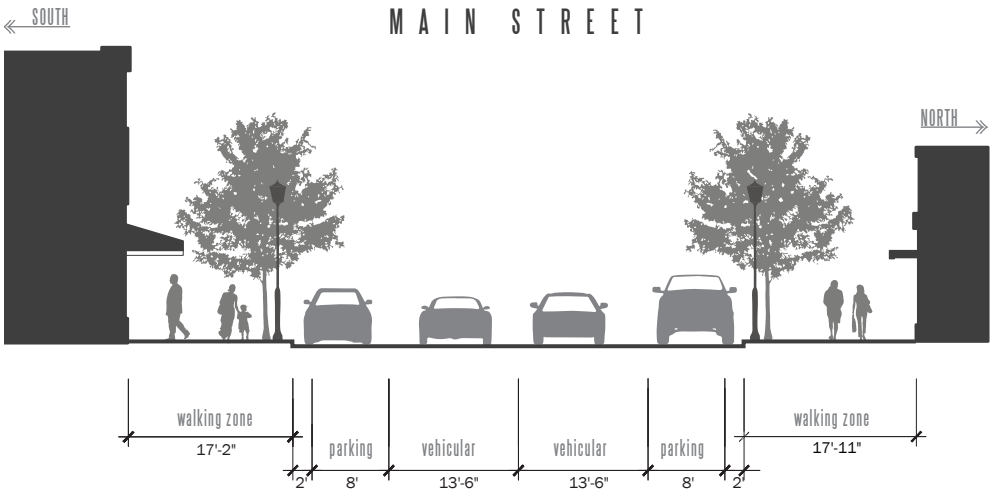


Stoughton Wisconsin | AYRES

STOUGHTON | REDEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS PLAN

EXISTING STREETSCAPES

MAIN STREET



A SECTION
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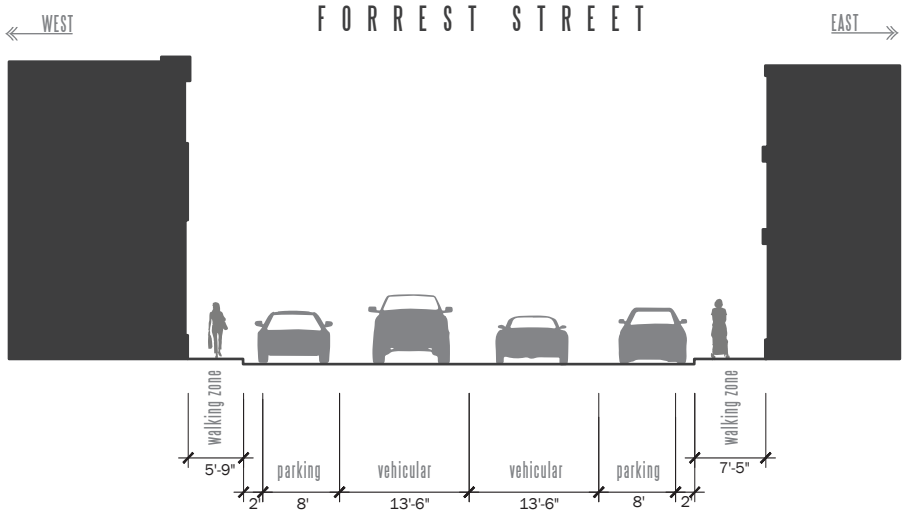
FORREST STREET



B SECTION
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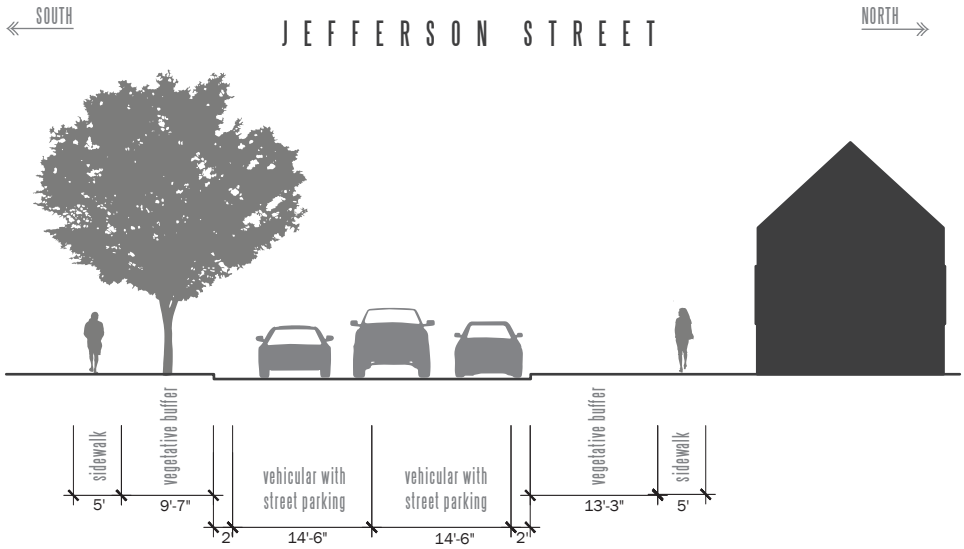
JEFFERSON STREET



C SECTION
1"=20'-0"

*Refer to the Redevelopment Plan on page 35 for cross section locations

animated street attracts residents, businesses consumers, and visitors to participate in the street life of the community.
Main street is more animated than other streets within the downtown core, animation and congestion levels drop off as one moves away from Main St. Partly this is because there are fewer businesses off of Main, but this is also because the streetscapes are not conducive to animation. And it was observed that the structure of downtown's city blocks become more fractured and interrupted as one moves away from Main.

Increased animation results from making the entire downtown core more desirable for different types of people (residents, business owners/ operators, visitors, and consumers) for longer

Typical late afternoon vehicular and pedestrian traffic in downtown Stoughton, May 2019.

periods, throughout the day. Improving animation is the result of better access, experiences, and meaningful, desirable destinations.
The following recommended improvements outline strategies for increasing the levels of animation in the downtown core through changes to the City's physical character. Improvements in these areas will promote increased access, downtown user experiences, and establish meaningful desirable destinations.

Streetscape Recommendations

Although the experience on Main St. is mostly positive for most visitors and users, off of Main the continuity of downtown begins to erode. North of Main the block character weakens in the block from Main to Washington but strengthens again on the north side of Washington where the fabric is dominated by residential and established institutional (schools and church) facilities. South of Main the fabric weakens in response to the more industrial and manufacturing types of uses.

General streetscape recommended improvements(see pages 40-46 for graphic recommendations):

1. Increase street tree frequency and abundance on all streets within the downtown core.
- Street trees should be found on both sides of all streets within the downtown core.
- Canopy tree species reaching average heights of 40-100' are desired. Species with canopies cover walks and parallel parking are preferred.
- Ornamental scale trees (< 40' height avg) are not suitable street trees.
- Sidewalk users should have a uniform canopy over the walk.
- Sufficient soil volume shall be provided to ensure tree maturation.

2. Identify and adopt a pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting standard throughout the downtown core.
- Vehicular scale lighting should be approximately 18-24' in height. This lighting should dominate Main St and at the corners of major intersections.
- Pedestrian scale lighting should be between 12-16' height. This lighting should be found throughout the downtown streetscapes and provide uniform safe lighting for nighttime use and pedestrian movement.
- The lighting standards should be of the same 'family' meaning they should have the same overall design, colors, and materials.

3. Sidewalk widths shall be increased throughout, except on Main St.
- Minimum sidewalk widths in the downtown core shall be 6' width.
- 8' width sidewalks should be planned and designed along the south side of Washington, the north side of Jefferson, and both sides of

4th from the planned new development at the river north to Washington.

4. Where space permits, landscaped terraces shall be provided between the sidewalk and the back of curb.
- When paved surfaces are required between the sidewalk and back of curb the material shall be concrete, brick paver, stamped concrete, or other decorative method. Asphalt and gravel should not be used.

5. Eliminate above-ground utilities throughout the downtown core.
- All utilities should be moved below ground to improve the aesthetic and character of the downtown.

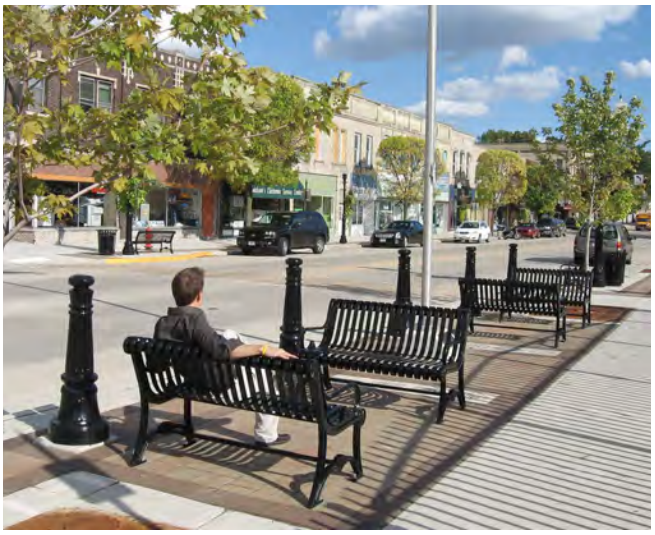
Recommended improvements for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Designate an outdoor dining zone where existing sidewalk width permits.
2. Improve the street tree soil volume area
- Improved tree pit sizes and volume with stormwater infiltration (See page 40).

3. Design and development of gateway markers
- Minimally markers should be placed at the east (Water and Main) and west (6th and Main) ends of the study area.
- A central marker should be developed to be placed at 4th and Main.

4. Crosswalks along Main shall have a uniform aesthetic paving pattern through the entire intersection, indicating the pedestrian significance of these crossing.
- Full paved intersections are most important at Forrest and Main, and 4th and Main where primary civic spaces or new major pedestrian circulation patterns are expected.
- Brick pavers through the intersection or a stamped concrete or other decorative paving method shall be used to make the full intersection identifiable as a pedestrian zone to vehicular operators and pedestrians/ bicyclists.

Example of a main street crossing and improved pedestrian experience with colored brick paver crosswalks and brick paver intersection. Image: Google Earth



Example of main street furnishings with a cohesive aesthetic.

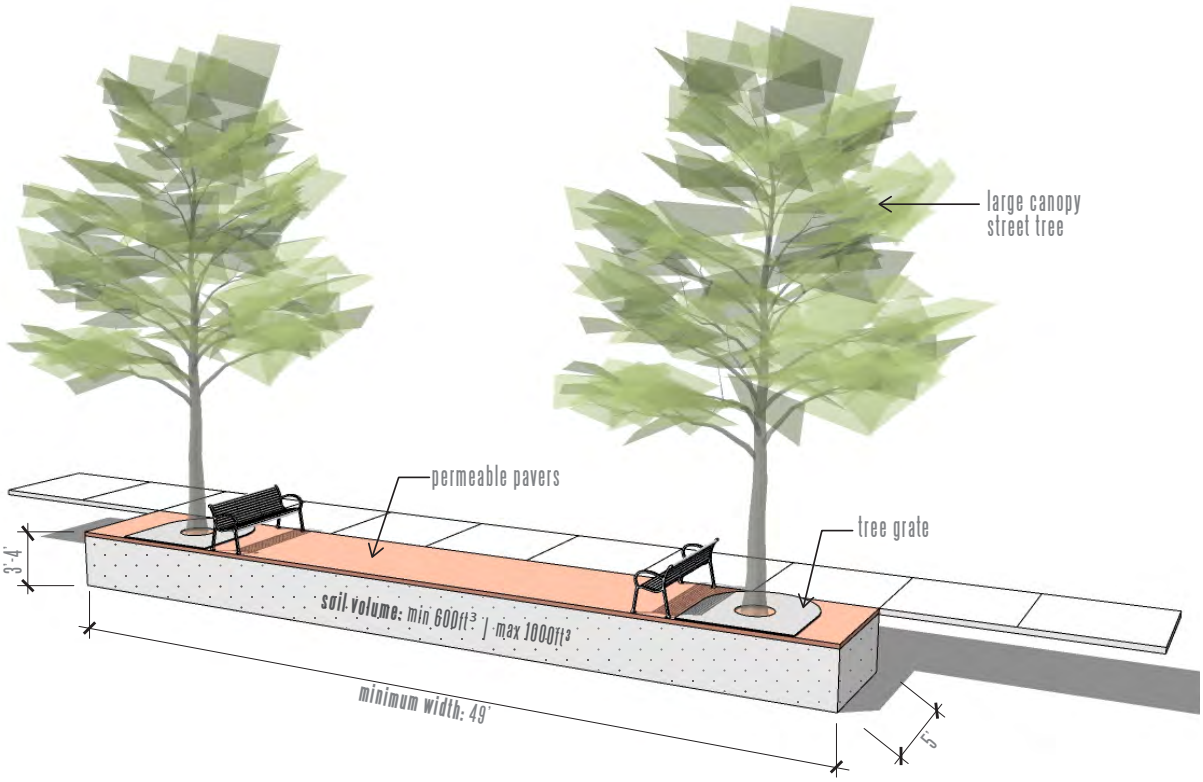
5. Improve the sidewalk experience east from 4th to Hillside Ave.
- Provide an 8' wide walk on both sides of the street.
- Extend the 'Main St streetlight' to Hillside Ave.
- Identify appropriate locations for benches and bike racks.
- Develop space and establish street trees.

Recommended improvements for other streets in the downtown core:

1. Adjust the street width and parallel parking areas to accommodate increased pedestrian/ bicycle space.
- Where needed, eliminate parallel parking on one side of the existing streets.

2. Provide 6' minimum width sidewalks on Water, Division, Forrest, Washington and Jefferson.
3. Provide 8' minimum width on west side 4th south to the new planned park and residential development.
4. Crosswalks within the downtown core shall be of the type currently found on Main St.; a band of district color and material highlighting the crosswalk band; not the full intersection.
- Brick pavers, stamped concrete, or other

STREET TREES



STREET TREES

NTS

STREET TREE SOIL VOLUME | **LARGE TREES**

	Min.	Max.
Soil Volume (ft³)	600	1,000
Ideal Soil Depth (ft)	3	4

RECOMMENDED SPECIES

- American Elm (or elm hybrids)
- American Sycamore
- American Basswood
- Buckeye
- Hackberry
- Honey Locust
- Horschestnut
- Kentucky Coffee Tree
- Linden Spp.
- Oak Spp.

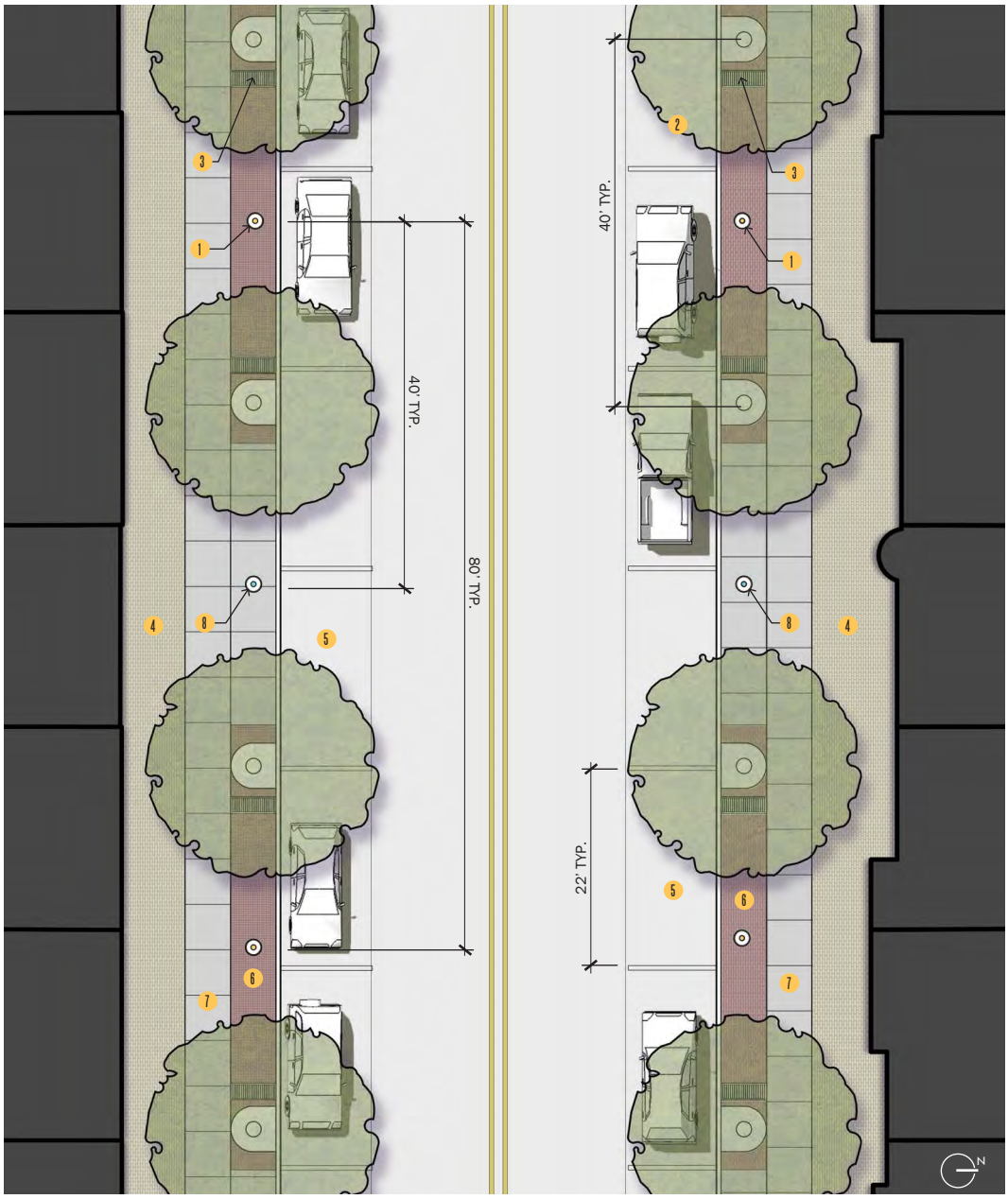
STREET TREE SOIL VOLUME | **MEDIUM TREES**

	Min.	Max.
Soil Volume (ft³)	400	600
Ideal Soil Depth (ft)	3	3.5

RECOMMENDED SPECIES

- Hawthorne Spp.
- Hophornbeam
- Ironwood
- Linden Spp.
- Malus Spp.
- Maple Spp.

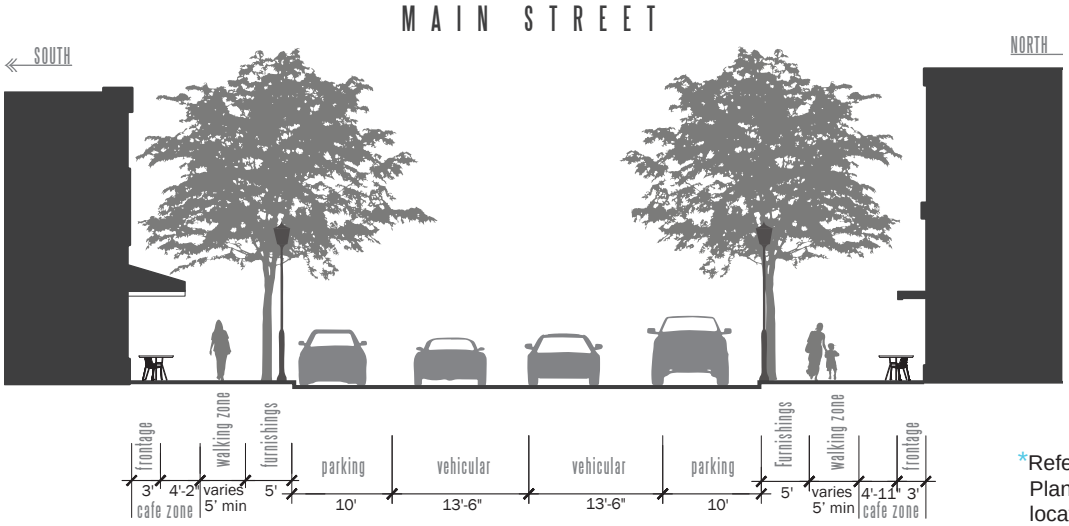
MAIN STREET



1. Pedestrian Pole light
2. Large canopy street tree
3. Bench
4. Cafe zone
5. Parallel parking stall
6. Permeable pavers
7. Concrete paving
8. Pedestrian/vehicular Pole Light

A PLAN VIEW
1" = 20' - 0"

MAIN STREET



A SECTION
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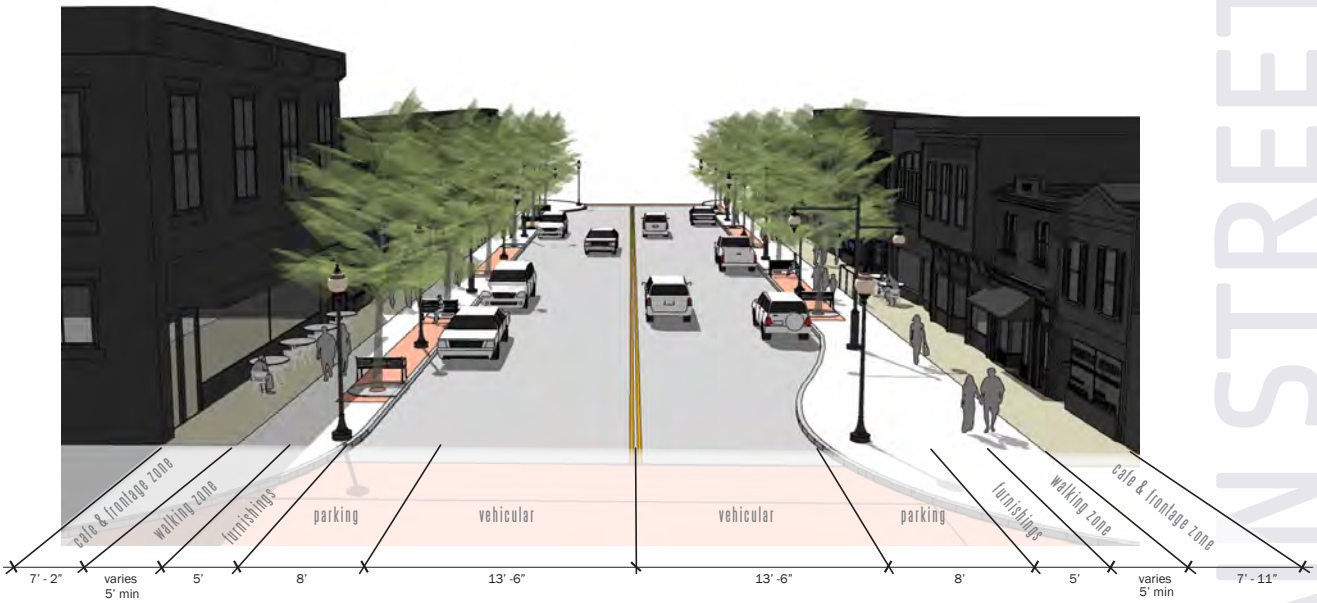
*Refer to the Redevelopment Plan on page 35 for cross section locations

MAIN STREET



A MAIN STREET | STREETSCAPE EXPERIENCE

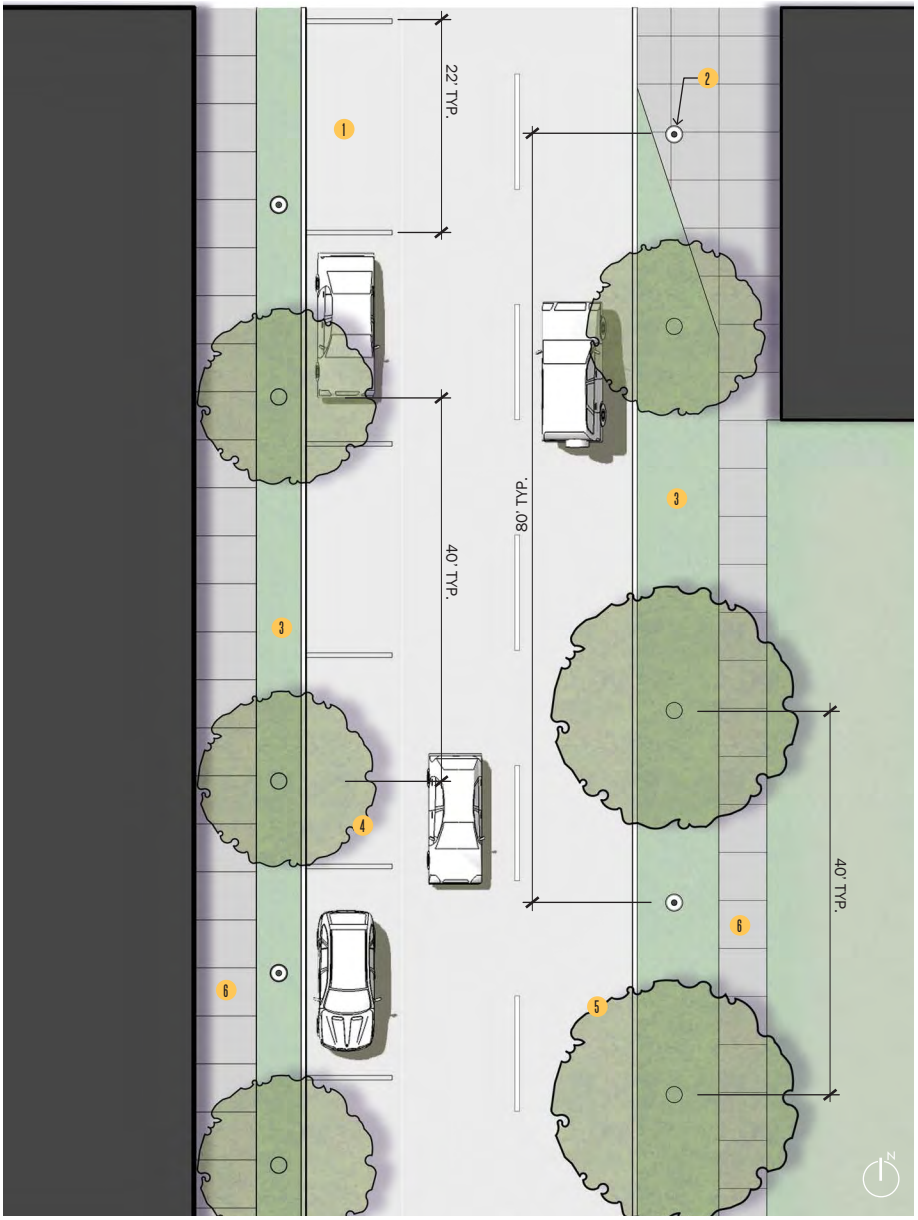
NTS

A MAIN STREET | SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE

NTS

FORREST STREET

1. Parallel parking stall
2. Pole light
3. Vegetative terrace
4. Small canopy street tree
5. Large canopy street tree
6. Walking zone



B PLAN VIEW

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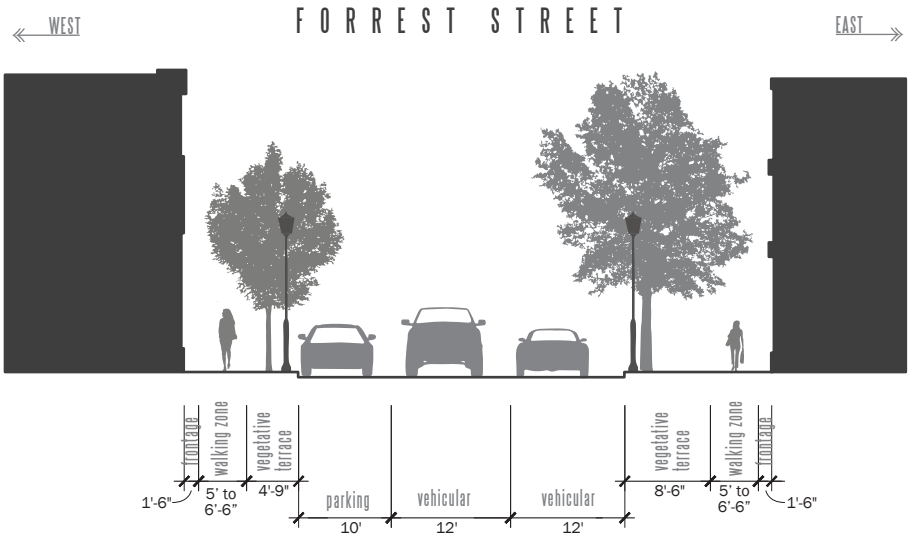


B SECTION

1" = 20' - 0"

*Refer to the Redevelopment Plan on page 35 for cross section locations

FORREST STREET

B FORREST STREET | STREETSCAPE EXPERIENCE

NTS

B FORREST STREET | SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE

NTS

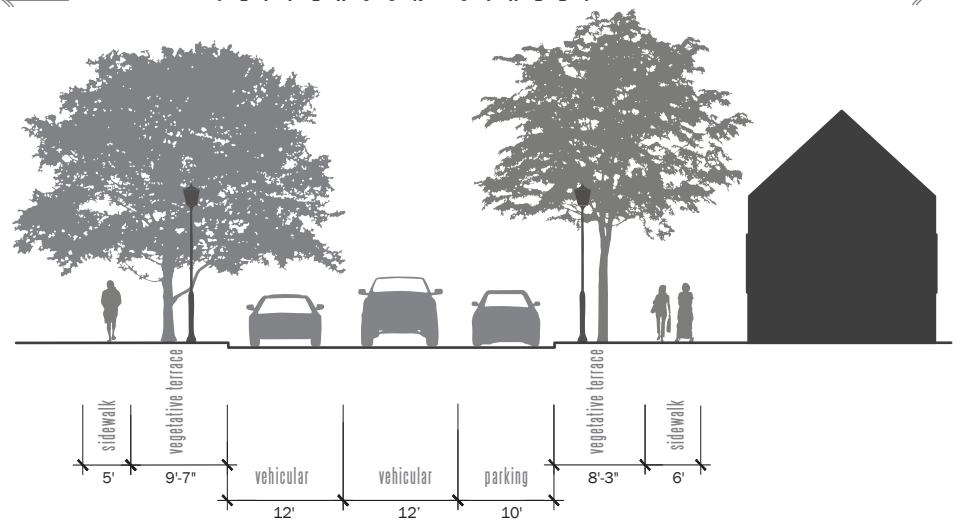
JEFFERSON STREET

1. Pole light
2. Parallel parking stall
3. Large canopy street tree
4. Vegetative terrace
5. Walking zone

C PLAN VIEW

1" = 20' - 0"

SOUTH — JEFFERSON STREET — NORTH



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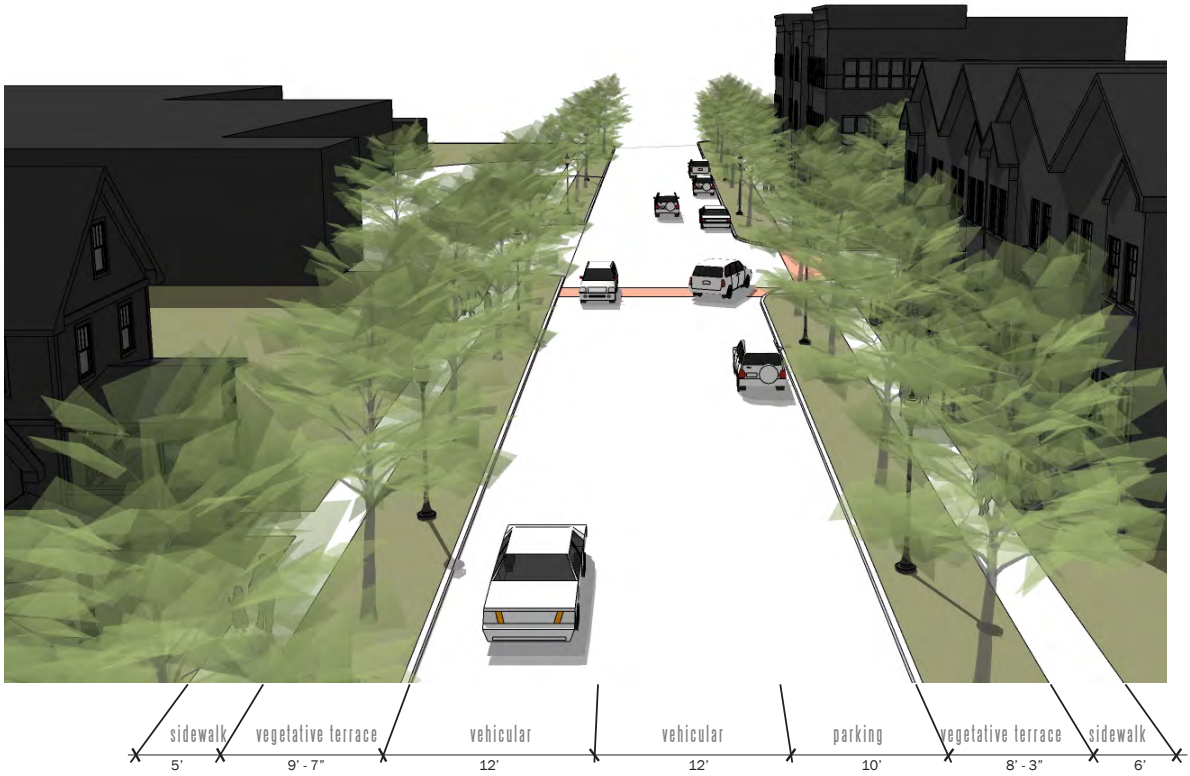
*Refer to the Redevelopment Plan on page 35 for cross section locations

JEFFERSON STREET



C JEFFERSON STREET | STREETSCAPE EXPERIENCE

NTS

C JEFFERSON STREET | SIDEWALK EXPERIENCE

NTS

decorative paving method should be used.

- Whatever decorative paving method is used for Main St. should be used for the crossing on all other crossing in the downtown core.

Wayfinding and Branding Recommendations

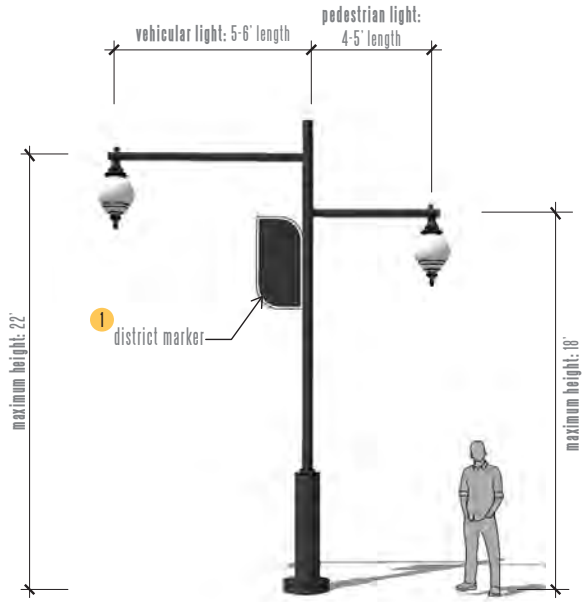
Wayfinding signage should be developed throughout the downtown core. Human beings navigate in space by visualizing a space as a whole and recognizing their position in that space (where they are, which way they are facing, and where they want to go). This is the purpose of wayfinding. No such signage exists within the downtown core, today. Making it easier for downtown users to navigate the core is critical to attracting users to the core.

However, wayfinding is more than signs, labels, arrows, and 'you are here' maps. Effective wayfinding brands the identity of a community or district while recognizing the unique aesthetic character of different regions, streets, or neighborhoods within a district; it utilizes memorable landmarks to orient users along well-defined circulation corridors; it identifies and recognizes key decision-making points based on circulation routes and modes of transportation; and it simplifies the decision-making of the user or visitor to allow them to navigate easily to desired locations and destinations. While Stoughton has a logo – it does not have a brand identity. A branding study should be prepared that develops the brand identity for the downtown core. The branding study should identify the image and the character Stoughton's downtown core based on resident, business, user, and consumer input. The brand should define the colors, fonts, patterns, and materials to be used in the development of the downtown core wayfinding and used on the City's website, promotional material for the downtown core, events calendar and other public outreach systems.

Wayfinding systems can include structures such as gateways, signage, kiosks, mapping, and art, but should have defined aesthetic of materials and colors reflective of the community, neighborhood, or district. Well-designed systems are consistent in color, patterns and materials, but flexible enough to adapt to changes. Most significantly these systems should be concise and readily understandable. Increasingly wayfinding systems use traditional analog technologies (signs, arrows, and mapping) as well as digital content (Bluetooth push devices, interactive

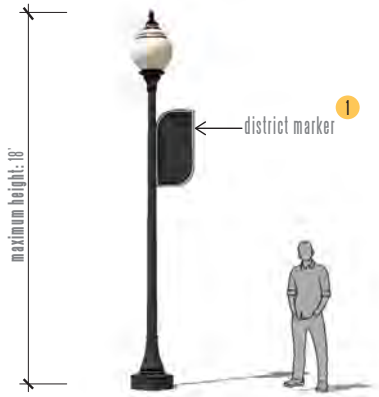
Example wayfinding and branding hierarchy of signs, lights, district markers, maps etc.

STREET FURNISHINGS



VEHICULAR / PEDESTRIAN LIGHT

NTS



PEDESTRIAN LIGHT

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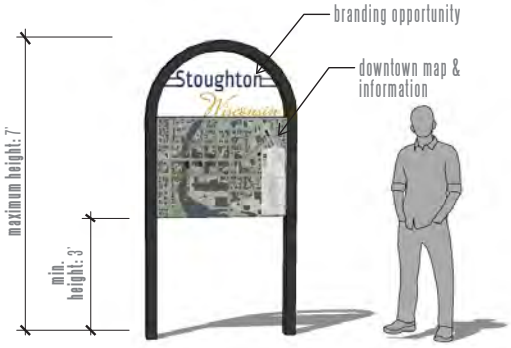

WAYFINDING KIOSK 2

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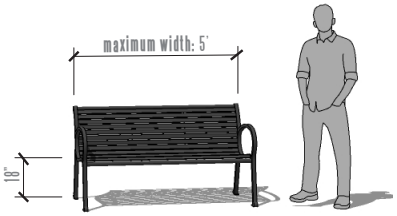


BENCH

NTS

Image: Burns Photography

Image: Kristin Cypher

screens, and interactive content) to enable users to better get where they want to go, advertise upcoming events, or even promote deals or promotions by businesses in the downtown core.

Designing wayfinding structures (signs, markers, etc.) is only half of an effective wayfinding system. Ensuring the structures are the right type in the right place is the other half of an effective system. A wayfinding system should be developed that provides clear guidance for users throughout the downtown core. Wayfinding components (structure types and information content) should be designed. Key decision-making points should be mapped and cataloged. A prioritization plan should be prepared that indicates the phased implementation of wayfinding in the downtown core.

General wayfinding and branding recommendations:

1. Conduct a brand identify study for Stoughton's downtown core.
- The brand should be developed with feedback from the residents, business operators, landowners, visitors, and consumers.
- The brand should define fonts, colors, materials, and most importantly messaging to promote the downtown core.
- The branding exercise may identify a communication strategy for different audience groups to promote the downtown core.
- The brand should be reflected in the developed wayfinding program but also in print and digital content developed for the downtown core.
- Identify the primary district(s) for branding. Districts may include the downtown core, the 4th St Corridor, the Railroad Works, etc.

2. Conduct a wayfinding study for the downtown core.
- Define and map primary circulation routes for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles.
- Determine where circulation routes may be in need of improvement.
- Map key intersections and decision-making points for vehicular operators, as well as pedestrians and bicyclists within the downtown core.
- Identify the major destinations users are expected to seek within Stoughton and especially within the downtown.
- Determine the location of gateway markers.
- Design wayfinding strategies, reflective of the brand, for deployment within the downtown and appropriate outlying areas.
- Prioritize and phase the implementation of wayfinding components.
- Wayfinding content (signage formatting, promotional material, etc.) should be consistent between built, installed structures and digital web-based material for apps.

Wayfinding recommendations for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Identify appropriate gateway markers along the Main St. corridor.
2. Identify the primary locations for wayfinding content along the Main St. corridor.

District branding/wayfinding parking sign in LaGrange, IL.

Light pole banner branding in Grafton, WI

3. Design and define wayfinding content include district monikers, directional signage, 'you-are-here' type signage, or other wayfinding content.

Infill and Redevelopment Recommendations

Opportunities for infilling, redeveloping (raise an existing structure and replace with a new building) and remodeling existing structures can be found throughout the downtown core. Along Main St. most of the opportunities are remodeling type of opportunities. Existing, unoccupied structures are found along Main St. There are also opportunities for remodeling some existing, occupied structures to develop better ground level retail or commercial space, and/or upper floor office residential spaces.

Infill and redevelopment opportunities increase immediately off of Main St. In these portions of the downtown core the block face is interrupted and broken in places. Where possible, priority should be made to infill the block face with new buildings. Underutilized and buildings in poor condition should be evaluated for remodeling before removal. Building sizes, materials, and patterns are less uniform off of Main; alternative and in some cases lower quality, materials are permitted. Minimum architectural standards should be defined for the downtown core. The design and materials used on buildings within the core should be reflective of the brand.

