

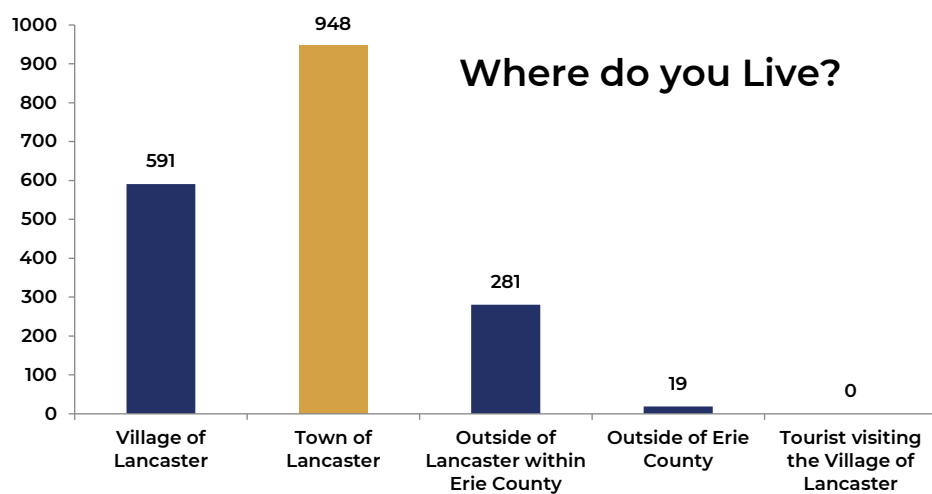


LANCASTER NY FORWARD PUBLIC SURVEY REPORT

To complement the LPC meetings and public workshop, a public survey was launched on June 5, 2023, which was made available online and on paper copies before closing on July 14, 2023. The objective of the survey was to gather input from residents and visitors of the Village of Lancaster alike in regard to their perceptions of downtown Lancaster and what opportunities and issues they see. Public engagement for the survey included advertising at every LPC Meeting and Public Workshop; attending the Village’s Sip and Shop Event, showings at the Opera House, and the 4th of July Parade to hand out flyers; and leaving flyers and surveys at the library, senior center, and apartments and businesses downtown. Overall, the survey was a great success garnering **1,839** responses. Some of the key takeaways from the survey are summarized below.

Respondent Characteristics

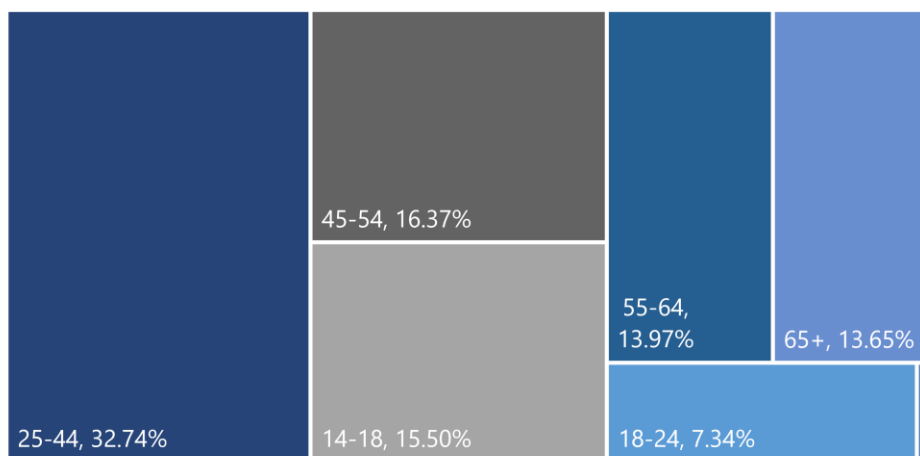
Respondents to the survey varied by age group and in their relation to the Village. Of the nearly 2,000 respondents, 591 live in the Village of Lancaster, which represents 5.9% of the Village’s total population. The largest proportion of respondents (51.5%) came from the Town of Lancaster. Of the 591 Village respondents to the survey, 41.5% of them indicated that they have lived in the Village for 20 or more years. While the majority of respondents stated that they live outside of the Village, the bulk of respondents (56%) also indicated that they are less than a five-minute drive from downtown Lancaster. These relatively high response rates from Village and Town residents indicate a strong level of interest in the program and a desire for the program to support projects that will bring significant improvements to the Village.





In addition to their relationship to the Village, the survey also sought to understand the distribution survey respondent age groups. The age group with the highest response rate was the 25 to 44 age group, which totaled 32% of all responses. Overall, 56% of respondents identified as being under the age of 45. This survey received a healthy number of responses from a wide array of age groups, which in turn helps to provide a clearer understanding of what opportunities and issues are perceived by all types of residents and visitors of the Village.

What is Your Age?

