



Diane Nichols Tradd  
Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

Kevin Coughlin  
Deputy DPD Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kevin J. Murphy, City Manager

FROM: Diane N. Tradd, Assistant City Manager/DPD Director

SUBJECT: COUNCIL MOTION OF 3/21/17 BY COUNCILOR SAMARAS AND COUNCILOR BELANGER  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER HAVE DPD CREATE A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR DOWNTOWN  
BUSINESSES TO IDENTIFY REACTIONS TO LOCATION OF LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL

COUNCIL MOTION OF 5/23/17 BY COUNCILOR MERCIER  
REQUEST CITY MANAGER PROVIDE REPORT REGARDING POLL RESULTS FROM  
DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SURVEY CONCERNING LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL

The Department of Planning and Development recently completed a survey of downtown business owners to understand how the location of the high school may impact their business. The anonymous survey was administered using the electronic tool: SurveyMonkey. Business owners were notified of the survey via email and follow up calls were made to businesses to ensure that they had received the survey. Of the approximately 150 businesses contacted, 38 completed the survey. A copy of the survey is attached.

Responses were received from a variety of business types. Based on the makeup of downtown businesses it's not surprising that the majority of responses were from retailers (55%) and restaurants (34%). Owners of coffee shops, art galleries, and professional services (including attorneys, financial institutions, and medical offices) also participated.

55% of business owners reported that high school *students* frequent their business at least monthly with 29% reporting daily visits. 40% of business owners reported that *teachers and staff* frequent their business at least monthly with approximately 16% reporting daily visits.

All business owners that responded to the survey noted that less than 50% of their annual sales are generated through students/staff/teachers of the high school with the majority claiming that they earn less than 10%.

The survey included several open-response questions. When asked about the *positive* aspects of the high school's downtown location 27% of responders pointed to the positive environment, energy and vibrancy it brings to downtown. Other responses included:

- People on the streets; increase in foot traffic
- Likelihood that students will engage with the community
- Diversity

When asked about the *negative* aspects of the high school's downtown location, 26% of responders said there are no negative impacts. The majority of responders (37%) noted traffic congestion during mornings and afternoons. Other responses included:

- Jaywalking
- Student behavior

The survey also asked businesses to comment on how moving the high school out of downtown may impact their business. Responses varied from "little to no impact" to "significant loss in business revenue."

DNT/ns

5/31/17

Attachment

cc: Kevin Coughlin, Deputy Director  
Allison Lamey, Economic Development Director

# City of Lowell Downtown Business Survey 2017

Dear Downtown Business Owner:

As you may be aware, the City is considering locations for a renovated and/or new high school. Please take a few minutes to tell us how Lowell High School currently impacts your business. For each question there is an opportunity for you to expand on your response if you wish to provide more feedback. Thank you.

**1. What type of business do you own? Please check all that apply.**

- Restaurant
- Coffee Shop
- Retail
- Art Gallery
- Salon/Barber Shop

Other (please specify)

**2. On average how often do high school students frequent your business?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Never
- I don't know

Please feel free to comment

**3. On average how often do high school teachers/staff frequent your business?**

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- A few times a year
- Never
- I don't know

Please feel free to comment

**4. Roughly what portion of your annual sales can be attributable to high school students/teachers/staff?**

- Less than 10%
- Between 10 - 25%
- Between 26 - 50%
- More than 50%

Please feel free to comment

**5. In your opinion, what are some of the positive aspects of the high school's presence downtown?**

**6. In your opinion, what are some of the negative aspects of the high school's presence downtown?**

**7. One of the options before the City Council is moving the high school out of downtown. What impact(s), if any, might this decision have on our business?**

**8. This survey is intended to be anonymous; however, if you would like to share your contact information you may provide it below.**

Business Name

Owner's Name

Phone

Email

**Thank you for taking the time to respond to this survey.  
Please visit the Lowell High School Project [website](#) for more information.**