Infill, redevelopment, and remodeling should be directed at supporting the types of businesses and uses recommended in the Market-based Recommendations portion of this study. Residential apartment or condominium-type mixed-use type buildings should be promoted and incentivized in the downtown core. Where possible, balconies should be developed. Residential development should include a mix of living possibilities and market points. New residential, mixed-use buildings should include the development of ground level public/private open space areas where appropriate.

Image: Christian Delbert

Image: Wild; Wonderful West Virginia

Image: longislandernews.com

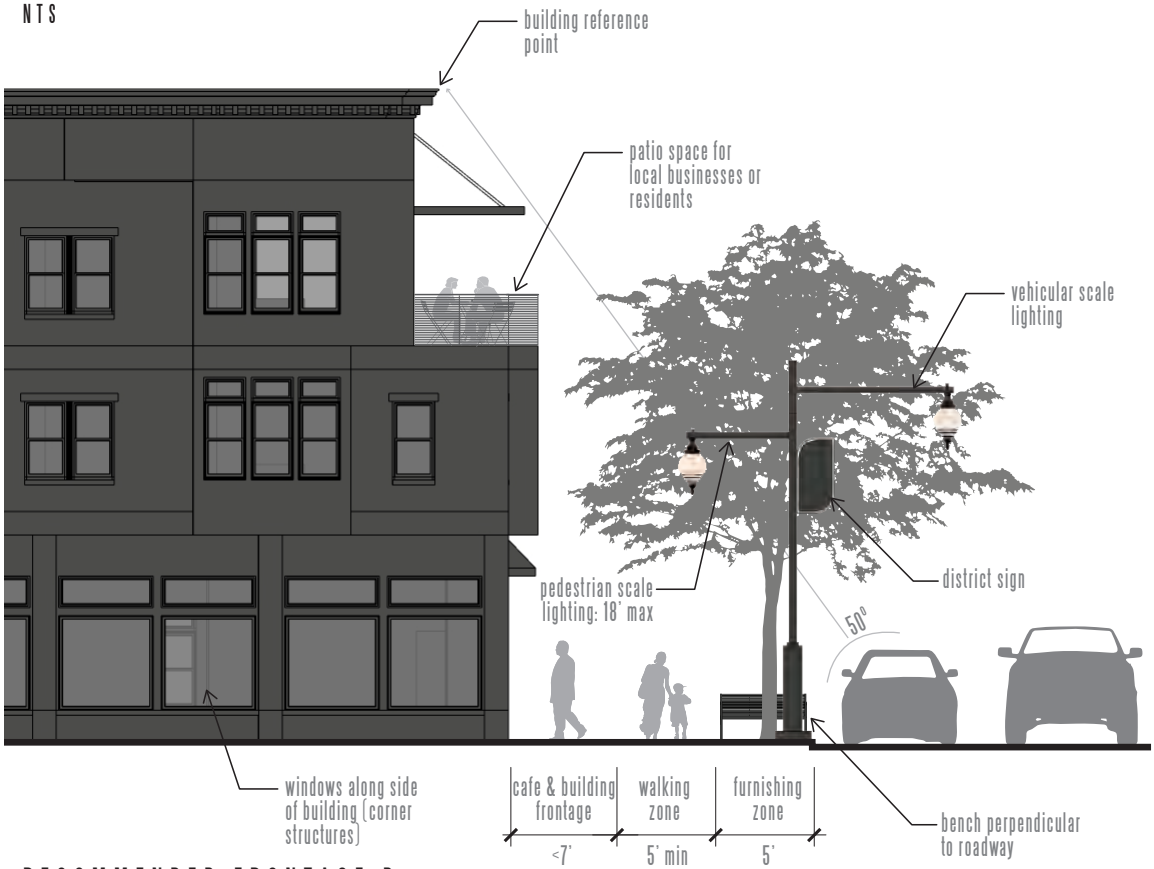
Image: Arterial

Examples of mix-ed use main street frontages with maintained historic facades, cafe space, and appropriate window to wall proportions.

INFILL & REDEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDED FRONTAGE A

NTS



RECOMMENDED FRONTAGE B

NTS

Image: Visitbeloit.com

Image: Dash Park Facebook Group

Examples of plazas and public gathering spaces making use of hard and softscape components, pedestrian walkways, and flexible space for events and other civic gatherings.

Representatives of the Redevelopment Authority Subcommittee provided recommendations for buildings that could be remodeled or redeveloped as part of a market revitalization process in the downtown core. These buildings are identified on the project concept plan.

Surface parking lots should be pushed to the inside of the block wherever possible. Surface parking should not be the dominant land use at any major intersection. This includes all the intersections with Main throughout the downtown core. If possible, the corners of the surface lots at between Water and Division at Washington and Jefferson should be developed with a suitable structure to anchor the blocks.

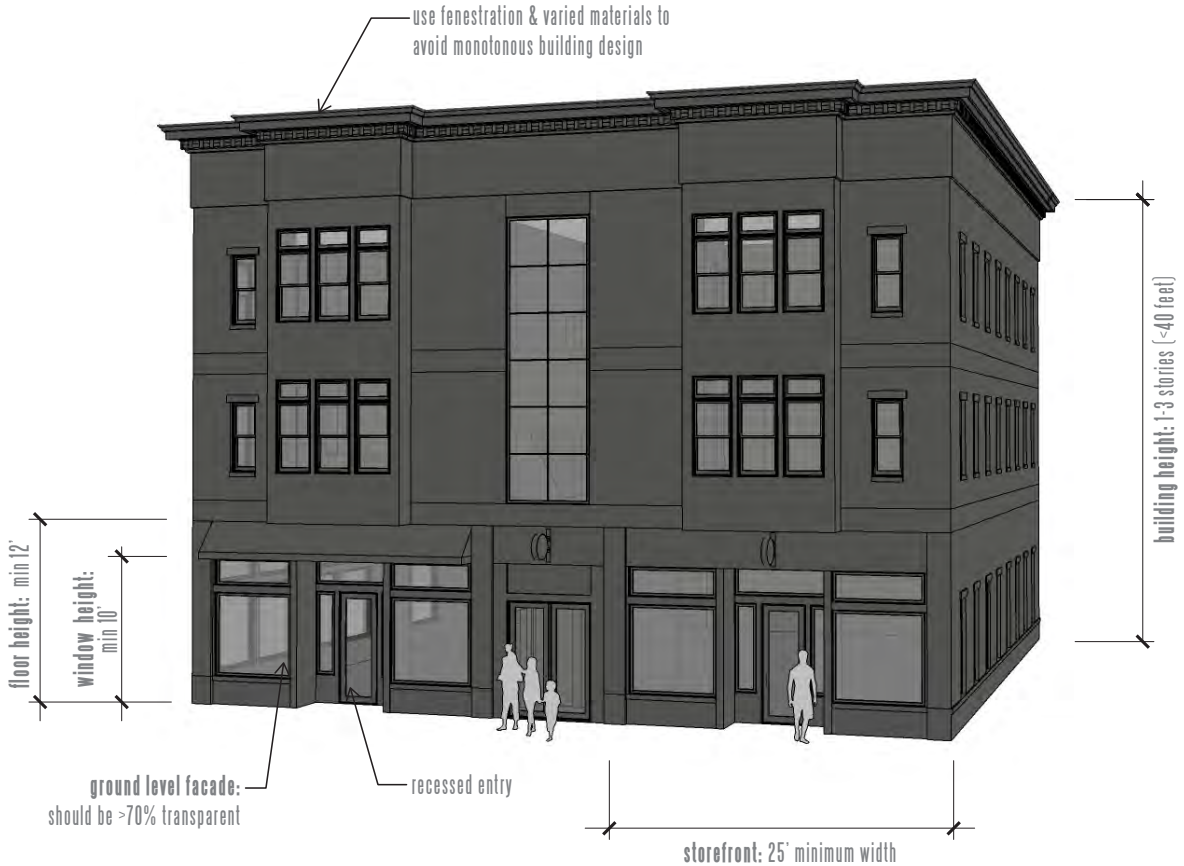
Although concern over parking was expressed routinely throughout this project, defining the block from a bicycle and pedestrian standpoint is as important as parking. Minimally a wall or other feature should be designed and developed to anchor the corners with a structural element. However, new building is preferred.

In addition to the infill, redeveloped, or remodeled structures in the downtown core portions of the downtown should be designed and developed for civic gathering and community open space. As the primary thoroughfare in the City and in the downtown core a civic space should be developed along Main St. The preferred location for this type of space is adjacent to the new City Hall at Forrest and Main. An alternative location would be the municipal parking lot and empty lot north and south on Main at 4th St. The new civic space should be a plaza-type space incorporating hard and softscape components. It should be a flexible space that would allow for the set up of tents or stages for some events, or host food trucks and the farmer's market. This space should be the marquee civic space in the downtown supported by other public spaces such as Rotary Park. For events such as the Catfish Music Festival, the new civic space should be the location for visitor orientation, host outdoor vendors, and serve as the primary event stage. It should serve as the preeminent space for the Victorian Holiday event, perhaps hosting a small temporary ice rink.

A new park and open space should be developed at the intersection of Water and Jefferson.
The new park should span the river to Page, improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience across the river from the west into downtown, and most importantly become a hub for the new planned Riverwalk along the Yahara south of the downtown core. As the downtown hub, this park also creates a destination point for an expected, desired pedestrian and bicycle loop, beginning at Water and Jefferson running south along the river to 4th, back up 4th to the downtown and west along Jefferson and Main back to the new park. This park would become an additional open space anchor for downtown, along with the proposed Riverfront Redevelopment Project east of 4th street, and its adjacent Whitewater Park. These new destinations, along with proposed corridor improvements discussed in this chapter connecting downtown, and a planned pedestrian/ bicycle link from Stoughton to the Capital City Trail providing enhanced regional access, the city begins to grow a rich network of amenities which help form the new fabric of downtown Stoughton.

General infill, redevelopment, and remodeling recommendations:

1. Identify opportunities for infill, redevelopment and remodeling of structures or sites within the downtown core.
- Preliminary opportunities are shown on the concept plan developed for this project.
- In collaboration with the Market-base recommendations, provided earlier, develop programs and funding streams to incentivize remodeling of appropriate existing buildings to a brand-determined quality.
2. Promote the development of surface parking at the interior of the block.
- Eliminate large surface lots at the block face, especially at prominent intersections.
- The brand should define fonts, colors, materials, and most importantly messaging to promote the downtown core.
3. Define the architectural standards that promote the downtown core brand.



RECOMMENDED STRUCTURE
NTS

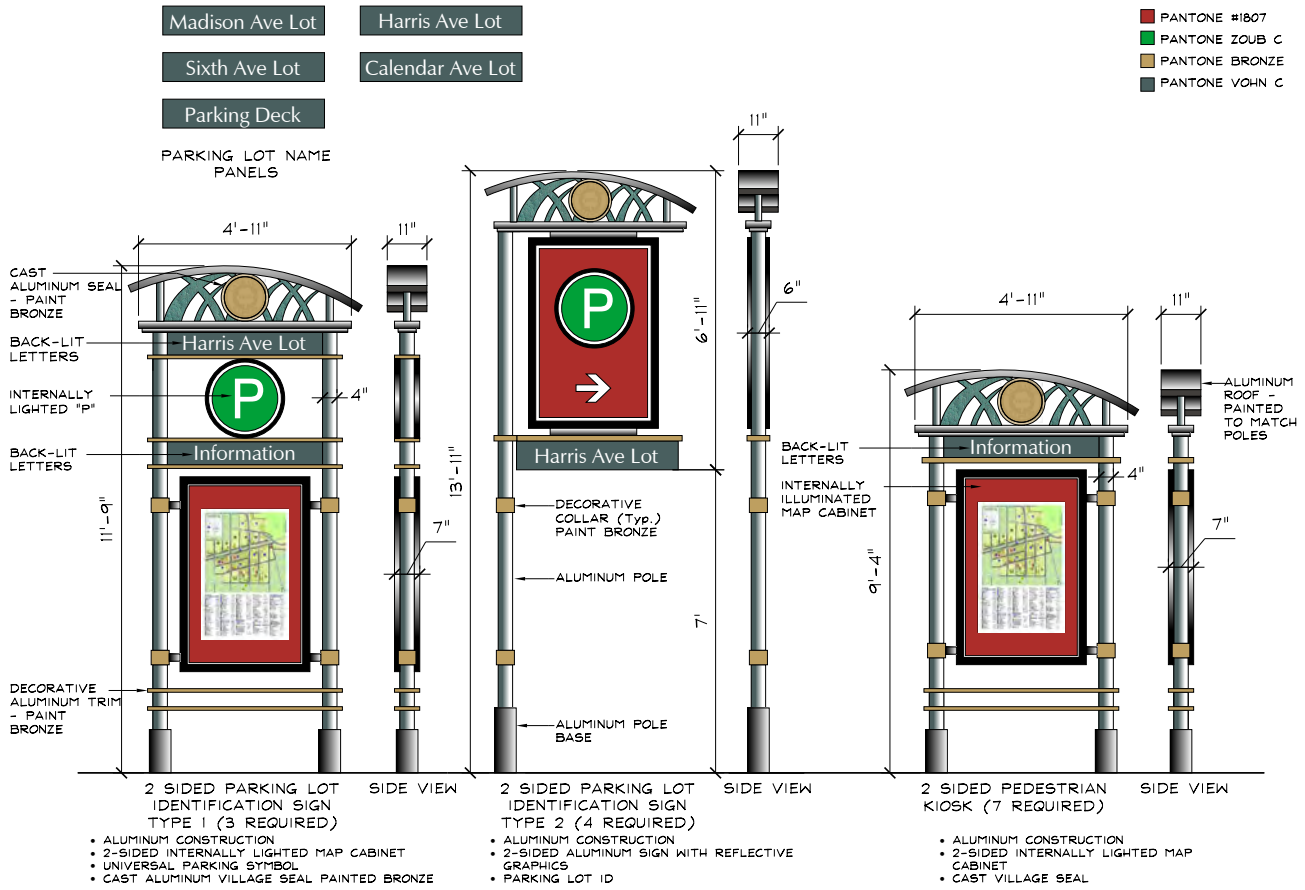
- Building facades and entrances should be clearly identifiable.
- Approximately 60-80% of the ground level should be window.
- The quality of building materials and the window openings should bend around buildings with facades on two faces of a block.

Parking

Concerns over parking were expressed throughout this study. Two types of concerns were noted, first, was the concern that there isn't enough parking where it is most needed, this is immediately adjacent to or on Main St. Second, is the concern that the parking regulations do not provide sufficient time for downtown consumers and shoppers to conduct business without being ticketed.

The Stoughton police department conducted a parking inventory in 2017 identifying where parking within the City could be located. However, a parking needs and demands study should be conducted to determine if there is a parking deficit within the downtown. This plan recommends removal of parking along some of the north/south roads within the downtown core (Water, Division, Forrest, and 4th) to provide a higher quality pedestrian streetscape experience. Improving the streetscape experience will make parallel parking a block or half a block away from a desired destination more appealing.
This plan also recognizes the opportunity for the development of additional parking areas, with the removal of some existing buildings, in the interior of some of the blocks. In addition, as infill and redevelopment buildings are designed, at grade, first floor, or below grade parking should be examined and, when possible and feasible, developed.

A second parking study should be developed to test the parking limits within the downtown core. Currently parking is limited to two hours in several key locations. However, this parking limit only exists from 8 am to 5 pm. A study should be conducted to identify where and how longer parking opportunities could and should



Parking and information hierarchy standards.

be developed. It is also worth noting that parking downtown becomes free after 5 pm in the most desirable locations (parallel parking on Main St), this also happens to be the preferred shopping period for the age group with the highest probability of spending downtown as identified earlier this study. Unfortunately, many businesses in the downtown are not open during the most desirable shopping period.
Bike sharing or bike rental stations should be examined for the new park space planned for along the river and at the existing municipal lots on Water at Washington and Jefferson. One or two smaller hubs within the downtown core could promote users to park further away from their destination and utilize bike opportunities.

Consider renting or developing a trolley for large events in the downtown core when larger crowds are expected, and remote parking may become needed. The trolley could also be used for special weekends, art crawl events, or events expected to have multiple venues.

Parking recommendations:

1. Develop a study to determine the parking needs/demands within the downtown core for the current downtown conditions and an estimated future, built-out condition.
2. Conduct a study to determine the appropriate length for parking control along key corridors or adjacent to significant destinations within the downtown core.

- Explore where parking periods could be extended to promote the downtown core and the development of business within the downtown.

Parking sign in LaGrange, IL.

3. New buildings should explore at grade or below grade parking as part of their building development and design.
4. Review the possibility of a bike share with hubs (parking and rental locations) at key locations within the downtown core.
5. Explore the need and opportunity for the development of a downtown trolley for special events in the downtown.

What to Do Now

The following recommendations from the four main categories above can be developed now.

General streetscape recommended improvements:

1. Identify and adopt a pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting standard throughout the downtown core.

- Vehicular scale lighting should be approximately 18-24' in height. This lighting should dominate Main St and at the corners of major intersections.
- Pedestrian scale lighting should be between 12-16' height. This lighting should be found throughout the downtown streetscapes and provide uniform safe lighting for nighttime use and pedestrian movement.
- The lighting standards should be of the same 'family' meaning they should have the same overall design, colors, and materials.

Recommended improvements for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Identification of an outdoor dining zone where existing sidewalk width permits.

Recommended improvements for other streets in the downtown core:

1. Crosswalks within the downtown core shall be of the type currently found on Main St.; a band of district color and material highlighting the crosswalk band; not the full intersection.

- Brick pavers, stamped concrete, or other decorative paving method should be used.
- Whatever decorative paving method is used for Main St. should be used for the crossing on all other crossing in the downtown core.

General infill, redevelopment, and remodeling recommendations:

1. Identify and court desirable developers for downtown.
2. Define the architectural standards that promote the downtown core brand.

- Building facades and entrances should be clearly identifiable.
- Approximately 60-80% of the ground level should be window.
- The quality of building materials and the window openings should bend around buildings with facades on two faces of a block.

Parking recommendations:

1. Review the possibility of a bike share with hubs (parking and rental locations) at key locations within the downtown core.
2. Explore the need and opportunity for the development of a downtown trolley for special events in the downtown.

In the Next 5-Years

The following recommendations from the four main categories should be developed in the next 5-years.

General streetscape recommended improvements:

1. Increase street tree frequency and abundance on all streets within the downtown core.
2. Continue implementation of a pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting standard throughout the downtown core.
3. Sidewalk widths shall be increased throughout the downtown core, except on Main St.
4. Where space permits, landscaped terraces shall be provided between the sidewalk and the back of curb.
5. Eliminate above-ground utilities throughout the downtown core.

Pedestrian crossing in Wauwatosa, WI. Image: Google Earth

Recommended improvements for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Improve the street tree soil volume area
2. Design and implement gateway markers

- Minimally markers should be placed at the east (Water and Main) and west (6th and Main) ends of the study area.
- A central marker should be developed to be placed at 4th and Main.

District branding and gateway markers in San Diego, CA. Image: Brett Shoaf

Recommended improvements for other streets in the downtown core:

1. Adjust the street width and parallel parking areas to accommodate increased pedestrian/ bicycle space.
2. Provide 6' minimum width sidewalks on Water, Division, Forrest, Washington and Jefferson.
3. Provide 8' minimum width on west side 4th south to the new planned park and residential development.
4. Redo crosswalks with band of district color and material highlighting the crosswalk band; not the full intersection.

General wayfinding and branding recommendations:

1. Conduct a brand identify study for Stoughton's downtown core.
2. Conduct a wayfinding study for the downtown core.

Wayfinding recommendations for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Identify appropriate gateway markers along the Main St. corridor.
2. Identify the primary locations for wayfinding content along the Main St. corridor.
3. Design and define wayfinding content include district monikers, directional signage, 'you-are-here' type signage, or other wayfinding content.

General infill, redevelopment, and remodeling recommendations:

1. Continue to identify and court desirable developers for downtown.
2. Promote the development of surface parking at the interior of the block.

- Eliminate large surface lots at the block face, especially at prominent intersections.
- The brand should define fonts, colors, materials, and most importantly messaging to promote the downtown core.

Parking recommendations:

1. Develop a study to determine the parking needs/demands within the downtown core for the current downtown conditions and an estimated future, built-out condition.
2. Conduct a study to determine the appropriate length for parking control along key corridors or adjacent to significant destinations within the downtown core.

- Explore where parking periods could be extended to promote the downtown core and the development of business within the downtown.

3. New buildings should explore at grade or below grade parking as part of their building development and design.

In the Next 10-Years

The following recommendations from the four main categories should be developed in the next 10-years.

General streetscape recommended improvements:

1. Continue establishment of street tree frequency and abundance on all streets within the downtown core.
2. Continue implementation of a pedestrian and vehicular scale lighting standard throughout the downtown core.
3. Eliminate above-ground utilities throughout the downtown core.

Recommended improvements for Main St within the downtown core:

1. Redo intersections along Main St as paved experiences through the entire intersection.
2. Extend the Main St streetscape experience from 4th to Hillside Ave.

69th Street Plaza in Wauwatosa, WI. uses a distinct design aesthetic with colors, forms, and materials emblematic of the area. Image: Landscape Forms

Partnerships and Funding Opportunities

The market recommendations in the plan suggest that those involved in implementing the plan refine and update available incentives for business improvements. In addition, the physical improvements section of the plan suggests several projects that will need to be funded. Some of this work can potentially be achieved through the expansion and enhancement of existing partnerships like the one with the Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation (WWBIC) or other organizations. Grants are potentially available for façade improvements, infrastructure replacement and upgrades, site redevelopment, and streetscape and branding.

It will be important to have an appointed group or person to further research grant opportunities because funding levels, cycles, and requirements vary. Having identified target sites, in particular for brownfield grants, will be an advantage. Many grants are designed for "shovel ready" projects. In addition, synergies can be found between projects. For example, roadway or other public infrastructure projects can be designed in a way to fit the original need but also provide the enhancements discussed in the plan.

A list of potential partners and funding sources is provided below. This is a starting point that will evolve as efforts and projects are refined. As projects become more focused, new funding opportunities might arise.

Partnerships

Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation

- https://www.wwbic.com/

WEDC's Main Street and Connect Communities Programs

- https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/main-street/
- https://wedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/2018-Main-Street-Connect-Communities-Program.pdf

UW Madison's Small Business Development Center

- https://sbdc.wisc.edu/

Madison Region Economic Partnership

- http://madisonregion.org/

Funding

US Environmental Protection Agency and WDNR **(Brownfields)**

- https://www.epa.gov/brownfields
- https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/brownfields/epagrants.html

WEDC Ideal Sites Redevelopment Program

- https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/idle-sites-redevelopment-program/

WEDC Community Development Investment Grant Program

- https://wedc.org/programs-and-resources/community-development-investment-grant/

Community Development Block Grants

- https://doa.wi.gov/Pages/LocalGovtsGrants/CommunityDevelopmentPrograms.aspx

Appendix 1: Online Survey Results

This appendix includes the online survey data collected during the planning process for the Market Revitalization Plan in Downtown Stoughton.

Appendix 1: Downtown Stoughton: Resident/Consumer Survey Results

The Downtown Stoughton Resident/Consumer Survey was conducted from August 6, 2019 through October 8, 2019. The purpose of this online survey was to identify respondent preferences specific to downtown Stoughton and to inform the market-based recommendations for this downtown planning process. This online survey consisted of 18 questions and received 1,110 responses. Overall, the total response number (1,110) is equivalent to 19.9% of total number of households within the City of Stoughton (5,574). Respondents were not required to answer any individual survey question.

These survey results identify what respondents think, not why they think the way they do. Respondent behaviors and attitudes about downtown Stoughton's overall experience and shopping and dining options are described in these results. In addition, the survey results provide guidance for future business growth by identifying businesses or business categories that may affect additional purchasing in downtown Stoughton. Overall, survey respondents were very direct in their observations about their downtown Stoughton experience and the kinds of actions they believed were needed to improve Stoughton's downtown.

This appendix includes the detailed survey results from the Stoughton survey. A summary of the survey's demographic questions (Questions 13 through 16) is presented first. The responses to these 4 questions provide an overview of this survey's respondent pool. After this demographic summary, the survey data for each question is then presented in numerical order. (The detailed data for the 4 demographic questions is included.) The analysis and observations specific to each question's responses are also documented.

As part of the survey analysis, four (4) respondent sub-groups were identified, and their responses were analyzed to consider the differences and similarities among these sub-groups and all responses. These sub-groups were:

- Respondents aged 25-44. This group represented 37.1% of all survey responses. Their preferences are particularly important to downtown's future, given their interest in events and experiences. This sub-group is also forming households, either starting or raising families, and spending higher proportions of their household incomes for both reasons.
- Residents of zip code 53589 (Stoughton residents). This respondent group represented 86.3% of all survey responses. Given this high percentage of the total survey responses, the resident sub-group results directly correlated with the results from all survey responses.
- Non-residents (other than zip code 53589). Any differences between non-residents' responses (13.7% of responses) and all responses to survey questions are described in the analyses of each question.
- Daytime shoppers. This group, based upon their response to Question 9, comprised 25.6% of all survey respondents, of which 84.2% were residents of the 53589 zip code.

Within the presentation of each question, any significant differences or similarities between all responses and any of the above sub-groups are described within the observations by question. Any comparison observations are separately noted by question. Survey question 17 was open-ended, asking respondents to provide any final comments about downtown Stoughton. 447 respondents, or 40.3% of all respondents, provided voluntary comments. The 41 pages of unedited respondent comments (pp. 42-82) conclude this appendix. The final survey question, Question 18, was also optional. Respondents

were asked to provide their contact information to learn more about the survey results, this downtown study's final recommendations, or to be engaged in downtown Stoughton's future. This respondent contact information was provided separately to Stoughton's Downtown Revitalization Sub-committee.

Questions 13 and 14: Respondent Residency and Employment

Question 13: In what ZIP code is your home located? (Top 3 Zip Codes)		
Zip Code	**#**	**Town**
53589	850	Stoughton
53575	22	Fitchburg
53534	11	Edgerton

Question 14: If you are employed, in what ZIP code is your place of employment located? (Top 3 Zip Codes)		
Zip Code	**#**	**Town**
Various	273	Madison
53589	270	Stoughton
53717	14	Middleton

- Question 13 respondents resided in 49 different zip codes.
- Question 14 respondents worked in 72 different zip codes.
- For both Questions 13 and 14, most responses were from the Madison region. A small number of zip code responses to both questions were from out of state. These responses were from either visitors to Stoughton or local residents who telecommute.

Question 15: Respondent Households

Question 15: Choose the answer that best describes your household.	
Answer Choices	**Responses**
I live alone	12.6%
We are a household composed of two (2) adults and no children	40.9%
We are a family or a household composed of three (3) or more adults over age 18	11.3%
We are a family with pre-school or school aged children living at home	29.4%
Other (please specify)	5.8%

- All responses and non-residents' responses had higher percentages of 'I live alone' responses, generally reflecting their higher percentages of older respondents.
- 86.7% of the aged 25-44 sub-group reside in households with multiple people.
- The 'Other' responses fit into the categories provided with minimal changes to the overall percentages shown for all responses and sib-groups.

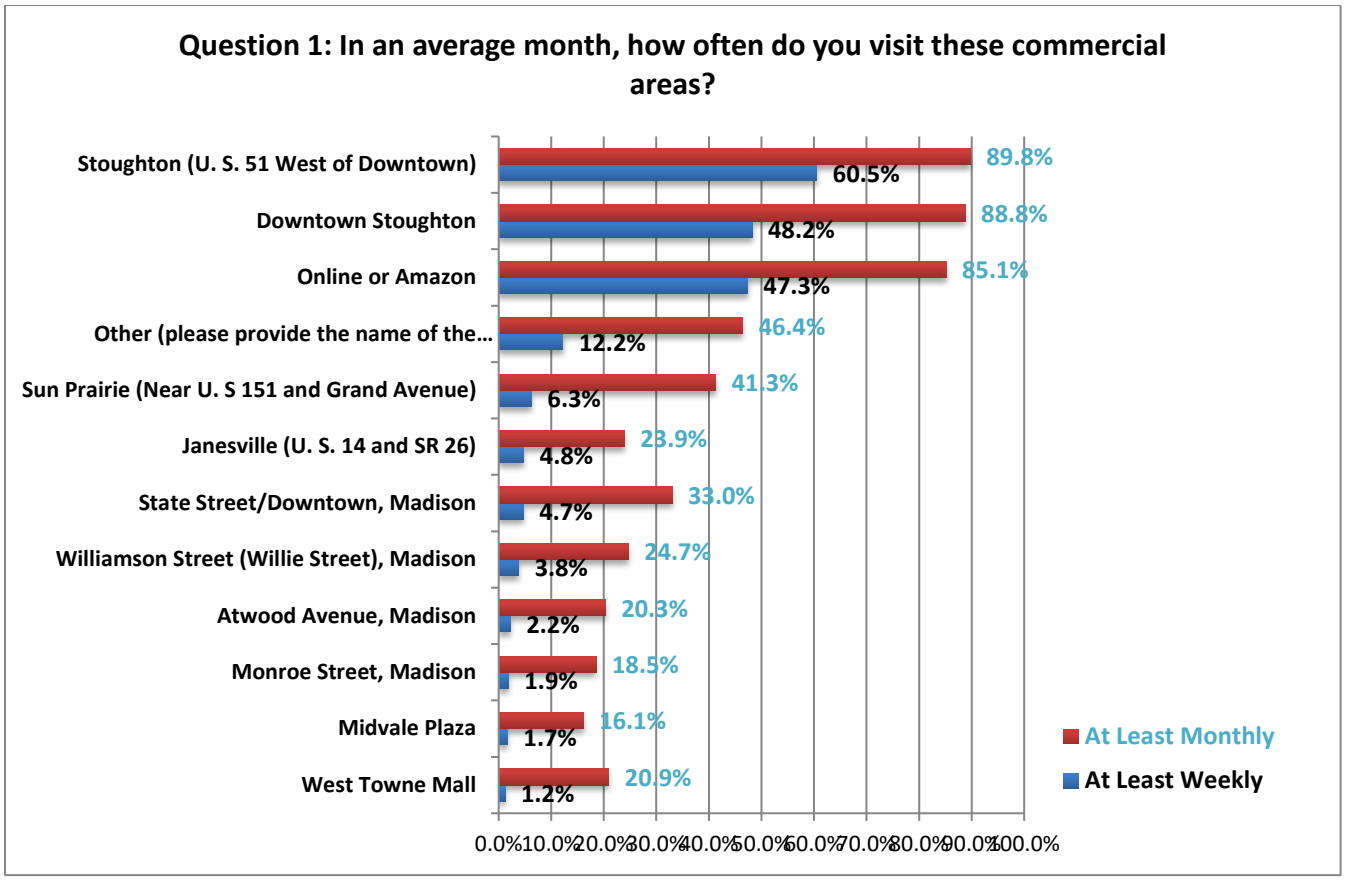
Question 16: Respondent Ages (Compared with the City of Stoughton's Population)

Question 16: Please choose the category that matches your age.		
Answer Choices	Survey Responses	City of Stoughton
Under 20	0.9%	25.1%
20 to 24	3.1%	5.7%
25 to 34	15.2%	11.9%
35 to 44	21.9%	13.3%
45 to 54	17.8%	14.7%
55 to 64	21.1%	12.0%
65 to 74	16.4%	8.6%
75 or older	3.5%	8.7%

- The overall respondent pool skews older when compared with the City of Stoughton's total population data, based upon U. S. Census data. (This survey used U. S. Census age categories). The non-residents responses actually skewed older than all responses.
- The percentage of aged 25-44 responses (37.1%) exceeded that of the City's percentage (25.2%) for those age categories.

Question 1: In an average month, how often do you visit these commercial areas?

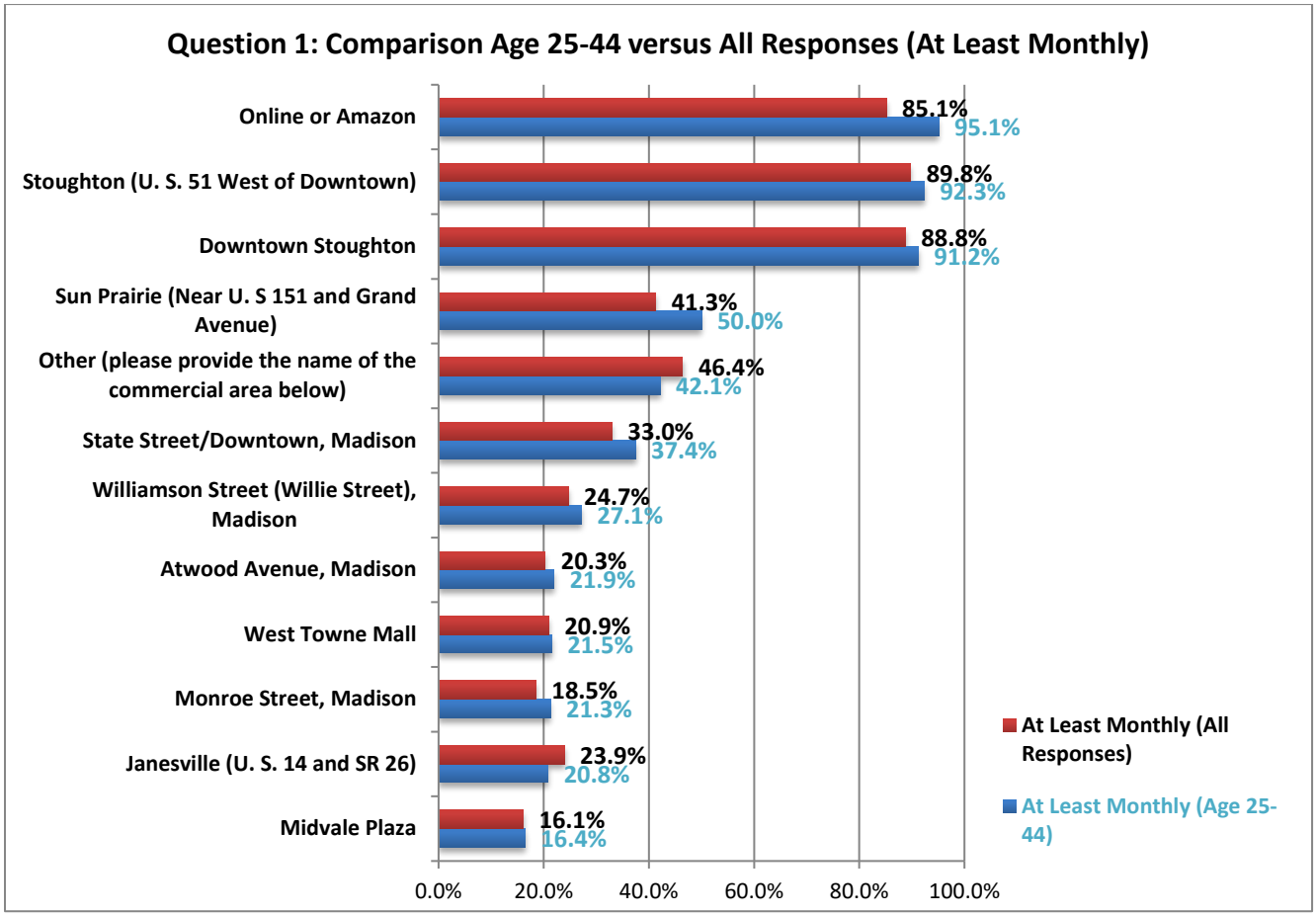
In an average month, how often do you visit these commercial areas?											
	At least weekly		A couple of times		Once		Rarely		Never		Total
Downtown Stoughton	48.2 %	528	31.0 %	339	9.6 %	105	9.4 %	103	1.8 %	20	1095
Stoughton (U. S. 51 West of Downtown)	60.6 %	663	24.6 %	269	4.7 %	51	7.9 %	86	2.4 %	26	1095
Online or Amazon	47.3 %	516	28.6 %	312	9.2 %	100	9.4 %	102	5.5 %	60	1090
Sun Prairie (Near U. S 151 and Grand Avenue)	6.3 %	68	20.5 %	223	14.5 %	158	28.9 %	314	29.8 %	324	1087
West Towne Mall	1.2 %	13	8.3 %	89	11.5 %	124	52.7 %	569	26.3 %	284	1079
Midvale Plaza	1.7 %	18	7.0 %	75	7.4 %	80	34.2 %	368	49.7 %	534	1075
Janesville (U. S. 14 and SR 26)	4.8 %	52	10.9 %	118	8.3 %	90	34.7 %	377	41.4 %	450	1087
Williamson Street (Willie Street), Madison	3.8 %	41	10.8 %	117	10.1 %	109	34.4 %	372	41.0 %	444	1083
Monroe Street, Madison	1.9 %	20	8.2 %	88	8.5 %	92	39.3 %	424	42.2 %	456	1080
State Street/Downtown, Madison	4.7 %	51	13.6 %	147	14.8 %	160	44.4 %	482	22.6 %	245	1085
Atwood Avenue, Madison	2.2 %	24	8.9 %	97	9.1 %	99	34.6 %	375	45.2 %	490	1085
Other (please provide the name of the commercial area below)	12.2 %	63	22.5 %	116	11.7 %	60	12.4 %	64	41.2 %	212	515
Other Commercial Area											241
										Answered	1108
										Skipped	2



Observations

- Respondents are regularly visiting downtown Stoughton, and routine online purchasing is a reality in overall respondent purchasing.
- Within the 'Other' category, the named commercial areas (with the highest number of listings) cited by respondents were East Towne, Costco/Greenway Station, Middleton, and Hilldale. Other commercial locales included all of Stoughton's nearby downtowns and the major commercial strips in Monona and Sun Prairie.
- The varied commercial areas selected and listed by respondents reflect the diversity and accessibility of the Madison region's commercial district options—malls, major big boxes and retailers, commercial corridors, and nearby traditional downtowns.

Question 1: Sub-group Aged 25-44 Compared with All Responses



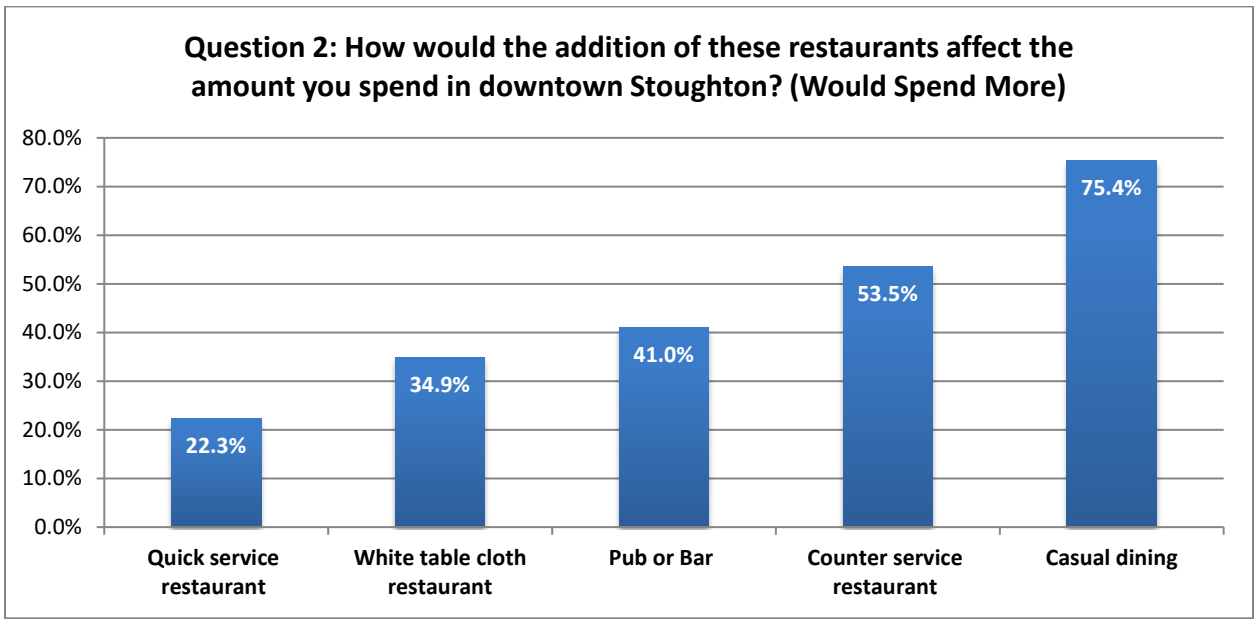
Comparison Observations

- This sub-group's respondents shop online significantly more than the overall respondent pool. The difference is similar for weekly visits to downtown Stoughton—60% of the aged 25-44 visits at least weekly versus all responses at 47.3%.
- This sub-group is also visiting commercial districts throughout the Madison area with greater frequency than all respondents, reflecting the diverse nature of their higher household spending needs.
- The 'Other' commercial areas, cited by the aged 25-44 respondents, were generally consistent with all responses. They did list 'Other' responses in greater numbers. Multiple sub-group respondents mentioned East Towne, downtown Edgerton, Monona, and Fitchburg for frequent visits.

Question 2: How would the addition of these restaurants affect the amount you spend in downtown Stoughton? (Examples indicate a well-known restaurant within that category.)

How would the addition of these restaurants affect the amount you spend in downtown Stoughton? (Examples indicate a well-known restaurant within that category.)