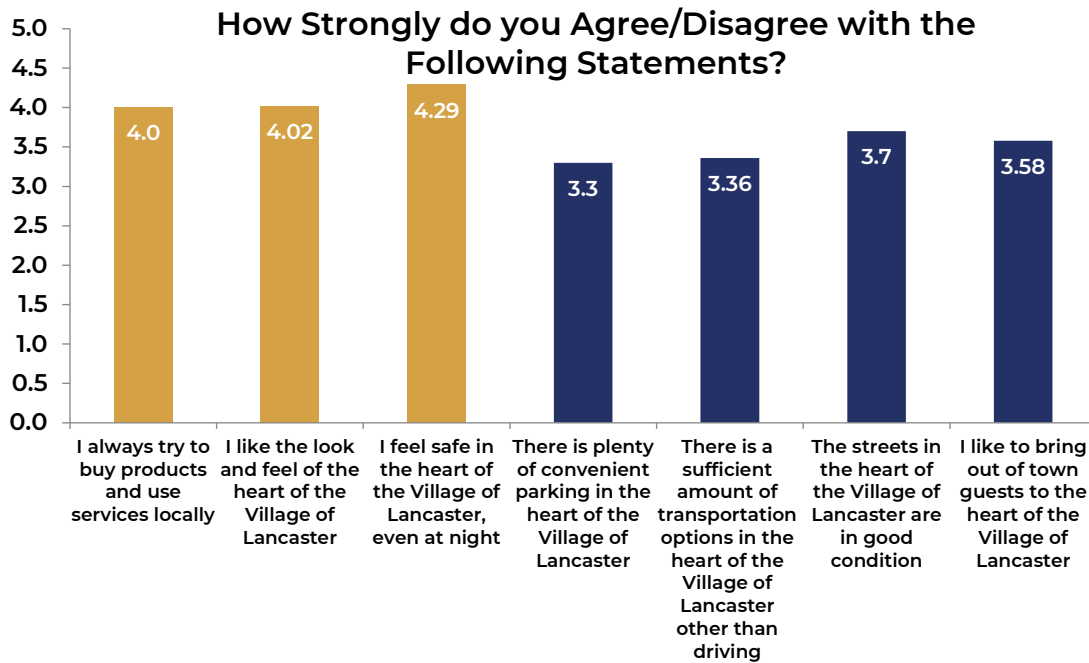


Perceptions of Downtown

Before respondents were asked their opinions on improving the Village and NYF area, the survey first had to draw out opinions on how residents and visitors utilize downtown Lancaster and what their current views are on it. Overall, we received 262 responses from people who already live downtown and 135 additional responses from those who are interested in moving downtown. Furthermore, 172 respondents indicated that they are interested in or planning on starting a business in the Village.

Respondents were given a series of statements about downtown and then asked to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with each of them. Responses were weighted on a scale of 1 to 5 with “strongly disagree” equaling 1 and “strongly agree” equaling 5. Overall, most respondents agreed with the statements presented, as each statement received a weighted value of at least 3.0 or more. The three statements that received especially high levels of agreement were:

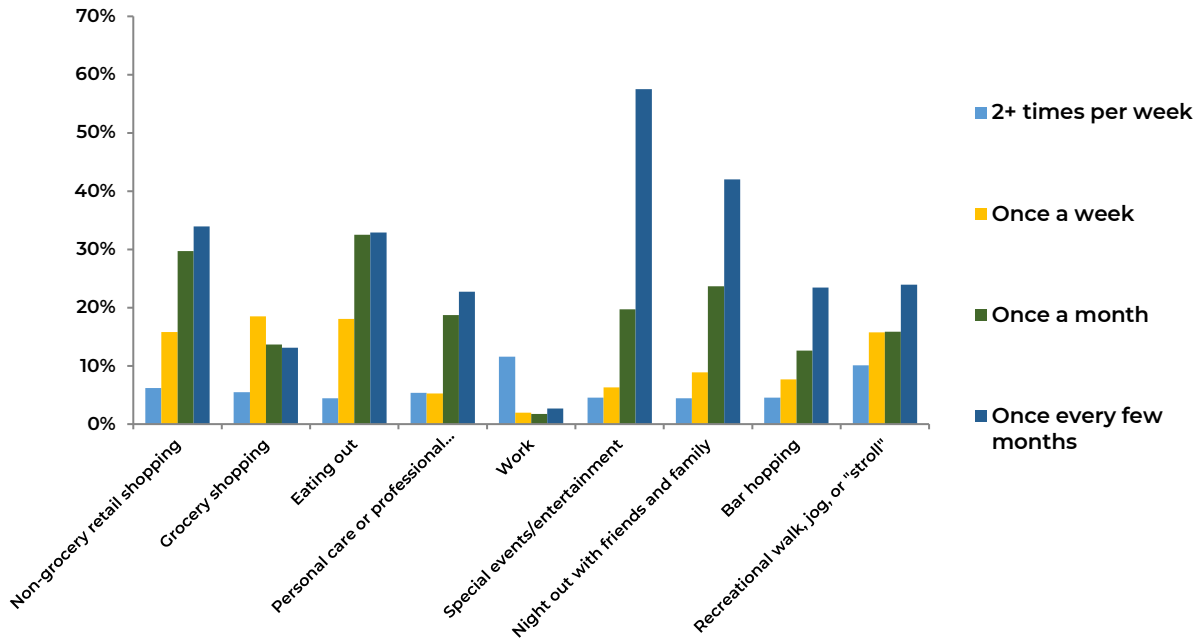
1. “I always try to buy products and use services locally” (4.0)
2. “I like the look and feel of the heart of the Village of Lancaster” (4.02)
3. “I feel safe in the heart of the Village of Lancaster, event at night” (4.29)



