

**REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION**

20-119

**Agenda Item:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject:** Consideration and Action on the Report and Recommendation of the Village Center Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
2019 Downtown Deerfield Resident Survey Report  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Approval of Recommendation

**Action Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

Village Center Commission

**Originated By:** \_\_\_\_\_

Mayor and Village Board of Trustees

**Referred To:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of Background and Reason for Request**

At the November 5, 2018 meeting, the Village Board granted permission to the Village Center Commission (VCC) to conduct a downtown resident survey to gather feedback from Deerfield residents on the Village Center/downtown Deerfield. The survey was open from January 1, 2019 through March 31, 2019 and a link to the survey was printed in D-Tales, Village utility bills, posted on the Village Facebook page and Village website. The VCC provided the Village Board with a statistical update at the May 6, 2019 Board meeting.

The survey report concentrates on what the residents perceived were problems in the downtown area and offer suggestions as to how the Village could address those concerns. The VCC consolidated those issues into the following topics:

- Pedestrian Safety at Deerfield and Waukegan Road Intersection
- Improving Safety in Parking Lots
- Greater Support to Shop Local
- Desire for a Greater Sense of Community
- Make Downtown Deerfield a Destination
- Encourage Family and Youth Friendly Spaces

The VCC planned to present this report in the first quarter of 2020 but has been delayed due to current pandemic. The VCC approved this report at their October 7, 2020 meeting and is asking the Village Board to consider their recommendations.

**Reports and Documents Attached:**

Report and Recommendation  
Infographic

**Date Referred to Board:** November 2, 2020

**Action Taken:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Six Recurring Responses Received From the Downtown Resident Survey

#1 Pedestrian Safety at Deerfield and Waukegan Road Intersection



#4 Desire for a Greater Sense of Community



#2 Improving Safety in Parking Lots



#5 Make Downtown Deerfield a Destination



#3 Greater Support for Shopping Local



#6 Encourage Family and Youth-Friendly Spaces



## RECOMMENDATION

To: Village Board of Trustees

From: Village Center Commission

Date: February 27, 2020

RE: 2019 Downtown Deerfield Resident Survey Recommendation

### Background

At the November 5, 2018 meeting, the Village Board granted approval to the Village Center Commission (VCC) to conduct a survey of Deerfield residents as to their opinions on the Village Center/downtown Deerfield. Village residents were notified of the 2019 Downtown Resident Survey in D-Tales, Village water bills, on the Village website and through its Facebook page. The survey was conducted from January 1 through March 31, 2019. The VCC presented preliminary results of the survey to the Village Board at the May 6, 2019, meeting. The VCC has analyzed and discussed the survey responses, and is now presenting its findings.

The Downtown Resident Survey covered many topics; all focused on promoting and encouraging Deerfield residents to frequent downtown Deerfield. The responses clearly indicate that our residents have strong opinions about what they like and do not like about downtown Deerfield. The VCC wanted to concentrate on what the residents perceived were problems in the downtown area and offer suggestions as to how the Village could address those concerns. The VCC consolidated those issues into the following topics:

- Pedestrian Safety at Deerfield and Waukegan Road Intersection
- Improving Safety in Parking Lots
- Greater Support to Shop Local
- Desire for a Greater Sense of Community
- Make Downtown Deerfield a Destination
- Encourage Family and Youth Friendly Spaces

The following suggestions are meant to start the conversation addressing resident concerns. It is hoped that the results of the survey will be shared with all relevant Village departments as well as downtown commercial property owners, the DBR Chamber of Commerce, and Deerfield residents via the Village website and D-Tales.

### 1. Pedestrian Safety at Deerfield and Waukegan Road Intersection

Many residents expressed concern about pedestrian safety at the intersection of Waukegan and Deerfield Roads. The volume of traffic and general congestion cause pedestrians to feel unsafe as they cross the streets.

The VCC recognizes that the Village of Deerfield does not have much jurisdiction over this intersection. Efforts should be made to inform the residents via D-Tales that any major changes to this intersection are under the purview of the state. The VCC suspects a pedestrian safety study will need to be completed before any improvements could be implemented.