	I would spend a lot more		I would spend a little more		No change		I do not know		Total
Casual dining (Sit down, full service restaurants, informal atmosphere. An example is Wendigo.)	26.6%	291	48.8%	535	22.7%	249	1.9%	21	1096
Pub or Bar (Limited food options with a focus on entertainment or sports. An example is Deak's Pub & Grill.)	10.6%	116	30.4%	332	56.1%	613	2.9%	32	1093
Counter service restaurant (Order at counter, employee brings food to the table or for carryout. An example is Main Street Kitchen.)	10.3%	112	43.3%	472	42.5%	464	3.9%	43	1091
Quick service restaurant (Order and receive food at counter, drive thru service. An example is McDonalds.)	5.3%	58	17.0%	185	72.7%	793	5.0%	55	1091
White table cloth restaurant (Fine dining with gourmet food, price points match high service level. An example is Big Sky.)	7.6%	83	27.3%	298	59.5%	649	5.6%	61	1091
								Answered	1101
								Skipped	9



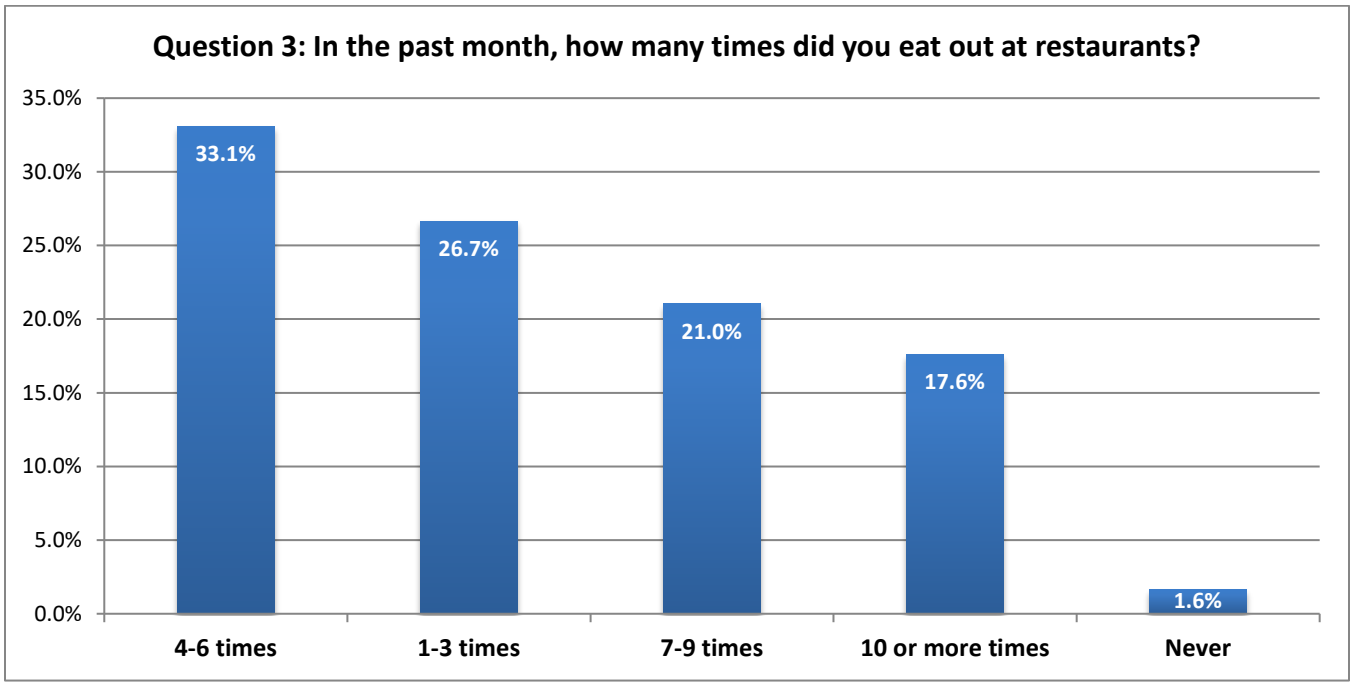
Observations

- Answers displayed are the sum of the responses "would spend a little more" and "would spend a lot more."
- Casual dining was the preferred format by all respondents for increased restaurant spending in downtown Stoughton.
- Only 9 of the 1,110 respondents did not answer this question.

- All sub-group responses corresponded to overall question results. The aged 25-44 sub-group responses supporting casual dining were higher (87.4%) than for all responses (75.4%).
- Wine bars and craft breweries with food were most frequently suggested in the comments of multiple survey questions.

Question 3: In the past month, how many times did you eat out at restaurants?

In the past month, how many times did you eat out at restaurants?		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Never	1.6%	18
1-3 times	26.7%	294
4-6 times	33.1%	365
7-9 times	21.0%	232
10 or more times	17.6%	194
	Answered	1103
	Skipped	6

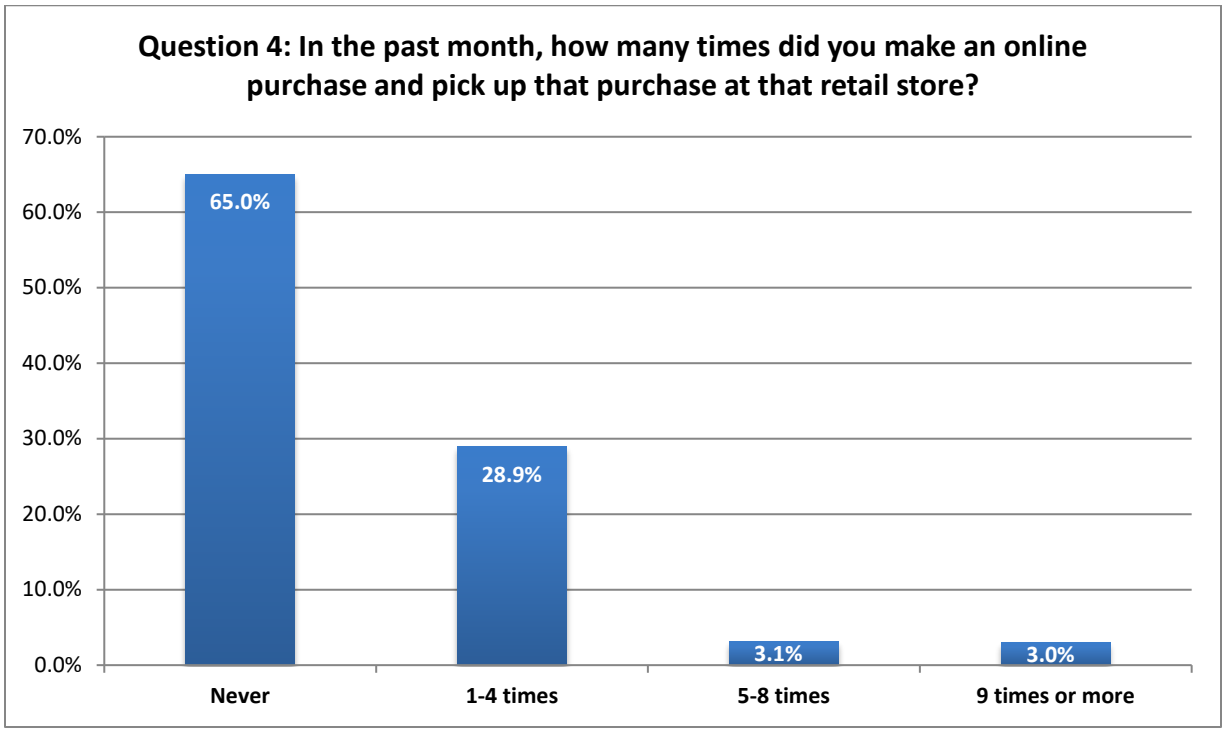


Observations

38.6% of respondents are dining out 7 or more times per month, or at least twice weekly (or more). Again, a large percentage of respondents (1,103 of 1,110) answered this question. Considering these responses with Question 2 responses, the indication is that a casual dining option developed by experienced restaurateurs could succeed in a suitable downtown Stoughton location.
All sub-groups responses tracked directly with all survey responses.

Question 4: In the past month, how many times did you make an online purchase and pick up that purchase at a retail store?

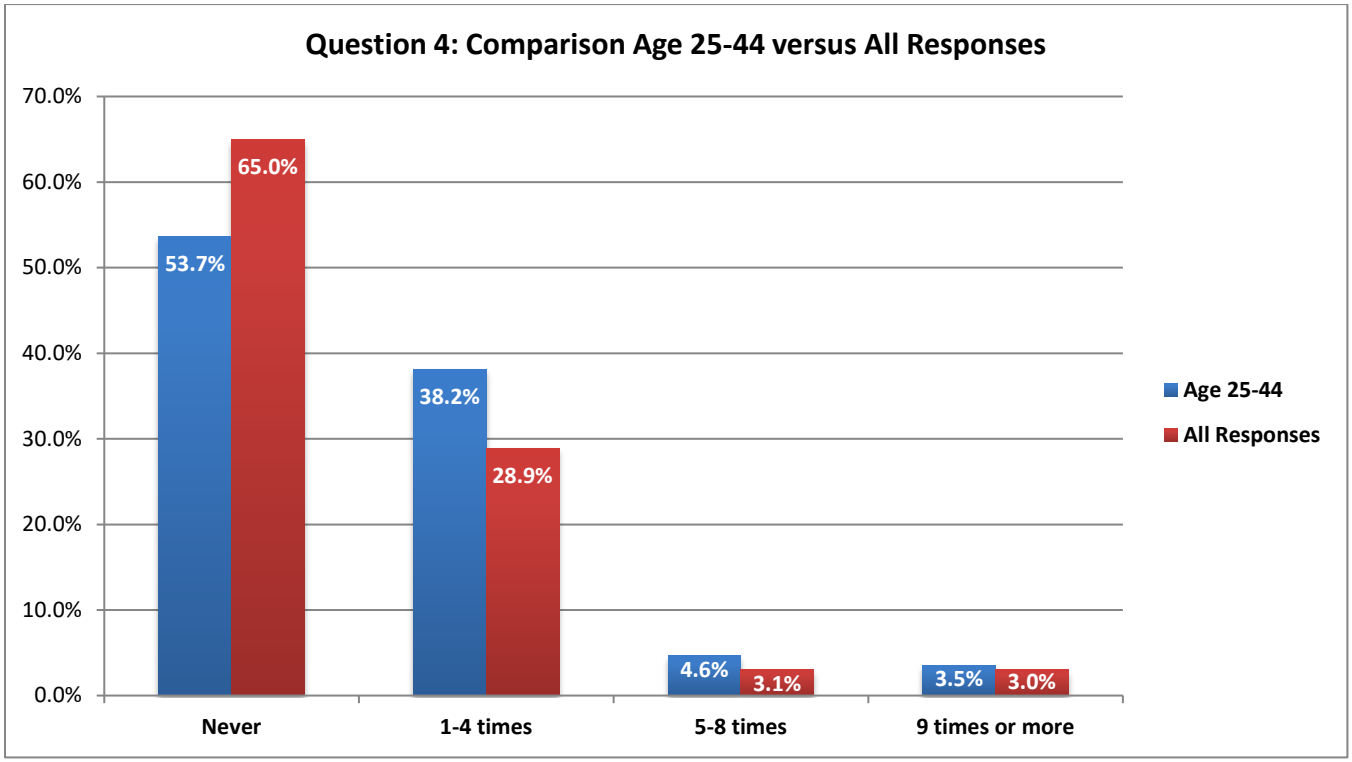
In the past month, how many times did you make an online purchase and pick up that purchase at a retail store?		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Never	65.0%	717
1-4 times	28.9%	319
5-8 times	3.1%	34
9 times or more	3.0%	33
	Answered	1103
	Skipped	6



Observations

- This question asked respondents about a specific online purchasing trend, known as BOPIS, or 'Buy Online, Pick-up In Store.' Retailers, regardless of size, with a strong online presence, are expanding their customer communities within the 'Near Me' market through in-store pick-up. This trend was described in this study's Summary of Findings (in the demographics and trends sections).
- Within the total respondent pool, nearly 2/3 of respondents (65%) have never purchased online for in-store pick-up. The remaining respondents (35%) are generally making these online purchases for store pick-up 1-4 times per month.

Question 4: Sub-group Aged 25-44 Compared with All Responses



Comparison Observations

- The aged 25-44 sub-group makes significantly more online purchases for in store pick-up than all responses. Many of those purchases are made at major retailers, such as Wal-Mart.
- Since 86.7% of this sub-group's respondents are Stoughton residents, enabling online purchasing will be important to both residents and visitors and for increasing downtown's overall business revenues. This assumes online purchasing offered by individual small businesses can be supported through their electronic and social media platforms.

Question 5: Please provide the name of the store(s) where you made that online purchase.

Please provide the name of the store(s) where you made that online purchase.		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Store Name	100.0%	372
Store Name	45.7%	170
	Answered	372
	Skipped	737

Store	# Responses
Walmart	114
Target	73
Kohl's	55
All Grocers	38
Home Depot	14
Menards	12
Fleet Farm	8
Best Buy	7
Old Navy	6
REI	6
Walgreens	6
Macy's	5
Amazon Pick-Up	5

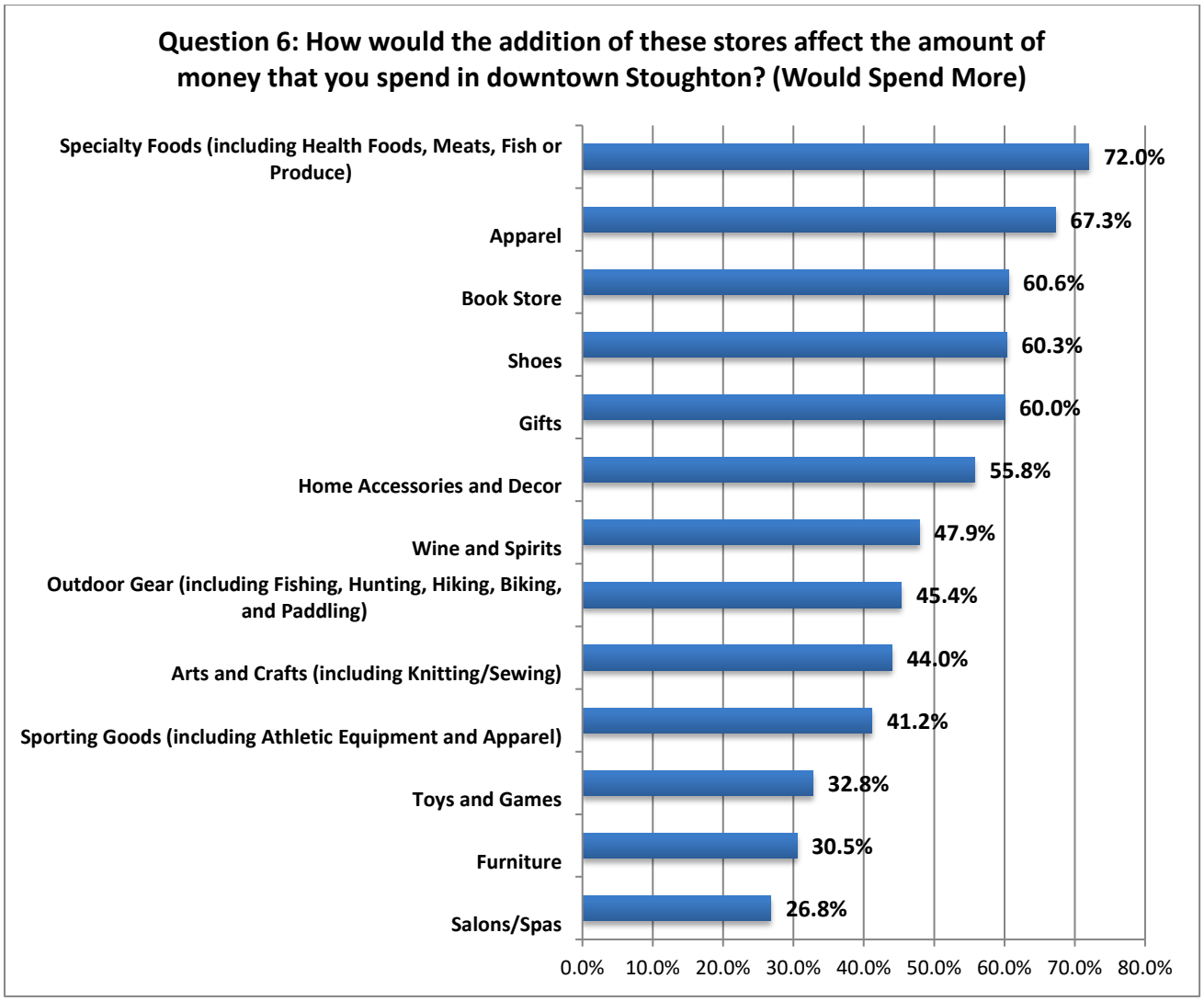
Observations

- With a few exceptions, most of the responses listed were major retailers located throughout the Madison area. The exceptions were smaller retailers or food and beverage orders, primarily for pizza, sandwiches, or coffee.
- The large number of skipped responses reflects the high percentage of 'Never' responses to question 4 regarding online purchases for in store pick-up.
- Walmart was the store most frequently mentioned for in store pick-ups by respondents. Overall, the stores cited were diverse in size and product offering and were located throughout the greater Madison area.

Question 6: How would the addition of these stores affect the amount of money that you spend in downtown Stoughton?

How would the addition of these stores affect the amount of money that you spend in downtown Stoughton?

	I would spend a lot more		I would spend a little more		No change		I do not know		Total
Home Accessories and Decor	12.5%	127	43.2%	438	40.1%	406	4.2%	42	1013
Furniture	3.7%	37	26.8%	270	64.4%	648	5.2%	52	1007
Apparel	18.3%	184	49.0%	494	28.6%	288	4.2%	42	1008
Specialty Foods (including Health Foods, Meats, Fish or Produce)	29.3%	296	42.8%	433	24.8%	251	3.2%	32	1012
Outdoor Gear (including Fishing, Hunting, Hiking, Biking, and Paddling)	12.3%	124	33.0%	332	50.1%	503	4.6%	46	1005
Wine and Spirits	12.4%	125	35.5%	357	48.9%	492	3.2%	32	1006
Book Store	22.0%	222	38.6%	389	36.6%	369	2.9%	29	1009
Arts and Crafts (including Knitting/Sewing)	10.7%	107	33.4%	335	53.0%	532	3.0%	30	1004
Gifts	13.0%	131	47.0%	474	36.0%	363	4.0%	40	1008
Salons/Spas	5.1%	51	21.8%	219	69.3%	698	3.9%	39	1007
Shoes	15.5%	156	44.8%	450	35.6%	358	4.1%	41	1005
Sporting Goods (including Athletic Equipment and Apparel)	7.5%	75	33.7%	336	55.0%	549	3.8%	38	998
Toys and Games	4.2%	42	28.6%	288	63.1%	635	4.1%	41	1006
Other (please specify)									80
								Answered	1023
								Skipped	86



Observations

- The answers displayed above are the sum of the responses "would spend a little more" and "would spend a lot more."
- Again, over 1,000 respondents answered this question. Among the 80 respondents comments, suggested businesses include multiple responses for: coffee shops; art supplies; children's gifts; more restaurants; music/musical instrument stores; businesses that offer classes; board games and comic books stores; and entertainment venues.
- Apparel and shoes are among the highest categories for spending additional dollars in Stoughton's downtown. The responses for apparel and shoes are heavily weighted to 'would spend a little more.' Given the stores listed in Question 7 and the regional shopping patterns described by all respondents, proving a viable market for apparel or shoe sales would be required before any experienced store owner would open a downtown Stoughton location. The remaining three (3) of the top 5 categories noted (specialty foods, books, and gifts) are among the stronger retail categories succeeding in many downtowns.
- The aged 25-44 sub-group responses tracked with those of all respondents.

Question 7: What NON-Stoughton store(s) or restaurant(s) have you visited that you think would be a good addition to downtown Stoughton?

Highest Responses by Category	
Restaurants-Multiple Format Descriptors	62
Asian, Thai or Vietnamese	30
Ice Cream/Frozen Yogurt	24
Sushi	23
Apparel/Shoes--Multiple Descriptors	19
Italian	15
Book Store	15
Wine Bar	13
Pizza	12
Coffee Shop	11
Indian	10

Highest Number Responses by Business Name	
Panera	40
Noodles & Company	39
Willy Street Co-op	39
Target	37
Starbucks	23
Firefly, Oregon	22
Qdoba/Chipotle	15
Trader Joe's	14
Buck & Honey's	13
Sugar River Pizza	10
Kohl's	10
Colectivo	10
Barrique	10
Hobby Lobby	10

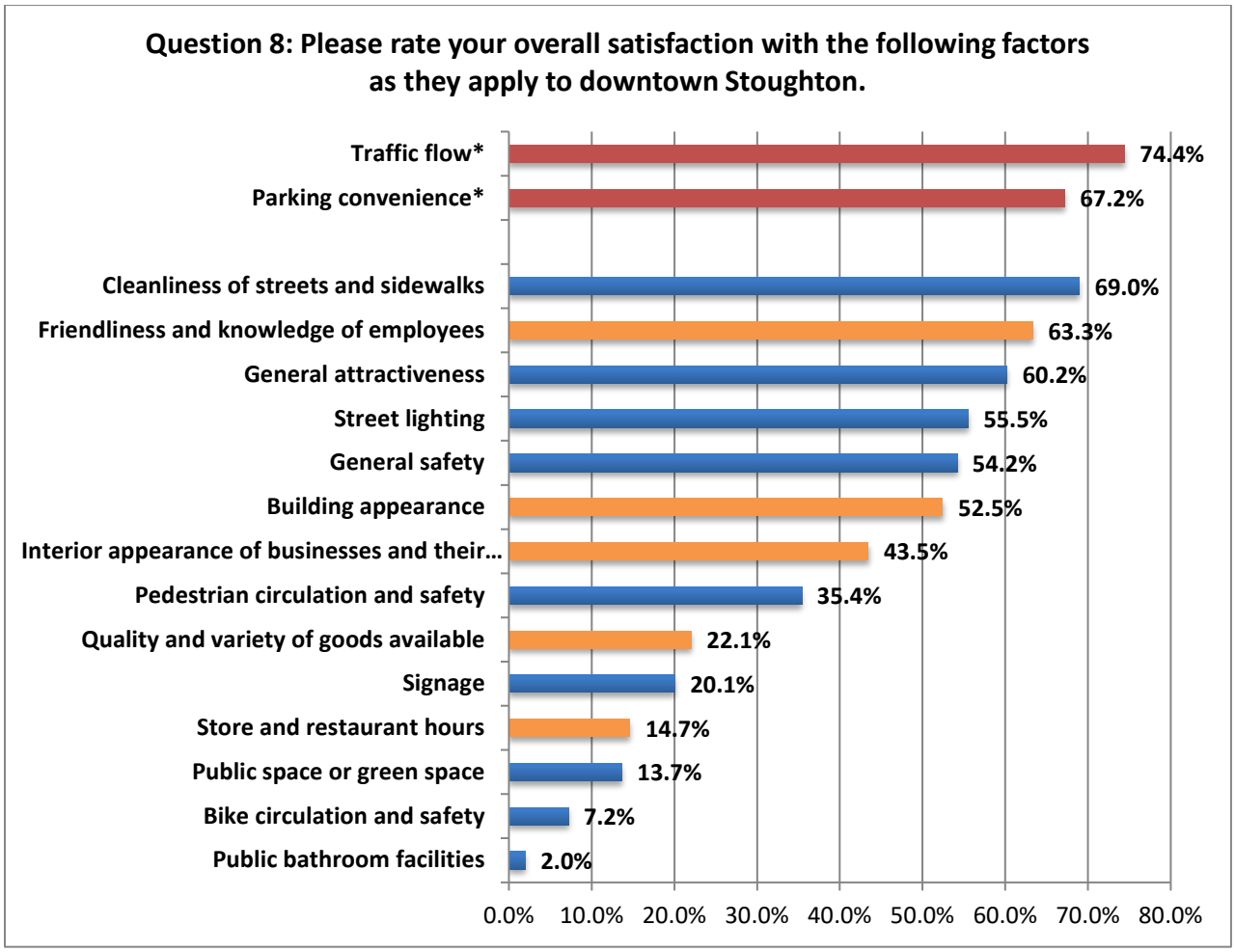
Observations

- Survey respondents provided 978 answers to this question. Businesses listed by respondents were identified in one of three (3) ways: by business name, by general business category or type, or by description, such as “any restaurant on the east side of town.”
- The above tables summarize the results from all responses. The numbers by category and by name indicate a preference for additional downtown dining options. Of the 14 named businesses listed 10 or more times by respondents, 6 are independently owned. (In all past surveys conducted by BDI, Panera is always ranks as the number 1 or 2 named business.)
- The largest number of responses (32%) specified restaurant options by business name, cuisine, or format. Fine dining, casual, or family friendly formats were noted by multiple respondents as preferred. Coffee shops, particularly nearby Firefly, were frequently mentioned. Among the sub-groups, the responses were similar with one difference-- the aged 25-44 sub-group noted coffee shops more frequently. Respondent interest may represent an expansion opportunity for Wildwood or an opportunity for a new business to enter the downtown Stoughton market.
- The most frequent retailer suggestions were apparel/shoe stores and bookstores. The apparel-related suggestions ere diverse, ranging from “plus-size children’s clothing” to “any men’s clothing.” While apparel-related retailers are often suggested in BDI’s consumer surveys (as noted in the Question 6 observations), two (2) market factors inhibit their likely recruitment and success in most downtowns. First, whether located in a shopping mall or a traditional downtown, apparel-related stores operate most successfully as a cluster of several stores offering comparative and complementary merchandise. Second, apparel retailers nationally continue to experience disruption from broader market trends (described in this study’s Summary of Findings), including e-commerce. Many smaller apparel retailers are closing for owner reasons, including the lack of a successor owner or changing customer behaviors. Bookstores, particularly independent operators, may present an opportunity for downtown Stoughton, assuming experienced owner interest in a downtown location.

Question 8: Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following factors as they apply to downtown Stoughton.

Please rate your overall satisfaction with the following factors as they apply to downtown Stoughton.

	Excellent		Above Average		Average		Below Average		Poor		N/A or Don't Know		Total
General attractiveness	11.8%	120	48.4%	492	33.7%	342	4.2%	43	1.3%	13	0.6%	6	1016
Building appearance	7.4%	75	45.1%	456	40.5%	410	5.1%	52	1.3%	13	0.6%	6	1012
Cleanliness of streets and sidewalks	16.7%	169	52.3%	531	25.6%	260	3.3%	33	1.7%	17	0.5%	5	1015
Street lighting	16.5%	167	39.1%	396	35.9%	364	3.8%	38	0.9%	9	3.9%	40	1014
Friendliness and knowledge of employees	19.7%	200	43.7%	443	28.1%	285	2.7%	27	0.7%	7	5.2%	53	1015
Quality and variety of goods available	2.4%	24	19.7%	200	41.6%	422	27.0%	274	7.1%	72	2.3%	23	1015
Interior appearance of businesses and their merchandise	8.0%	81	35.5%	358	47.0%	475	6.2%	63	0.7%	7	2.6%	26	1010
Traffic flow	4.9%	50	18.5%	187	51.0%	517	17.3%	175	7.1%	72	1.2%	12	1013
Store and restaurant hours	1.8%	18	12.9%	130	48.5%	490	24.4%	246	9.9%	100	2.6%	26	1010
Parking convenience	6.9%	70	19.4%	196	40.9%	414	21.6%	219	10.3%	104	0.9%	9	1012
Pedestrian circulation and safety	7.4%	75	28.0%	283	45.1%	456	11.8%	119	5.6%	57	2.1%	21	1011
General safety	14.2%	144	40.0%	406	37.8%	384	5.1%	52	1.6%	16	1.3%	13	1015
Public space or green space	2.3%	23	11.4%	115	36.5%	368	35.0%	353	10.8%	109	4.1%	41	1009
Signage	4.1%	41	16.0%	161	62.3%	627	10.9%	110	2.9%	29	3.8%	38	1006
Bike circulation and safety	1.3%	13	5.9%	59	35.1%	351	24.4%	244	9.5%	95	23.8%	238	1000
Public bathroom facilities	0.2%	2	1.8%	18	18.9%	188	29.2%	290	25.0%	249	24.9%	248	995
Other (Please identify this factor below)	1.7%	5	2.7%	8	9.3%	27	8.9%	26	18.2%	53	59.3%	173	292
Other Factor													158
												Answered	1017
												Skipped	92



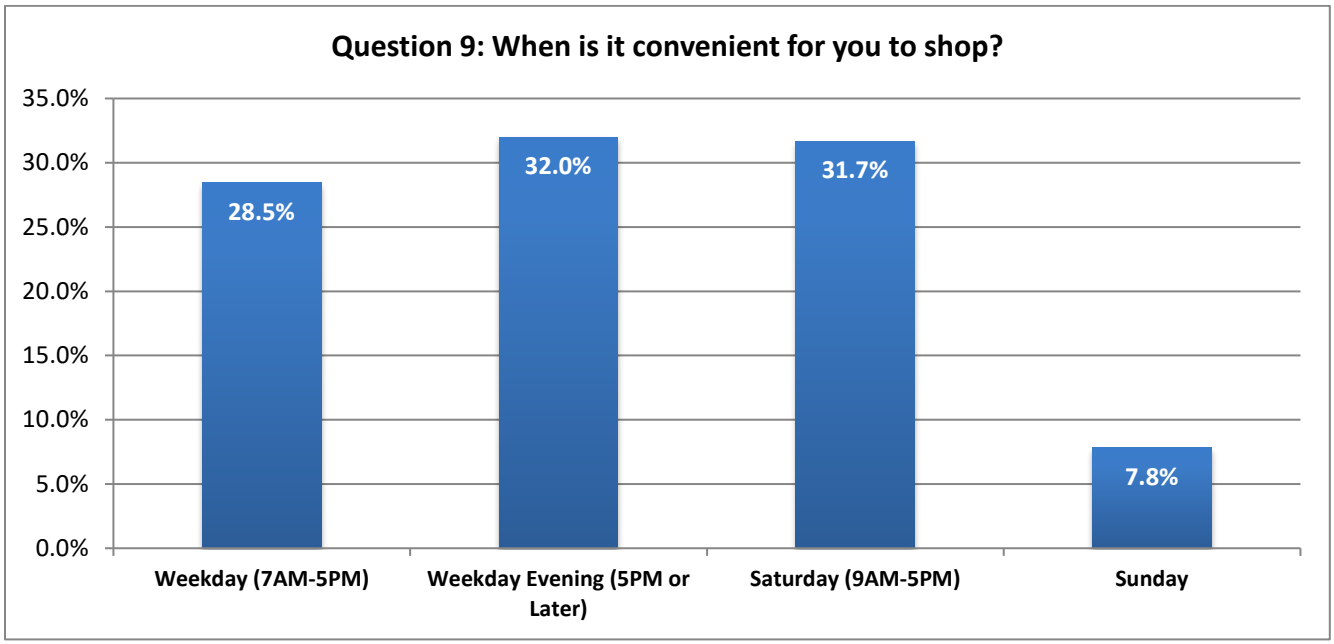
Observations

- The responses shown above for traffic flow and parking convenience include all responses rating these two (2) factors as Excellent, Above Average or Average. These two (2) ratings are positive for downtown Stoughton. For any community, the cost to be rated 'Excellent' for parking is prohibitive and uneconomical. Traffic flow, particularly for any downtown located on a major highway like Stoughton, is rarely under local control.
- The remaining factors display all respondents' ratings of Excellent and Above Average. Those factors controlled by public sector interests are shown in blue; those controlled by private sector interests are shown in orange.
- The results from the sub-groups and from all respondents ranked all factors in the same order. The aged 25-44 sub-group rated the private sector factors slightly lower than did the entire respondent pool, though this sub-group rated downtown as safer. This same sub-group also provided 51 of the 158 'Other' factor comments. Most comments noted three (3) categories of issues: (1) additional thoughts about bike access, including bike lanes, downtown bike racks, and improved links to local and regional bike trails; (2) better signage and information, including online, about parking locations; and (3) outdoor seating and dining.

- Store and restaurant hours were the lowest rated factor under private sector control. Alternatives to address operating hours will be recommended in this plan's final report. Respondents' observations about business hours are also noted with Question 9 analysis.
- The availability of public bathroom facilities was uniformly rated as the lowest factor controlled by the public sector. Determining the best public bathroom locations and any associated location costs (such as property acquisition), actual construction costs, and the ongoing costs for maintenance, daily bathroom cleanings, and routine security patrols will be important to addressing respondents' concerns.

Question 9: When is it convenient for you to shop?

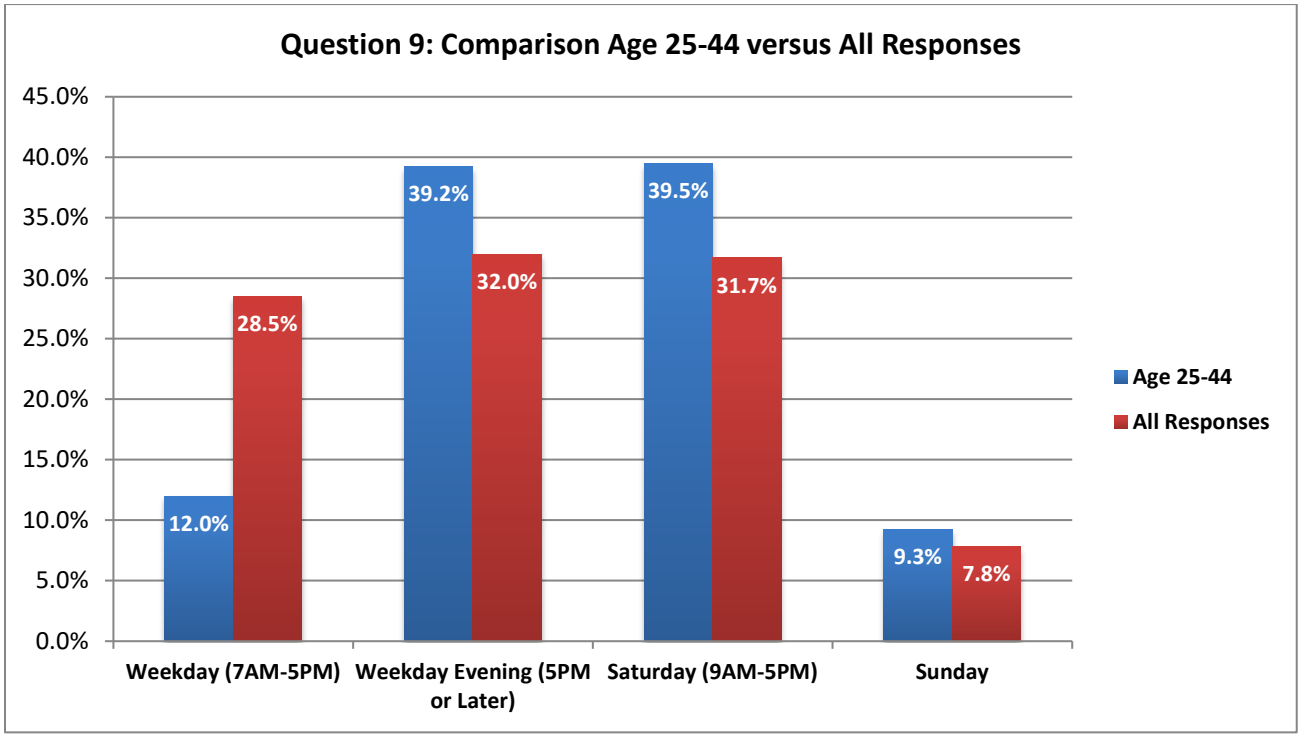
When is it convenient for you to shop?		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Weekday AM (7AM-10AM)	3.5%	35
Weekday (10AM-5PM)	25.0%	249
Weekday Early Evening (5PM-7PM)	23.4%	233
Weekday Evening (After 7PM)	8.6%	86
Saturday AM (9AM-12PM)	14.1%	141
Saturday PM (12PM-5PM)	17.6%	175
Sunday	7.8%	78
	Answered	997
	Skipped	112



Observations

- This question required that respondents select one time slot as their most convenient shopping timeframe.
- A high percentage of daytime shoppers (82.4%) are Stoughton residents. 49.1% of these respondents were aged 65 or older. An additional 25.5% are aged 55-64. 57.6% of this resident sub-group identified as not currently employed or are retired.
- Non-resident sub-group shopping mirrors the results from all responses shown above, and their age skews slightly older than all responses.

Question 9: Sub-group Aged 25-44 Compared with All Responses

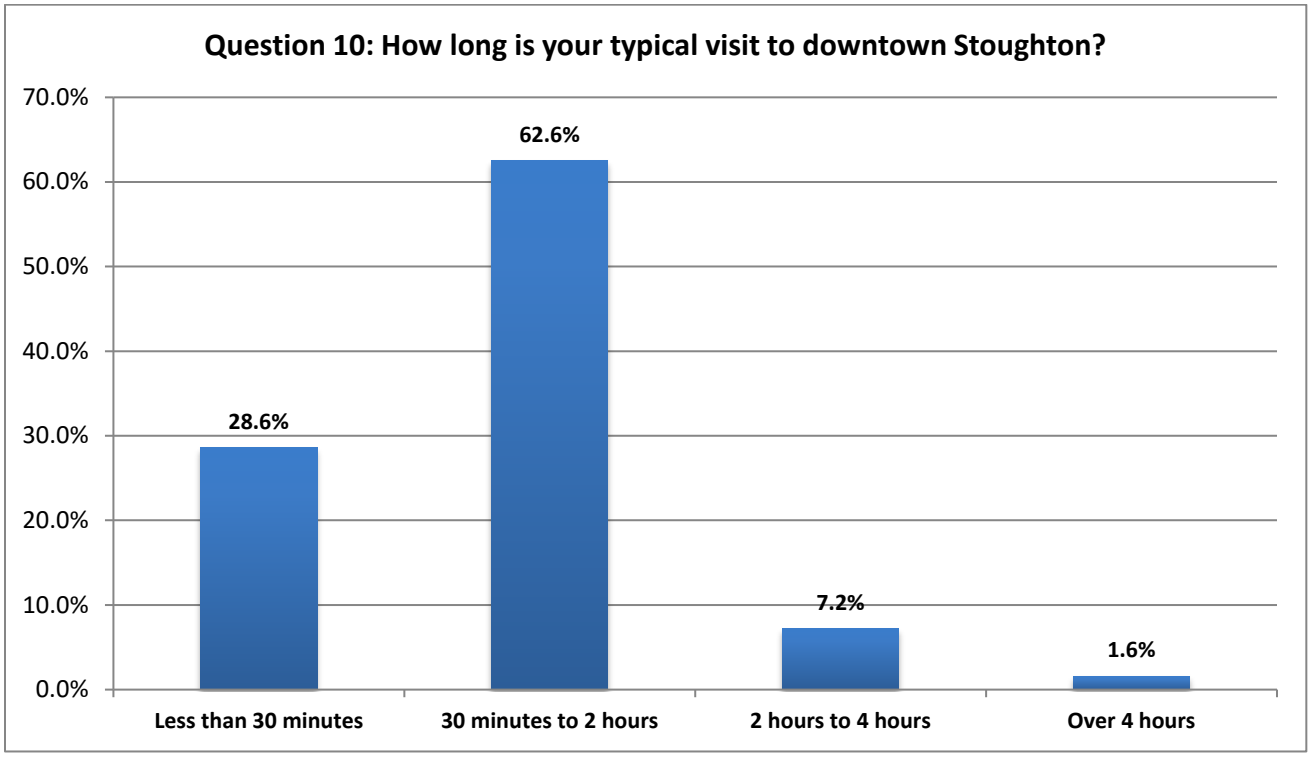


Comparison Observations

- Significantly fewer aged 25-44 respondents shop during daytime hours. Only 3.3% of this sub-group responded that they were not currently employed or retired as shown in Question 12 below.
- 27% of sub-group respondents identified early evenings as their most convenient shopping timeframe.
- These responses, combined with Question 8's responses, indicate an opportunity for businesses to extend their hours to capture additional sales. Strategically, extending downtown business hours requires a concerted promotional effort, encompassing a multi-year commitment to ongoing communications with current and potential customers to educate them about any hours change, a commitment by a group of merchants to extended hours (usually starting on one evening), and the recognition that not all businesses may participate, given the individual nature of their independent business operations. As noted, alternatives to address operating hours to attract additional customers will be provided in plan recommendations.

Question 10: How long is your typical visit to downtown Stoughton?

