

Resident and Business Surveys

III. RESIDENT AND BUSINESS SURVEYS

As a part of this project, two surveys were conducted to gauge the health of Downtown Coolidge, as perceived locally. These were a survey of owners/managers of businesses located in the project area and a telephone survey of residents living in Downtown's primary trade area. A summary of the survey responses follows.

Use of Downtown

The vast majority of trade area residents surveyed, 83%, reported coming to Downtown with great frequency (defined as between 1 and 7 times a week). On the other hand, only 13% of those surveyed said they come to Downtown with moderate frequency (from 3 times a month to 6 times a year) and 4% said they come to Downtown Coolidge infrequently (5 times a year or less).

Purpose of Trips

When asked why they currently come to Downtown Coolidge, the top four reasons cited by residents surveyed were:

- "Post office" (19%);
- "Banking" (16%);
- "Service businesses" (12%); and
- "Shopping" (10%).

Therefore, 57% of those surveyed said they primarily come to Downtown for one of these four reasons.

The remaining reasons cited for Downtown trips were:

- "Eating in restaurants" (7%);
- "Library" (7%);
- "Conducting personal business" (6%);
- "Government business" (6%);
- "Work there" (6%); and

- “Other” (6%) – museum, visiting friends/family, religious services, recreation, live there.

In addition, 5% of those surveyed said they most often find themselves in Downtown simply because they are “passing through.”

Shopping Area of Choice

Those surveyed were asked where they do most of their family shopping at this time, other than grocery shopping. The following three answers were given by survey respondents:

- Coolidge (54%);
- Out-of-town (42%); and
- Other (4%) – mail order, Internet.

Of those citing Coolidge as their primary shopping choice, the vast majority said they shop at Wal-Mart.

Those citing out-of-town venues mentioned the following:

- Casa Grande (14%);
- Out-of-town in general (8%);
- Chandler and Mesa (6% each);
- East Mesa and Queen Creek (2% each); and
- Gilbert, Johnson Ranch, San Tan, and Tucson (1% each).

It is interesting to note that, among respondents who said they do most of their shopping in Coolidge or out-of-town, six different Wal-Mart stores were cited.

When asked why they choose to shop in a particular area, residents mentioned:

- Convenience (46%);
- Variety/selection offered (24%);
- Closeness to home (12%);
- Price (12%);

- Closeness to work (4%); and
- Other (2%) – loyalty, improve tax base.

Downtown Characteristics

Residents and business owners surveyed were asked to rate a list of 19 Downtown characteristics as being "good," "fair," or "poor" at this time.

Six characteristics were rated "good" by a majority or significant percent (defined as up to 46%) of residents. Three received this rating from a majority of business owners – and these three were among the six rated "good" by a majority or significant percent of residents.

The three characteristics on which residents and business owners agreed were:

- Helpfulness of salespeople (62% residents, 60% business owners);
- Business hours (54% residents, 59% business owners); and
- Quality of service businesses (48% residents, 54% business owners).

The three characteristics rated "good" by a majority or significant percent of residents, but not business owners, were:

- Traffic circulation (53% residents, 42% business owners);
- Knowledge of salespeople (49% residents, 38% business owners); and
- Availability of parking (46% residents, 32% business owners).

Downtown Improvements

Residents and business owners were asked to rate a list of possible Downtown improvements as being "very important," "somewhat important," or "not important" at this time.

Thirteen improvements were rated "very important" by a majority or significant percent of residents. Twelve received this rating from a majority or significant percent of business owners.

The improvements rated “very important” by a majority or significant percent of both residents and business owners were:

- Increase restaurant variety (89% residents, 88% business owners);
- Increase the number of retail businesses (83% residents, 93% business owners);
- Increase the variety of retail goods (79% residents, 78% business owners);
- Improve restaurant quality (79% residents, 71% business owners);
- Physically improve buildings (76% residents, 89% business owners);
- Improve the variety of service businesses (72% residents, 46% business owners);
- Improve the quality of retail goods (71% residents, 62% business owners);
- Improve the area’s cleanliness (71% residents, 78% business owners);
- Improve the feeling of safety (58% residents, 70% business owners);
- Improve parking availability (51% residents, 50% business owners); and
- Improve parking convenience (49% residents, 46% business owners).

The improvements rated “very important” by a majority of residents, but not business owners, were:

- Improve the quality of service businesses (56% residents, 27% business owners); and
- Improve customer service (53% residents, 40% business owners).

In addition, one improvement was rated “very important” by a significant percent of business owners, but not residents. This was:

- Improve traffic flow (41% residents, 48% business owners).

In summary, the survey results indicate that residents of Downtown’s primary trade area think it is very important to:

- Improve Downtown’s variety of restaurants, retail, and service businesses;
- Improve the quality of restaurants, retail, and service businesses;

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- Make Downtown more of a shopping area by increasing the number of retail businesses;
- Improve Downtown's ambience, in terms of building appearance, cleanliness, and safety; and
- Improve Downtown's convenience, related to customer service and parking availability/convenience.