Possible Suggestions to Consider:

- Install “No Right Turn on Red” signs at all four corners of the Deerfield and Waukegan Road intersection and consider “No Right Turn on Red When Pedestrians are Present” signage at other Village center intersections as deemed appropriate. (Capital Improvement)
- Install bollards at intersection corners as a buffer between the sidewalk and traffic. (Capital Improvement)
- Consider a pedestrian overpass or underpass spanning Waukegan Road and/or Deerfield Road (Capital Improvement)
- Install crosswalk buckets with flags at intersections as the town of Evanston has done. Pedestrians can carry a flag as they cross the intersection to increase their visibility to motorists. They then leave the flag in the opposing bucket. (Capital Improvement)
- Install hanging flower baskets at the intersection to serve as a traffic calming measure while enhancing the intersection aesthetically. (Capital Improvement)

**2. Improving Safety in Parking Lots**

Residents commented on the difficulty of navigating the parking spaces and parking lots in the downtown shopping centers. Not only is it difficult to maneuver a vehicle in the parking spaces and parking lots, it is also unsafe for pedestrians. Many suggestions were offered as to how to address these issues.

The VCC suggests that the Village of Deerfield educate the residents by continually reminding them that Deerfield does not own any commercial property in the village. The property owners are responsible for maintaining their property within the laws of the Village.

Possible Suggestion to Consider:

- Suggest to developers that single direction aisles with angled parking spaces would facilitate safer use of the parking lot and reduce traffic concerns. (Policy Consideration)
- Indicate with surface markings several designated pedestrian crosswalks. These could be further enhanced with appropriate signage that says, “Yield to Pedestrians”. (Capital Improvement)

- In consideration of the increased usage of SUVs and the larger size of the average vehicle, the Plan Commission should revisit Village ordinances regarding the required size for parking spaces for specific uses in a commercial parking lot. The VCC appreciates the need for a property to maximize the parking spaces in their property, but recommends that Deerfield should consider pedestrian safety first before considering national trends for customer parking requirements. (Policy Consideration)

### **3. Greater Support to Shop Local**

Residents expressed a desire for more locally owned, independent, and unique businesses in downtown Deerfield.

The VCC suggests that the village seek to educate the residents on the process of how businesses come to downtown Deerfield. This should include the information that the Village does not control rental rates or discuss vacancies with the commercial developers.

#### Possible Suggestions to Consider:

- Support the Chamber of Commerce in their Deerfield Community Text Program as needed. (Policy Consideration)
- Support with all Village communication any efforts made by the commercial developers to promote their businesses. Encourage a more progressive Shop Local message when possible in Village communications. (Policy Consideration)

### **4. Desire for a Greater Sense of Community**

Residents want to have a reason to frequent the downtown area. They want the downtown to be a destination for events and activities that promote a sense of community.

The VCC recognizes that the bulk of the space in downtown Deerfield is privately owned. However, past events held in the open areas indicate that the developers recognize the value to them of community events.

#### Possible Suggestions to Consider:

- Reach out to the commercial developers to promote community events in their open spaces. These can include concerts, homecoming activities, holiday festivities. (Policy Consideration)
- Investigate potential Village-sponsored events such as First Friday, a food truck night or night market, a craft fair, a community garage sale. (Policy Consideration)

- Explore the possibility of a free Deerfield community newspaper focused specifically on Deerfield events. The Village should consider subsidizing a Deerfield community newspaper until it is self-sustaining. This would enhance the resident's knowledge of local community activities and promote "Shop Local". It should be available at local merchants (at no charge) and contain information about school and community activities. Residents without children in the school would be able to stay up-to-date.  
(Capital Improvement)

## **5. Make Downtown Deerfield a Destination**

Residents were concerned about the sidewalks throughout the downtown area. They mentioned the need for updating and increasing the perception of safety.

The VCC recommends that the Village convey via D-Tales that the Public Works and Engineering Department have long-term plans for ongoing improvements in streetscape. Constraints should be mentioned: the sidewalk width cannot be adjusted.

### Possible Suggestion to Consider:

- Increase the number of bollards and/or planters to enhance the sense of a safety barrier between the sidewalk and the street. (Capital Improvement)
- Consider hanging baskets to enhance the aesthetics of the intersection of Waukegan and Deerfield Roads. These would also serve as a visual delineation at the edge of the sidewalk. (Capital Improvement)

## **6. Encourage Family and Youth Friendly Spaces**

In making downtown Deerfield a destination, more effort should be made to promote spaces for use by families and teens. Group activities promote a sense of community, and space for such activities should be an important component in any village.