How long is your typical visit to downtown Stoughton?		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Less than 30 minutes	28.6%	286
30 minutes to 2 hours	62.6%	625
2 hours to 4 hours	7.2%	72
Over 4 hours	1.6%	16
	Answered	999
	Skipped	110

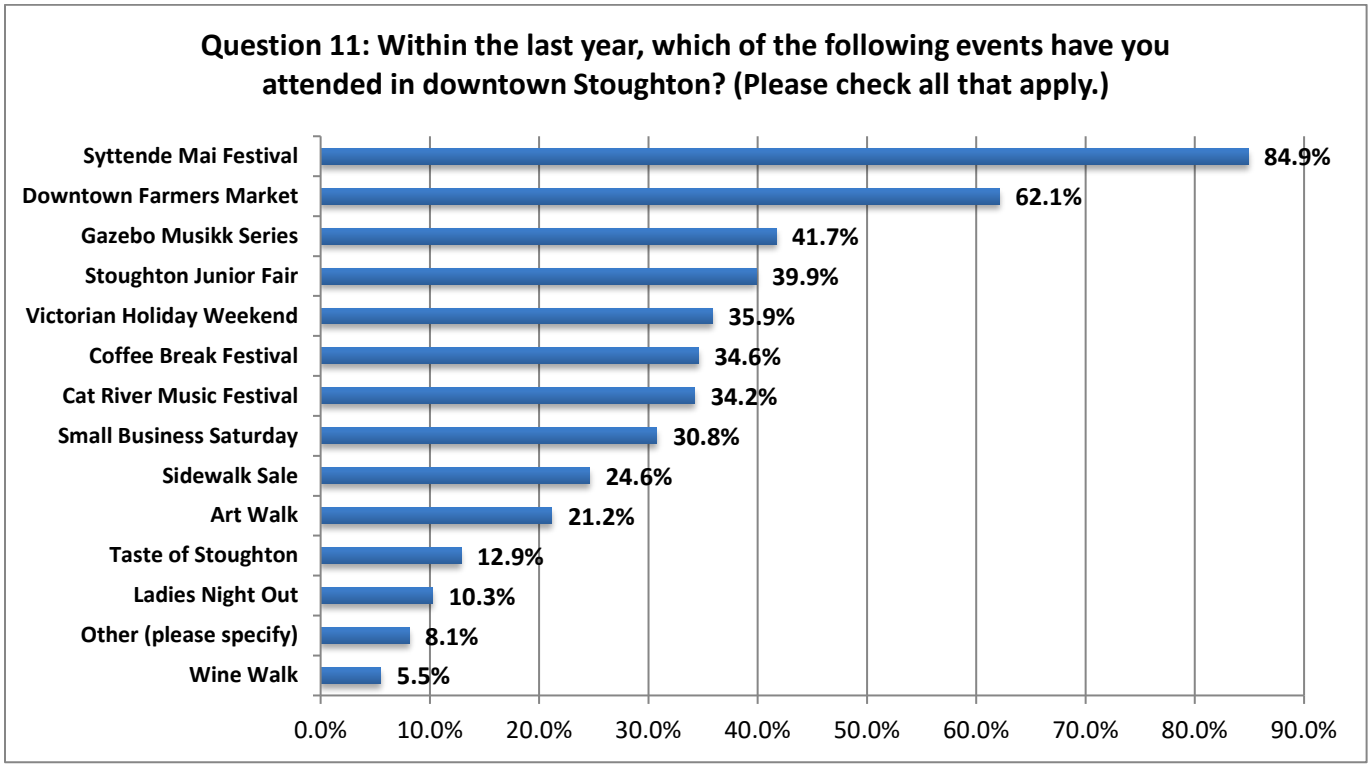


Observations

- Residents and visitors are spending time in downtown Stoughton, with an opportunity to extend the time spent, increase overall downtown sales, and create a unique downtown experience, building upon downtown's many current assets.
- For the aged 25-44 sub-group, 68.1% spend 30 minutes to 2 hours for their typical downtown visit, and 24.5% of respondents spend 30 minutes or less for a typical downtown visit.
- Non-residents spend the most time on their typical visits to downtown Stoughton--20.0% spend 2-4 hours. The additional time also reflects their attendance at downtown special and cultural events.

Question 11: Within the last year, which of the following events have you attended in downtown Stoughton? (Please check all that apply.)

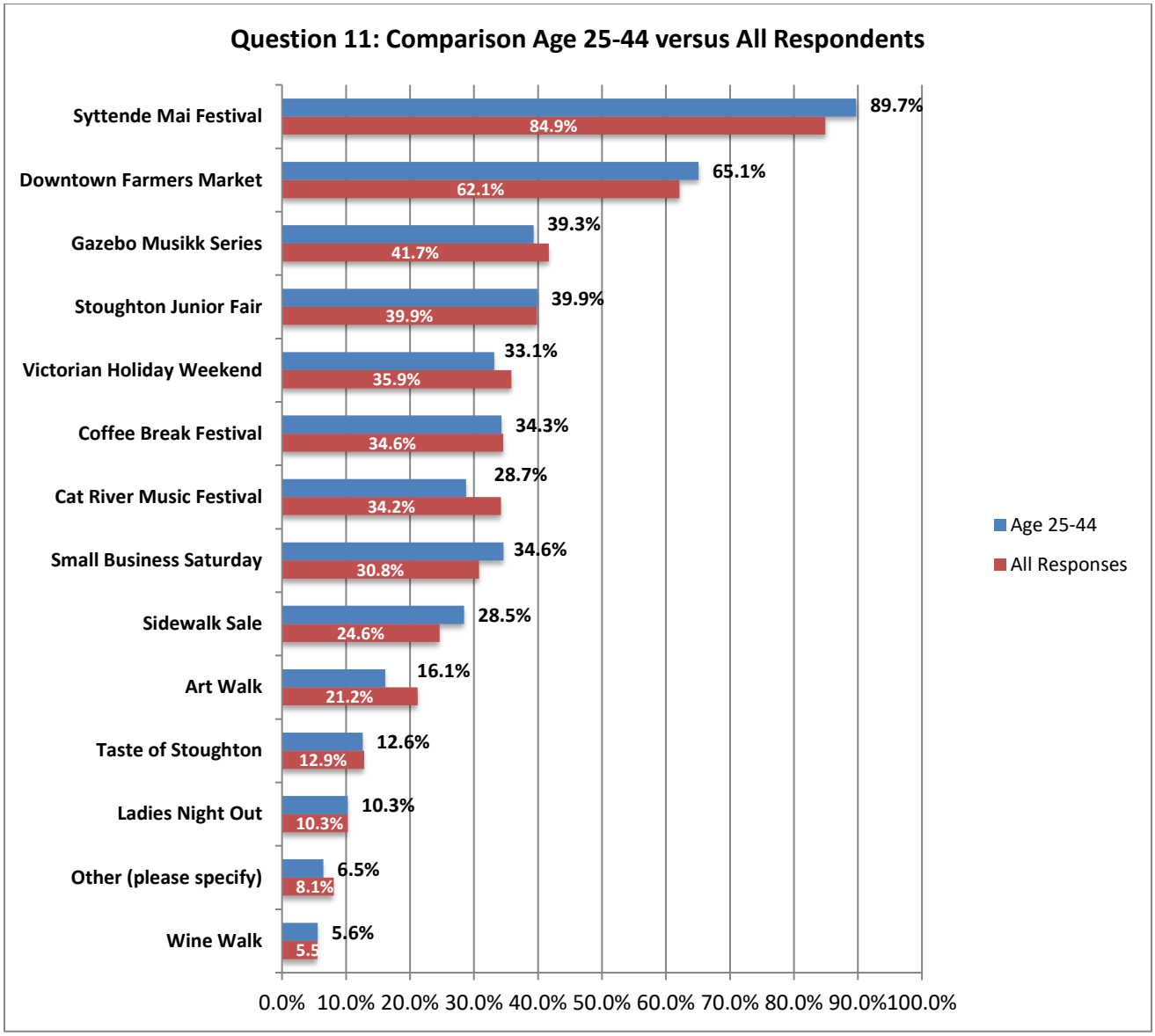
Within the last year, which of the following events have you attended in downtown Stoughton? (Please check all that apply.)		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Syttende Mai Festival	84.9%	786
Small Business Saturday	30.8%	285
Downtown Farmers Market	62.1%	575
Taste of Stoughton	12.9%	119
Gazebo Musikk Series	41.7%	386
Coffee Break Festival	34.6%	320
Cat River Music Festival	34.2%	317
Victorian Holiday Weekend	35.9%	332
Ladies Night Out	10.3%	95
Wine Walk	5.5%	51
Art Walk	21.2%	196
Stoughton Junior Fair	39.9%	369
Sidewalk Sale	24.6%	228
Other (please specify)	8.1%	75
	Answered	926
	Skipped	183



Observations

- All respondents, including all sub-groups, continue to attend the Syttende Mai festival in similar high percentages. For the future, ensuring that this festival incorporates both traditional and new activities will enhance its ongoing appeal to new attendees from the Madison region.
- Other events listed by respondents included performances at the Stoughton Opera House (27 of the 75 'Other' suggestions), events at the Stoughton Public Library, and multiple events held by Stoughton organizations.

Question 11: Sub-group Aged 25-44 Compared with All Responses

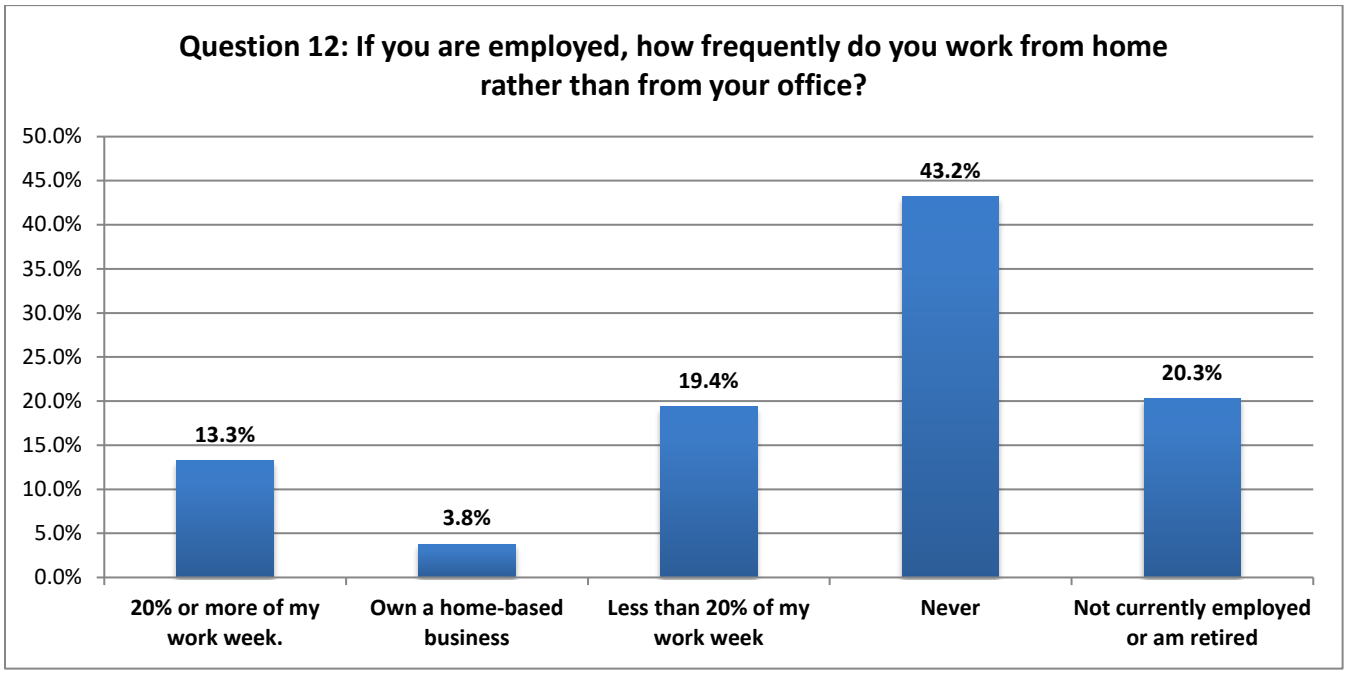


Comparison Observations

- This sub-group attends more downtown business promotional events, such Small Business Saturday, than all respondents. They also attend the downtown Farmers Market. A higher percentage (89.7%) also attends Syttende Main when compared with all responses (84.9%).
- During this plan's stakeholder interviews, participants indicated the some downtown events were not well publicized, were sparsely attended, or lacked leadership. Evaluating each downtown event annually can identify ways to improve each event, including activities and publicity, and to determine how each event contributes to downtown's visibility, ability to attract residents and visitors, and overall experience. This type of evaluation also identifies whether an event needs to be placed on hiatus or has outlived its purpose.

Question 12: If you are employed, how frequently do you work from home rather than from your office?

If you are employed, how frequently do you work from home rather than from your office?		
Answer Choices	**Responses**	
Not currently employed or am retired	20.3%	193
Never	43.2%	410
Less than 20% of my work week	19.4%	184
Between 20% and 50% of my work week	7.1%	67
More than 50% of my work week	6.2%	59
Own a home-based business	3.8%	36
	Answered	949
	Skipped	160

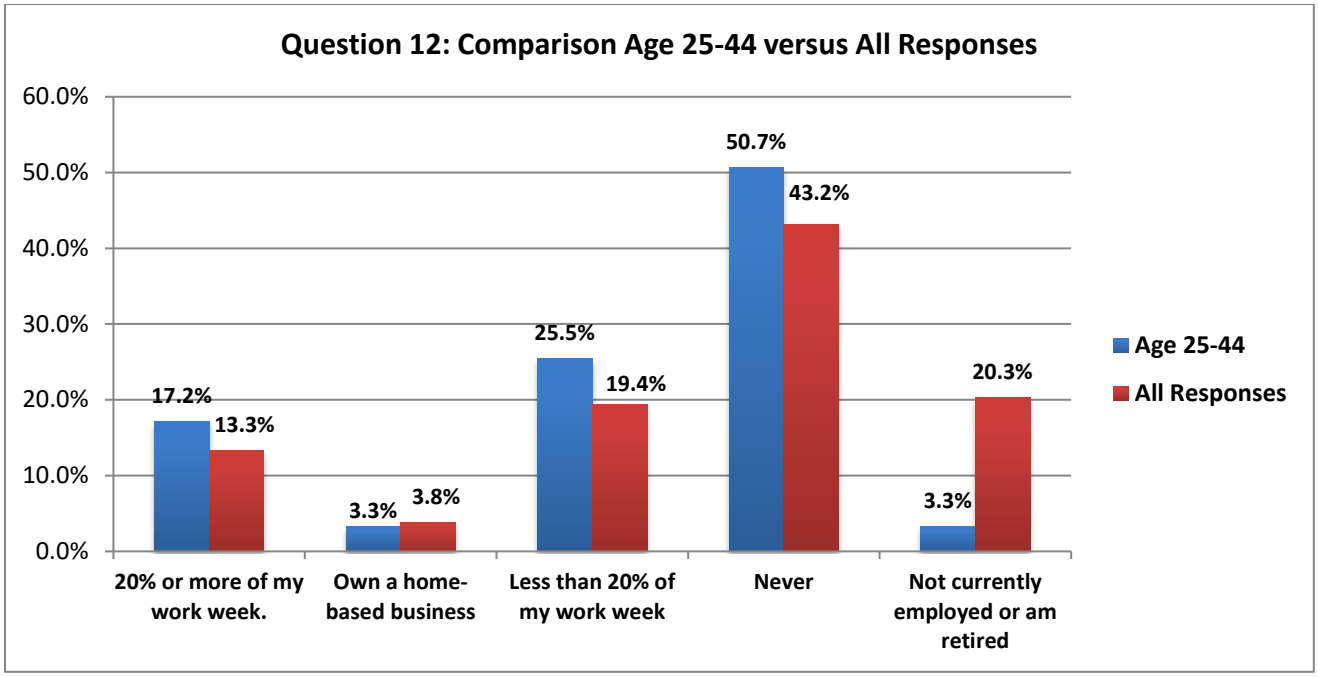


Observations

- In addition to downtown's current employment number (1,772 within .5 miles[1]), 17.1% of all survey respondents are work from home at least one day per week. This percentage also includes respondents who operate a home-based business.

[1] According to the Experian data provided in this study's Summary of Findings, p. 24.

Question 12: Sub-group Aged 25-44 Compared with All Responses



Comparison Observations

- Two (2) significant differences are noted in the above comparison: first, only 3.3% of the respondents aged 25-44 are not currently employed versus 20.3% for all respondents; second, nearly 51% of the aged 25-44 sub-group never works from home.
- As with the overall results, the aged 25-44 respondents who either work from home at least one day per week, or 20% of the work week, or own a home-based business represents 20.5%, or about 1 in 5, of sub-group respondents.
- Among other sub-groups, 22.1% of non-resident respondents were retired or not currently employed. The zip code 53589 residents sub-group percentage is 20.4%, similar to the percentage for all responses
- From a strategic perspective, the implications for downtown Stoughton are interrelated—how to make downtown convenient for aged 25-44 consumers and how to ensure that Stoughton area remote workers routinely consider downtown Stoughton as a place to spend time working.

The observations specific to Questions 13 through 16 introduced these survey results. These questions identify the demographic characteristics of the overall respondent pool. The following information provides the detailed response date for all four (4) questions.

Question 13: In what ZIP code is your home located? (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

Answered: 985 Skipped: 184

In what ZIP code is your home located? (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

Zip Code	#	Town	Zip Code	#	Town
53589	850	Stoughton	02053	1	Medway, MA
53575	22	Fitchburg	52722	1	Bettendorf, IA
53534	11	Edgerton	53188	1	Waukesha
	8	Invalid Zip Code Listed	53211	1	Whitefish Bay
53558	7	McFarland	53502	1	Albany
53588	7	Spring Green	53511	1	Beloit
53590	5	Sun Prairie	53515	1	Black Earth
53527	4	Cottage Grove	53523	1	Cambridge
53705	4	Madison	53532	1	DeForest
53711	4	Madison	53535	1	Edmund
53716	4	Madison	53546	1	Janesville
53521	3	Brooklyn	53548	1	Janesville
53531	3	Deerfield	53572	1	Mount Horeb
53536	3	Evansville	53576	1	Orfordville
53538	3	Fort Atkinson	53593	1	Verona
53703	3	Madison	53597	1	Waunakee
53508	2	Belleville	53599	1	Woodford
53545	2	Janesville	53714	1	Madison
53551	2	Lake Mills	53715	1	Madison
53562	2	Middleton	53818	1	Platteville
53563	2	Milton	53956	1	Randolph
53704	2	Madison	54114	1	Crivitz
53713	2	Madison	54451	1	Medford
53726	2	Madison	57730	1	Crazy Horse, SD
			60074	1	Palatine, IL

Question 14: If you are employed, in what ZIP code is your place of employment located? (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

Answered: 720 Skipped: 389

If you are employed, in what ZIP code is your place of employment located? (Enter 5-digit ZIP code; for example, 00544 or 94305)

Zip Code	#	Town	Zip Code	#	Town	Zip Code	#	Town
53589	270	Stoughton	53508	3	Belleville	53536	1	Evansville
53713	43	Madison	53517	3	Blue Mounds	53542	1	Janesville
53703	39	Madison	53538	3	Fort Atkinson	53549	1	Jefferson
53711	36	Madison	53563	3	Milton	53571	1	Morrisonville
53726	29	Madison	53594	3	Waterloo	53576	1	Orfordville
53704	25	Madison	53708	3	Madison	53595	1	Dodgeville
53715	23	Madison	53534	2	Edgerton	53596	1	Sun Prairie
53716	23	Monona	53547	2	Janesville	53597	1	Waunakee
53706	20	Madison	53548	2	Janesville	53783	1	Madison
53705	17	Madison	53572	2	Mount Horeb	53790	1	Madison
53717	14	Middleton	53588	2	Spring Green	53818	1	Platteville
53593	13	Verona	53707	2	Madison	53913	1	Baraboo
53719	13	Madison	01605	1	Brookfield, MA	53916	1	Beaver Dam
53558	12	McFarland	10075	1	New York, NY	54161	1	Pound
53562	11	Middleton	12919	1	Champlain, NY	60056	1	Mount Prospect, IL
53575	11	Fitchburg	19073	1	Chester, PA	60090	1	Wheeling, IL
53714	11	Madison	53095	1	West Bend	60610	1	Chicago, IL
53590	10	Sun Prairie	53190	1	Whitewater	60611	1	Chicago, IL
53545	7	Janesville	53201	1	Milwaukee	61011	1	Caledonia, IL
53527	6	Cottage Grove	53511	1	Beloit	61108	1	Rockford, IL
53792	6	Madison	53518	1	Blue River	64689	1	Winston, MO
53546	4	Janesville	53528	1	Cross Plains	80229	1	Denver, CO
53701	4	Madison	53531	1	Deerfield	95350	1	Modesto, CA
	4	Invalid Zip Code Provided	53532	1	DeForest	97401	1	Eugene, OR

Question 15: Please choose the answer that best describes your household.

Please choose the answer that best describes your household.

Answer Choices	Responses	
I live alone	12.6%	126
We are a household composed of two (2) adults and no children	40.9%	408
We are a family or a household composed of three (3) or more adults over age 18	11.3%	113
We are a family with pre-school or school aged children living at home	29.4%	293
Other (please specify)	5.8%	58
	Answered	998
	Skipped	111

Question 16: Please choose the category that matches your age.

Please choose the category that matches your age.

Answer Choices	Responses	
Under 20	0.9%	9
20 to 24	3.1%	31
25 to 34	15.2%	150
35 to 44	21.9%	217
45 to 54	17.8%	176
55 to 64	21.1%	209
65 to 74	16.4%	162
75 or older	3.5%	35
	Answered	989
	Skipped	120

Question 17: Any additional comments about downtown Stoughton?

Answered: 447 Skipped: 662

Answers to this open-ended question were optional. The following comments are unedited and displayed as written by survey respondents. 40.3% of all survey respondents provided comments. Multiple respondents provided extensive written comments, indicating their interest in a vibrant and successful downtown Stoughton.

Stop trying to be like the west side of Madison. Be like a typical small town in rural WI.
Lack of advertsing--ie sidewalk sale--nobody knows it is happening Stores and restaurants--hours of operatiosn are a problem Need a coffee shop
Coop failed because not enough 20-40 year olds that like organizes and coffee shop. Most small towns struggle with keeping businesses open. The ones that succeed have a storefront and online service. If you want to remin vibrant you need young families/affordable housing/promote businesses/farm to table is big/get the word out to the community that businesses can't survive without their patronage.With the bike trail etc coming, you need t-shirt shop, coffee shop, wine tasting, music, expand farmers market, etc. Food trucks for events or on Saturdays to get more ethnic food in the area.
I am glad to see this survey. The Chamber needs new and innovative ways to bring people to the city. Downtown appearance problems--grass in sidewalks; buildings not maintained; uneven sidewalks; empty stores; dated merchandise; difficult to cross Main Street
It saddens me to see empty storefronts.
Mt. Horeb has an amazing downtown and so many activities/festivals. The entire city shows their Scandinavian heritage.
The availability of parking determines whether I go to my favorites downtown. So many times you have to park more than a block away.
Lived in Stoughton all my life and feel we really need a moderately priced clothing store for men , women and children. Tired of so many second hand stores! Stori Anne was expensive and geared toward smaller women. We have plenty of restaurant options and need retail. A good mix of stores is healthy - not all second hand, antique, craft or art related. When one goes they all go! Not everyone is interested in these types of stores and will not shop them. I shop McGlynn's, Cheeser's, and the Cinema Café regularly. The rest of the stores are of NO interest to me. Occasionally the Norsk Nook, if I need a gift. Let's also build on our Norwegian Heritage. Livesreise is a gem and the Museum is way under utilized. Why aren't we building on our Norwegian theme and becoming a real destination? (Mount Horeb for example) We should build on what we have and are known for, not try to recreate ourselves. Stoughton's Art District is pretty lame. Sad to see the river redevelopment is not going to be stores. Cute Norwegian themed buildings along the river with food, shops, outside terraces etc.. is far more inviting then apartment buildings. Would love to go to the Opera House for entertainment, but it seems only people who like Country and Blue Grass music are invited. Some of us don't enjoy that type of music - would love to see other forms of entertainment included. Quite frankly - if we didn't have Walmart, Stoughton would be a ghost town. There is NOTHING to

purchase in the downtown to sustain a household. Walmart and the businesses, in Kettle Park, have brought so many new visitors to the downtown.
I love the antique stores and resale. Also the crafty type stores. I shop at Hobby Lobby. Also if I could get Stoughton grocery stores to carry what I can only get at whole foods and Trader Joes, I wouldn't go to Madison. Pic n Save is not friendly to suggestions and Wal-Mart also says they have no control. Also we really need a womens clothing store. So sad the boutique closed. I think specialty Crafty and repurposed type stores would bring people. I go monthly with friends to other towns looking for these types of stores.
Great place to live, greatly miss the stamp and scrapbook shop and the quilt shop. Need another apparel shop
I believe Stoughton has excellent potential for new business and housing development, as well as a revitalization of downtown. There should be a serious consideration to expanding green space, wider sidewalks for outdoor cafe potential, enhanced street lighting and signage, and bike lanes. I also strongly support the proposed development project along the riverway of the old industrial area.
There are some places downtown that I enjoy and are glad they are their. With that said it's about 6 places out of all that space. The majority of the shops have very poor hours or are vacant most of the time.
This (and historic houses) are what brought us to Stoughton. We love the downtown & festivals. Two biggest opportunities I see are allowing for outdoor eating/seating on main st; also, what about a small park/playground (or splash pad) on main st at the empty lot near Koffee Kup? This could be a central gathering place and draw a lot of family foot traffic downtown 7 days a week, all day/evening long. It could bring a real sense of vibrancy/community to Main St and draw families walking to downtown from neighborhoods as a destination. Some festivals could be improved by opening up Main Street to the festival & rerouting traffic. Super excited for the bike trail to connect to Madison; When will we get painted bike planes on Main St? This would be a GREAT way to draw people from the trail to ride to downtown as a turnaround destination for getting coffee/food/ice cream/beer once the trail connects to Madison. Just go see the number of bikers in McFarland by the Green Lantern on a Saturday to see the potential once the trail connects. Without bike lanes on Main, I fear people will ride the trail but miss out on stopping and spending money. Also, I think there are some amazing opportunities to develop walking/biking trails in the undeveloped land back by the river/school property/fair ground land, especially the narrow isthmus of land that is back by troll beach area.
Like I mentioned before, if Stoughton is to elevate its options, then limit the ridiculous amounts of shady bars on the East side of town, please! I live over on the East side, and it could be so very cool if there were just more options! The Gazebo Music is a nice addition to the East side. Stoughton desperately needs something other than burgers and fries for food options- diversify- how about some Thai, Indian or take away BBQ or fried chicken?! We need green space so our kids can ramble around safely. We need bike paths ALL OVER town so we can safely ride around without concern of being run over by some dude in a diesel who's on his 7th DUI. We need more after school activities for school-aged children.

I think it would be nice to have some sort of businesses that offer experiences, not just goods. Something like wine tasting or a place that does sewing classes or an ice cream shop/candy/novelty store. Maybe a place that offers karaoke a few nights a week?
Need a coffee shop that is comfortable, has internet access, and open longer hours.
We are blessed with a downtown that appreciates its heritage and maintains the important early buildings. The Opera House is a gem! The Historical Society, Sons of Norway and Norwegian heritage building promote many fine activities. Stoughton has one of the finest Senior Centers in the state having been accredited 3 consecutive times. It's school system is strong, meeting the needs of a wide range of children. There are many beautiful historic homes that grace the Cityi! We are privileged to have two food pantries for those families in need. Stoughton is a very generous community in all facets of life.
I use the public library quite frequently for Internet access plus books.
Clean up the pubs past the mayor's office. Elsings should be redeveloped for more retail opportunity. I have tons of ideas for this town to be better
I love Soughton and wished it was more convenient to visit the small shops
The downtown has significant potential. It just needs a little updating. Businesses need to cater to the younger population who are beginning to make Stoughton their home. They are raising families and have disposable income to spend. For the older population, housing needs include independent living, condominiums, and long term care facilities.
HAVE MORE EVENTS ! ALL DIFERNT KINDS FOR ALL DIFFERENT FOLKS
Bring in more biz like Wildwood and Wendigo. Also would shop regularly at a grocery co-operative and a larger farmers market downtown.
As a new Stoughton community member (moved from Willy St.), I firmly believe there is a movement of young couples/professionals considering Stoughton to purchase homes/start families/start businesses. I think it is critical to include their perspective in decision-making of development ideas/concepts. Thank you for hosting the open house event, it's a great start!
I don't shop downtown Stoughton. It's hard for retailers to compete with the price and convenience of on line shopping. I go to restaurants and bakery regularly. I go in the lumberyard and hardware store multiple times a week. I used to go to the grocery coop weekly. Although the street lights are attractive the light makes it hard To see pedestrians. I know that sounds weird. The light kind of blinds me as I drive.
I would like to be involved in efforts to tell Stoughton's story through a series of story panels that are located throughout the downtown area. I have professional experience having done this for the Riverwalk in Wisconsin Dells. I look forward to seeing how the plan for the area comes together.
This has been needed a long time and would love to see many ideas that could be implemented from this study. Business association has been long needed with a vision! Love to see a City Urban Planner hired, someone who has the education, skill, and experience to implement opportunities for the City. This would hopefully increase millennials to come to Stoughton if we were to offer affordable housing, shopping, some employment, and opportunities for activities. Stoughton is filled with history so I would like to "preserve" this but add to many opportunities for all ages!
public transportation in and out of Stoughton train service to Mad. Mil. Chicago
Less tattoo and resale shops, more gift, clothing, specialty stores and restaurants with food like Wendigo but quieter atmosphere. Would love to see a YMCA in town. I would take yoga at Stoughton yoga but the times they offer don't work with my schedule.
Stoughton downtown is a charm. We have guests from out of town come and comment how unique and special it is. We are proud to live here. We hope the downtown stays vibrant in years to come. Some suggestions for improvement are more bike racks would be nice. Walking trails or paths along

the river would be greatly utilized. Slowing the speed of traffic through Main Street would be appreciated.
Too many empty stores. Need more variety of restaurants.
avoid bypass to keep downtown alive
Thank you for doing this survey. It is difficult to see historical buildings being torn down. Other cities have learned that restoration is the way to increase intrigue and cultural. Stoughton tears them down. Look at the Opera House, but that was saved by a citizen. The wagon warehouse could have been made into something unique. The 315 Main Street Park is lame and the owner bullied the system to do it. Now it open up to a ugly parking lot and back of a building. When building are torn down to open spaces data wise it stops flow of foot traffic. Stoughton will learn, but it will be too late. Hopefully with the results this survey this Mayor will not then vote to do the opposite.
Stoughton has a lot to offer, but the business downtown are not open or are always closing. The bars and restaurants downtown cater towards the Opera House Venues, which is usually fast greasy bar food. It would be nice to have a restaurant that actually had REAL FOOD. Where in this town can you go for a Prime Rib dinner that the prime rib is cooked slowly for a day?? Everything is CISCO food and usually poor quality. Do we have a steakhouse without having to rob the bank to pay for it. Not looking for a 5 course meal. We have great coffee shops and cannabis shops, at least the Tattoo parlors have left this town. Edgerton has been able to put a lot of activities together throughout the year which people from all over look forward to going to. There Chili Festival has been a great success and look at the big name bands they bring to town for outside entertainment. Merchants downtown need to start opening their doors so people can shop the downtown, and not being closed Mon - Wed. I have watched people trying to get into stores to shop DURING THE DAY and the shops are closed, let alone past 5:00 or open at 9:00 on Saturday or Try being open on Sunday. They cut their own throats downtown, why do they think we go to these other towns to shop? They have to be open!!
This is probably a very unpopular opinion, but I strongly believe it needs to be said. Keep low-income housing and multi-unit building away from downtown. Statistically speaking, population density increases will increase crime and reduce safety as it relates to pedestrian, bike, and auto traffic.
Parking much better than other towns. An ice cream shop might do well.
We live on the west side of Stoughton, and it seems far removed from downtown. Some of our neighbors never go to downtown Stoughton for anything. We go for events, but seldom for shopping - doesn't seem to be much there, or they close early. It's nice that Walmart has come in.
Abel Contemporary is the best thing to happen to Stoughton in a long time. Add some murals and public art please. Artist-designed benches in some little pocket parks around Main St. would be nice. More art related businesses, and someplace to eat over there would really make it the Arts District that it supposedly is. There are a ton of good artists down here - you could support the artists and make Stoughton more unique and appealing at the same time!
Get rid of the on street parking during rush hours so there could be 2 lanes in/out of that area. Prohibit bikes on the sidewalks. Require businesses to have hours that coincide with customers, ie most everything is closed on Sunday.
My family's history is the reason for my fondness of Stoughton.
I almost had an accident with a fire truck that barreled out of the fire station parking lot without stopping and before turning their sirens on. I was driving east, so the opera house blocked any view I had of the station parking lot. I had to slam on my brakes, and grab my dog with one hand to keep them from slamming into the dashboard. That area could be a lot safer for vehicle traffic, going in both directions.

Stoughton needs more community meeting space for nonprofit groups. Current options do not meet needs in terms of availability and low-cost.
We don't do a lot of shopping anymore in our household of 2, but it's always been enjoyable to stroll up and down main street, picking up an item or two. However, the more tattoo parlors and pawn shops we get, the less attractive that stroll becomes. Things we would shop for are meats/cheeses if they were in one store (how about it Cheesers?!?!), beer/wine/liquor (if they were priced close to Woodmans), and since we'd already have a parking spot, would also utilize Fosdal's more often. Any store that opens on main street will need to have reasonable pricing to compete with on-line shopping.
We absolutely adore Stoughton!!! Keep Up the good work and hope to see focus on quality community spirit and activities for all.
would love an affordable general store.
I think if you brought art classes to a downtown space like shake rag alley in mineral point, you could draw people from other areas and they would use local restaurants and explore stores.
Downtown Stoughton could use some housing to increase the number of people in the area and help make downtown thrive. Some nicer apartments or condos to increase the population density. I would consider living downtown if there were options other than living above a main street storefront. I work until at least 5:00 and often find myself wishing the stores downtown were open until 6 so I can pick up items on the way home.
Parking and cross walk improvements would be huge.
Ways that we expand our community need to embrace a full-package approach. Let's work on increasing the arts and events in Stoughton and then the other things (stores and restaurants) would be more likely to open up space here because they see that our community is thriving and a solid location for them to expand to. We bring tours to Stoughton that visit Livsreise. The Stoughton Opera House is a thriving venue. We are able to support restaurants such as Wendigo and Big Sky because the Opera House is doing well. There is no single business/restaurant that will turn things around. Let's springboard off the things we already have. We are an arts community. Let's continue to invest in that aspect of our community. Completing our bike trail, connecting us to Madison, would be another step in adding value to our community. Maybe we make canoe, kayak, bike, etc. rentals available on the weekends. I've heard a number of people inquire about this. The weekends and/or evenings are when the average person has free time (vs. M-F during daytime hours). This survey seems to be approaching growth exclusively through businesses and restaurants. That is one aspect of growth. We need to have a broader perspective.
I was there recently as a tourist who does not live in Wisconsin, so it was a one-time visit. This should be an option on the survey early on, to inform later questions.
More restaurants and businesses should partner with the Opera House
Stoughton has alot to offer and certainly do not want to see it turn into a small Madison (like Sun Prairie has become - or Waunakee that seems to be trying to become a high-income residence). We do need to drive more FOOT TRAFFIC and buying customers. I know two business owners have told me they closed as people come in and chat/look but are not buying. I know for me if it was not for the rental income of apartment above the property I would be closed as there are not enough buying customers to support the monthly bills of running business.
I would like to see fewer businesses devoted to vehicles e.g., gas stations, repair shops, auto parts stores. The city is already over-saturated with them, especially a single brand such as Kwik Trip.

Make better use of the beautiful river and add places to walk or bike along the river
über and lyft needs to become a regular service that is available. so many businesses would get more people going out, people do not have to worry about drinking and driving if they can call for an affordable ride home. this gives people many more opportunities to enjoy.
A business idea- a cafe that had a toddler/children's play area would be fantastic!!
I love that the old historical buildings have been preserved and restored. I love that the unique historical identity of downtown Stoughton still exists. I hope that this is preserved and that any changes that are made are in keeping with this historical character. I appreciate Livsreise and the programs that are offered there.
We need some solid (appealing to many) retailers downtown that can draw people in; and we also need some quality businesses. Too many of the businesses seem to have a lower and unappealing level of quality. This does not generate much, if any, curbside appeal.
There is serious concern from many downtown businesses in regards to the parking police and the tickets that are given out. THIS IS NOT MADISON! Also the EXCESSIVE and RECKLESS disregard for life from the police department and their speed going through downtown responding to calls. Someone is going to get hit or killed. They are technically breaking the law.
Downtown has a good charm, it was part of the reason we moved here. The roads really put a damper in it. Would like to see nice roads and sidewalks, consistent lighting, seating areas, maintained buildings, inside and out. Easily accessible.
It is convenient for me to shop at more than one time. I also would like to shop on Sat, Sun and I would like to go out in the evenings, when dining venues could be open. I have gone to downtown Stoughton on many occasions only to find my destination closed, few places open for lunch or nothing open after 9 pm.
Hours are a huge issue. Things always seem closed. Our biggest struggle is finding somewhere family friendly to eat on Saturday and especially Sunday nights. It seems everything closes up so early. We end up driving to other cities to eat. Things also close on like Mondays or Tuesdays. It is very odd.
Would love a small, good market downtown. Something like the former Main Street Market and current Jennifer Street Market. Or a year round farmer's market that had good healthy veggies. A good bookstore/coffee shop would be a dream come true...although downtown coffee and lunch spots have been looking up with the new additions in the past year or so. Also glad to see Abel Gallery here. How can downtown businesses capitalize more on the Opera House which is bringing in good crowds from around the area?
Norwegian heritage and pride is a plus. Friendly employees, store clerks.

Moved to the downtown Stoughton area from out-of-state 12 years ago and many improvements have been made. Stoughton seems primed for much more development and taking advantage of natural areas, such as the riverfront. Friends in Madison recently told us about Charlie's on Main restaurant in Oregon because of their unique "speakeasy" venue and how you order drinks there (describe a color or feeling and the bartender creates a special cocktail). There are many taverns here, but offering something fun a inventive like that could be refreshing and draw people here from surrounding areas. They serve food so it's a place that we would visit more (won't go to places that just serve alcohol, we need food too :D!) We've also visited the opera house in Baraboo a few times this past year. They show old movies and I wondered if that's something our opera house could do. The Stoughton Opera House is an amazing venue and anchor for the area, but the mainly folk music lineup has become stale for us and our friends. Other music genres and/or other uses for this gem we have, could boost visits to the area.
Unrealistic to try and compete with on-line retailers or big boxes. Impossible to match prices. Must look for unique or special interest stores (like Diamonds Select, Woodland Studios, Abel Gallery, Wildwood Cafe, Big Sky) that will attract people to Stoughton as does the Opera House. Need better public parking for Opera House. Get rid of ugly Stougton Store sign, it defaces historical store front. Figure out use for old historic bldg on riverfront which is now a monstrosity and was a historic bldg. Also laundromat bldg behind it. Naughty Norske is a great first step.
Please stay open at least two nights per week. and weekends during the holiday season
Please, please add more restaurants and variety of stores that stay open on weekends and evenings. Nothing is open weeknights or Sundays when working families can shop and eat. This town needs more to stay competitive in Dane County. Allow growth!!
We need to think of non-car related travel in downtown development. Sidewalks, bike trails and other non motor vehicle travel. Please connect the whitewater park with this development planning and furthwr conncetions to the lower yahara river trail coming from madison. Big picture of travel with mpre tham just cars. Contiguous teails around stoughton to encorage family bike tracel and waljing opportunites.
I love our downtown area and am always sorry when businesses close. Not sure what the reasons are other than lack of shoppers during week days. Appears that artistic programs, such as The Opera House, Stoughton Village Players, Gazebo Music, and Syttende Mai Festivals draw but often in the evening hours so stores are closed. We do have an attractive downtown but need to have storefronts occupied. Young people love Wendigo and Wildwood so could concentrate on this style of restaurant. Dune is outstanding and small with original ideas for gifts and cards. Not sure how the Chamber advertises for our shops but seems as though there is a general need for coordination between business and Chamber. Love Laz's Bistro too. The antique stores are struggling because young people do not seem too interested. Seems as though young families are looking for adventures with couples and families. The new water park with shelters for gatherings seems to be working well. Nice to have Aldi's in our town.
Road conditions are horrible around the entire area. In considering your proposals, please factor in rebuilding the roads, not just patching them. It will greatly add to the function and beauty and therefore attraction to outsiders.
Mandt Park should be developed.

