

Downtown Omaha BID Stakeholder Survey

October 2005

The Downtown Omaha BID Committee, with assistance from the City of Omaha and the Omaha Public Power District mailed a survey to more than 1,200 downtown property and business owners in September of 2005. 131 stakeholders responded. The survey was designed by Progressive Urban Management Associates and tabulated by Garner Insight, both based in Denver. In addition to describing their role and the type of property they own or occupy, stakeholders:

- Rated the City of Omaha's performance in providing a range of services in Downtown Omaha;
- Rated the likelihood they would consider paying for particular services through a BID assessment;
- Indicated whether or not they thought that services provided through a BID assessment would improve the property values and economic conditions in Downtown Omaha; and
- What they would add or change to positively affect Downtown Omaha.

Profile of Respondents

Type of stakeholder. As shown in Exhibit 1 below, nearly 60% of the stakeholders own a business in Downtown Omaha.

Exhibit 1

Are you a commercial property owner, business owner and/or resident?

Role	% of Respondents	Count
Commercial Property Owner	32%	40
Business Owner	58%	74
Resident	29%	37
Church	1%	1
Public School	1%	1
Non-Profit Organization	1%	1

Note: Numbers add to greater than 100% due to multiple response.

Location and number of properties. The majority of respondents own or occupy a single property located either in the Old Market District or elsewhere in Downtown Omaha. More than half of the stakeholders (61%) own or occupy a property that is not in the Old Market District.

Exhibit 2

How many Downtown Omaha properties do you own or occupy?

Location	One property	Two to five properties	More than five properties	Count
Downtown	85.9%	11.5%	2.6%	78
Old Market District	79.6%	18.4%	2.0%	49

property uses. Downtown property uses ranged widely, from offices to hotels or hospitality. Uses included in the “other” category included art galleries and studios, and auto salvage yard, healthcare, salons, sports, entertainment and conventions and a wholesale distributor.

Exhibit 3

Which of the following uses apply to your property/business?

Property Uses	% of Responses	Count
Office	33.6%	42
Retail/restaurant	28.8%	36
Residential	28.0%	35
Other	14.4%	18
Parking	13.6%	17
Warehouse/light industrial	12.8%	16
Government/non-profit	5.6%	7
Hotel/hospitality	2.4%	3

Note: Numbers add to greater than 100% due to multiple response.

Evaluation of Downtown Service Provision

Stakeholders rated their perception of the City of Omaha’s performance in providing several types of services in Downtown Omaha. The services evaluated included street cleaning, landscaping, trash removal, security/police, lighting and sidewalk repair. Exhibit 4 on the following page depicts the ratings from the entire stakeholder sample.

Exhibit 4

How would you rate the City of Omaha’s performance in providing the following services in Downtown?

City Service	Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor	n
Street Cleaning	33.1%	47.2%	15.7%	3.9%	127
Landscaping	30.5%	38.3%	25.0%	6.3%	128
Trash Removal	36.7%	46.7%	13.3%	3.3%	120
Security/Police	49.6%	39.5%	5.4%	5.4%	129
Lighting	46.0%	43.7%	9.5%	0.8%	126
Sidewalk Repair	23.8%	44.4%	19.0%	12.7%	126

On average, stakeholders rated the City’s provision of services in the “fair” category, where a score of “1” indicates a “very good” rating and a score of “4” indicates a “very poor” rating. Sidewalk repair and landscaping received comparatively poorer scores among all stakeholders. Lighting and security/police tended to receive the best scores.

Exhibit 5

Average service ratings by stakeholder sub-group

City Service	Overall	Old Market	Downtown	Commercial Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident
Street Cleaning	1.91	1.90	1.89	1.97	1.92	1.89
Landscaping	2.07	2.06	2.11	2.15	2.13	1.95
Trash Removal	1.83	1.83	1.80	1.94	1.85	1.81
Security/Police	1.67	1.57	1.74	1.51	1.59	1.84
Lighting	1.65	1.63	1.69	1.54	1.72	1.67
Sidewalk Repair	2.21	2.47	2.07	2.15	2.32	2.19
n	129	49	77	40	74	37

Exhibit 6 on the following page presents the proportion of stakeholders who rated a particular service “very good” or “fair.” As shown, commercial property owners were most satisfied with lighting. Business

owners and stakeholders who own or occupy property in the Old Market District were least satisfied with the City’s provision of sidewalk repair.