### Possible Suggestion to Consider:

- The Village should work with the Park District to create spaces for youth activities on Park District or Village property. Outdoor game tables including ping pong and checkers, a climbing wall, and graffiti walls would all promote community participation. (Policy Consideration)
- Encourage all developers to include youth-friendly space in their commercial developments. This would include searching for tenants that offer activities for youths as well as dedicating outdoor space for group use. (Policy Consideration)

**RECOMMENDATION**

The VCC is recommending that the data from this survey be made available to Deerfield residents, downtown commercial property owners and tenants, Village Commissions and Village Department heads.

The VCC is recommending several capital improvements, policy considerations, and educational components as indicated in the body of this report. The VCC believes the proposed suggestions will help to promote safety, support downtown businesses and be proactive to the changing downtown environment in the C-1 Village Center District while protecting the character of downtown Deerfield as a retail district and destination.

Recommended Actions

Specifically, the VCC is recommending the Village Board of Trustees support the six areas listed in this report to be considered in future Village planning documents and policy decisions such as updates to the Comprehensive Plan, Zoning Ordinance and land use/zoning approvals for Special Uses and Planned Unit Developments as appropriate.

Additionally, Staff will work with promoting the educational components of this report through the Village's various communication platforms.

Ms. Shaw moved to approve the 2019 Downtown Deerfield Resident Survey Recommendation and the send the Recommendation to the Village Board for consideration. Ms. Holtz seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following vote:

AYES: Holtz, Shaw, Street, Zobus (4)

NAYS: None (0)

2019



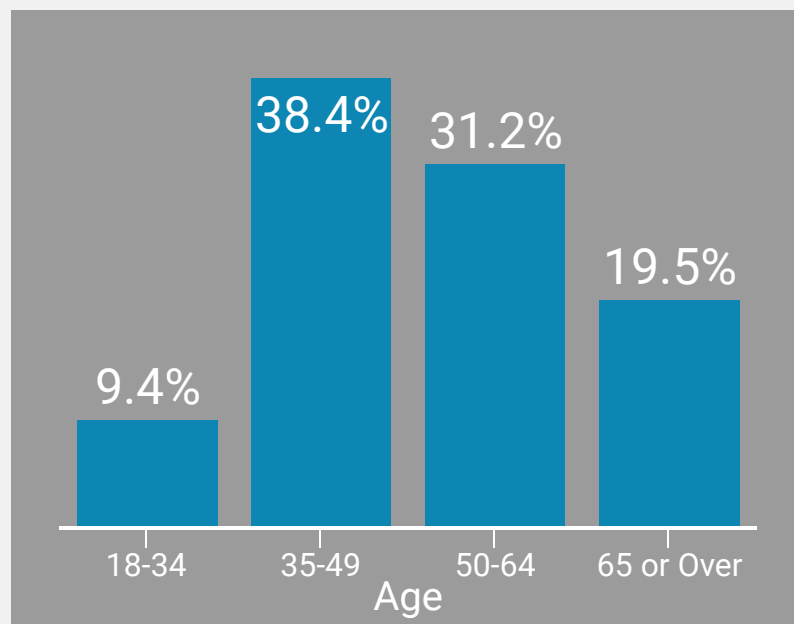
# DOWNTOWN DEERFIELD RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

From January 1 through March 31, 2019, 1,540 residents responded to the Downtown Deerfield Resident Survey.

Here is what we learned:

## 1. Who responded:

60% of the respondents are female.