I often choose to eat elsewhere than Stoughton because there are almost no options for vegan food. Rarely I shop downtown because the stores don't offer things of desire for me, aside from Dune which really is a great step above. The Wildwood Café has also been a really great addition. I think we need a more modern approach when it comes to stores and restaurants. Dune is excellent because it has great appeal and has a different feel than any other typical 'gift shop'. When it comes to food, m people these days have dietary restrictions so having a wider range of food for anyone to be able to eat is a great idea in my mind. For example, Wendigo is locally sourcing food and offering things that people like, but personally, I have not been there because of their shorter menu with minimal vegan options.
Development of the river area look at Ft Atkinson bike, walking path. Restaurants along the water. Stoughton has natural beauty it should be developed and promoted.
I love Stoughton for its history and how the town reflects that history. The small independent stores make this town what it is, and bringing in more chains into downtown would slowly destroy the integrity of this beautiful town.
Enjoy ethnic bent, opportunities for senior citizens, bakery
I love shopping downtown Stoughton. I shop local as much as I can, including hair styling, nails, children clothing, Cheesers, All Through The House, library.... most of the restaurants, ale houses, and bars. I love walking to town. I'm proud to say I have NEVER been inside Walmart and will NEVER do so. I am still very disappointed that our community voted them into our city.
Need to do a better job with plowing. Last year was not good.
Stores need to have longer hours. More cafe type restaurants to liven up the crowd on the weekends. Capitalize on riverfront with outdoor dining.
I would love to see the river incorporated more into the downtown vibe. It's sad to me that we have a vape shop prominently stationed right next to the river. Wendigo is my favorite part of downtown so cool restaurants/brew pubs/etc would be welcome. Downtown also doesn't feel bike or canoe/kayak friendly so it feels like there is room for growth.
AS I STATED THE PLANTERS ON MAIN STREET BY NEW CITY HALL ARE A DISGRACE. YOU ONLY GET ONE CHANCE TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION -- IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF WEEDS - THIS DOES NOT SHOW MUCH COMMENT FROM THE CITY. IF SOMEONE SAYS THEIR WORKING ON IT - I WOULD SAY "NOT FAST ENOUGH" MAY NEED TO THINK ABOUT SOME UNIFORMITY ON SANDWICH BOARDS ON SIDEWALKS - SIZE AND PLACEMENT
We really miss our co-op and would love another Co-op to come to town!
I've always felt Stoughton has much potential but falls short. We should do something similar to San Antonio Texas but on a much smaller scale. A board walk of sorts with restaurants and stores facing the river possibly even a motel. Downtown Stores should be open past 5pm. People are working. I used to hear store owners complain that they could not make it in Stoughton but they refused to keep doors open past 5pm Most importantly, Stoughton should want to increase housing, apartments and Condos for the middle class

I love downtown stoughton. We often go to Madison for dinner because of the large variety of good food at NON-CHAIN restaurants. Getting chain restaurants is really not something interesting to me. I have really never had problems parking downtown. I don't mind walking a block or two to find a parking spot. I don't mind paying a little more to give business to local shops. There just aren't many that have things that I need regularly. I do enjoy Christmas shopping locally if I can. I don't know what's needed but I don't think fast food or chain restaurants in the downtown area is going to attract people from out of town. Uniqueness is key. It's one thing we found attractive when we moved here.
Just moved to Stoughton one year ago. It's a great community, a lot of people know each other and take care of each other. Downtown Stoughton seems a popular place to go, there are many festivals which seem well organized. Please keep the historic feel of downtown intact (I do not care for the demolition of the house on the corner of 4th Street and Main Street). Please relocate UniRoyal, so we can build e.g. a nice boardwalk with restaurants/shops along the Yahara River and get rid of the pollution.
Lovely downtown with a beautiful river. Would be nice to have a river walk area, similar to what they did in downtown San Antonio, Texas. Most downtown businesses have a very specific niche, that sometimes does not appeal to the masses. Try and do more river related events, to draw more people downtown.
Would love some dedicated children's space - we leave town often to find things to do with out child. People drive all the way to Black Earth for their children's museum - could be a draw of outside business in addition to serving locals.
We need a park/bike path/green space along the river. Incentivize Uniroyal to move to a different location (business park). More places like Wendigo, Koffee cup, Opera house, Fosdals, the library etc.. Less focus on low income housing and more focus on improving schools and making the downtown a place people want to walk to.
The best draw Stoughton has is the Opera House.
need more businesses for seniors especially, survey them at the retirement communities in person,, give tax incentives to get the business started. more store front lighting. exercise equipment place might be success ful incorporated with sporting goods for school age needs especially.
Tattoo, piercing, vaping, cbd stores will be the death of the "quaint" feel of downtown. Visitors do not want to come to Stoughton and deal with that.
Whitewater park needs to happen, it will bring a huge increase of visitors and tourism to downtown Stoughton for food and outdoor activities with their young families visiting the park. Stoughton will need to increase pedestrian safety and bike access to allow more folks to enjoy downtown to accompany their Whitewater park visit. I hope the US Hwy 51 corridor project will increase safety for downtown visitors. Ideally, I'd like the UW Hwy 51 corridor to bypass downtown so as not to congest it with Semi Truck traffic that quickly ruins the pavement and increases noise by an order of magnitude. One can only dream.

Question #9 of this survey should allow more than one answer. Downtown Stoughton is unpleasantly noisy because of all the traffic. I think there is more than enough parking. It's just that people want to park right in front of where they are going and get upset because they can't; and don't want to walk a block or two. If you go to a mall, you have to walk the equivalent of several blocks, and most people don't complain about that. I think that some of Stoughton's best and most popular businesses are not in the downtown area: BBG's, Famous Yeti's, Asleson's Hardware, Stoughton Garden Center, Wal-Mart, Pick N Save, Aldi, St. Vincent's, Goodwill, Walgreen's. And banks... Downtown Stoughton should have a full-service bank.
The stores close too early in the evening. The signage is very poor. Some of the stores do not have signs. Other stores have signs, but they aren't visible to people driving past the stores.
Get rid of the stores that sell trinkets and attract a business that centers around children. As a mom with young children, I need somewhere to go with my kids for entertainment and this isn't a good city for that. In the summers, we go to the parks but for 3/4 of the year, we drive out of Stoughton to find things to do since all we have for kids is a bowling alley, movie theater, and a couple of gymnastic places that are barely open on the weekends. We need something like a small scale Legacy Academy (Fitchburg) or Pump It Up (Fitchburg) or something active for young children. We often spend our money in other cities b/c Stoughton is limiting for young children. I've heard that countless times from other moms. We enjoy the restaurants and the library on Main Street but we don't buy anything else from the stores on Main Streen b/c they don't really sell anything worth buying. I'd love to see another clothing boutique but they had to leave b/c of the high price of rent. Otherwise we do our shopping mostly online b/c it's fast and delivered to our house. It's hard to find parking on Main Street so we often avoid it. On the survey question about when we are available to shop on Main Street, you will get some flawed answers b/c it only let me choose 1 answer. I'd be available to shop any time on the weekends but it didn't let me choose all those available times. We need to do something to make Stoughton exciting. There was interest from a couple who wanted to start a distillery. That would have been something new and exciting. I'm hoping the river rafting becomes a reality b/c then we'd have something to do with our guests who come here to visit.
This town is old. We need to liven it up with the types of businesses that young professionals with money would like. Look at Atwood Avenue. Look at Princeton Wisconsin. Look at East Washington Ave in Madison. We need to attract regional young people with money to at least spend some of it here, if not live here. The only destination spots for young people are Wendigo, and maybe Viking Brew Pub. Nauti Gal has been a very nice addition to downtown. Great atmosphere. Thing of the up and coming generation. The seniors are already taken care of. We need fresh thinking, fresh blood, fresh businesses. Cultivate young entrepreneurs. We need more folks like those who opened Wendigo/Famous Yetis. People WILL come downtown if there's a reason to. I've lived here nearly 20 years and not much has changed. We need fewer Dollar Stores, fewer Tattoo parlors, fewer Leather stores, and Walmarts and more relevant businesses to today's lifestyle and restaurants that people can afford. If Wendigo can make great food at the low prices they afford, so can others. Look to other towns to see how they turned things around. The other thing is that change moves WAY TOO SLOW here. Look at Fitchburg compared to here. I work there and it's growing like gangbusters. Managed growth is good but having barely any? That needs to change.
There is a nice selection of restaurants, however, most are not open for breakfast, and many not open for lunch which is when I am more likely to eat out. We need a lovely coffee shop, like the FireFly in Oregon.

Also a Co-op that had unique foods and value-added service would be great, like the one in Viroqua. Also, the town needs an aquatic-community center. Like a nice pool, or community center built on the (new) waterfront area.
Question #9 - more than one answer! Weeknights 5-7p and BOTH Saturday and Sunday are convenient, especially with family.
I use the pedestrian bridge at Page Main Court and would like to see it remain at this location. I would also like to know how much the pedestrian bridge close to the train bridge cost when it was installed to continue the bike/hike trail. Thanks!
Parking is always a huge problem, not sure how to solve it tho. Small town downtown areas unfortunately seem to be a thing of the past, which is a sad thing to me. Life as I knew it as far as mom and pop stores are a thing of the past and I don't really see it coming back(very sad to me), I'm not sure how it can be turned around.
I wish YRGC had worked out--it is very much missed!
People standing around outside the bars and such can feel menacing. I understand they need to go somewhere to smoke, but having to walk around them while they are standing on the sidewalk in downtown Stoughton outside of a bar is not exactly the way anyone wants to experience downtown.
Stoughton is a charming hometown. It is a shame that so many, myself included, shop elsewhere because I either cannot find what I would like or I cannot afford it. Perhaps look at the best of Mount Horeb, Fort Atkinson, Regent Street in Madison to find some ideas that will work here. A cozy, welcoming store, ie: a used bookstore with a coffee bar, or a winery would get me downtown more, and probably keep me there, along with other visitors. Downtown should remain more retail stores and not become full of service businesses. Nothing would cut down on pedestrian traffic more than storefronts full of financial, healthcare or religious businesses. Downtown retail hours are too limited. Extended evening and Saturday/Sunday hours are needed. I understand the owners needs and/or wishes to limit hours for their own lives, but they have chosen to have a customer based business, and customers need to be able to shop when they can, or else they will go to Madison or Janesville to shop. Flower planters or more decorative items are needed to dress up the downtown. Expand Victorian Holiday - Colored Christmas lights on the light poles rather than just white lights. More fun Christmas decorations downtown. Later and more weekend hours for retail businesses. More emphasis on showcasing the river downtown.
More restaurant/bar with outdoor and deck seating along the river would be wonderful.
It would be nice to have more kid-friendly places, like Firefly Coffehouse in Oregon, or the children's museum in Black Earth - never thought of a small town having a children's museum until I heard of that one! More bike racks. The only one I know of downtown is the one outside the library. I often bike downtown to go to the post office or the library. Some small public green spaces would be nice near downtown. Benches, grass, shade, fountain, etc. Maybe public bathroom facilities. Semi traffic on Main Street is not ideal. Would be nice if they had an alternate route, but I realize it is Hwy 51.
Stoughton is a beautiful community. I don't really feel that I know a lot about the businesses downtown and sometimes don't know anything about the businesses and what they sell. For instance I had no idea that Dandelion Outfitters existed. They are a great choice for women who wear 0-6x and a VERY reasonable price. I found out about it on Facebook.
I work downtown.Also, thank you for offering this survey for the community.

I think the kayak competition idea for the downtown area is not a good idea for the river. Instead, ideas to allow a river flow down the rest of the yahara and clean up that part of the river would bring much more outdoor activities for EVERYONE to participate in.
Very busy traffic downtown and not always safe to cross even at intersections. Some historic buildings appear to be rundown and in need of maintenance.
I think Stoughton should never allowed Walmart to move into Stoughton. They are hurting downtown businesses, by selling they products cheaper. The city of Stoughton needs to focus on bringing quality businesses back to downtown with more public parking and restrooms. Also more green space.
The addition of smoke, vape, cbd shops is not great for our image. Continue to support building owners with declining buildings like the old corner book store. Also, tighten up store front rules to make downtown businesses look more historic and fit with the theme of the town. For example, the gymnastics/nerf business on Main. The exterior of the top floors is great, but street level is not cohesive and is unattractive.
Downtown Stoughton is a hidden gem. Creating Stoughton as a destination would be amazing.
Keep it cute and fashionably historic. The small town charm is attractive when kept up to shape. A community gathering area not hidden behind a fire station would be nice, maybe where the old abandoned Uniroyal buildings are near Nauti. Riverside restaurants and live music-late night venues. Remodel ped bridge over river. Redevelop the rental housing on West side of ped bridge. Attract more small businesses that are not flippin antique stores or overly priced non-essential home goods. Higher class eatery and bar like Wendigo but with more manicured gourmet menu. Add bike facilities to main street or new ped-bike bridge.
I really miss a good Italian restaurant
Stoughton is great wish they had pretty displays like edgerton with hanging flower baskets etc. The library is the big pull for us to get downtown we go to their programs and then to the donut shop and then to the cheese shop. We like the bars that are welcoming to kids for lunch etc. I think a lot of businesses can work together to bring people downtown. For example we went to green road pottery for event and then to Lons for lunch- different businesses but both appealing. Should say that we stay longer when we walk from our house. Our tire gets marked for parking and I worry about getting a ticket and having to hurry up to move vehicle otherwise. So less likely to enjoy downtown if I have to drive there. Unless there is parking that goes more than 3 hours?
Dump, get rid of all the parking make it 4 lanes an you might actually be able to get somewhere after 3pm

I would love to see either hanging baskets or large flower pots lining both sides of Main Street like Edgerton does. It is so lovely and inviting looking. We definitely need something. I'd like to see the Norwegian flags go down after Syttende Mai and the flowers come out. Plus I truly think we need some Public Restrooms for visitors and the residents of Stoughton. I was recently in Ft. Atkinson for a music festival and they had clean wonderful public restrooms for attendees, not just port-a-potties. Businesses shouldn't have to offer their restrooms unless it's a restaurant. Also I love the idea of a community tree/rest area on the corner across from the library. An annual tree lighting at Christmas could be a great new tradition for the city.
Better traffic flow to ease congestion .
With the vacant store fronts we now have it isn't worth planning for business to be located in the proposed river front development. If we can't keep stores in business downtown why dilute things further?
Too many empty shops Have a historic walking tour Wish wendigo was open for lunch Get rid of dilapidated awnings More public art- sculptures along main st An independent bookstore An art supply store Upscale cafe along the river River walk Willy st coop Mural on cement wall underpass near the river
The loss of Yahara Grocery Co-op was a major blow to the already decimated downtown. Our family ran in and out of Yahara for quick grocery needs at least 2 or 3 times a week and they were the only place in the entire city to buy locally and sustainably produced meats and dairy. They also were an easy and pleasant place to get groceries with little kids in tow. We miss it terribly. In addition, the loss several years ago of Catfish River arts and antiques store was the beginning of what seems like the end for downtown. Before we moved to Stoughton, we lived in Madison and would travel down here just to go to that store (as did many others). Now the downtown contains rows of empty storefronts. A few unpleasant-looking bars with people smoking outside don't really help bring in the foot traffic. My husband and I have dreamed of opening a business downtown for years, but lately we've stopped talking about it because it seems like no businesses survive here and the city seems to do nothing to help.
I love downtown Stoughton....please attract more and more diverse businesses.
Please, please bring in more variety of shops and restaurants! The hours of the businesses downtown are terrible for families and working people. Nothing is ever open late afternoon Saturdays or Sundays.
Downtown is fine, don’t create problems that don’t exist

Allow the downtown restaurants in the A&E district to entertain. The only visibility outside of the restaurants are the smokers out on the sidewalk. Time for Stoughton to stop being so parochial and at least try this out. It will bring more business to the downtown. In addition I am a transplant to Stoughton from Madison. I love it here however I am not into Syttende Mai festivities as lovely as they are. There are other opportunities here for the downtown businesses to capitalize on namely it's reputation as an artists district. The Art Walk is great but still trying to get it's legs and I hope the downtown businesses continue to support it. The Chamber of Commerce needs to buy into this event. If I recall 2017 was a very successful event when the chamber backed it. There are so many artists in this area and now with the addition of the Abel Gallery I am hopeful that there will be more traction for arts events. The Wine Walk hopefully will succeed although at this point I don't know much about it. The Women's nite was great as I attended for the first time this year and will do so now on an ongoing basis.
Well....we have a lot of storefronts empty, does anyone think that there might be a connection to the Walmart? Before one of the stores closed, I happened to be chatting to the owner. They mentioned that they felt the members of the city council was not supportive of the businesses downtown....I hope there are things that can be done better/differently to improve the relationship and trust with business owners. Did we loose access to recycling bins downtown?
The alleys"s are full of trash and stink! There are two many people standing outside of restaurants smoking and leaving their trash. Please make the downtown smoke free! This will only make it cleaner and more welcoming to all.
Most trips downtown for us now involve the Post office, Library, City Hall, McGlynn's and Senior Center. Used to have the car fixed at Smokey's, buy furniture on Forrest Street, a seamstress in Kegonsa Plaza, gifts at Prize Impressions and groceries at the Coop but these are mostly gone now. Still visit All Through the House, Cheeser's, Fosdel's, and Stoughton Cinema occasionally. Accessibility is important for me and does limit where I can go. The Sky restaurant, for example, has a large step at the entrance. While I can do the step my wife cannot so we don't go there. Downtown has developed into more of an entertainment district rather than a shopping location. The stores for basic necessities, groceries, hardware, gardening are located elsewhere. Downtown will have to cater to the unique and/or unusual to draw future shoppers.

We moved to Stoughton from Milwaukee two years ago and absolutely love the sense of kindness and community. We walk from our house near the hospital to downtown multiple times per week. We love to shop local when we can and do our best to support the restaurants/shops in our community. We love that the farmer's market has moved off the street and enjoy the market many Saturdays in the summer. We love to check out new restaurants and wish there were more options to patron, especially downtown, that were a little less bar-like (more in line with Wendigo or Wildwood). Outdoor seating on a nice day is always a plus. A couple of ideas for new focused shops that come to mind are: olive oil/spices, an ice cream parlor (not inside a movie theater) and a butcher with local meat/products. We are sad to see many of the retail shops closing on main street – but with online shopping we understand that retail overall is struggling. However, more gift-type shops with items made by local artists, boutique clothing, etc. could do well. The more we can infuse our uniqueness as a community into retail, the better these shops will do. If I can't get it online or it's a special/unique item, I'm much more likely to purchase from a small shop. Some of my favorite stores in Milwaukee were Sparrow Collective, the Public Market, Rushmor Records to name a few. And things like art walks, food tastings, etc. can help drive traffic to retail. We would also patron experience-focused businesses: wine tasting, beer garden/brewery (could be a perfect idea for the riverfront development), sand volleyball courts, food trucks. We really enjoy the Settende Mai festival and all the unique activities that come along with it (canoe races, Norwegian dancers, parade, etc.), and the more of those activities that are walkable from the main area of the festival, the more likely we are to attend. We may be the anomaly for the current demographics of Stoughton, but I think as more people our age (low 30's) move to Stoughton due to its proximity to Madison, people who are like-minded to us will have similar sentiments. We hope to see downtown Stoughton thrive for years to come as we raise our family in this wonderful community.
For myself it seems like most quick service restaurants are closer to Oregon/Madison side of town and the other side of town really lacks options. Like I said before Kwik Trip is used a lot for the big manufacturing employment lunches and is very busy for quick service during lunch, but that is really their only option. I have more time on my lunch break and can go to Oregon/Madison side of town but it takes up a lot of my lunch break (which is 45 mins) to travel that far. I used to go to the bakery downtown for a sandwich but they stopped serving them (took up too much of their time I think to make them). And it would be pushing it to go to Pizza Hut on a lunch break for the buffet but they only are serving those twice a week instead of five now too.
Downtown was one of the main selling points when we decided to relocate here. We love the walkability and the options. Sad to see all the empty storefronts popping up - hopefully some new ideas and businesses can occupy those spaces. I really think a small brewery or even a sandwich or ice cream shop would do really well downtown. The brewery's that I have been too around the state draw people in from all over to spend time - best example is Rock County Brewing in downtown Janesville.
No more big box stores like Wal-Mart. Trust me when I say that NO ONE moves to Stoughton because we have a super Wal-Mart. What a colossal waste of time effort and taxpayer money to bring that abomination to Stoughton. Mayor Olson was obsessed with this thing that was a dinosaur before it was built. Adding more stores and restaurants to Stoughton will not make it attractive to young families. Capitalize on the river trail, and thing that will draw folks to downtown and the surrounding blocks. The bicycle infrastructure in this town in non-existent. The river trail is nice but does us no good. Glad to see the decision makers have stopped wasting more time on the s0-called "historic Blacksmith's shop" (we call it the historic rubble pile). Out city decision makers keep taking their eye

off the ball. Get with it folks. Strangly, a Super Wal-Mart did not make us the Paris of the midwest. Try something else.
Mayor Tim is doing a good job. Would love to see him engage with people he trusts and values their opinion to come up with think tank ideas. The people in those think tanks, should not be offended if their ideas are not created, they should be common sense people who want to participate and make changes for the better of the community. However, have the understanding that Administration is participating with the entire picture and they know the constraints, funds and laws that determine controlling factors. Use good straightforward and honest communication.
Better parking and lighting at night.
Would love to see downtown Stoughton become a thriving community again. I enjoy going to places like Galena, IL or even Monroe, WI that have a variety of stores and restaurants.
I think it would be nice to have outdoor seating off the main hwy to enjoy a meal or music
People have blamed Walmart for the demise of downton Stoughton. While there is validity in this claim, I feel Stoughton has the ability to be a town of Walmart and a thriving downtown if the downtown area is cleaned-up and has systemic change to the culture of Stoughton; not everyone is Norwegian anymore and we should want younger families to move here. It doesn't appeal to younger families the way Middleton and Oregon do, but it has the potential. Stoughton should honor its heritage, but embrace the diversity now. If younger families move to Stoughton, we wouldn't have a declining enrollment in our schools. Declining enrollment means less money for our schools, which would lead to even fewer younger families wanting to live in the area. Just like we can be a town of a Walmart and a thriving downtown, we can also be a community consisting of families making up the largest per capita of section 8 housing in Dane county, and families within the middle/upper middle class demographic. I think Stoughton is in a unique position of moving forward and celebrating what makes us special and enticing more people to want to live here. I hope this survey is reaching more than people who happened upon the postcard at a shop downtown and you are receiving input from a diverse population of residents. I look forward to seeing the positive changes to come!
I'll add one last thing that was left out of the downtown survey that relates to housing stock. I believe for downtown businesses to be sustainable, we need to attract people to the downtown area who have and are willing to spend money. In that spirit, I believe if housing stock is to be part of any downtown or river front development or redevelopment, the focus should be on upper end units- both condos and apartments. Stoughton has many lower income units and I believe it is time to try something different.
I love downtown Stoughton. I love the RDA plan. Am sad about all the empty storefronts. I do a lot of my shopping in Stoughton. I'd love to help with downtown revitalization. I am on the board of SVP/
Would love to see more variety in shops not as pricey though

30 minute parking is fine near post office and city hall, etc, but if you're going to ticket people be consistent about it. Don't have 2 hour parking and then give out tickets once every 3 weeks on some streets. Have additional options for people who have to deal with multiple children and strollers and packages every day and find it incredibly inconvenient and unsafe to have to walk half a mile every day to get back to their car just to avoid a parking ticket when no one is parking on that street all day anyway. Perhaps a couple spots on streets with weekend parking restrictions, but not weekday parking restrictions. Perhaps specific permits you could give to people who could use the assistance and are participating in bringing in revenue to the city. Perhaps changing a few signs. Perhaps working with people in the city instead of making blanket regulations that really don't actually solve the problems. There are many additional things other than parking that could be done to significantly affect downtown Stoughton for the better, however the parking issue hit particularly frustrated spot for me. I, and many others, think it is time for a real, very serious discussion to be had about where this city is, where it is going, and who needs to be taking it there. Stoughton is home for all of us, it is an important place to all of us and we care very much about it. It is time to stop letting the buildings fall into disrepair because they're historic, it is time to stop forcing permits upon everyone for everything, it is time to stop making everything so hard for people to do and to change. It is time for Stoughton to have fewer empty shopfronts and have young, fresh business owners and committee members ready to take on the new generations of people who want to see change, inclusiveness, and updates while maintaining the small town, historic, hometown feel of Stoughton.
The last year mainstreet has been taking steps towards targeting the younger larger demographic 25-40 yo adults, but the majority of stores on main street are more friendly to the elderly stoughton crowd, who in all honesty usually have less disposable income than a young to middle aged adult.
downtown is lovely but please don't mess up the river with too many buildings and businesses.. The river is a wonderful attraction but it will get congested and dirty and spoil all the happy thoughts for river fun.
More variety of useful shops would be nice...
Have a WONDERFUL Senior Center with all their opportunities!!
No real reason to go downtown except for pharmacy and library.
keep it the way it is DOES NOT NEED RIVER WALK , HOUSING ETC LETS FILL WHAT WE HAVE VACANT FIRST
I think we need more variety downtown. Better parking. Good unique restaurants. Not chain restaurants. There is a great variety in the Dells (something for everyone). For the river walk it would be cool to see a place like The Grateful Shed Truckyard. It’s a fun bar/restaurant.
Parking limitations downtown stop me from shopping and dining in town.
I really miss the coop and their fresh deli items. I’d love something like metcalfs-type but parking is just tough and a barrier for some who don’t like parallel parking.
The lighting at night needs to be brighter and there are many darker areas a stalker could hide , I used to walk all over, but not anymore, the safe feeling is not there with all of the nighttime young adults group running around late.
It's a hidden gem. Wonderful!

It would be nice if there were traffic and more of a walking/bicycling/family friendly vibe, like there is on State Street, maybe just during the weekends or something. I'd be more willing to spend more time downtown if the historic part of town was a tad bit quieter and offered more outdoor tables for eating outside. With all the traffic, its often too noisy and busy to relax in that area though. I think the traffic issue would need to be addressed since 51-and all of its traffic-runs through the middle of town.
Stoughton should hold the contractors who do street renovations and rebuilding to a much higher standard as per timeliness of the completion of a project. I recall a few years ago when the streets adjacent to, and leading to Main Street were unusable for months, and yet, weeks would go by when nothing of substance was done. Instead of letting work like this to the cheapest bidder, Stoughton should hire contractors who will get the jobs completed within specific time frames, and impose costly penalties if they fail to meet these requirements. And as I mentioned previously, Stoughton should plow the sidewalks on downtown Main Street. Sure- the upkeep on our numerous baseball fields might suffer a bit (for example), but our businesses are vital to what this city is.
There are some businesses that could definitely use a facelift. A coat of paint, new awning, refreshed window displays would go a long way. It doesn't need to be fancy-clean and neat is good.
I'd like to see more options to bring in younger adults. More entertainment options and restaurants.
Viking brew pub great addition, actually all downtown restaurants are great
The snow removal in the winter is horrendous making it hard to park on main street Don't need anymore clutter in my house and that's all it seems to be downtown except the bakery and crowded restaurants
Just give me good food, good beer, good relaxing atmosphere, and I'm good! Sadly retail shops do nothing for me, amazon has ruined Brick and mortar shopping for me. What I need to shop for we already have - ace Stoughton, aslesons, the car parts stores, and the appliance place are all great! Yeah I miss the old video game stores, music stores, and snowboard shops of my younger years, but sadly I think that time has passed.
Get rid of parking on Main Street.
Bring more unique events... food trucks.. open cully's patio back up... Irish music... kids events... things to do to bring people downtow make it vibrant ... shops that sell specialty things.. butcher shop!!! Something like brennen's good and sport it's market.,, make stoughton a walkable bikeable place for all
Parking is the biggest issue. Traffic pattern. Rude drivers, pedestrian safety.
Get real business, not these niche hobby shops that close every 6 months. Have them open hours that are convenient for families ie evenings/mornings
Please preserve it's beautiful historical buildings and feel!
I honestly never knew of most of the special events listed in previous question 11. I would have gone to Wine Walk, Lades Night Out, or Taste of Stoughton. I am a member of the 2 Stoughton Neighborhood groups and still never heard of those events. I don't get the local paper. Were there ads in the Great Dane shopper for these events? Wish we had an Antique/Collectibles/Craft/Flea/Farmers market like used to be all over the place - great draw for people outside of town. We have the entire Mandt/fairgrounds to offer lots of booths/lots/tables in an outside venue in the fall before all the holidays begin - antiques, crafts, collectibles, harvest foods, decor, plants, gifts, etc. Make it rustic and cohesive and people will come from all over to attend.
Please focus on downtown. Focus on pedestrian safety.

Focus on getting a small grocery store like Main St. Market was with ample parking. Also, get rid of the horrible dollar general, which is always dirty and get a dollar tree.
I love it here. I wish it was easier to bike, I do love the walkability of downtown Stoughton. The downtown Farmer's market adds a great feeling of connection to the community, as does Wildwood. I also love the library!
We need to address parking and space limitations at the Senior Center.
I would value non-commercial, green public space close to downtown. *Space* with trees- not a strip or a nominal corner lot with some grass.
Outdoor seating in the appropriate months for wine /dining would be a great addition!! Better lighting on Riverside Drive! It is dangerous walking in that area after dark.
-i wish our street lights had a warmer-spectrum of light. they are like flourescent blue-white. a warmer yellowish hue would be much appreciated. -can we not patch our sidewalks (where the red faux bricks meet the cement) with black asphalt!? (sorry, but it looks lame). -what's up with the garbage/recycling cans with no dividers inside!? i guess it's all garbage then. -it would be sweet if somebody could make use of that abandoned "drive-through" restaurant (west of downtown) and turn it into a fast/healthy restaurant... called Wraps, say, and specialize in fast wraps. like 8 styles or so. turkey, curry, greek, asian, blt, veggie?... :)
Change parking restrictions, two hours doesn't give out of town shoppers enough time to have lunch and shop without fear of getting a ticket. Signs should direct folks to public parking. Chamber needs to promote downtown Stoughton and stop taking events away from downtown, example. Coffee Break used to be held downtown, there was no advertising sidewalk days, which used to be a big event for Downtown Stoughton
Additional public parking would encourage more shoppers to support the struggling downtown businesses. Signage on Main Street directing drivers to the existing public parking behind the Main Street businesses would also help non-residents to find these parking areas. Having some sort of financial incentive for small businesses to fill the many vacant storefronts would make it easier for start-ups to get a foot hold and would make the downtown much more attractive to residents and visitors alike.
Very nice downtown area. I would go more often for better restaurants and clothing options. I went more often when StoriAnne was in business. I visit Wendigo, Autumn Pearl and Wildwood Cafe the most out of the current stores downtown. I appreciate you getting our feedback!
Basic traffic laws need to be better enforced, too many U turns on Main St as well as drivers not yielding to pedestrians in crosswalks.
No public transportation. Buses? Too much truck traffic. Uniroyal smells awful. Pedestrian crossing on Water Street is super dangerous. No affordable housing. Wages too low in town to afford housing in town.
There is nothing that draws younger people
Wish shops were open in the evening. Generally, a very nice downtown. Stoughton needs to keep a balance of stores to keep it interesting to the general public.
Book store please!!!

I think Stoughton would attract a lot of people to downtown if they had live music performances other than the just the Gazebo or catfish Festival. The Nauti Norske has a beautiful venue for live music and should be used.
We love our downtown Stoughton! We love that there are several restaurant options that are open most weeknights and weekends. It would be nice to have some shops open during the weeknights, but it's not absolutely necessary. Perhaps one day a week would be nice?
More places like Wendigo please! We're there at least once a week and done variety would be appreciated!!!
Currently there are not a lot of activities to involve kids when going shopping downtown... other than next generation. If there were more attractions for small families like a rocky rococo's or chuck e cheese or a bouncy house or activity center... children's museum, painting for families, jungle gym etc... something like this would be perfect! https://www.legacyacademy.info/youngstersOpenGym.html
I have always had to travel to see a nice christmas display at downtown businesses. I would like to see from black friday till christmas downtown stoughton open on friday and saturday nites or maybe just saturday nites where you can enjoy the season of shopping more. Each business would make a window display, sell christmas stuff and be open late on those days. Our Victorian dressers could be out more than one weekend. Santa could be available, rather than going to the mall. Carriage rides, hot chocolate, special treats at the candy store. I think you get the idea.
We desperately need more kids activities. We have parks and we've added the splash pad recently, but we don't have anything indoors (for the winter) other than the library and gymnastics. I would love to see a play space for kids inside (toddlers/preschools specifically) for all the stay home parents to bring their kids. Also indoor sports. We hate having to drive all the way to KEVA just to have sports for our preschooler.
A greater upscale/modern dining and bar experience would be great. Wildwood Cafe is one of our favorite places in Stoughton.
Traveling down south we notice that a lot of downtown revitalizations had large companies in their downtown buildings that didn't take a lot of parking. For instance, Verizon has stores in small Georgia towns right in their downtown. Other carriers also had these stores, but not as many. Also, a lot of the businesses had been turned into a bed and breakfast with some having cafes or diners open to the public. While a health clinic such as Dean or Physicians Plus would need more parking than the other businesses I mentioned, a great place for them would be in the Yahara Plaza building with parking in the back. Another business that may be appealing now, but could potentially lose popularity in the future is a winery. I know that we had a wine tasting place for a while downtown, but their hours were unclear and it wasn't maybe the best location.
The historic nature of Stoughton's downtown is what makes it unique and irreplaceable. Whatever revitalization happens should focus on taking advantage of the historic properties we already have and making them shine. The setup of the downtown is something other towns can't compete with, we just need to take advantage of it. For example, the building Elsing's is in is for sale. It's going to take a lot of work but could be another centerpiece for the town like the Lageret and the art gallery. What can we do as a town to make sure the building is put to use? I hear a lot from people that they want somewhere they can sit outside- if we could encourage sidewalk seating at existing restaurants that would be popular. I think people are looking for places they can go that have events or community building things. So not just a store, but a place that does tastings and classes, for example.

I have many suggestions; need to promote the Opera House in Madison. Need quick action on the development of the derelict buildings on the Yahara River. What an eyesore for prospective home owners. Put a bridge across the river into Mandt Park. Open it up!! The West Mall, Walmart, has taken business from downtown. The challenge is that there are enough eating places. We need more shops, cultural places, boutiques that may have to be subsidized by the city until folks have had enough of Walmart. Got to spruce up downtown!! Put some money into the buildings. Keep the rents attractive to retain businesses. Has to be competitive! Make some hard choices on ceilings on rent, zoning, and investing money in downtown. As an Eastsider we are getting the short end of the stick. Get those business parks up to snuff and work to attract new industries to Stoughton. A full time person to hunt up some industries over the long all. Promote the historic districts, the hospital, the museum; complete and promote the hiking and biking trails. They need attention and would attract younger folks The river is a hidden gem that has not been touched! Do some development by it and on It!!
Stoughton needs more public parking.
Downtown Stoughton is a treasure. But it is neglected when it should be nurtured. I have money to spend and would love to spend it in Stoughton. But stores are mostly closed and there is so little variety that the things I need to buy - I end up going to the mall or online. Businesses really need to stay open in the evenings both during the week and weekend. Question 9 should have allowed for multiple answers! (it is convenient for me to shop after work during the week - 5-7pm, after 7pm, all day Saturday and even Saturday evening which wasn't even offered as an option) We finally have a dedicated coffee shop downtown but it closes at 2 on Saturday! Stay open! Advertise! People can't spend their money in your shop if they don't know you're there. Store owners may say no one is there later in the day but people would come to the stores if they knew the stores were there and open.
We need a clothing store, a shoe store, and for the bakery & restaurants to be open on Monday's.
Downtown Stoughton is one of the reasons we moved to Stoughton and to a house close to downtown. It's upsetting to see so much turnover with businesses. We try to shop local as much as possible. Stoughton should try to cater to the Opera House clientele who come for dinner and a show by supporting AirBnB and other opportunities that make it easy to stay overnight and shop. Also, there need to be more places for families with young kids to be on the weekend. We go to the library and the Gazebo Musikk, but would love more opportunities, like Kids in the Rotunda in Madison.
One of the reasons we moved to Stoughton was because of the historic charming downtown. The City needs to do more to keep downtown vibrant, particularly invest more resources into streetscaping, beautification, and street/sidewalk upkeep. Wherever possible, the City should plant and do more to keep healthy street trees in the greater downtown area.
It is very hard to depart from a parking space as Highway 51 is so busy. I avoid the downtown area sometimes due to this issue. I'd like to see a bookstore, a lunch restaurant with fresh salad bar options, a shoe store I've heard talk of public bathrooms - I think anybody can go into the library and use the bathroom? I think public bathrooms are not needed and can be crime magnets.
Would like to see more unique clothes stores for younger children or young adults.
❤️Stoughton
Downtown Stoughton has so much to offer but it lacks in being a day destination as there are not enough businesses and activities that someone would come out for the day to enjoy. a beautiful boutique hotel with lounge and bar would be a great attraction for locals and visitors. More specialty

shops like another small food coop, butcher shop, farm to table style restaurant, clothing/shoe shop, homewares etc. would be a great addition. sidewalk dining in our beautiful summer evenings at a restaurant.
I don't feel as if this survey covers the downtown issues...many city officials never shop downtown so they do not know what having a store downtown entails. A small business cannot compete with a big box nor an online store with free shipping. City council can ask all kinds of questions like this, but unless they are willing to shop downtown and a majority of stores, they are not doing the downtown stores any favors.
Stay at home mom should be an option above^^^^^ We visit the library & Fosdal's frequently as well as other visit shops in town. If there was a place like Firefly coffee house in Oregon it would be busy all the time. Groups of moms I hang with meet there on a weekly basis and it's always hopping. Adjacent parking is key especially for older crowd and those of us managing young children.
I would love to see a vibrant space with options for food and shopping.
Anything to bring more young families to Stoughton will be appreciated. Oregon is growing at 10x Stoughton....what are they doing?
Currently, anyone can open any business in downtown Stoughton. There has to be formal guidelines because we have watched several undesirable businesses open up which has devalued Main Street (e.g. CBD, Smoke shop, thrift shops, pawn shop). It's no wonder good stores have closed surrounded by this environment. Continue to encourage building owners to improve their facades with an emphasis on restoration of the beautiful architecture. Encourage more retail and restaurants as opposed to offices. Snow removal needs to be done very early in the morning when cars are not present - right now, people cannot exit cars and get to sidewalks without walking down to the corner. Consider seeking developers to convert buildings (above Lifetime Dentistry, above the tumblers, and by railroad) into condos and higher end apartments. Edgerton has done a great job with that.
The stoughto9n Chamber of Commerce needs to step up efforts to help fill empty business by offering a monetary incentive for new business to open up on main Street. . Telling us that they leave this to "market forces" is not a good idea. Also Downtown merchants are not usually open on evenings except at XMAS and never on Sundays so there is no incentive to go downtown. Stoughton is a bedroom community to Madison and merchants cannot succeed being open 9-5 Monday thru Friday and having only morning hours on Saturdays.
I love the businesses that are here, but it's hard to patronize the downtown shops with their limited weekday evening hours. My favorite places in Stoughton are Big Sky, Wildwood, Wendigo, Dune, Cheezers - all excellent places to spend my time! The public library is also an amazing community asset, and I appreciate their generous evening hours because I can stop by after work. The seasonal Sunday hours are great, too.
We are missing some of the very basic places that most towns have. Ex: Dry Cleaner Ice cream shop Nail salon Basic Italian restaurant Actually having any kind of restaurant that serves food past 9pm would be amazing

There is very little in Stoughton for a young family to do. Everything caters to elderly people, which effects the quality and type of stores that go downtown. Dune and Wendigo are changing that, and I'm so appreciative of their efforts. We also need more options for date nights. Blue Sky has random hours, making it hard to eat there. The loss of the coffee shop with a play area took away a favorite activity I'd do with other moms and our littles. Perhaps an art center for toddlers would be excellent, similar to those in more affluent suburbs (ex Creando). The library is the only thing to do with young kids during the day, so that gets overcrowded and not fun. An upscale clothing boutique for kids and adults, similar to Madewell or Anthropologie, would be absolutely amazing. I'd go there at least weekly, if not more. A home goods store that doesn't focus on antiques or farmhouse decor would be great as well. I spend a decent amount of money at these places online, so if they were closer, I'd just go in person. I would also spend a good chunk of time at a craft store. A place like Noodles would be fantastic for eating with young kids - fast and good. Parking is subpar. The area by KK needs to get fixed, as people randomly walk across the street expecting cars to stop for them. KK needs a bigger parking lot for sure. Also, please no more head shops.
I really wish there was bookstore/used bookstore in downtown Stoughton. Midwest Books has been closed for a very long time now, wish a new store would move in.
Would love to see more casual sit down restaurants/breweries, more shopping options for apparel, home decor & gifts, more outdoor seating (& rooftop seating) at the restaurants, a children's museum, and most importantly, a public gathering space similar to Madison's Memorial Union...the gazebo area by the Fire Station is nice, but not big enough, doesn't have any tables or seating, is on a hill, and does not have any businesses attached to get food or beverages...would be amazing to have a space along the river for this somewhere with a view. Would also love to see a river walk/pier/boardwalk similar to places like Oconomowoc, downtown Milwaukee, Baraboo even. I have lots of ideas :)
Would like to observe the noise ordinances and vehicle ordinances pertaining to speeding and careless driving habits be enforced more than they seem to be.
1. I think we've hurt our downtown by providing new space for businesses on the outskirts of town...incentive some of those stores to relocate to the downtown area and we might have a chance. 2. Another thought regarding 'NON-Stoughton store(s)' I suggest Stoughton consider providing "shared space" for different small businesses, entrepreneurs, or even local groups. The space could be rented out on a monthly basis. (like the Bodgery in Madison for example) 3. I also think having a centralized space for START and other important social nonprofits that support the citizens of Stoughton would be beneficial to all of us!
I dislike the parallel parking on Main Street. It limits the space available and stops traffic, plus it's hard. Would love to see angled parking.
Businesses turn over rapidly. Many times hours of operation don't suit the need of consumers. Parking is a deterrent.