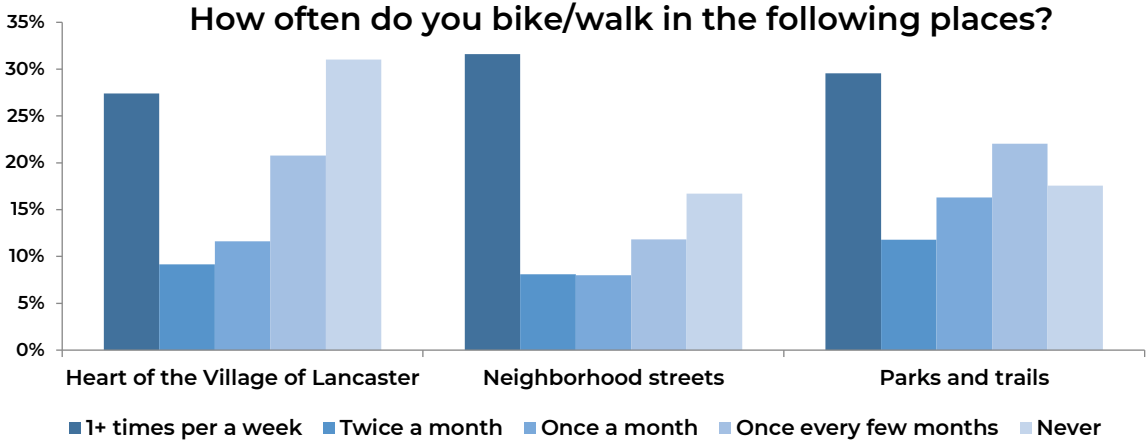
Following this, the survey then asked respondents to indicate how often they come to downtown Lancaster and for what various activities and services they come downtown for. 43% of respondents indicated that they visit downtown Lancaster at least once per week. The largest proportion of respondents (23.5%) indicated they come downtown only once every few months. Based on the responses, the reasons respondents most frequently come to downtown Lancaster is for work, grocery shopping, and recreational walking/jogging. Activities and services that respondents come downtown for less frequently included eating out, a night out with friends or family, and bar hopping. These types of activities are typically reserved for more special circumstances so they may not be something respondents typically do; however, when they do, they are doing so downtown.



How Often do you Come Downtown for the Following?



Interestingly, many respondents indicated that they utilize downtown for exercise or to walk recreationally. Diving into this question further, the survey asked how often and where respondents are biking and walking in the Village. Overall, it is clear that residents in the Village are very active. More than 25% of respondents indicated they walk or bike more than once per week in the heart of the Village, along neighboring streets, and in parks/on trails. Conversely, over 30% of respondents indicated that they never walk or bike in the heart of the Village. This may be due the perceived lack of infrastructure and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.



Lastly, while a surprising number of respondents travel downtown via bike or walking, private automobiles are still the primary form of transportation; therefore, the survey sought to understand how well respondents rate the wayfinding and ease of navigation downtown. Respondents were asked to rate wayfinding in the Village on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the most difficult to find one’s way around, and 5 being easy to find one’s way around. Overall, respondents rated the wayfinding and the ease of navigation downtown with an average score of 4.1 out of 5, with the plurality of respondents giving it a 5 out of 5.

4.1 Average Wayfinding Rating



The Future of Downtown

Now that the survey has established an understanding of who took the survey and what their perceptions of downtown are, next was to determine what opinions respondents had on opportunities and issues which can be addressed through the NYF program.



The survey began by asking a number of questions in regard to what types of new restaurants and businesses respondents would like to see in downtown Lancaster. In regard to restaurant types, the two most frequent answers were Italian and Mexican. Other common answers included café/coffee shop, vegetarian and healthy, and Asian cuisines, such as Indian, Thai, Japanese, and Chinese.



Regarding what types of new businesses respondents would like to see come to downtown Lancaster, the number one answer was restaurant, which helps support the desire for a number of different restaurant types identified in the prior question. Other common answers include a movie theater, brewery, coffee/café, bookstore, and a farmer's market.





In addition to new restaurants and businesses, the survey also asked what types of outdoor activities respondents would like to see some to downtown. The most frequent response was a farmers' market. Other common responses included fitness and yoga classes, a dog park, movie nights, and concerts.



Lastly, in the survey there was one question which was only available to those who were 18 years old or younger. This question posed to these younger respondents, "If you could build a building in the heart of the Village of Lancaster and fill it with anything, what would it be?" Common responses received for this question includes:

1. Buffalo apparel store
2. Under 21 late night café/club
3. Indoor and outdoor sports facilities
4. Outdoor music/performance stage
5. Food hall
6. Grocery Co-Op
7. Fast Casual dining
8. Mall
9. Car museum
10. Central information hub