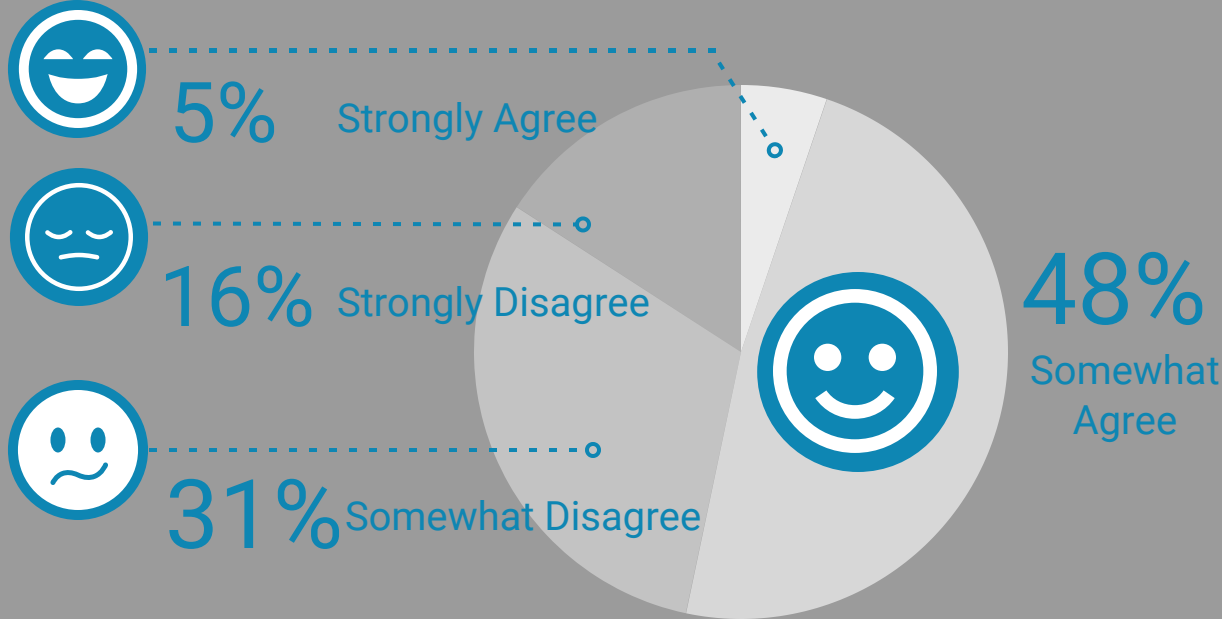
40% of the respondents are male.



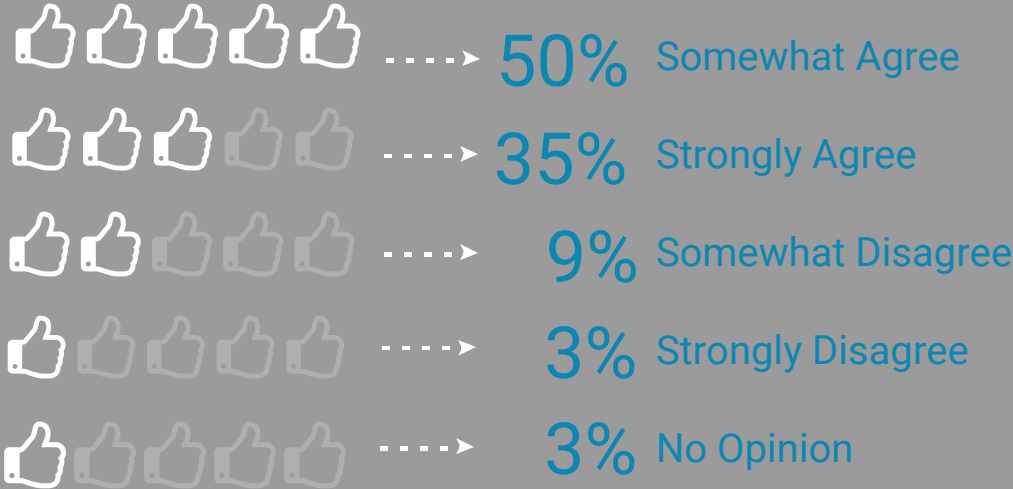
**32%** of the respondents said they have lived in Deerfield for more than 25 years.



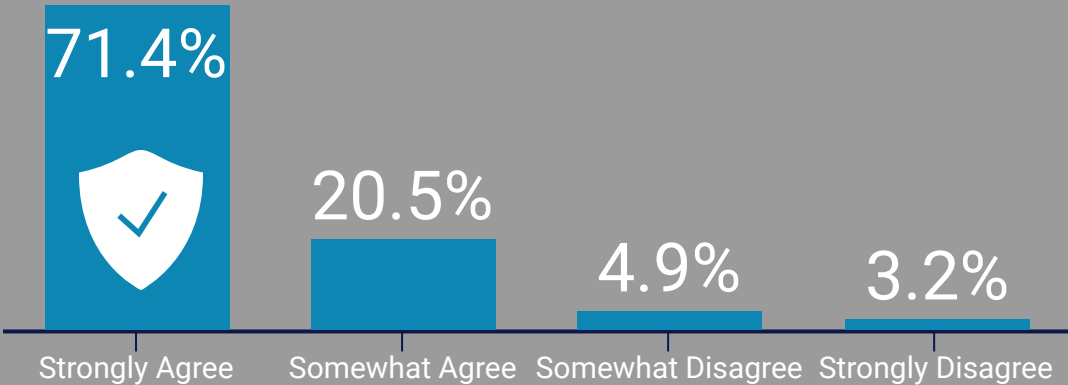
2. Downtown Deerfield is vibrant and enjoyable.