We are in desperate need for more children attractions here. Kinder musik or a childrens museum or open drop in classes all times of day. We are all going to Madison for jumping gyms or the childrens museum. There are a few options here, but most of them are during working hours and that doesn't work for everyone.
We love a few of the places in downtown Stoughton, like Wildwood and Fosdal's, and that's often where we begin our Saturdays. However, we often head to the near east side of Madison for the rest of the day. Right now, Stoughton's downtown has a lot of really niche stores that make it a great place to shop for gifts, but that's not something I do on a regularly basis. I really only spend time in those stores close to Christmastime. We'd definitely spend more of our normal days in downtown Stoughton if there was a nice outdoor place to grab a beer and a specialty sandwich and have a picnic, hang out with friends, and listen to live music (like Olbrich Biergarten or The Hop Garden in Paoli). Division Street Park has come a long way but could benefit from some additional seating. Rotary Park is also nice for live music, but there's no great seating or places nearby to grab food or drinks to go.
It would be nice to see better City parking it would be nice to have a nice shoe store clothing store because the Walmart that went up yes still can't find anything in it that you need in a little something different for fast food other than Subs and Pizza
We love downtown and would like to keep the current charm of the area while growing the business culture. Wildwood is a great example of a business who has quickly grown roots into the area and an excellent example of the type of business we'd like to see more of.
Relatively recently (5 or so years ago) downtown had some really unique shopping options...Boyd's Mercantile, Lilystone, Next Generation, A day in the Country, Storiann, All through the House...I could spent a whole morning shopping and buying really fun, unique items. Now with the exception of Next Generation the stores are all closed or seem sparse when you walk through. I am not sure why some places downtown stand the rest of time, while others don't make it. It's really sad to see so many great businesses shut down. More help from the city with advertising maybe? The addition of a well Known restaurant (Sugar River Pizza or something similar)? Since the new Walmart, downtown really needs help. I will always try to support local businesses, but right now, there isn't much down there.
The city should spend more time and money in maintaining the city owned buildings such as the power house, depot , storage barn at racetrack park, senior center. Make downtown Stoughton unique like New Glarus, Mt. Horeb, Westby, Blackriver Falls, Ashland. Expand on the Norwegian Heritage and preserve the footprints from the past to draw visitors to the community. Have new buildings built in Scandinavian architecture .
need flowers on the utility poles
Did not list the Public Library, Senior Center or Opra House as a reason to be downtown but they do bring me downtown.
Love Dune Gift & Home and Wildwood Café! I go there whenever I am able and would love to see more shops (like a plant store like Wildewood) that would make it fun to stay for longer!
I absolutely adore Dune, as I think it's an incredibly innovative and personal store that breathes life into the downtown. Having stores that offer unique and on-trend items (versus felted hats and Victorian furniture) is so important. Dune is the true reason I visit downtown Stoughton as a young millennial living on the West side of Madison.
Connect bike/walking paths to downtown
Bike path connecting Stoughton to McFarland!
The stores need to be open in the evening more - especially on Opera House show nights.

The street lights are dim, the sidestreets are rough and bumby. They used to string lights and garlind across main street, which they should still do because it was super pretty. It would also make the town more attractive.
Beautiful little city, nice music and food scene. You forgot to add the Opera House to your list. This is one of Stoughton's jewels! I'm anxious to see if the river development takes place..
Need better sit down restaurants & antique malls downtown
We currently have a bunch of wonderful businesses, which contribute to a strong community. Downtown has a lot to offer - a couple great restaurants, brew pub, library, opera house, theatre - but need a few things to keep us looking forward (ex, shared workspace office). But, we also have some real eyesores - mainly Uniroyal - which should be re-located to the business park. Focus should be on attracting less specialty stores - like home decor - we have many already.
The whitewater park should bring more tourist spending to Stoughton which should elevate the downtown businesses and probably bring in a paddling/outdoor retailer.
Water front would be cool.
The alleys are a mess all the way from Forrest Street to Water Street. There is junk, weeds, peeling paint on buildings. The old laundry building on the south side of the Hyland building has been collapsed and rats breeding in it for years, looks awful and very visible to everyone. The building that was Cully's Bar on Water Street is an eyesore and should be restored and re-painted to cover the black. Traffic flow-North Fifth St. should be a "right turn only" onto Main, very poor visibility there. Would like to see a diner, supper club, Dollar Store, grocery, hair salon, on the EAST SIDE. Stoughton does NOT end at the railroad tracks, It is a long way from that side of town to the west side to get an item that Kwik Trip doesn't carry and so inconvenient. Stoughton is becoming one big mess- so divided-new street dept. way out on the East end-new high - end neighborhood on the West side-crazy traffic from one end to the other.Whitewater Park? Remove the dam? Apartments on the river for a couple thousand a month? We will not be retiring hereafter all.
A great place to live
What downtown Mt. Horeb has become seems like a good model. Sad the co-op closed. More greenspace, please! I would volunteer to maintain gardens.
We are missing a communications opportunity by not putting banner signage over Main Street to advertise events, etc. Main Street gets a lot of rush hour and other traffic. I perceive there are fewer bus tour groups coming to town for Livsreisse, shopping, lunch, etc.
We love it, and think that with a few minor improvements it could be really extraordinary!
Maxwell Street days needs more marketing. I only assume when it will be, but have not seen any advertising for it. Also, need more stores to participate in all events, to increase number of shoppers and to expand the store hours for evenings and week ends. You have to be open to attract more customers.
I think it is vital to the cimmunity that downtown continues to thrive. Caution to the City in allowing too many tatoo shops and bars. We need a balanced mix of good retail and restaurants in order to bring customers and visitors.

I hear people complain about parking time restrictions. Main St parking may be empty or nearly empty and still people get tickets for overtime 2 hr.parking. Seems a bit unfriendly. Perhaps this should be looked into and some revisions made.
Bike trail connection between the river trails.
have been lied to yelled at when i ask specific question refused to be helped and after being ignored i never went back. not worth my time to even try any more. i was even chased down the street and threatened to have my ass kicked because of my opinion. made police report, but still nothing done. i do not shop here anymore!! even laura trotter, head of the chamber, did not care.
Stoughton is missing an oportunity to include a Norwegian Restaurant. Visitors are surprised to learn we do not have ethnic foods.It would be a great addition to include as part of our Norwegian Heritage.
It is a beautiful city with a lot of potential. Stores should have open hours on Sundays.
I am very passionate about downtown. I shop locally when I can and am disappointed with the number of businesses closing. With the yahara and lakes, Stoughton has potential to draw in traffic based on natural/outdoor sites and activities AND the historic downtown. I am new to the city (<2 years) but wonder if the chamber is as supportive of small businesses as it could be. I also feel like the city does not do enough advertising...before I moved here from sun prairie I had no idea of the charm or potential of the town. A thriving downtown will draw visitors but also more residents...hopefully this will reverse the decline in school enrollment. All of this is linked together. We should be looking at other towns that have successfully preserved their heritage and become a tourist draw...think cedarburg, Wi, Stillwater, mn, etc.
I love the businesses we have, would love to see more!
Many empty stores make Stoughton seem like a ghost town during day. Better signage (at each corner) to show pedestrians which way to walk to find specific Restaurants, gift shop, art gallery, etc.
I try to shop Stoughton as much as I can. Usually get gifts at All Through the House and Cheesers. Home improvements / refinishing done through Slinde's, etc.
Would like some more diverse restaurant choices - Greek, Thai, Japanese, Italian. We do not need any more pizza restaurants or gas stations! Need another coffee shop with more hours - something like Firefly in Oregon. Love the Opera House & free concerts in the summer. The city needs to enforce cars stopping for pedestrians in the crosswalk -it is a real issue downtown
Support the businesses. Hold events downtown!! NOT Mandt Park, NOT the hospital. You ask them to support the events and be sponsors and be involved with the Chamber but yet don't advertise the event, or return the "support" to the businesses that put the time money and energy into an event. SUPPORT DOWNTOWN!!
Love to walk there. Happy with the theater. Post Office and Library are constants for me.
I live down town. There are too many empty spots.
I hope that the focuses groups really make some considerable action plans for the future of our Stoughton community. I am invested and want/need to see progress.
Need more stores downtown to balance the Hwy 51 store area

Would be nice to have dining options on Main St, esp with the gymnastics and now dance studio on Main.... That are open nightly. Wendigo and 51 South are not open on Monday, neither is El Rio Grande and Main St Kitchen isnt open at night.
We just moved here in May and haven't explored much due to construction and business hours. Syttende Mai was a great way to get to know some of the businesses and community. The "Taste of Stoughton" wasn't downtown. There also wasn't much there. It seemed more for the Parade of Homes. We felt like we wasted our time going to it.
Stoughton needs better parking, easier access to some of the stores. I work at laz bistro, and the top complaint I hear from people is the lack of public parking available.
I don’t think Stoughtonites appreciate the beauty of our downtown and how lucky we are to have the amenities we have.
my Top three picks for stoughton would be (in no particular order)... Wine bar Boutique Great! restaurant
Please, keep throwing money at Stienkraus and KPW and non-profit retirement housing, so that we can pay it through higher taxes and the loss of downtown. If stoughton is so attractive to them, and they're making a profit, why does the city need to continuously accept their requests for more and more money? Good Job!
I know that there's alot of people, including myself that's gluten free/has a allergy to food. I think that it would be nice/great, if there's places that serves or sells foods that we can eat. I know that there's also some where their food can't be cooked or by other non gluten stuff, for it can't be crossed contaminated, other wise they get sick.
Stoughton should find a way to help Uniroyal relocate to the industrial park. Develop this land as apartments/ condos on the River with commercial use such as Willy’s coop on the first floor. The proposed Riverfront development could include similar commercial/residential mix but also a park that would connect via a pedestrian/bike bridge with Mandt Park. Syttende Mai activates could move from behind Kegonsa plaza to a structure in the new park and Kegonsa plaza could be used as parking lot.
Use the library regularly
I have made a point to do ALL my shopping in Stoughton. I do NOT shop at Wal-Mart. Shoes are missing and a coffee shop a la Firefly in Oregon.
Parking tickets are ridiculous!
SHOPS ARE NEVER OPEN IN THE EVENING. WHY DON'T THEY STAY OPEN TILL 8 PM ONE WEEK NIGHT. PREFERABLY ALL ON THE SAME NIGHT. I WISH WE HAD PANERA BREAD IN TOWN TOO MANY SHOPS CLOSING AND EMPTY STOREFRONTS ARE NOT INVITING THEY NEED MORE ACTIVITIES TO BRING PEOPLE DOWNTOWN
Downtown Stoughton is lovely. I appreciate the many businesses that have preserved the original look of their store-fronts. It feels good to see such a busy, thriving downtown in a small town.
First and formost...I was not able to go back to review my answers and very disappointed in survey questions.

I like stoughton Its a pleasant drive from Madison I didnt know about the town festivals and events listed I think it eould hrlp to publicize in the Isthmus and NPR
I always enjoy coming to Stoughton: we absolutely love the Opera House and Cinema Cafe! (We spend a lot of time at the SEA facility for our sons' basketball games, and it's always fun exploring the downtown area between games.)
One of the reasons we moved to Stoughton was because of the nice downtown area. I rarely go into Madison and don't feel like I need to because we can access a lot here in Stoughton. I am very much in favor of any further downtown development and improvements, especially along the river front. I think there is so much potential and look forward to see what Stoughton can become in the future!
curious to visit your town and explore the possibilities for reasons to return as l enjoy visiting the state. l live in the Black Hills of South Dakota and travel there for disc golf and holidays.
I love the waterfront dining at Nauti Norske. It's great that Fosdal's bakery is still there, and that the library is downtown and free parking is handy. Of course, the Opera House is a great draw to downtown. I like the preservation of individual and unique historic storefronts.
I appreciate you tackling this challenge; a vibrant downtown is difficult to find in the time of e-commerce.I would love a bookstore, but Book World, a WI based chain which I always thought would be a good fit, closed all of its stores two years ago. There use to be some wonderful home decor shops here at various times, but all of the good ones have closed. A nice gourmet food store like the one that used to be in the dollar store location, would be nice. An other resale store, one that includes furniture and household goods, would be great.
There's nothing to do on Tuesdays or most Sundays. Everything closes too early.
Stoughton has a lovely downtown but we only go to the library on a regular basis. We don't eat out that often. If I need anything else I go to Walmart since they have a little of everything. Other stores I frequent is the Stoughton Garden Center, Cheesers (occasionally), Stoughton Cinema Cafe, Pick and Save.
Love it, but wish that stores are open later after I commute home. Wish there was more on the East side besides just a Kwick Trip. We need better bike lanes! A grocery within walking distance is important to me, too.
I am concerned about the sheer number and high proportion of alcohol outlets and tobacco outlets downtown. I worry that the ease of purchasing vape products will harm the health of our community, and I worry that the drinking culture of Wisconsin as reflected and enhanced in downtown Stoughton will be bad for us in the long run.
Need more main street charm, something to attract people to Stoughton. More children's activities.
A lot of stores I've loved have closed (StoriAnnes, Lily Stone) and I understand that online shopping is taking away from business. I try to support downtown stores as much as possible. When we are downtown (family of 5) we most frequently go to Main Street Kitchen, Viking Brew Pub, Next Generation, McGlynns, and Wendigo. Once my kids get a bit older, I'll have more time to shop on my own downtown. It would be great to see a sushi restaurant but I'm not sure if that is a high priority for others in Stoughton.
We do not need a white water park.
While we are empty nesters, we have our grandchildren every chance we can get them....we like to do things with them in town as well :)
Love to support local. Cannot wait for more open air venues for dinners and gatherings
I wish the Norwegian Center was more flexible about use of their parking lot. I would be willing to pay a small amount to have a parking spot during their non-business hours. It seems unwelcoming that they never let the general public use it.

Love the library, the PostOffice Cheesers and Big Sky. Very charming town with lovely people. But I do miss Yahara Co-Op
I love the downtown!! Having the library, post office, plus the stores is so convenient!
Need to start appealing to young families! Bike path from downtown Stoughton to Madison. Flags on bridge pointing out things to do on other side. Flags by fire station pointing out things to do down hill. Better signage for parking. Give sr center facelift...like Liveriese. Grant's to help stores update storefronts. Benches facing street! Green space with bathrooms. Make better use of land along river!
I believe what you are doing...researching and finding an identity for downtown is what is needed. We need to find a niche that has not been filled in the Madison area. Our proximity to Madison is one of our greatest assets. Also marketing to the smaller communities south of us (Edgerton, Janesvillle etc.) Coming up with an identity and then working to draw those types of businesses here is the key. The second key is funding to make it affordable for those businesses to get a foothold and then flourish.
Let demand dictate what goes on downtown. The city needs to stay the hell out of it and quite spending my tax money on all these so called researchers
Also need more public bathrooms. Longer hours for local business. We really need to emphasize Stoughton's history and Norwegian background. Mt Horeb has really passed us up.
Well maintained!
I would REALLY like stoughton to have a nicely done gym...like the Princeton club or harbor athletic.
I work and live in Stoughton. I work in a professional office but I am underpaid. Office manager was getting paid over $50,000 she did not even go to college. I did go to college and I get paid over $20,000. I work a second job. The boss does not care my opinion.
Do the riverfront project right! Don't turn it into significant/primarily subsidized/low income housing. Must have shopping , good restaurant/bars, live music or it wont work. Build it and they will come.
Fix the roads !
If I go down town its to McGlynn's or the bakery there is not much down town any more
I've only lived here 2.5 years and really like it here. Stoughton has a lot to offer. Compared to so many other smaller cities the downtown is pretty lively!
I hope we can keep a movie theater (albeit with nicer seats). The restaurant hours are good, but specialty store hours are not the best if you work in Madison but live in Stoughton. Bring back a bridal boutique store with a lingerie section.
Get ride of the lady giving parking tickets -- how unfriendly. you can't see a 2 hour movie without getting a ticket. We need more rive access -- more paths. and turn off coopers causeway -- and clean up the park by the Luke Stoughton house on division.
They need more week night hours.

My biggest concern is the foolishness of the Whitewater park development. I certainly wouldn't go in that water and it will have a negative impact on the excellent existing activities that take place at Mandt Park, like the fair.
We have a lovely downtown with a lot of attractions. My difficulty has been understanding business hours. I had family visit on a Tuesday and was excited to show them our downtown unknowingly over half the businesses were closed and the restaurant we went to was closing. They were gracious enough to stay open to let us finish eating. But that’s been one of my struggles.
Would love to see more resturants(steak, Italian) adult clothing. Love next generation! Love library
Need clothing and shoe store(s) and more restaurants
Needs serious consideration for accessibility, but I love being able to go there to the library and would do MUCH more shopping and dining if places were accessible. Would love to try Wendigo and Big Sky but can't get in. Can't get in to Fosdals or any other coffee shop.
It’s quaint and friendly. Parking and traffic can get bad especially during rush hour or special events. I like drive through restaurants and there aren’t any downtown. I’d like a clothing store (new) downtown.
I would love to see later hours and some weekend hours on Sundays for the shops downtown
I couldn't check more than one box about when it's convenient for me to shop, so I'd like to add that I'd like to see stores open a little earlier and later on weekdays in addition to Sunday hours.
I was really sad to see the grocery coop close. I liked being able to walk to a grocery store. It would be great to see something similar move into downtown, especially once the farmers markets close down for the winter.
I would love to see a clothing store and a book store!
The area is relatively dated in it's offerings. Lots of antique or home decor stores make the area feel like it's built mainly for those in their 60s. We need more businesses that attract a younger (25-40) audience or it will continue to decline. From what it sounds like from talking with neighbors, Stoughton has strict laws and the committees that oversee them can be difficult to work with. If the town wants to bring more people to the area, we need to make downtown livelier and a destination/experience.
Whatever is being done keep it affordable... taxes in Stoughton are ridiculously high. We have the second highest property taxes and we should really be lower than Madison, Middleton, Verona, Fitchburg and yer we are only beat out by one!! That’s pretty bad...
Have you considered starting meetups in the area? I spend a lot of my time elsewhere simply because it’s hard to meet people here being a newer city member
Main Street is in desperate need of repair from Hoel Rd to Lynn St. They’re awful!
I hear opinions that local businesses should be open on Sundays. I disagree! That’s what makes our small town appealing to people like me. I have small town values and don’t prefer the hustle and bustle of Madison. I am disappointed in the Catfish Music Festival. Why pick the same week(end) as the Stoughton Jr Fair!?!? We are a 4-H Family and were really put-off by that decision. I know it impacted our attendance and your attendance too.
Don’t want to lose the charm of downtown. We don’t frequent as often as we’d like but would absolutely dine out weekly if we had a couple nice restaurants. They don’t need to be chains but Examples like Bar Taco (Hilldale), Cafe Hollander (Hilldale), Texas Roadhouse, Benvenuto’s, etc. biking

brew pub isn’t bad but feel like food options for dining out in Stoughton are just average at best. Often go to Madison to eat out.
The people fighting progress in Stoughton need to stop. The older generation trying to dictate how things are run need to understand that we should be trying to attract younger people and families. Our school district is suffering. We'd see higher tax revenues. We have so much potential as far as becoming a destination for visitors but we can't seem to figure out some basic requirements. Take a look at places like Asheville, NC, Denver, CO, San Diego, CA, Austin, TX...I realize these are far bigger cities but we should be trying to replicate some of their attractions - outdoor dining, regulations that allow people to play music past 9 pm, pet friendly, etc. Stoughton is so stuck in it's ways. We should stop fighting the growth on the West side of town - Downtown should be rejuvenated IN ADDITION to expanding our amenities in other parts of the City. Our East side sucks. We have to be better. We need more affordable housing that doesn't mean low income apartments in the Kegonsa school district. Other cities seem to be figuring this out - Sun Prairie is booming and we could be too. It's so disappointing that our current city government only seems to care about Downtown and how THEY think it should be.
I think there is a great variety of shops downtown, though it would be nice to fill the void of those that recently closed. I try to "shop local" for the holidays for my out-of-state family, but find the options are limited after 5 on weeknights (I tried on a Thursday in November, and all but the Hallmark store was closed).
Find a way to make downtown more interesting to shop. Shop owners should be open later in the evening, can't get back to Stoughton by 5. Help fill empty storefronts, especially during holiday season - encourage pop up shops?
Outside of buildings look tired. Not a big fan of sandwich type signage. Benches are nice, but when you want to use them to watch Sytende Mai Parades, they face the wrong way! I have seen benches than can swivel both directions. As seniors, we don't make lots of purchases. We frequent Cheesers, Hallmark Gifts and Cards, McGlynn Pharmacy, the Drive-up Bank for McFarland State Bank, and the Opera House. Once in a while we eat downtown at Big Sky and Wendigo's.
Too much 'trying' to be Norwegian... you are not Norwegian anymore and very few people care about that. It is NOT an attraction... Syttende Mai, Victorian Holiday, Coffee Break, etc. are lame events and have been for years. You need to focus more on attracting food, crafts, arts and related events. Or specialty food retail... possibly professional businesses like tech incubators, etc. would be helpful. Stoughton's downtown is nice... it is the heart of your community... it is a critical piece that I fear is being ignored by local leaders in favor of exterior development. Your downtown is what makes you special... if you let that fail, you will lose the most valuable asset of your community.
The Stoughton Co-op was a huge loss for downtown. I’d love to see it replaced with something similar. We could also benefit from a book store chain in our city.
Don't allow big stores like Walmart and dunking donuts to build in the future. Their convenience drives traffic away from downtown

Would love to see the coming bike trail extend all the way to downtown, with a dedicated trail or lane so not to upset drivers and keep bikers safe. Having later evening hours and weekend hours, especially Sunday is important. Start an ongoing celebration like Atwood does with first Fridays to get people to come out more regularly. Help local businesses host bands, the cost to do so could be shared. This could encourage people to come downtown to see a show at Viking, Wendigo or other venue without that venue having to bare the brunt of the costs. Go Stoughton....let's see what can be done! So exciting!
There are plenty of bars, different types of business need to come in...but businesses that are known would help draw people down town. If you put a art store down town, I would do one like Blick, it's a smaller art store very much like michaels but smaller scale.
Thank goodness for Fosdals. I wish we could have kept the co op going. Wendigo and Vik ing Brewpub are excellent places to visit. Also Opera House is a treasure!
I'd like to see fewer empty store fronts, both downtown and on the west side of town. The viking brewery could be much more of an attraction if the exterior matched the interior a bit better! It would be nice if new stores/restaurants could have signage approved more quickly so they don't have to resort to hand-written signs while waiting for approval.
Weekend hours need to be worked on. Very sad to see Stori Ann leave...that is a huge miss.
The number of hoops needed to jump through to open a business is ridiculous. Also increase the quota for liquor licenses.
It is a great little town
I would like to see the Riverfront development tie closely into the downtown, in terms of draw and appeal. I think the Riverfront, the Library and Main Street could all work together beautifully with the right planning!
Lon's Tailgaters plays their music too loud! You can't even have a conversation the music is so loud! Nauti Norske has horrible service.
It would be great to have more public spaces - especially along the river front. Bike/walk trails with night lighting, art sculptures, outdoor music/entertainment areas/plazas, adult-size swings, playgrounds, fountains, chess/checker tables, picnic/relaxation areas, places for street vendors, shaded places to sit... ways to get diverse cultural activities would be great as well.
Best things: Restaurants/bars: Wildwood Cafe, Wendigo's, Nauti Norske, Big Sky Diamond's Select Woodland Studios Opera House New City Hall Worst: parking for Opera House

We don’t need more stores, shops, restaraunts ... build something that makes Stoughton vibrant ... special .., standout. Wal-Mart? Blah. Who cares? Culver’s? Blah, they are everywhere. There is nothing that sets stoughton apart. Bless our Norwegian heritage but look at something else to “brand” our identity. Enough with the Norske stuff. That it well covered here. Think bike trails, walking paths, USE the river to attract young people and outdoorsy people. Build a attractive outdoor aquatic center. The mud hole is quaint but so very old and unattractive. We live to do things other than shop and eat. I’d be hard pressed to point out something that makes Stoughton stand out from the crowd. Look for that, not another shop or sub shop.
Please don't make this about shopping! Downtown's are much more important to our communities than as just another shopping district. Downtown's should be about concentrating a visitor's or resident's experience of the community. After visiting a downtown, a visitor should know a little something about the community and experienced some of the best of what the community has to offer - whether it is a unique environmental benefit, outstanding design, unique food, regional art or fun events. Making it about shopping and retail does everyone a disservice. Shopping is a necessary chore that few enjoy and should be done as efficiently and in as little time as possible. The growth of on-line retail is proof of this.
We grow our own veggies and fruits and are not big consumers so we don't shop much in Stoughton. When we do, it is either at St Vinny's, Stoughton Spirits or Tractor Supply. Twice a year friends from NYC go to Cheeser';s but Stoughton downtown has rarely provided much shopping appeal for us.
I went to the Olbrich Garden Walk Friday morning. It would have been helpful to have signs, advertisements, maps, etc. advertising Stoughton's downtown. After the walk I called the chamber suggesting they advertise shopping and eating downtown at events such as that. The woman I spoke with (a person other than Laura whose name I can't remember) said they were out of maps and they have an order in with the printer. She also said that when she goes to events she seeks out the downtown area to explore. I told her I do that too, but we can't assume all other people do that and that advertising our downtown would be helpful at events such as these to bring more people downtown. I was very disappointed when Sfibi closed and talked to Rebecca the owner about it. She expressed that she wished there would be more support from the chamber in getting people to come downtown. Another shopowner told me she doesn't think she will be able to afford the chamber fee, as well as the advertisement fee that comes with every advertisement for the business that the chamber puts out. I'd like to learn more about what the chamber does and doesn't do for the businesses and the ideas they have for the downtown. I would like to see viable businesses go in downtown and not more insurance companies, finance companies, and offices. I would much rather go downtown than to the half-vacant strip malls that dot Stoughton. As you can see, my zip code is not Stoughton. I live in the town of Dunn, halfway between Stoughton and Oregon and have an Oregon address.
Would love better bike access, better quality resteraunts, nice river access, wider sidewalks, less traffic noise, more public art-statues and murals, monthly art walk - friendly first Friday type event would be fun
We would love to see a coffee shop/cafe that is open later in the evenings.
A fun coffee shop with good sandwiches and coffee would be great. That’s seems to be lacking here in stoughton. Wildwood is nice, but something in addition that working at would be easy.

I am thrilled about our beautiful small town. When I see the activity in the downtown on a regular basis I am so proud. Please do not allow a bypass to occur, if the traffic leaves the downtown area, we are dead. All the small towns that have had a bypass happen appear to be dead in the water.
The downtown businesses are in my opinion mostly specialty shops or eateries all of the same flavor.
It's pretty lovely, and it seems like it is straddling a divide between old stoughton and the direction people coming to stoughton are wanting to take it. It has the potential to really thrive and grow given the right set up.
I wish the YRGC could have been maintained. Being a single older adult, however, I would buy limited amounts of items. I liked the deli.
Less bars, more coffee shops
Really Miss the Coop! Love Wildwood Cafe and Wendigo. I have a soy allergy and both of these restaurants cook with out soy. Last I checked they are really my only two Options in Stoughton to eat at.
Born & raised Stoughton Missing alot...ie. dime stores, clothing stores, shoe stores, soda fountains/ice cream cones
Every store should be accessible to everyone.
Invest in downtown and along the river. A brewery would be fantastic anywhere in town (this would be in addition to Viking brew pub). The real estate along the river needs to be developed with public outdoor space, music venues, outdoor activities (white water kayaking park!!!), etc. Stoughton has sooooo much more potential with its yahara river running through town and Lake Kegonsa. Both are soooo underutilized.
Great survey. Stoughton has many great entertainment options. The addition of the Saturday Farmer's market has been well received. I would think a simple brochure with a map with the location of all the stores and a simple description of of the stores would be helpful.
It is an undiscovered gem.
Please no more freaking antiques stores.
Please fix the streets sooner than later. They are a safety hazard and are embarrassing to tourists.
It has such a great and lively atmosphere, very unique. However as a young adult there isn't much in the way of nightly activities, it seems like everything closes at 6 downtown and I don't get off of work until 7. I just feel like the accessibility isn't always there time-wise
I love downtown Stoughton. I have family who owns a business in Downtown Stoughton. I think parking is an issue, but don't see how it can be improved.
I am plus sized. So the clothing stores never had much for me.
The current light posts are not bright at night. Snow removal in the city and downtown was poor last year.
More flashing crosswalk signs would be great. The stores I visit the most outside of downtown are Loft, REI, and Trader Joe's. And outlet version of REI would be great downtown and would bring more people from Madison. Similar to this place in Denver: https://www.wildernessx.com/.
It's cute, but there is not many places that are actually useful to me. I don't need a bunch of gift shops, I want stores where I can get things I use regularly. I love the addition of the cbd shop and enjoy the restaurants and movie theater, but I will likely never go to any of the oddball specialty shops.
Parking is the big issue. No matter what you do to downtown stoughton, parking is the big bottleneck, plus the buildings are only suitable for niche stores anymore.
I really like downtown Stoughton. I would love to support it more rather than driving to Madison.

Overhead street lighting in downtown should match the overhead lighting near the chamber of commerce and Laz Bistro section... Much easier to see if anyone or anything is in the road in that area. ALL pedestrian crossings in Stoughton should have the light up signs for crossing.
Keep the footbridge!
Look at Waunakee"s community center, I love that place. We need a community swimming rec area. Where you can ice skate in winter. Outside discovery for families.
I love our downtown, it’s very cute and clean. Some of the store options could be improved, they seem kind of old. I wouldn’t mind more places with outdoor seating. Nauti Norske is my favorite downtown for that. We like the ice cream shop in the movie theater.
Lights stopping traffic for pedestrians walk up to high. Need to be more at eye level!
Please clean up the areas south of downtown and around the potential river development. Let’s make the new river development something special.
Limited store hours is an issue for most people working outside of Stoughton. Sun Prairie and Cottage Grove are growing....review their growth strategies.
I would like to see stoughton focus on improvements instead of expansion. The more we expand, the more people, the more people, the more crime and taxes we have to deal with. Example: sun prairie. Let's fix what we have! The whole reason to live here Is to have quiet and safe living. I can drive to madison and sun prairie to get things I can't here. Keep all that big city crap up north!
Street crossing is not good with big semi trucks passing through. Could use a festival based around water activities, Yahara. Too many resident -based festivals. Not broad enough appeal.
How about a Dragon Fly yoga or other real yoga studio?
Downtown Stoughton is fine. What we need to do is get rid of the unsafe mudhole (troll beach) and build al little aquatic center with clear water.
Suggestions: * Business incubator * Public transportation between Stoughton & Madison * Facility for craft/art classes (with guest teachers), gathering of stampers/scrapbookers/quilters
A fresh market type grocery is needed. I would like to continue to see small events and more art to create a visual vibrancy. Increase Opera House programming, since whatever is good for the O.H. is good for downtown Stoughton. Explore the idea of Stoughton Village Players indie film nights. Explore the idea of another music/arts venue in the Elsing's building. Create ramp parking in the current library lot.
The Opera House is a marvel. Keep supporting this gem and its programming.

I would like to see some tie-ins between whatever the final river walk project is and downtown and maybe a trail that connects it with the land under the 2 downtown bridges
I would love to see more acts gear towards 20's-40's come to a Stoughton Opera House. Sara Evans just put on a fabulous show in Belvidere, IL and there was a huge crowd of all age ranges. The Killers, Vance Joy, Lizzo, Conan Gray, the Fray, Cassie Musgraves, The Swon Brothers, John Michael Montgomery, are just a few other ideas.
Get the river development done!!!!
No bike racks, no public restrooms, no parking garage, more evening businesses (galleries, high end cocktails). Banner advertising across Main Street. Flowers on light posts. Give owners a monetary incentive to make apartments over businesses current or condos for sale. Make downtown s place people want to live. An AFFORDABLE grocery store.
More family diners, bike connection options to neighboring municipalities (riding roads is very dangerous), more entertainment options besides opera house and movie theater and the occasional play. Maybe movies or theater in the park once a month events or something similar. Would like to see the east side of stoughton more developed for retail options. An outdoor event center similar to Gazebo music would be nice especially if it could have a few food trucks/stands. All in all I think Stoughton is awesome, we are just limited on a few things and have monolpolies
Taxi service should run until bartime to ensure safety of everyone.
Stores being closed on Sunday is a bummer. Store signage and way finding could be better. Approach to main street from east or west could be more inviting.
Keep working on connecting the bike path to McFarland.
It was nice when you had the scrapbook store that people could go and work on projects and purchase stuff to use on craft projects.
The downtown has great potential. However, businesses fail because all businesses are not open at the same time, especially on weekends. It is really unfortunate that when I have visitors here from out of town and when I want to shop downtown on the weekends that stores are not open. Or on Saturday some stores are open for a few hours, some close at 2pm, some 5pm, some later -- hard to plan a shopping trip with friends if it is so disjunct. Also with many stores and restaurants not open on Sunday -- they lose a lot of business as well. The weekends are when people come to town to spend more time walking around. Also the downtown needs a grocery store -- now that the Coop is closed there is no place for the East side of Stoughton to shop. There is no place to get local produce and other products that the coop used to sell. Need another coop or store like that ASAP!! Lastly, the downtown needs a boutique hotel that can accommodate guest for the opera house, wedding venues (The Lageret and Chorus House), and is close to the hospital and business park. Focus on downtown really needs to be at the East end -- many blighted buildings and not good use of the greatness of some of the buildings that are standing idle.
I love the unique character of downtown and the convenience of walking or biking to the City Hall, Cheesers, McGlynn's, Autumn Pearl, the Post Office, Public Library, Stoughton Opera House and other gems. The friendly personal service downtown is wonderful.

Would like a restaurant that is appealing to out-of-town guests when I host them, or a casual business lunch destination. It should be quiet enough for us to have a conversation. Many of our restaurants are great for "locals" (Koffee Kup - sitting very close to others and overhearing conversations, etc.) with good food and nice prices, but doesn't have a nicer feel to it (ie table cloths, atmosphere, etc.). I liked the Stationery House for office supplies. Would enjoy a store with those products. Thank you for providing this survey.
When we first moved here, I always tried to shop downtown Stoughton first when looking to buy gift items. We are walking distance from the downtown, and while I still attempt to do this, so many stores have closed that it's becoming more and more difficult to make shopping here a goal. Loss of the antique shops, gift and home decor shops, Coop, all clothing-related stores, all furniture-related stores... I go to the Hallmark store, Cheesers, Next Generation, Woodland, All Through the House (though their inventory has really decreased), Dune, Diakanos. I use the library a lot. We don't eat out a lot but try to go to Wildwood, Laz's, Big Sky, Wendigo periodically.
I see a lot of good shops close down. Stori Anne is the most recent. Very sad - wish we could do a better job keeping stores downtown Stoughton.
I believe the keys to its success is to work to make it a destination for visitors. While the residents of Stoughton enjoy having nice shops nearby, I think to sustain them requires pushing our name out there as place to spend the day eating/drinking (coffee/tea/wine/beer) and shopping. One of the keys to that is improving store hours - and it should be a collective effort for all the downtown businesses. Right now, Saturday hours are limited and most shops close Sundays. For me, that writes off huge potential for visitors on a day most people have off. Work with the Chamber of Commerce, look at a time of the year where people might be out & about (Fall??), promote promote promote (Sponsored social media ads/TV/Newspapers...) and stay open all weekend with specials, etc. I think there will be results if the shops work together on it. I think summer is a mixed bag due to vacations, etc so I'd look at Spring or Fall to do this.
Love our downtown but need more restaurant options. Also more convenient hours of operation for stores. Parking is a bit of an issue. Opera house is awesome. Brings in so much business before and after shows.
I'm excited to see growth in downtown Stoughton!
A stronger job market would be nice so I dont have to drive as far for work. Nor talking about fast food, more business related.
The parking restrictions and recent enforcement do not create a positive effect. They prevent me from wanting to visit again.
I love downtown - I shop and dine often downtown. I rarely go to Madison to shop. No one asked about east town mall it’s closer and safer, I sometimes go there or to kohl’s.
Rent for building space seems too high to keep small businesses here if they don’t own the building
Waterfront should be a far greater asset and focus!
No restaurants open on Sundays. Nice to have movie theater but needs serious upgrade.
I love and am proud of our downtown. It is such a gem. We need to help keep businesses in business. I think some store hours could be more accommodating to customers, but I’m sure that comes down to what each store can afford along with rent.
That ugly green building is an eyesore.
Make it trendier! More places like Wendigo.

Many business come and go. I think in part due to parking (Java Junction failed for many reasons but a big one was parking in morning rush and the 51 project that cut them off for a summer. It was a wonderful place for the community and so many still miss having that.) I think also so many stores downtown are "niche" . The clientel may be interested, but they are so small they cant compete in price, so only the very comfortable (financially) can afford to buy local. I think also that most of the niche stores apply to the foodies and the crafters and there isnt much down there for anyone else, unless you want to sit in a bar, townie bar at that.
Please get rid of Walmart and put a Target in its place. No more Kwik Trips either. Keep big business out of this beautiful downtown.
It’s frustrating that businesses are not open more. I’ve tried to go to them several times and they are closed
We shop Stoughton most of the time and will always look here first before driving to Madison. Stoughton businesses will always get top priority with us.
It’s pretty vital compared to other communities.
Love Stoughton - would rather shop but need more choices
As a resident of the downtown area of Stoughton for 24 years, I was very happy when my wife and I found a home to buy in the downtown area to stay in my new hometown and in easy walking distance of all the downtown businesses. I hope the Redevelopment Authority will be weighting the residential tax payer opinions above merely economic issues.
Again, building appearance on a number of store fronts is a concern. Sunday shopping hours and weekend evening shopping hours would be helpful. A general upgrade in appearance, and aesthetics would be welcome
Parking is the biggest problem for me visiting downtown. It is difficult to parallel park with a constant stream of traffic passing through. Even a simple trip to the library means street parking or trying to maneuver in their small awkward parking lot.
I spend a lot of money downtown, mostly on food and drink but I also use McGlynns and others from time to time. I answered that my spending wouldn't change with the addition of any type of restaurant because I would spend the same, just at more places.
Stoughton in general is wonderful. We moved here about a year ago, and it is such a tight knit community. We also feel very safe here. My only suggestion would be to add things that we have to go to other cities for, such as Starbucks and Target.
What Stoughton is really lacking is a coffeehouse with longer hours. There's no place for people who don't want to go to bars to socialize at night. Malabar and Wildwood are nice but they don't stay open late enough!
Some of the shops are excellent. Great product, great people. But overall more needs to be put into the downtown and the shops need help. All the best downtown areas have the help of the community and the town itself. Stoughton has the potential to be a destination, but isn't there yet.
Would love to see a gym with racquetball courts for year around exercise.
We would love to have an actual movie theater in town. The local theater is not ideal for viewing movies with it's flat floor.
I believe police need to patrol better with pedestrians. It is both unsafe to drive as people dart out between cars and cross at places other than crosswalks and it is unsafe to cross walking in crosswalks as cars do not stop. At night I know the lighting is horrible and it is hard to see pedestrians while driving

I tend to shop in Madison or Sun Prairie to save money. Stoughton's independently owned shops on Main Street are not competitively priced. Sun Prairie is surely doing something right with all of their business growth as well as population.
Do something nice with the riverfront property vacated by Millfab. That could really draw people in if you do it right.
I love our downtown and try to support it as much as I can. but we need more and better businesses there. A walk up fast food/food truck option (not a chain like mc d) would also be good. And more gathering spaces (public and business) would be great. Monthly "night out" specials etc. to draw people there once storefront vacancies are filled.
I have lots of people who visited from our if town and they always wish their small town was more like Stoughton. I had a city person recently say after visiting Stoughton that maybe they would live in a small town if it was like Stoughton.
Do we have a staging business site? If not we should do new business ideas can be tried and decided better with results! I would love to see some home made item shops to match out vintage beauty!
The river front development should have a big, positive, effect on downtown and vice Versa. A motor free path between the river front and downtown would be ideal. Perhaps do something with the parking lot adjacent to the Gazebo; it's a poor use of the space. We probably need a study of the music scene in Stoughton and how much the events impact the economy of downtown. This could lean towards the Opera House and what we need downtown to attract more people to the Opera House. Should the old city hall be redesigned to enhance the venue? Gleen information from Opera House ticket customers. Hand out a survey at Opera House events, Catfish, Gazebo. I would talk to the owners of Wendigos. They have the vibe people want. What's going on with the Cinema Cafe? That space will be or is available ....between that space and the parking lot behind it....seems like a future opportunity which needs forethought. Just saying.
Need a grocery co-op Need casual and unique lunch options (51 South is great)
There are lots of beautiful historic buildings. They should be better maintained.
One of the most classic downtowns in region. Much room for improvement, though! Concerned about amount of recent business turnover. Need MUCH better lighting and signage for parking. Where are public bathrooms? Must find a way to have more events to draw more people to downtown area. What about a Stoughton Film Festival? We have a number of venues that could host movies. Would say business owners should find a way to coordinate hours of opening better. Would say more businesses need to be open on Sunday if the city wants to draw outsiders. Very dull here on Sunday. Downtown must integrate with future Riverfront Project area. What about street food carts or ethnic festivals other than Norwegian? Need a break from constant Norwegian heritage.
We have a beautiful downtown that needs to be marketed better to attract more people
Beautiful to visit. Love the river. Miss the co-op. Love Viking Brew Pub and Big Sky, but BS's prices are a little high for the area. Love Catfish Music Fest. Love the Stoughton Opera House, go there a few times per year. Even though I live in McFarland, my salon is in Stoughton. The new Aldi is a great addition. Great small town vibe.
Missing the loss of the coffee shop in SWAC
I am very proud of our downtown! I would like businesses that might attract younger and more diverse audiences, like ethnic food, live music, bookstore.