3. I like the streetscape (street lights, street plantings, trash receptacles) in downtown Deerfield.



4. I feel downtown Deerfield is safe to walk through.



5. I feel that downtown Deerfield is accessible.



45%

Strongly Agree



37%

Somewhat Agree



11%

Somewhat Disagree



4%

Strongly Disagree

3 % No opinion

6. I like the public art in downtown Deerfield.



40%

Somewhat Agree



27%

Strongly Agree



16%

No Opinion



12%

Somewhat Disagree

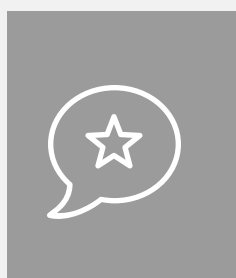


5%

Strongly Disagree

7. I would recommend downtown Deerfield to a friend.

39%



26%



18%



12%



5%



Somewhat Agree

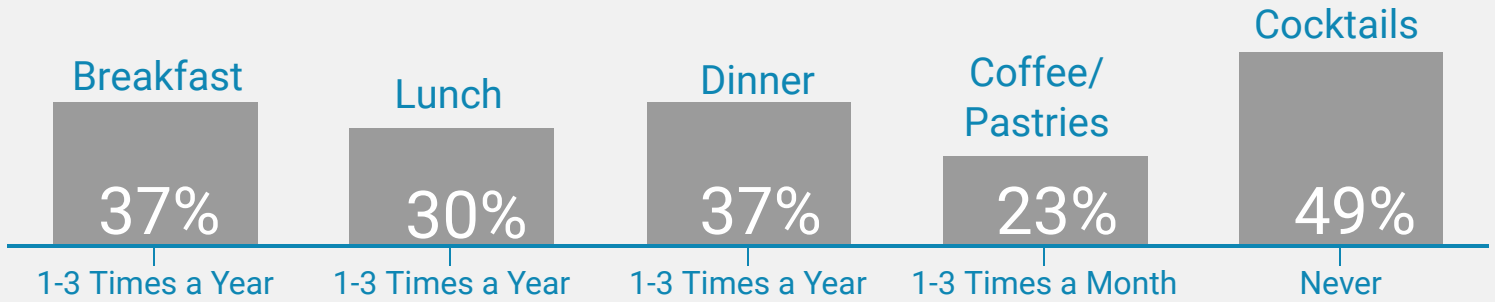
Somewhat Disagree

Strongly Agree

Strongly Disagree

No Opinion

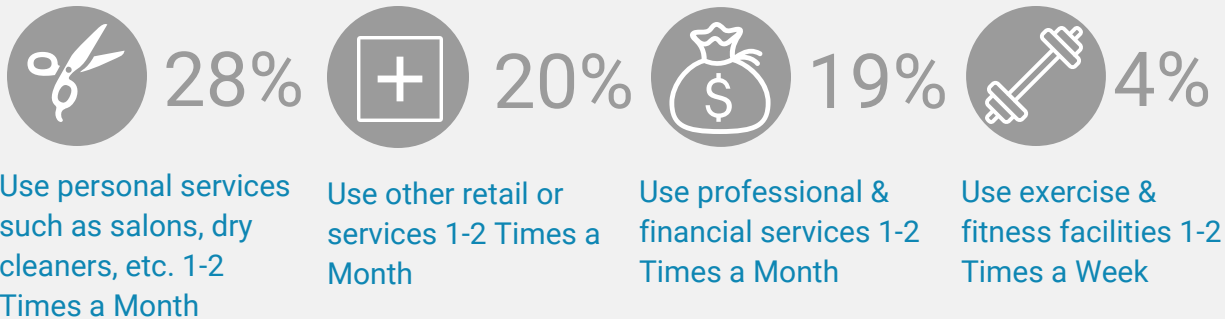
## 8. Eating and Drinking in Downtown Deerfield



## 9. Shopping in Downtown Deerfield



## 10. Personal Services & Other Retail Uses in Downtown Deerfield



## 11. Personal Services & Other Retail Uses in Downtown Deerfield





# 13. What do you feel is the greatest challenge facing downtown Deerfield?



## Top Three Responses:

475 Residents  
said:

**Businesses**

291 Residents  
said:

**Restaurant  
Options**

253 Residents  
said:

**Navigating  
Parking  
Spaces**