Stoughton has so much potential! Thank you for your efforts!! I often hear requests for more bike racks. Especially from cyclists riding thru town who would like to stop in but very few bike racks. Also residents who, prefer to ride not drive to town. Perhaps local businesses could fund the bike racks?
I would love to see another grocery like Trader Joe's or Jennifer st Market.
Find a way to stop the huge noisy trucks from going through town (usually too fast for conditions). If there was less truck traffic, the restaurants could have sidewalk cafes. Also, we need a real coffee shop (not Dunkin or MickeyD's) that is open at 6 a.m when lots of people are going to work. I have to work at 7 am in MadTown and there is not one coffee place open at that hour. So I buy in Madison.
Businesses need to be open daily and longer hours.
Downtown Stoughton is a favorite.
Allow Food trucks to operate in part of downtown Stoughton Get rid of the unsightly buildings Add bike paths downtown Stoughton
I am an artist living and working on Main St and have been so happy to see shops like Wildwood and Dune come in and bring young people and an updated vibe to downtown. I'd love to see more of this in the future and help make that a reality!
Too many empty stores!
The farmers market needs more vendors, ideally selling produce and more typical farmers market products. There currently isn't enough there to make it worthwhile to attend. The Monona Sunday market is a good example of a great small market.
I miss the Co-Op
Bars should open before 4 pm
Not many places to actually shop.
Spry Whimsey: wow!
My ideal shopping hours vary greatly and I was unable to reflect that in the answer. I often need to shop weekdays 9-6or 7, Saturdays 10-8, and sundays 11-6.
While I very much appreciate the historical significance of many of the buildings the bureaucracy of changing anything needs to be made easier and more lenient. The cute downtown was one of the reason we chose to move to Stoughton 2 years ago. It's sad to see it crumbling and businesses failing. I truly hope it sees a resurgence.
Don't let it begin to look like the West side of Madison!

Appendix 2: Market Evaluation

This appendix includes the Market Analysis, Current Real Estate, and Market Trends report generated during the planning process for the Market Revitalization Plan in Downtown Stoughton.

Stoughton *Wisconsin*

DEMOGRAPHICS & MARKETS

Downtown Stoughton has multiple assets, including regional arts institutions, unique businesses, and historic character. Among these assets are growing local markets. The demographic data charts below display downtown Stoughton's primary markets. These markets include:

- .5-Mile, or Pedestrian, Market: This market includes nearby residents and employees who can easily walk to downtown Stoughton.
- 5-Minute, or Convenience Drive, Market: Located within a 5-minute drive or a 10-minute bike ride to downtown Stoughton, these residents and employees can readily access downtown's businesses and are frequent patrons of downtown's businesses.
- 30-Minute, or Destination, Market: This geography (see map below) represents the destination market for downtown Stoughton. This market has increased in importance with the advent of online ordering and mobile phone use. For most consumers, 30-minutes represents the drive time for same or next day pick-up of an online purchase. 'Near Me' searches are also important for consumer restaurant selection and in determining events or activities to attend, such as festivals or cultural arts events.
- Custom Market: Downtown's business owners described this geography during this study's stakeholder interviews. This market area is where most of their customers originate. (A map of this market follows the 30-minute drive time map.)
- City of Stoughton: The City's demographics are displayed for comparison purposes. Residents of any community identify with their downtown, and their local spending is an important source of downtown business revenues. Specific to Stoughton, much of the City is located within 5-minutes of downtown.

Key for downtown's future will be adapting to the changing needs of regional consumers—whether Stoughton residents or consumers from throughout the Madison region. The strategic implications, concluding this data, describe the importance of adapting to altered consumer behaviors and their implications for ground level businesses and uses in downtown Stoughton and nationally. Downtown Stoughton customers are not just people who like to shop or tourists. Expanding the definition of who is a downtown Stoughton consumer will be important to downtown's economic future and to creating a downtown that is welcoming to all. This definition recognizes the importance of multiple customer groups—downtown and nearby employees' contribution to local business revenues, new downtown residential growth opportunities, downtown's relevance to local families and their desire for engagement with their community, and downtown Stoughton's ability to attract more consumers from within a growing region.

The demographic data and maps are followed by chart displaying downtown Stoughton's current business mix, based upon information provided by Stoughton's Redevelopment Authority (RDA).

STOUGHTON Redevelopment Authority

Demographics and Markets

Downtown Stoughton Markets	.5 Mile Pedestrian	5 Minute Drive Convenience (or 10 Minute Bike Ride)	30 Minute 'Near Me' (Destination)	Custom Market	City of Stoughton
Total Population	2,938	12,047	350,366	230,711	13,518
Total Households	1,336	5,104	147,654	96,519	5,574
Average Household Size	2.20	2.36	2.37	2.39	2.43
Population Density (per Sq. Mi.)	3,732.74	2,458.94	472.75	509.19	2,638.73
Projected Population Change by 2023	0.7%	2.9%	5.1%	4.0%	2.9%
Median Age	39.7	40.7	35.0	34.1	40.6
Employees	1,772	4,905	233,728	147,066	4,816
Jobs Per Household	1.3	1.0	1.6	1.5	0.9
Average Household Income	$72,399	$77,054	$84,030	$90,861	$79,166
Median Household Income	$61,174	$66,707	$65,805	$68,003	$68,310
Per Capita Income	$33,238	$32,909	$35,698	$38,377	$32,875
Renter Occupied Housing Units	38.9%	35.4%	42.1%	44.1%	33.6%
Estimated Spending: Dining	$4,241,600	$17,147,552	$500,960,491	$301,082,334	$19,285,148

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Downtown Stoughton Markets: Race/Ethnicity	City of Stoughton	30 Minute 'Near Me' (Destination)	Custom Market
White	94.8%	82.9%	80.5%
Black	1.2%	5.8%	6.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.2%	0.4%	0.4%
Asian/Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	1.7%	4.7%	6.7%
Some Other Race	0.4%	3.2%	3.6%
Two or More Races	1.7%	3.0%	2.9%
Hispanic Ethnicity	1.7%	7.5%	8.1%
Not Hispanic or Latino	98.3%	92.5%	91.9%

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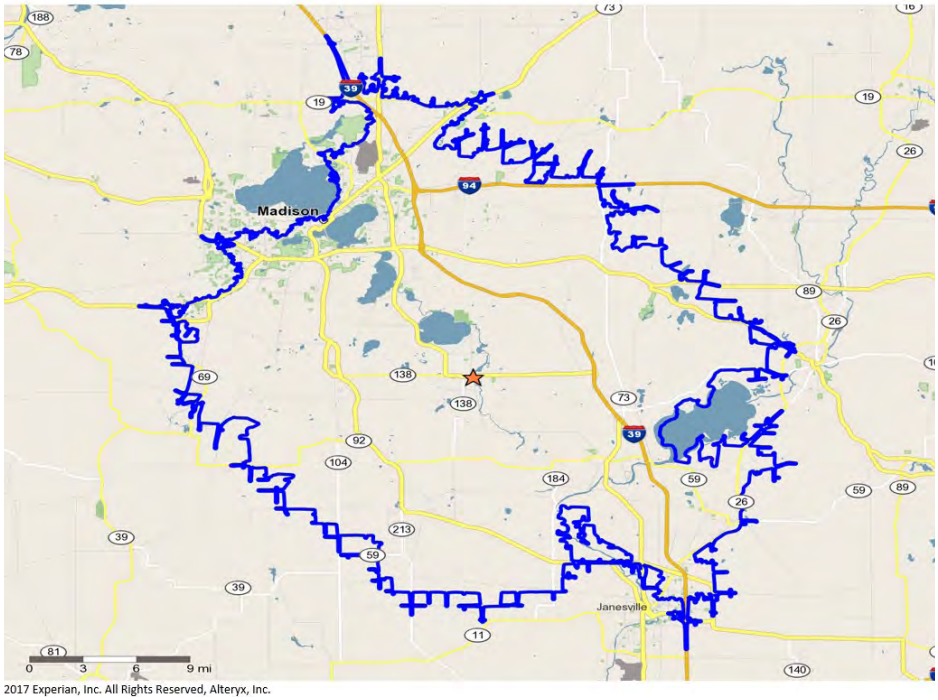
Map: 30-Minute 'Near Me' Market



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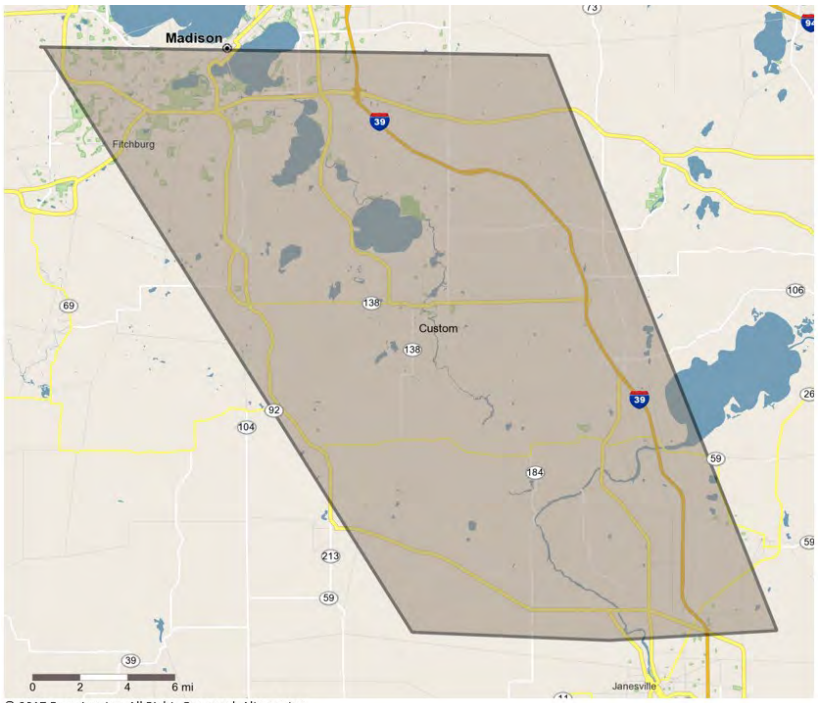
Map: Custom Market



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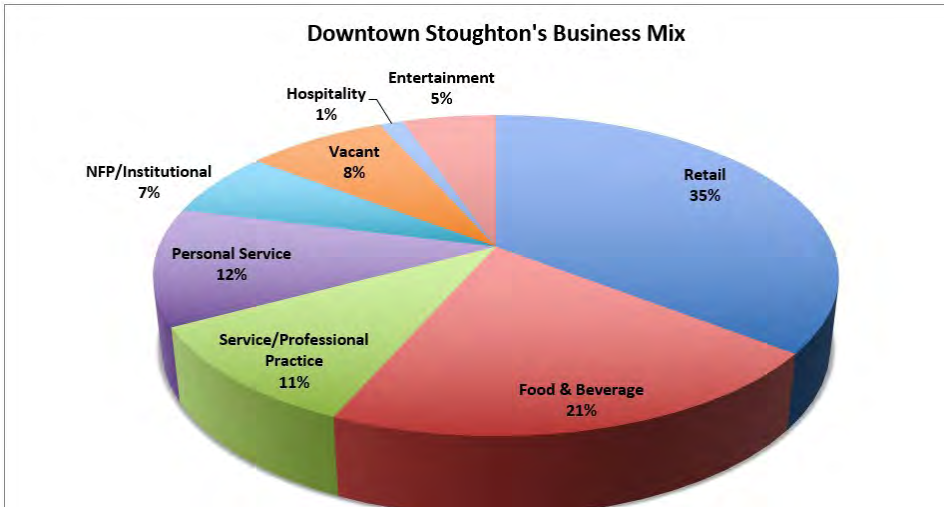
Downtown's Current Business Mix



Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton

- Overall, downtown Stoughton's markets are strong and growing, particularly the larger markets.
- Downtown's larger market geographies are younger (even excluding the university population), higher income, and growing in population. Estimated dining, or food away from home, spending indicates overall household spending power within the markets described. Given these market strengths, high performing downtown businesses can compete and capture additional sales from consumers within these larger markets. To effectively compete, downtown businesses will need to match and adapt their operations to changing consumer needs and behaviors, including how consumers use technology.
- According to Experian's psychographic data, 37.3% of Stoughton's households are described as 'Flourishing Families.' Increasing the emphasis on family-friendly activities will enable local affinity for downtown as Stoughton's gathering place and for downtown's businesses. This also creates reasons for families from nearby towns or living in the region to visit Stoughton to shop, dine, or attend an event.
- These larger markets also exhibit greater racial and ethnic diversity within their populations than the City of Stoughton and downtown's more proximate markets. This local trend resembles the national trend of increasing population diversity in all types of communities.
- Currently, the largest component of downtown's business mix by business unit is retail. This is an advantage to downtown Stoughton and another important downtown asset. Sustaining this component of the mix will require concerted efforts to support business growth (programs, expansion, and recruitment) by private and public sector interests. Retailers in downtowns and elsewhere now occupy smaller spaces, or store footprints, and operate fewer stores, given retail market trends.
- Nationally and regionally, those business categories seeking lease space and opening (and operating) successful businesses in traditional downtowns include health, wellness and personal service businesses and food and beverage businesses, specifically restaurants, coffee shops, and specialty food businesses. These growing downtown uses (in some communities, small office users are part of downtown growth) also attract additional and regular foot traffic to the downtown district and its businesses.
- Adapting to changing markets, consumer behaviors, and the real estate requirements for current and emerging uses will serve as the foundation for downtown Stoughton's economic future.

The following hypotheticals are 'back of the envelope' calculations indicative of downtown Stoughton's current real estate market. The assumptions used to develop these calculations are based on three (3) information sources–stakeholder interviews with regional real estate professionals conducted as part of this plan process, published sources about downtown Stoughton real estate sales, and data from real estate listings for the south Madison area, including Stoughton.

On a fundamental level, commercial rents are a function of the commercial activity in any district. Greater commercial activity means more business revenues and higher rents, given business interest in locating in that district. Commercial districts, including traditional downtowns, with higher rents also generate higher sales per square foot in downtown's businesses. The resulting higher returns to business owners and property owners enable reinvestment in downtown properties.

Two (2) sets of hypotheticals are shown below. The first hypothetical describes a ground level business tenant occupying 1,200SF. The $300 in sales per square foot (PSF) figure is an accepted national average for retail sales. Ground level rents typically represent 5-8% of total sales for these businesses. For this 1,200 SF space, annual rents at 5% and 8% would be $18,000 and $28,800, respectively. These annual rents equate to $15 and $24 PSF, respectively.

The second hypothetical applies the same 5% and 8% average rent expenses to downtown Stoughton's current ground level rents, estimated by local real estate professionals at $6-$10 PSF. For this same 1,200SF storefront, the estimated sales PSF for businesses paying $6 or $10 PSF ranges from $75 PSF to $200 PSF. These sales figures are significantly below the $300 average national sector sales PSF cited above.

Hypothetical Downtown Storefront: National Average Sales						
Storefront SF	National Average Sales PSF	Annual Sales	Annual Rent @ 5% of Sales	Rent PSF @ 5%	Annual Rent @ 8% of Sales	Rent PSF @ 8%
1,200	$300	$360,000	$18,000	$15	$28,800	$24

Hypothetical Downtown Storefront: Stoughton Ground Level Rents						
Storefront SF	Estimated Rent PSF	Annual Rent	Annual Sales (Rent as 5% of Sales)	Estimated Sales PSF	Annual Sales (Rent as 8% of Sales)	Estimated Sales PSF
1,200	$6	$7,200	$144,000	$120	$90,000	$75
1,200	$10	$12,000	$240,000	$200	$150,000	$125

The final hypothetical below displays the rental income for a hypothetical 2-story building in downtown Stoughton–first, with an owner occupant, and second, with a commercial tenant. This example building includes one ground level commercial space and two (2) second floor apartments. Again, current commercial market rents of $6 and $10 PSF are applied. The $6 PSF represents the rental rate for an owner-occupant, or a business owner who also owns their building. The $10 PSF assumes that a ground level tenant is paying the $10 PSF market rent rate. This hypothetical also assumes that the owner has a $165,000 mortgage on this property. This scenario supports two (2) points made in this plan's stakeholder interviews: (1) that residential rents are often supporting building debt service; and (2) that minimal cash flow is available for building improvement at downtown's current rent levels and sales PSF.

Hypothetical 2-Story Downtown Building				
	SF			
Ground level commercial	1,200			
Rental apartments (2)	1,200			
	Estimated Rent PSF*	Annual Rent	Estimated Rent PSF	Annual Rent
Ground level commercial	$6	$7,200	$10	$12,000
Rental apartments (2)	$12	$14,400	$12	$14,400
Building Rental Income		$21,600		$26,400
Expenses (20% of Rental Income)		$4,320		$5,280
Annual Real Estate Taxes		$4,000		$4,000
Net Income		$13,280		$17,120
Debt service (Assumes $165,000 mortgage at 4.5% with 25 year amortization)		$11,040		$11,040
Debt Service Coverage (Net Income/Debt service)		1.20		1.55

*Assumes allocated rent by an owner-occupant.

Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton

- Important opportunities exist to improve downtown business and real estate economics over time. While downtown's overall sales are currently challenged, improved operations by downtown businesses and stronger tenancies can support incremental growth and reinvestment.
- Initially, local incentives will need to be adapted to address the most needed improvements to downtown buildings. Improving downtown's storefronts in partnership with the private sector can begin to address three (3) issues: improve appearance and potential tenancies; communicate the local commitment to strengthening downtown; and indirectly support overall sales growth. The City's Landmarks Commission, in partnership with downtown property owners, can identity and prioritize the types of projects eligible for incentives.

The broader market trends affecting all sectors and uses have important implications for commercial districts, whether traditional downtowns, commercial corridors, or neighborhood business districts. Altered consumer behaviors, technology, and lifestyle shifts will continue to influence the future success of businesses and uses in districts like downtown Stoughton. For ground level businesses in traditional downtowns, how they sell is now more important than what they sell. Ground level businesses with strong operating characteristics can succeed in downtown commercial environments. This ability to respond to rapid market change will be critical for Stoughton's downtown stakeholders. For Stoughton, the relevant market and sector trends and their attributes are described below:

- The broader market trends affecting all sectors and uses have important implications for commercial districts, whether traditional downtowns, commercial corridors, or neighborhood business districts. In their own way, each major trend represents a seismic shift in how business is conducted, changing the nature of work, housing, and consumption. Altered consumer behaviors, technology, and lifestyle shifts will continue to influence the future success of businesses and uses in commercial districts, like downtown Stoughton.

- For ground level businesses in traditional downtowns, how they sell is now more important than what they sell. Businesses must now sell through multiple sales channels, or 'omni-channel.' Making it easier for customers to purchase, whether online, through social media, in store, or anywhere via mobile phones, is necessary to compete effectively. Using their optimal sales channels, ground level businesses with strong operating characteristics, regardless of use or format, can succeed in any downtown commercial environment. The ability to respond to rapid market change will be critical for Stoughton's downtown business community, the City and RDA, and their major partners in revitalizing downtown.

For Stoughton, the relevant market and sector trends and their attributes are noted below:

- 'The Experience': Today's consumers, particularly younger consumers, are seeking experiences versus opportunities to shop. Increased numbers of restaurants and personal services, such as spas, reflect this trend. Downtowns are particularly well positioned to capitalize on the desire for an experience, given their unique business types, special events, and local character.
  - Downtown must be welcoming to all, regardless of who they are.
  - Gathering places—public spaces and commercial, such as coffee shops or wine bars, are expected.
  - Unique special events. A well-organized events calendar activates any downtown and can serve to differentiate that downtown. Businesses, individually or collectively, can also host events that contribute to the downtown experience.
  - Creating excitement through temporary uses/spaces and emerging business types/formats. These new business formats encompass multiple types of short-term ground level uses in downtowns and traditional neighborhood commercial districts. Pop-ups are the most notable example. These varied and creative new uses help cultivate downtown's unique experience. Other downtown examples of temporary uses include: art exhibits or performance events in downtown vacancies and store windows; seasonal retail or dining, or different businesses regularly operating on short-term leases, within the same storefront; shared spaces by different types of businesses used to test new business concepts; and targeted events to their social media community by one or more businesses or featuring more or more products. Most important, these ever-changing uses ensure that residents and visitors want to come downtown, because there is always something new happening.

- Residents AND visitors. To be economically viable, any downtown must attract residents and visitors to its businesses and events. Like retail and the other commercial sectors, the tourism sector is changing rapidly. Organized tours to downtowns for shopping or other purposes are less frequent and generally targeted to an older demographic. Tourists also want an authentic local experience, including casual interactions with local residents. Business and leisure travel now are often combined, with nearby downtowns as a destination to visit, stroll, or dine. Technology has a significant impact on how travel occurs and what visitors do. and printed materials are less important with a mobile phone.

- Importance of Local. This trend has multiple aspects, but the fundamental basis is celebrating the local community as a singular and different place. Visitor experiences, as noted above, and how community residents identify with where they live are also components. The local identity derives from each community's local stories, serving as the basis for market positioning. The idea of local also extends to business growth, particularly in downtowns. Each community's commercial opportunities, access to start-up resources, and business barriers affect the decision to start and grown a new business in any community. Downtowns are often the place where this type of entrepreneurship begins.
- Technology, Technology, Technology. Technological change underlies how all businesses operate and establishes their competitive position. The same is true for downtowns. Residents and visitors need easy online access to downtown information, including events, maps, parking locations, and business information, including websites. This data must be current and mobile enabled. If it's not easy to access, these residents and visitors will go elsewhere. The increasing numbers of Internet resilient businesses in downtowns, specifically restaurants and personal services, also reflect the significant impact of technology.
- Rapidly Changing Real Estate Needs.
  - Smaller footprints are required for most uses, particularly for retailers.
  - Changing work environments also means smaller footprints. Open floor plans and the declining amount of square footage (SF) required per office worker (151 SF now versus 225 SF in 2000) also means reduced occupancies for service and office uses.
  - Fewer stores are needed, given the extended consumer reach through online shopping. Downtown retailers avoid the cost of opening and operating more storefronts and are selective in choosing new locations. 'Buy Online, Pick-up In Store' (known as BOPIS) continues to increase in importance to business profitability. These consumers often make additional purchases when picking up their online orders.
  - Shorter leases are needed for shared, short-term, and seasonal uses. Downtown property owners must also adapt to this market reality.
  - The definition of business expansion is broader. The new formats described below, such as starting a new business within an existing businesses or sharing spaces, allows downtown businesses to experiment and innovate.
- Retail Sector Trends.
  - 'Goods to people' versus 'People to goods.' As noted in this section's introduction, this reflects broader market trends that apply technology to enable consumer purchasing in multiple ways. Traditional business marketing, such as print advertising, occurs, but technology now permits consumers to purchase the way that they choose and from anywhere.
    - How they sell versus what they sell. To successfully operate a downtown business, regardless of the business type or product sold, the owner needs two (2) skill sets: an understanding of what makes downtown markets distinct, and how to operate and sustain profitable operations.
    - Fostering a 'community' of customers. Downtown businesses, regardless of type, use social media to develop their customer base, to keep current on what their customers want, and to respond.
    - Purpose and ethics matter to today's consumers, particularly Millennials.

- ‘Clicks and Mortar’ reinforces market positioning for individual businesses, recognizing the combined impact of having both a storefront and online presence in generating sales.
- Stores as showrooms, event spaces, and delivery mechanisms reflect how retail businesses accommodate their customers, the ‘experience’ that they craft, and how their customer base accesses stores. These approaches again require smaller store footprints.
- Health, wellness, and beauty are growing as a component of the larger retail sector, as noted above, due to their Internet resiliency and ability to generate routine foot traffic.

- Restaurant Sector Trends.
  - Food and beverage businesses are another downtown business growth category, given their Internet resilience and ability to foster an ‘experience.’
  - Labor shortages, increasing salaries, the need to offer competitive benefits, and worker transportation represent challenges to operating costs, particularly for independent restaurateurs and restaurant groups.
  - Off-premise sales—DoorDash, GrubHub, and UberEATS—are increasing industry-wide. The use of delivery services by restaurants of all types and formats has increased the need for nearby short-term parking in many downtowns.
  - Non-traditional competition—‘groceraunts,’ theater dining, and ‘ghost’ kitchens—is a reality. These emerging, and sometimes competitive, business formats for downtown restaurants are factors in most major metro areas. ‘Groceraunts’ are the restaurants, often with bars, opening within major grocers. Multiple screen movie theaters now offer sit-down dining as part of the movie going experience. ‘Ghost kitchens’ are commercial kitchens used to prepare food for exclusively for delivery and are now being used by larger restaurant groups to ensure improved quality in food for delivery.
  - ‘Guest facing’ technologies, such an I-Pad ordering or wine lists, are designed to improve efficiencies and support the image of that food and beverage business. Reservation services, including Tock, Resy, and Open Table, are both new operating costs and means of guest interaction.
  - ‘Morphing’ formats for concept testing. Restaurants are no longer just one format, such as sit-down or counter service operations. Established restaurants and groups use pop-ups or food trucks to support their brand. New operators may share space with another restaurant to test their business concept. Some operate ‘ghost kitchens’ exclusively for their deliveries.
- Employment Sector Trends: Downtown Stoughton’s employees are an important market for local businesses. The potential impact of any changes by these employers should be understood, given the implications for downtown’s overall business revenues.
  - Recognizing and accepting workforce diversity—age and race/ethnicity—is part of being a welcoming downtown.
  - The ‘skills’ gap and talent scarcity face most regions and employers. For many communities, attracting talent to their employment base and matching their existing workforce skills to available jobs are challenges.
  - The new jobs of the future, combined with the altered nature of work, will have an impact on healthcare, services, and manufacturing. The ‘gig’ economy, or the contractor workforce, and many corporate employees can work from anywhere. For downtown Stoughton, understanding how the altered nature of work is changing downtown’s employment base will be important to the City and downtown’s economy.
  - Entrepreneurship and small business growth represent the best and most stable sources for downtown’s future business and employment growth.
  - Downtown amenities are an employer benefit. For employers selecting a downtown location, the downtown district itself represents a true amenity. Their workers have a selection of businesses to patronize, particularly food and beverage businesses.

- Residential Sector Trends.
  - 'Rent by choice' and affordability are factors in the nation's increasing numbers of renters at all income levels, whether for convenience, flexibility, or availability.
  - Access to employment and family needs, such as good schools or elder care, also drive housing decisions.
  - Amenities are key for new multi-family developments in downtowns and elsewhere.
    - Smaller unit sizes are typical.
    - Higher end finishes in each unit.
    - Package storage to accommodate deliveries and online purchases.
    - On-site amenities, such as fitness and prepared food.
    - Pets allowed.
  - Availability of housing types in and near downtowns, such as 'missing middle,' multi-generational, or Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). In some downtowns, 'Boomers' renting by choice have created demand for larger rental units to accommodate visitors. Permitting 'Granny Flats' or ADUs on larger lots near downtowns is another example of emerging housing options. The Stoughton stakeholder interviews identified single-family housing units in the $250-$350,000 price range as lacking. These same interviewees also observed that many younger buyers in the region prefer to purchase homes not requiring significant remodeling.
  - 'Homecomers,' or young residents returning to their hometowns with their young families. This trend is evident is multiple Midwest towns. The desire to return is often shaped by the quality of local schools and of housing, in addition to proximity to family and friends.

Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton

- Business turnover remains a factor in all downtowns, even the most successful. Businesses close for many reasons. Though the perception created by certain current vacancies may be concerning, businesses are succeeding in downtown Stoughton. The opportunity to attract new and stronger businesses with new customers exists.
- Downtown Stoughton has multiple ground level businesses with strong operations, regardless of use. However, the current mix also includes hobby businesses, undercapitalized businesses, and businesses serving the owner's lifestyle versus the needs of today's consumer.
- Developing a set of business support and growth resources to assist new and existing downtown businesses represents one aspect of addressing turnover. Among these business growth resources should be assistance with business succession planning to ensure that downtown's strong, established businesses are prepared to transition to new owners.
- Downtown's private sector, given the large percentage of owner-occupied buildings, can improve their buildings to enable downtown business, employment, and residential growth.
- Additional downtown (and nearby) employment represents 'bonus' spending power for downtown Stoughton's businesses. Increased employment from small office uses and shared workspaces throughout downtown Stoughton can also contribute to downtown's activity and revenues.
- Enhancing the quality of downtown's residential units can expand the City's available housing types and include possible lodging options–both enhancing downtown's customer base

Appendix 3: Stakeholder and Focus Groups

This appendix includes the Stakeholder Observations and Focus Groups report generated after July and August stakeholder interviews.

Stoughton *Wisconsin*

STAKEHOLDER OBSERVATIONS & FOCUS GROUPS

STOUGHTON Redevelopment Authority

During this planning process, market-related observations were obtained through confidential interviews with downtown stakeholders (conducted on site on July 31, 2019 and by phone in August 2019) and in a stakeholder focus group held on August 1, 2019. Participants included downtown business and property owners, Stoughton residents, City officials, and representatives from Stoughton's major employers, local arts organizations, and downtown event organizers. The themes identifies in this plan outreach is summarized thematically below.

These interviewees and focus group participants recognize that sustained work will be required to improve downtown Stoughton's economy for the future. They also recognize that improvement will require time and investment by both the private and public sectors. Downtown Stoughton has multiple assets as a commercial district, but approaches and attitudes must change to address how downtown Stoughton will function in the future. Most important, all stakeholders want an economically vital downtown Stoughton that attracts more people, strong businesses, and local investment.

Downtown Stoughton: General Issues and Perceptions

- Recent vacancies have caused concern among downtown's business community. While these owners had individual reasons for their business closures, the combined effect creates negative perceptions for residents and visitors.
- In the past, Stoughton functioned as a distinct community with Norwegian roots. The City now serves as an economic component of a larger region and as a Madison suburb.
- Stoughton's downtown needs to become more welcoming to diverse populations. The City has become more diverse, as has the region. Stoughton's Norwegian story now represents one of many stories reflecting the City's history.
- Downtown Stoughton's private and public sector interests need a unified vision for a successful downtown future. The City and its downtown interests are perceived as resistant to change. Implementing any vision will require change. Potential investors also indicate that Stoughton needs to become more forward thinking and open to new ideas specific to downtown's future economic growth.

Downtown's Businesses and Uses

- Downtown's businesses need to recognize that national trends, particularly for retailers, apply to their present and future, and these businesses need to continuously adapt. This adaptation includes 'omni-channel' marketing and sales.
- Many downtown retailers close at 5 or 6PM and are not always open during their posted hours. Other participants indicated that this inhibits early evening purchasing by Stoughton residents who work in Madison or elsewhere. Downtown's retailers indicated that few customers patronize their stores after 5 and that closing earlier is important to their family lives.
- Too many hobby businesses and unsustainable businesses locate in downtown Stoughton. This negatively affects neighboring businesses and has contributed to recent business closings.
- Additional dining options are needed downtown to supplement the current restaurant cluster.
- Additional housing in or near downtown was cited as an opportunity to support downtown business growth.
- There is minimal collaboration among downtown's businesses, including strategic marketing efforts that could benefit multiple businesses. Related to the lack of collaboration is minimal communication among downtown's businesses.
- Temporary uses, such as food trucks, pop-ups, or AirBNB lodging, are emerging opportunities to activate downtown Stoughton. Local regulations may need updates to support emerging uses.

Downtown's Market Context

- With minor variations, downtown's businesses are generally attracting consumers from similar regional market geographies. (This is displayed in the Custom Market map included in the Demographics and Markets section of this summary.)
- Downtown Stoughton needs new ideas and fresh approaches to increase downtown business revenues and to improve downtown for the future. This will require greater collaboration among all downtown stakeholders.
- While new Stoughton residents are very committed to downtown and the City, both areas (downtown and the City) need to attract younger residents and families to the community.

Appearance and Design Issues

- Downtown needs to look better. This observation encompassed several aspects—cleanliness outside of storefronts, store window merchandising, certain building facades, and vacancies.
- Alleys, including rear-parking areas, were described as unkempt, poorly maintained, and dangerous in winter weather.
- The Main Street corridor needs more plantings and greenery to create a nicer overall experience.

Access and Circulation

- Parking enforcement during the day was cited as restrictive. The two (2) hour parking limit in most locations is insufficient if customers want to shop and dine.
- Parking is available but difficult for downtown customers to locate. More informational signage and better, consistent wayfinding would help manage any parking issue. This also applies to rear parking areas located behind Main Street buildings requires better signage.

Real Estate and Local Incentives

- Stoughton's downtown real estate includes a high percentage of owner occupants, or business owners who own their storefronts. Rents in leased storefronts are described as 'very high.'
- According to regional real estate professionals, the downtown real estate market is a good market. Prospective tenants considering downtown Stoughton lease space are primarily personal services and service-related.
- The range of ground level rents for downtown lease space is difficult to determine, given the high percentage of business owner-occupants. Stoughton's ground level rents are described as negotiable, but generally in the $8-$13 PSF range. Rents allocated (or paid) by owner-occupants to their buildings vary significantly by property ownership structure and owner tax status. These rents are typically below market rents. Asking rents per square foot (PSF) for vintage ground level lease in the south Madison area are generally $12-$15 PSF with varied add-ons. Asking rents for restaurant lease space is slightly higher PSF, typically $14-$20 PSF.
- Downtown's historic buildings suffer from deferred maintenance and disinvestment. For businesses owning their buildings, upper story residential rents are the economic driver for property ownership.
- Currently available local incentive programs need to be modified. These incentives do not match the needs of downtown's property owners.

Downtown Events and Activities

- Stoughton's arts and cultural institutions attract large numbers of visitors to Stoughton's downtown annually. As one example, the continued growth of the Opera House audience is important to the success of downtown's restaurants. The City has also received regional recognition for its arts programming.
- The major downtown festival, Syttende Mai, continues to attract nearly 20,000 each year, providing important exposure to downtown's businesses.
- A more recent event, the Stoughton Community Farmers Market continues to grow attendance and its community of customers through social media.
- The downtown has a complete, annual event calendar including new and established events. Some overlap exists among current events and targeted audiences. Also, there is no single information source (webpage or other media) with the complete downtown event schedule.

Organization and Partnerships

- The partnership between the City and downtown's private sector needs to be strengthened. Roles and responsibilities for the private and public sectors require definition. As one example, the private sector needs to better understand local regulatory processes, and the public sector needs to better educate the private sector about these processes.
- Downtown leadership, or a liaison function, is needed to enable collaboration among businesses. Multiple participants cited this need.
- Strong partnerships with multiple local interests will be important to downtown growth and any downtown leadership. As examples, partnerships with downtown's arts and cultural institutions would be beneficial for downtown's future. This could include multiple activities to enliven downtown in small ways. The City's major employers can provide access to expertise and potential customers.
- Engaging residents interested in seeing downtown succeed will be most important for downtown's future. This includes engaging parents and their young children in their downtown, building their affinity for their community.

Strategic Implications for Downtown Stoughton

- Becoming more welcoming will be key to a successful downtown future. This encompasses multiple efforts and actions—from welcoming diverse people and families to downtown, to permitting visitors and families to access restrooms, and to understanding what new downtown businesses need to succeed. Ultimately, being welcoming is the basis for all attraction efforts, whether for new residents, businesses, current residents or employees, and visitors.
- Collaboration will be required to ensure future success, particularly among private sector interests. A successful downtown means all interests, private and public, benefit from economic success. As one example, organizers of downtown events should be working together to eliminate any duplication and to ensure event publicity, success and organization.
- The private and public sector roles in downtown's improvement need greater definition. These defined roles will establish the context for collaboration. The City and Stoughton's RDA can examine their processes, regulations, and approvals to support this plan's implementation and downtown's economic success. The private sector needs to strengthen their operations, including customer attraction to their individual businesses and downtown, and to ensure quality improvements to their historic buildings to enable better appearance.

Appendix 4: Public Input Summary

This appendix includes a summary of public input gathered during the planning process for the Market Revitalization Plan in Downtown Stoughton that took place on October, 2019.

Stoughton *Wisconsin*

PUBLIC INPUT MEETING SUMMARY

The City of Stoughton and the City's Redevelopment Authority is currently developing a Downtown Economic Strategy. On October 1st, 2019 the Downtown Revitalization Subcommittee of the RDA hosted an Open House at the Legeret in downtown Stoughton. Based on sign-in sheets, approximately 50 members of the community participated. There where several stations where the community gave feedback on items such as parking, downtown events, streetscape, business mix, etc. The following report summarizes the public input received at the meeting.

A resident reviews the station instruction sheet.

Community members discuss the contents of the vision boards.

Residents gather for the first public input meeting.

VALUES BOARD

The Values Board consisted of eight characteristics that describe the essence of Downtown Stoughton. Community members were given 2 green dots to place on terms they felt best represented downtown. There were 111 dots placed in total. The term Vibrant had the most selections with 27% (30 dots), followed by Sustainable with 19% (21 dots) and Historic with 15% (17 dots). Growth was the next highest with 14% (16 dots).

VALUES BOARD

Stoughton Wisconsin

Participants were given an opportunity to provide additional comments on the board using post-it notes or directly on the board. Walkability and bikability were popular comments. Under Livable, a resident commented "walkable and bikable," while under the Sustainable category, one comment was to "decrease car traffic in favor of being walkable and bikable." For the Growth category, one response was to "work with Internet providers to bring improved Internet for downtown businesses and community."

VISUAL PREFERENCE SURVEY

The Visual Preference Survey included eight themed image boards with precedent images of projects, places, and amenities that could be used as inspiration or talking points for the redevelopment plan in downtown. Community members were given 2 green dots per board. They were instructed to place dots on images they felt strongly represented what they would like to see in Downtown Stoughton. Below is a summary of each board, indicating the top three images chosen per board. The visual preference survey results include pages 3-10.

Welcome Center & Public Facilities

There were 100 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 3 (30%), image 1 (23%), and image 5 (20%). A note on image 7 described how the corner of main and 4th street should be used as a welcoming corner with signs, lights.

WELCOME CENTER & PUBLIC FACILITIES

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 3 represents a reuse of an iconic existing, historic structure. Pedestrian scale lighting, large signage, and universal access promote the welcoming character of the preferred image.

Streetscape / Artscape

There were 111 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 4 (35%), image 3 (28%), and image 6 (23%). Image 4 received the third highest number of dots compared to all other boards with 39. Comments described having a major welcoming avenue from 4th street to the riverfront, and having a street of murals.

STREETSCAPE / ARTSCAPE

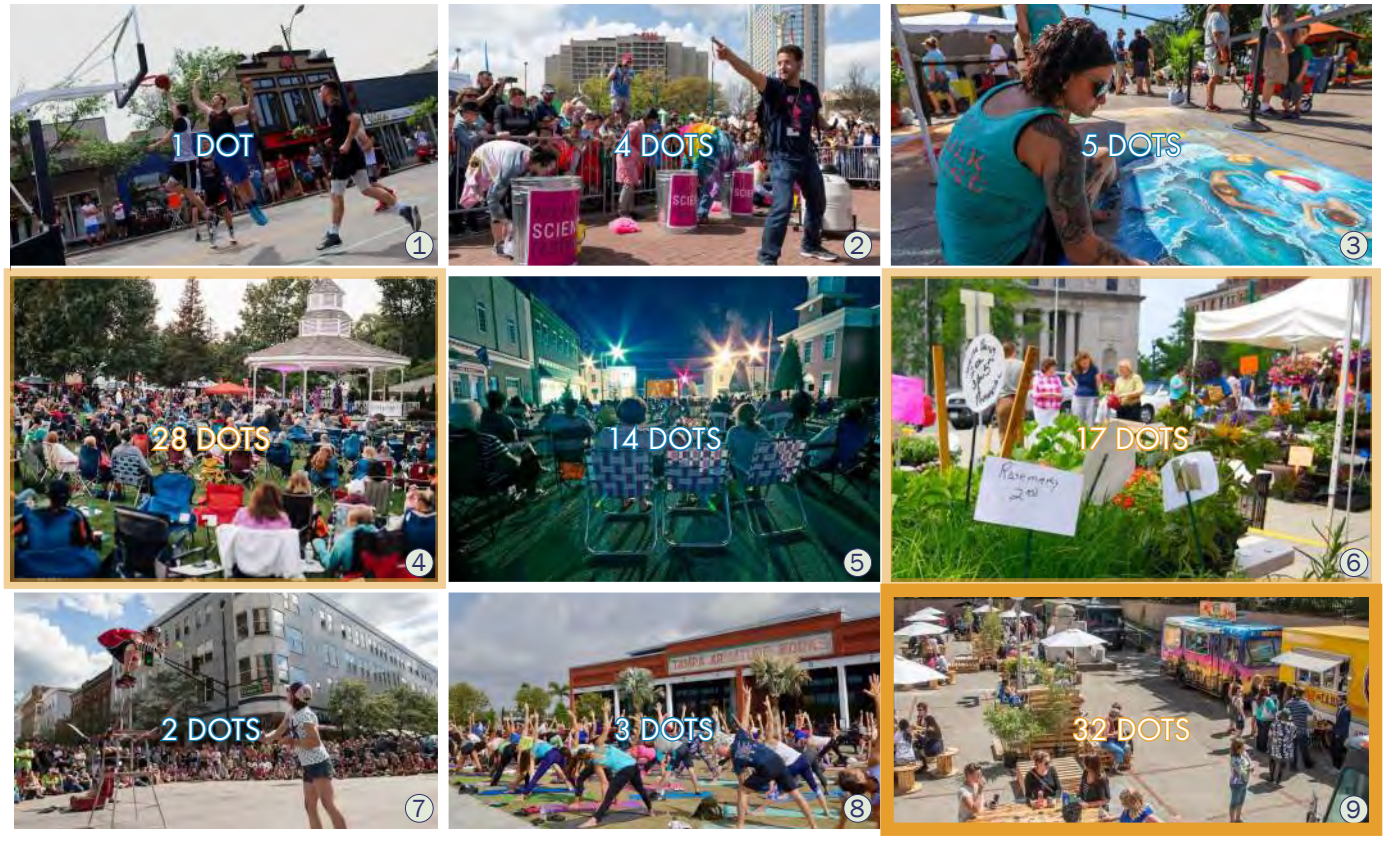
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The style of art in image 4 is individual and unique, unlike painted cows or painted Bucky's. The intent is a consistent pattern of art but of eclectic expressions, where possible. Often these pieces are not readily apparent or visible.

Events

There were 109 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 9 (30%), image 4 (26%), and image 6 (16%). Comments included having well promoted events, more signature events, more kids events, incorporating businesses into events, and having a regular food truck space. A note was made on image 5 to provide free outdoor summer movies.



EVENTS

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 9 is a representation of a densely spaced outdoor food truck area in a converted parking lot. Through the use of recycled industrial equipment, makeshift seating areas, and potted plants – along with the backdrop of colorful trucks – the space becomes inviting and visually interesting.

Signage & Wayfinding

There were 101 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 5 (32%), image 9 (18%), and image 4 (14%). There were two comments about incorporating the history of Stoughton into the signage or kiosks, including its historic buildings.

SIGNAGE AND WAYFINDING

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The downtown kiosk in image 5 utilizes color, history, and a mix of materials to create a dynamic, functional wayfinding signage pallet. The simple, contrasting colors used in the map are clear and precise, allowing users to quickly engage the sign, and find their destination.

Business & Dining

There were 108 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 3 (38%), image 4 (22%), and image 5 (16%). Image 3 had the second highest number of dots compared to all other boards with 41. Comments included having more al fresco dining, a mix of businesses, the value of outside dining and Venice spaces, as well as having a hotel close to downtown. One community member wrote "Our downtown is unique and we should make sure it doesn't look like everywhere else. We should play up the river, opera house and existing buildings with all their personality."

BUSINESS & DINING

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 3 is an example of a warmly lit indoor/outdoor dining patio. The overhead festoon lighting helps enclose the space, while also drawing the sheltered portion to the outside. The addition of movable seating allows users to adjust the space as needed for group size and function, which helps create character.

Art & Gateway

There were 103 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 2 (34%), image 6 (19%), and image 8 (14%). Comments included ensuring art installations were appropriate to the area, community and heritage. Additional comments discussed having gathering spaces with art installations, having more contemporary art, and having a bandstand near the river. One community member indicated they did not like anything on the board, but agreed with the need for more art.

ART / GATEWAY

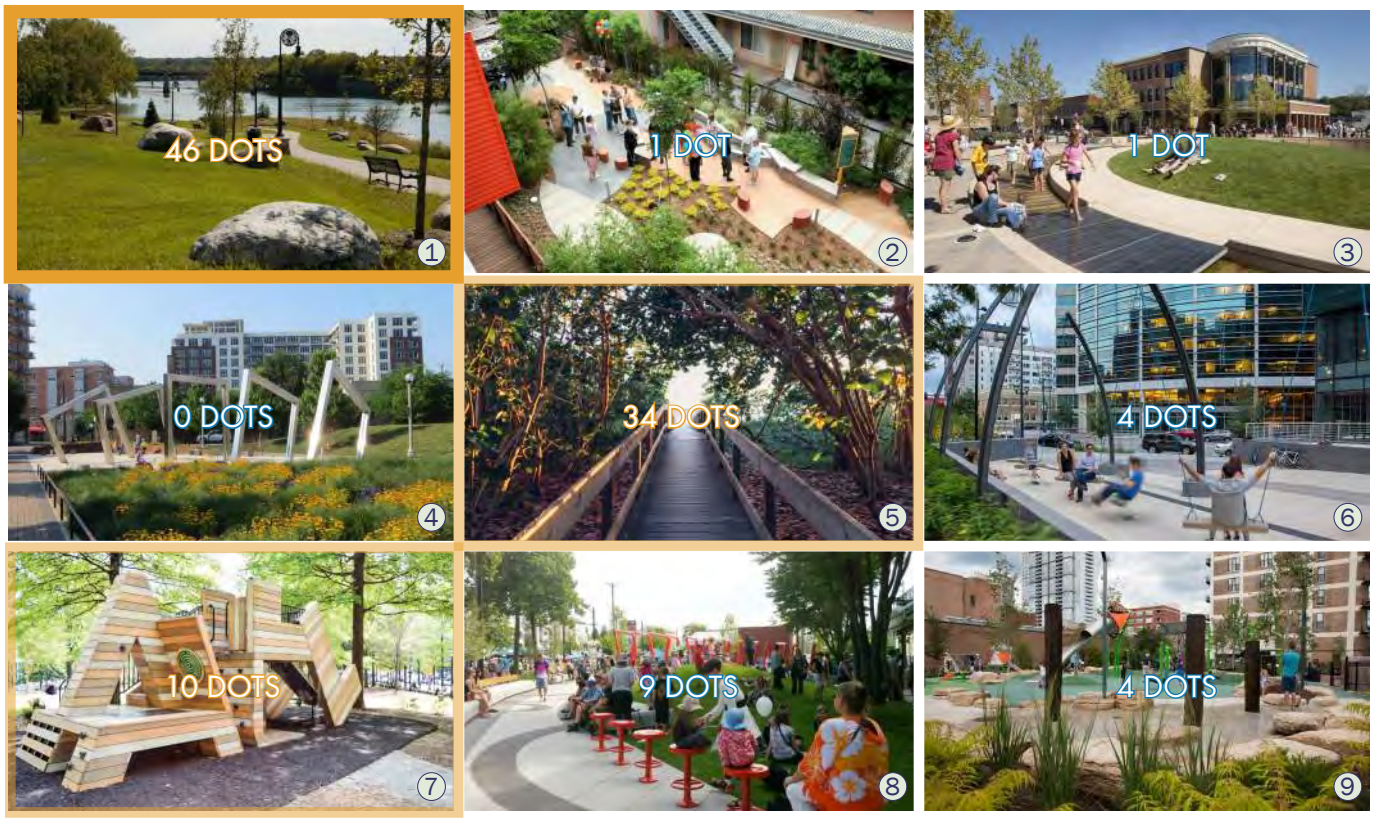
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The overhead downtown gateway sign in image 2 is an example of a design that is complemented by it's purpose and surrounding aesthetic. A sign highlighting a historic avenue should use clean and purposeful geometry that draws from the history of the area.

Parks & Open Spaces

There were 109 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 1 (42%), image 5 (31%), and image 7 (9%). Image 1 had the highest number of dots, 46, compared to all other boards. Comments included utilizing the riverway, more open gathering spaces, and dog friendly spaces.



PARKS & OPEN SPACES

Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

Image 1 illustrates a riverfront open space that isn't overly designed and provides an equal mix of vegetation, natural features, and pedestrian amenities to provide interest throughout the space. The path follows the natural curvature of the river which is smooth and organic, instead of arbitrarily directing users on an unconventional route.

Parking

There were 75 total dots placed on this board. The images with the highest number of dots were image 7 (45%), image 9 (33%), and image 8 (20%). There were several comments about limiting parking tickets and providing more free and extended (2+ hour) parking. Other residents commented about adding more bicycle parking and E.V. charging. One respondent didn't see parking as a priority, rather making the downtown more walkable and connected with the regional bike path system.

PARKING

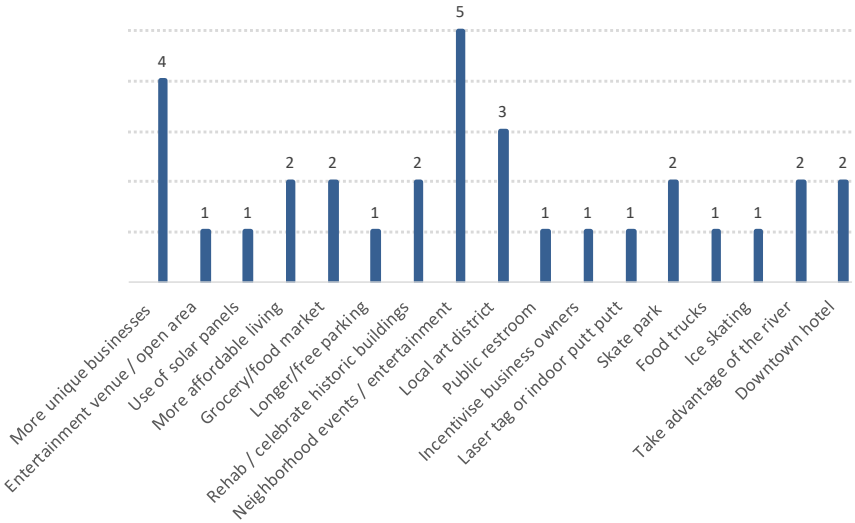
Stoughton Wisconsin

Comment:

The parking design in image 7 represents street side angled parking adjacent to a widened sidewalk for bigger groups and more leisurely movement. There is a nice vegetated barrier between the cars and the sidewalk which helps separate an undesirable element from the sidewalk and storefronts.

VISION BOARD

The Vision Board consisted of six themes that may be represented in the redevelopment plan. Residents were given 1 green dot to place on the theme they felt should be part of the downtown redevelopment. With 57 total dots, New Businesses recorded the most dots with 34 (60%), followed by Events with 11 dots (19%).



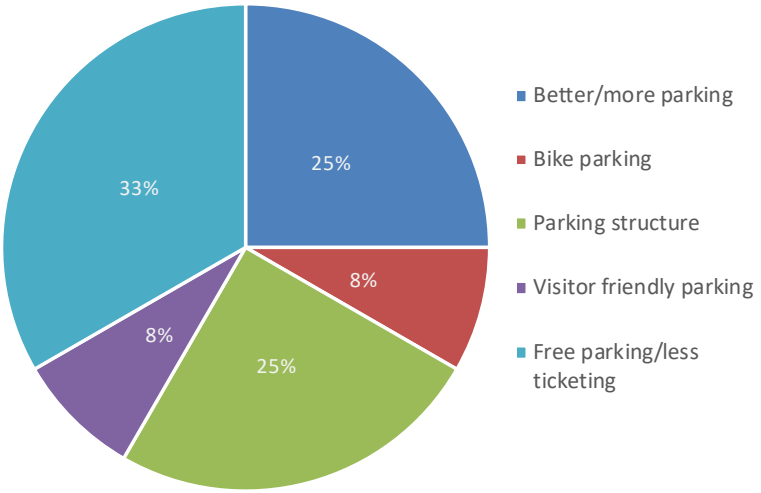
Several comments were recorded on this board. The most common suggestion was to have more neighborhood events to bring the community and surrounding area to downtown Stoughton. The next most common suggestion was attracting more businesses to the city such as coffee shops and book stores. Another common idea was to turn the area into a local art district, incentivizing business owners to rent space for art installations, or increasing the presence of murals, sculptures, and art live-work opportunities.

OPEN SPACE BOARD

The Open Space Board was an opportunity to write in comments about subjects or themes residents saw throughout the night, or that they felt were missed. There were eight categories for residents to place comments or ideas on the board. The following pages will provide a summary of the comments received in each category.

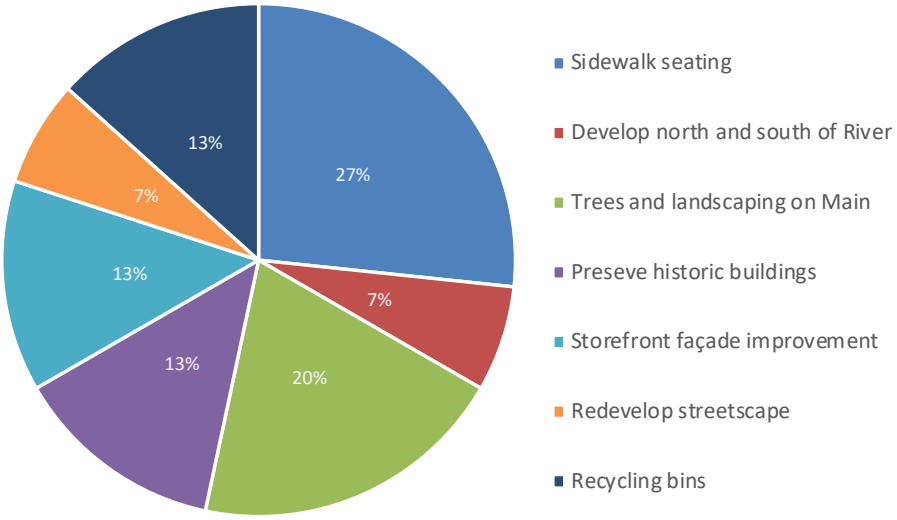
Parking

The comments for parking were specific to roughly 5 themes; free parking/less ticketing, better/more parking, more bike parking, having a downtown parking structure, and more visitor friendly parking. Free parking/ less ticketing was the most common idea with 4 notes, followed by better/more parking with 3 notes. However, though most comments centered on improving parking, a few residents disagreed with the need. One resident said "stop whining about parking," while another wrote, "I never have trouble parking. Is this really a priority? If we have events and businesses people want, they will come..."



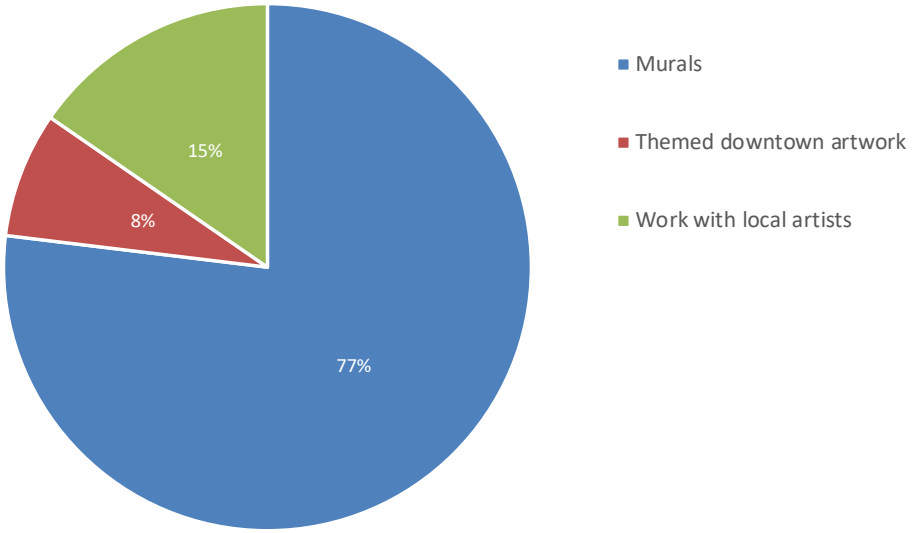
Streetscape

There were 7 distinct categories of comments received under streetscape: Having more sidewalk seating, developing north and south of river, more trees and landscaping on Main St, preserve historic buildings, storefront façade improvement, re-develop the streetscape and provide recycling bins. Installing more trees and landscaping on Main St was the most popular comment, followed by creating more sidewalk seating. One resident suggested to widen sidewalks "...for more outdoor dining/drinking. We have such long winters, it's nice to be outside when weather is good."



Artscape

There were 3 categories of comments recorded in this section; murals, themed downtown artwork, and working with local artists. Comments regarding murals were the most common type with 10 out of 13 responses expressing the desire for more murals. Comments included placing murals on all buildings, working with local artists to commission artwork, and installing themed artwork for different times of the year.



New Businesses

Responses for new businesses were ranged and varied. A few themes did materialize, including bringing in food trucks, a new grocer/co-op, and encouraging existing businesses while making sure new businesses are unique, desired, and can compete in the Internet age. One resident said, "give people what they can't get on Amazon; knowledge, experiences, and services." Another commented about the void the Co-op left, saying it, "makes Stoughton less livable. Would love to see a well curated general store/co-op so we don't have to drive to Willy St." Others commented on the hours of operations asking, "Can we help businesses be open in the evening and on Sunday's?"

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Housing

Responses for housing centered on needing more lofts and condominiums, as well as providing more affordable and low income housing. One comment suggested "condos on the river with small businesses like coffee shops, bookstores, and small gift shops." Speaking about affordable housing, one community member asked for "resources for individuals and families for housing." while another said, "rent downtown needs to be more affordable."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Events

Responses for events were varied, however a few themes emerged. Residents discussed the need for more festivals, using the gazebo at Rotary Park for a stage, and the surrounding downtown parks for event spaces. Another common response was the need for an events coordinator, as one resident said "we need an events coordinator that works with the city and C.C. to keep the downtown active and alive." Other ideas that received multiple responses were to fill the vacant spaces and to continue expanding the farmers market. One community member described expanding the farmers market "so we can support local producers and be more sustainable."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Parks and Open Spaces

Many residents agreed taking advantage of the riverfront was a high priority for improving Stoughton's parks and open spaces. Some talked about providing a more dynamic experience along the river, utilizing businesses, gardens, and installations to make it more interactive. Another resident asked to "link the riverfront development to downtown."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

Signage

Signage received only 8 community comments, however almost all of the comments agreed that updated signage is needed in the downtown. Many said having kiosks would be beneficial and one resident mentioned having a kiosk "where people can hang notices and promote community events." Other suggestions were to have more "helpful signage" that would indicate where parking can be found and if parking were full. Another suggestion was to eliminate downtown billboards. One resident said signage can "create an emotional experience for people."

The "Wordle" shown below provides another, subjective look at these open ended responses, based on the frequency of words as they appear in this theme.

LEGEND

STICKERS PLACED

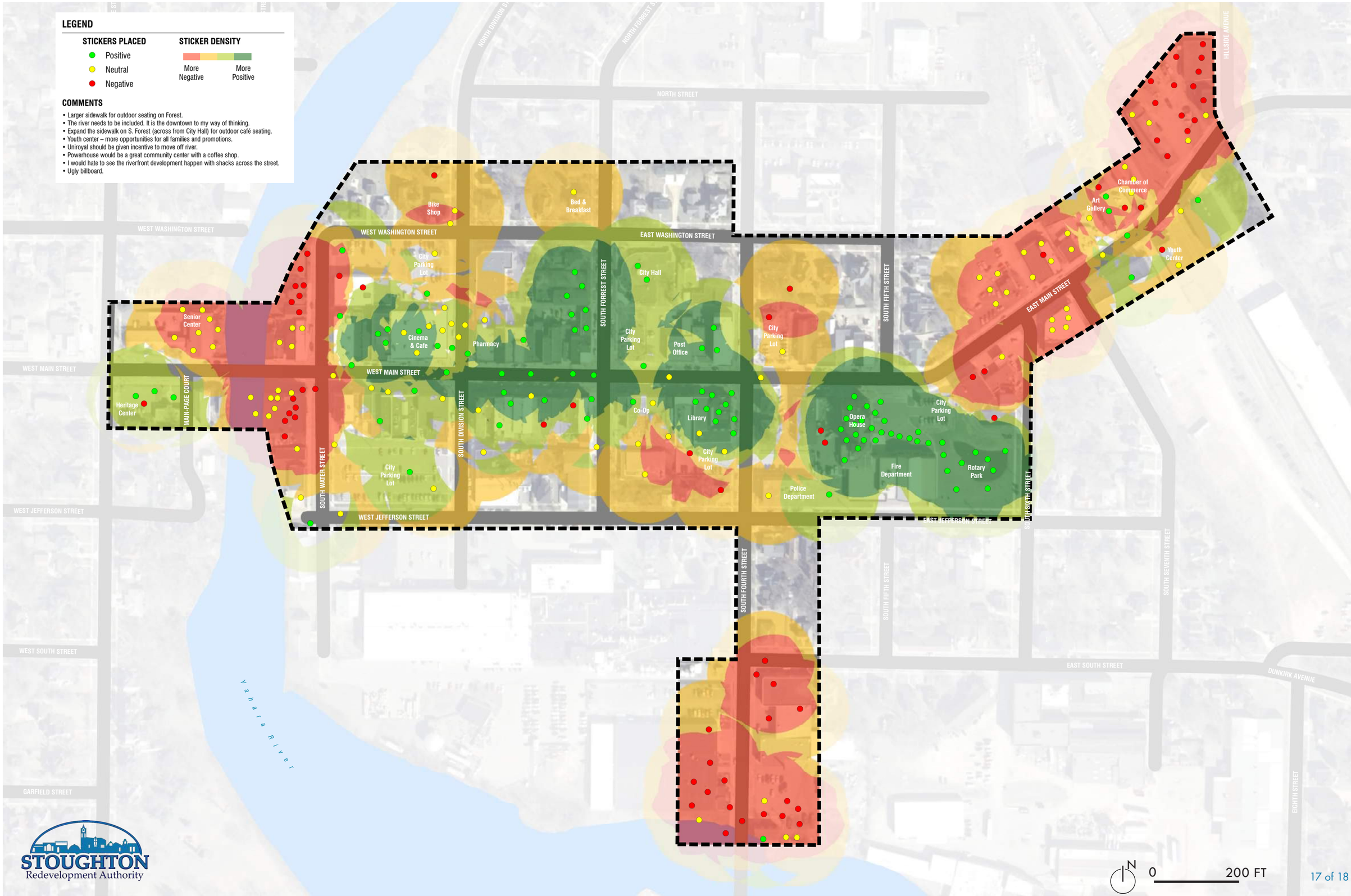
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative

STICKER DENSITY

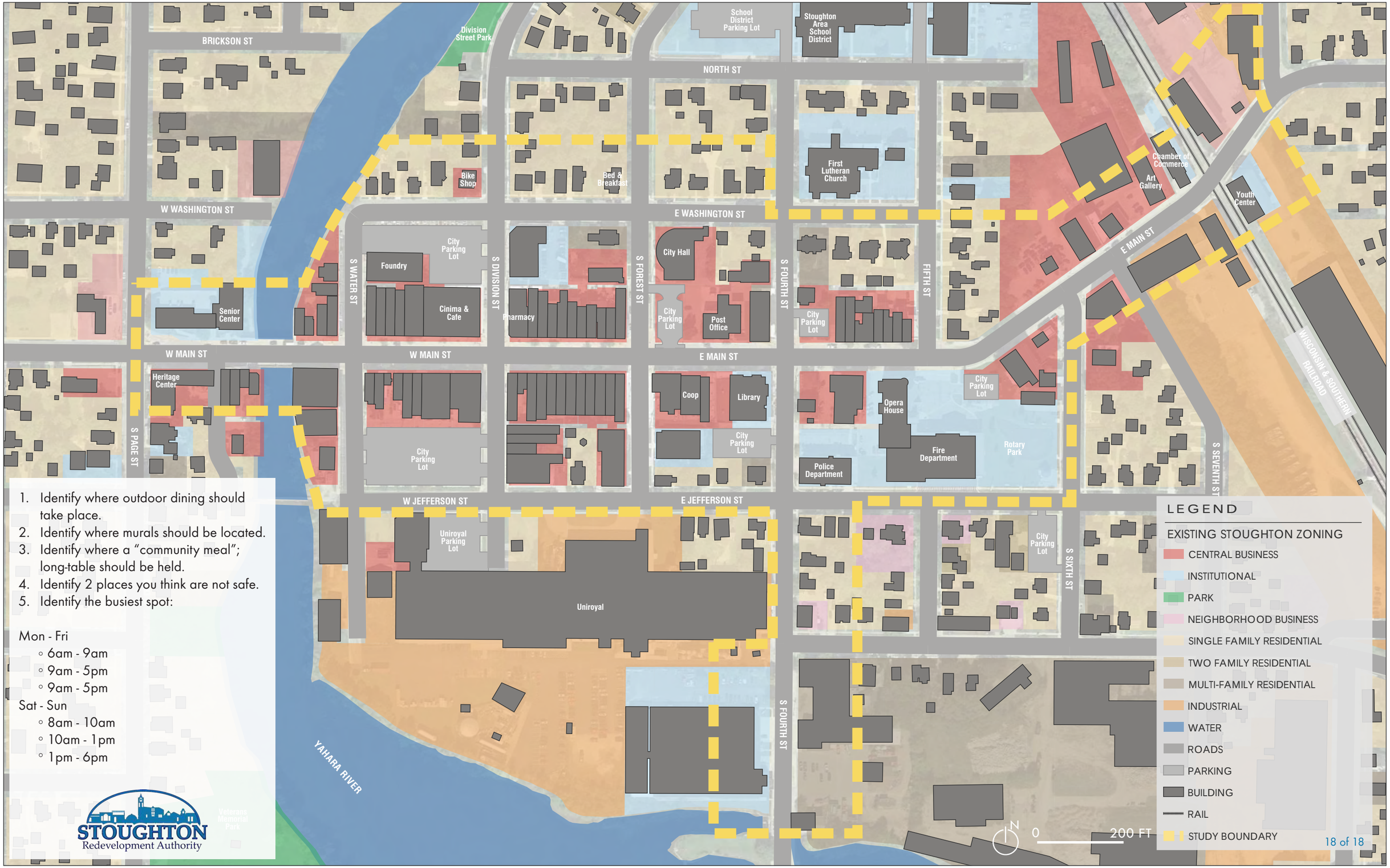
More Negative — More Positive

COMMENTS

- Larger sidewalk for outdoor seating on Forest.
- The river needs to be included. It is the downtown to my way of thinking.
- Expand the sidewalk on S. Forest (across from City Hall) for outdoor café seating.
- Youth center – more opportunities for all families and promotions.
- Uniroyal should be given incentive to move off river.
- Powerhouse would be a great community center with a coffee shop.
- I would hate to see the riverfront development happen with shacks across the street.
- Ugly billboard.



STOUGHTON Redevelopment Authority



1. Identify where outdoor dining should take place.
2. Identify where murals should be located.
3. Identify where a "community meal"; long-table should be held.
4. Identify 2 places you think are not safe.
5. Identify the busiest spot:

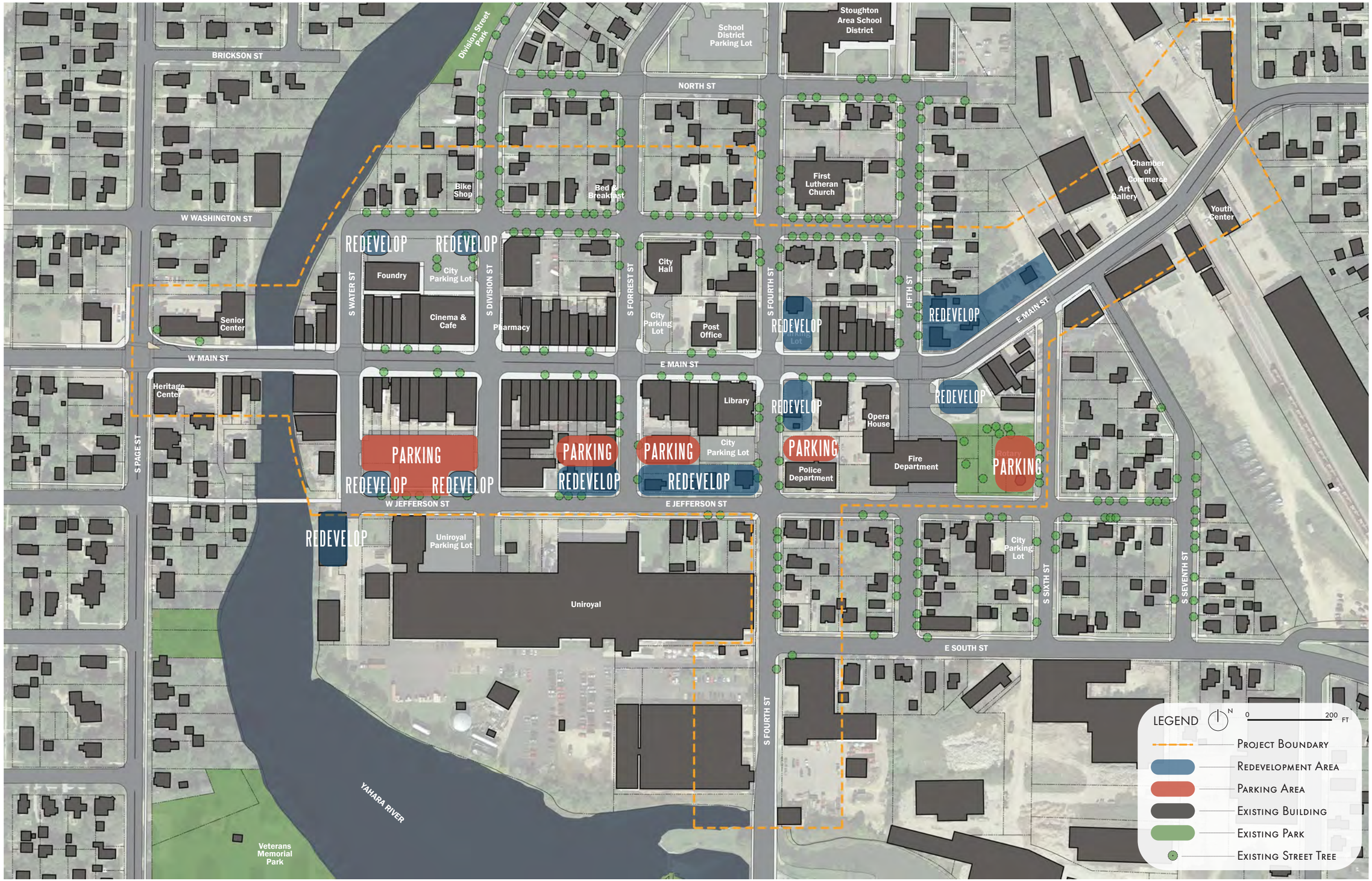
Mon - Fri
- 6am - 9am
- 9am - 5pm
- 9am - 5pm

Sat - Sun
- 8am - 10am
- 10am - 1pm
- 1pm - 6pm

STOUGHTON
Redevelopment Authority

Appendix 5: Opportunities Mapping

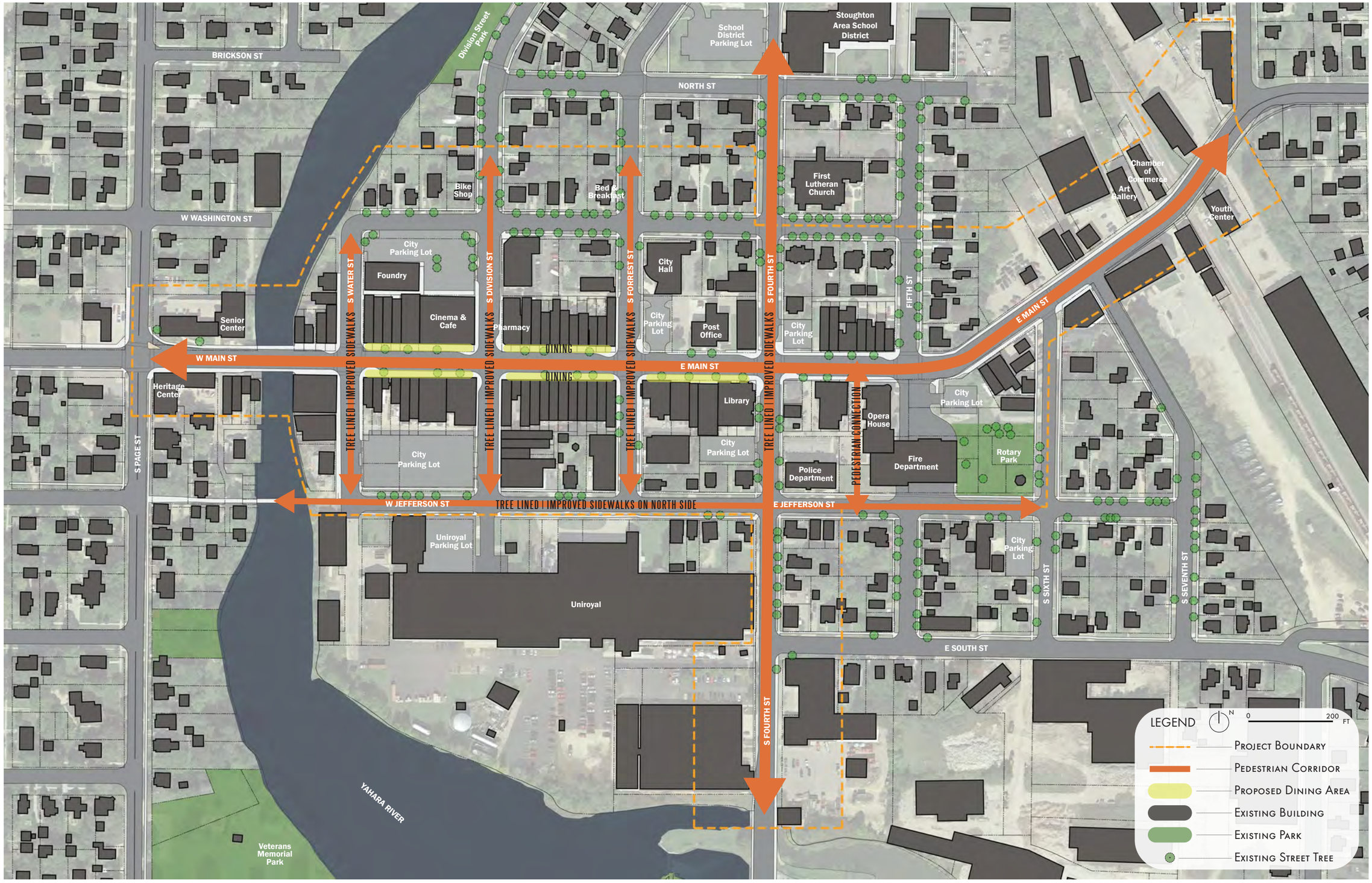
This appendix includes the opportunities mapping done as part of the preliminary planning process towards the end of 2019.



AYRES
11.25.2019

STOUGHTON | OPPORTUNITIES PLAN

Ayres Associates Inc | 101 East Badger Road Madison WI 53713 | t 608.255.0800 | www.ayresassociates.com | # 0668



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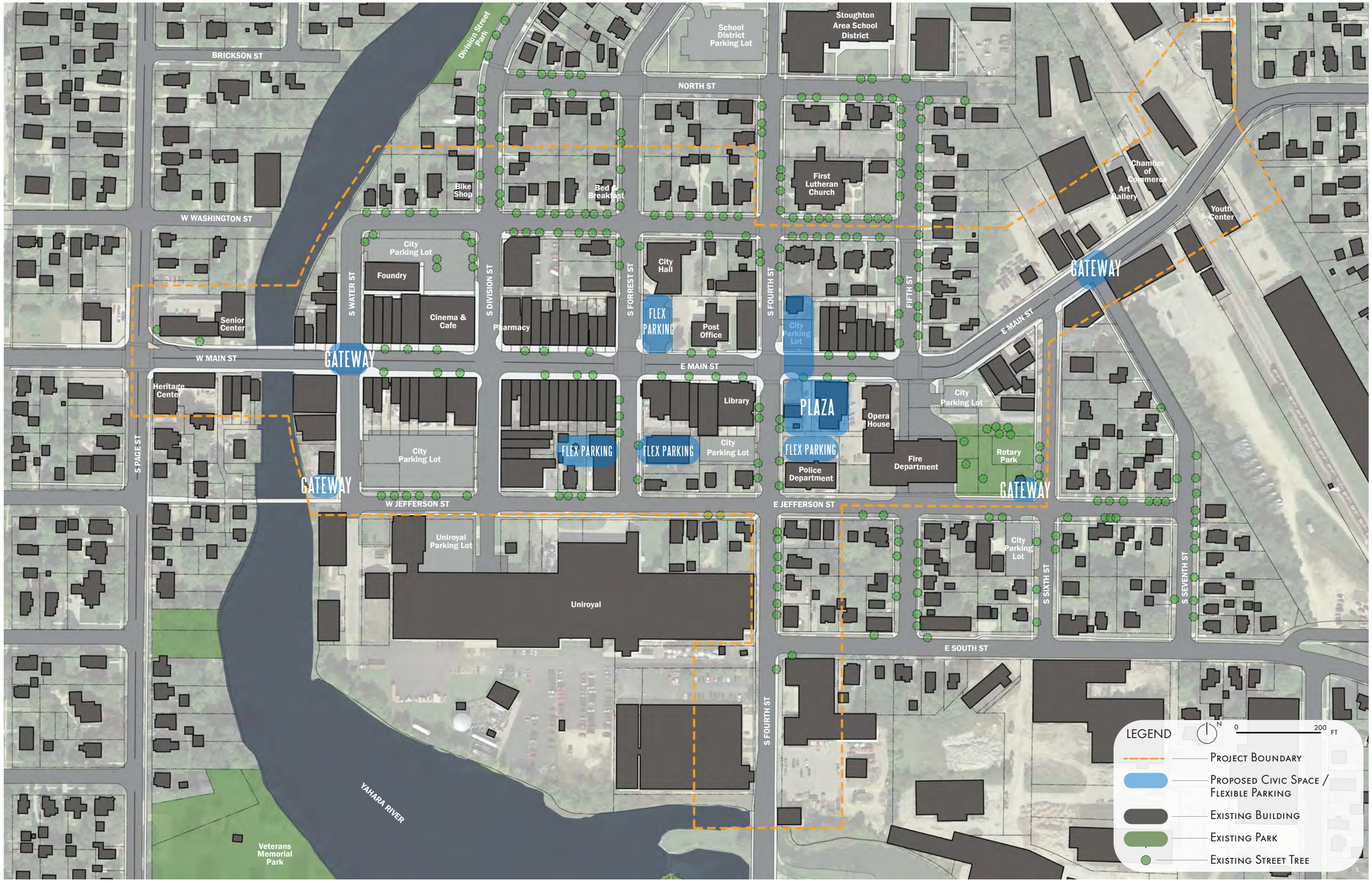

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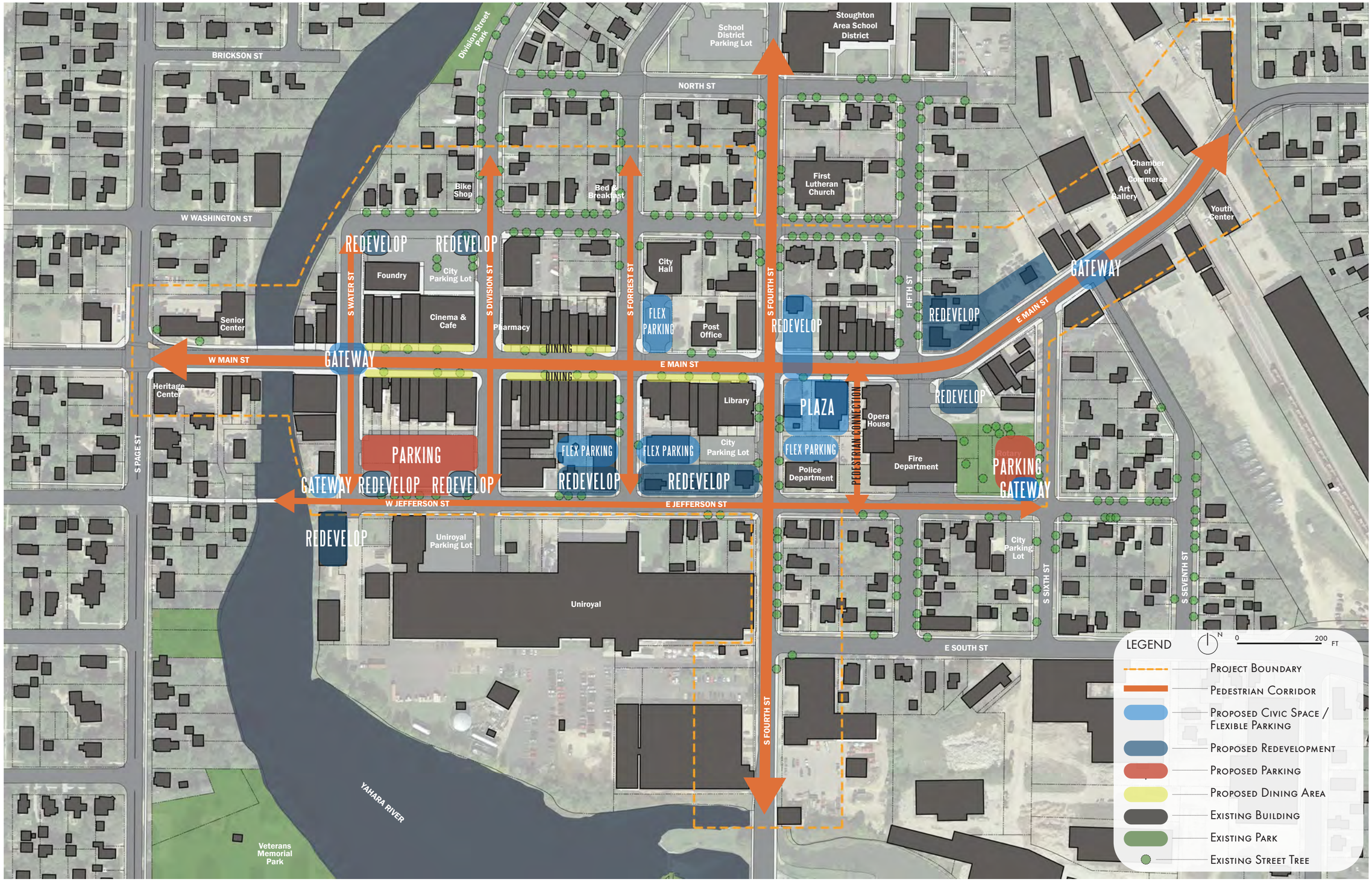

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11.25.2019

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