Exhibit 6

Proportion of respondents who rated a service either “Very Good” or “Fair”

City Service	Commercial					
	Overall	Old Market	Downtown	Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident
Street Cleaning	80.3%	77.5%	84.0%	79.4%	77.5%	83.8%
Landscaping	68.8%	67.3%	68.4%	65.0%	65.3%	75.6%
Trash Removal	83.4%	78.8%	87.1%	77.4%	80.0%	89.2%
Security/Police	89.1%	91.8%	88.4%	92.3%	89.1%	86.4%
Lighting	89.7%	85.7%	91.9%	97.4%	86.2%	86.1%
Sidewalk Repair	68.2%	57.2%	74.3%	79.4%	59.1%	69.4%
n	129	49	77	40	74	37

Color Code 50% - 59% 60% - 69% 70% - 79% 80% - 89% 90% - 100%

BID Assessment Services

Stakeholders rated the likelihood that they would consider paying for a particular service through a BID assessment. Exhibit 7 details the response of all stakeholders.

Exhibit 7

Which of the following services would you consider paying for through a BID assessment?

BID Service	Probably				n
	Definitely Consider	Probably Consider	Not Consider	Definitely Not Consider	
Safety Patrols	25.4%	23.0%	20.6%	31.0%	126
Sanitation Services	22.4%	35.2%	18.4%	24.0%	125
Economic Development	29.9%	26.0%	20.5%	23.6%	127
Advocacy	28.5%	28.5%	19.5%	23.6%	123
Parking & Mobility	28.2%	24.2%	24.2%	23.4%	124
Marketing	37.9%	24.2%	16.9%	21.0%	124
Downtown Identity	35.0%	26.8%	13.8%	24.4%	123
Capital Improvements	29.5%	32.8%	15.6%	22.1%	122
Human Services	30.6%	23.4%	19.4%	26.6%	124
Special Events	23.1%	28.1%	19.8%	28.9%	121
Planning	32.3%	29.0%	15.3%	23.4%	124

Exhibit 8 presents the average scores stakeholders assigned to potential BID services, both overall and by stakeholder subgroup. Values were assigned on a scale of “1” to “4” where a rating of “1” indicates that the respondent would “Definitely Consider” the service and a score of “4” indicates that the stakeholder would “Definitely Not Consider” paying for the service through a BID assessment.

Exhibit 8

Which of the following services would you consider paying for through a BID assessment?
Average ratings by stakeholder subgroup

BID Service	Overall	Commercial				
		Old Market	Downtown	Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident
Safety Patrols	2.57	2.49	2.59	2.90	2.72	2.19
Sanitation Services	2.44	2.42	2.46	2.79	2.56	2.1
Economic Development	2.38	2.27	2.43	2.69	2.53	2.05
Advocacy	2.38	2.36	2.38	2.70	2.46	2.15
Parking & Mobility	2.43	2.35	2.44	2.95	2.56	2.00
Marketing	2.21	2.29	2.13	2.54	2.34	2.03
Downtown Identity	2.28	2.29	2.25	2.56	2.47	2.06
Capital Improvements	2.30	2.25	2.32	2.74	2.48	1.91
Human Services	2.42	2.57	2.30	2.88	2.63	2.09
Special Events	2.55	2.5	2.54	2.90	2.84	1.94
Planning	2.30	2.35	2.24	2.69	2.35	2.11
n	129	49	77	40	73	37

Commercial property owners were the least likely to consider services provided through a BID assessment. Residents were the most likely to consider these services.

Exhibit 9: Which of the following services would you consider paying for through a BID assessment? Proportion rating the service “Definitely Consider” or “Probably Consider” by stakeholder subgroup

BID Service	Overall	Commercial				
		Old Market	Downtown	Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident
Safety Patrols	48.4%	53.0%	46.0%	38.4%	43.6%	62.1%
Sanitation Services	57.6%	56.3%	58.1%	42.1%	55.5%	61.2%
Economic Development	55.9%	57.1%	56.0%	48.7%	50.0%	67.5%
Advocacy	57.0%	55.3%	58.4%	45.0%	53.5%	64.7%
Parking & Mobility	52.4%	60.4%	47.3%	25.7%	47.9%	71.4%
Marketing	62.1%	58.3%	65.3%	53.8%	57.7%	68.5%
Downtown Identity	61.8%	62.6%	61.9%	46.1%	57.2%	68.6%
Capital Improvements	62.3%	62.5%	62.0%	42.1%	55.1%	80.0%
Human Services	54.0%	48.9%	58.9%	35.0%	50.7%	61.8%
Special Events	51.2%	52.1%	52.2%	38.5%	40.6%	77.1%
Planning	61.3%	58.4%	63.9%	46.1%	60.6%	65.7%
n	129	49	77	40	73	37

Color Code 50% or less 50% - 59% 60% - 69% 70% - 79% 80% - 89% 90% - 100%

As shown in Exhibit 10, 52% of the stakeholders who responded to the survey thought that property values and economic conditions in Downtown Omaha would improve if some of the services listed on previous pages were provided. Fewer than two in five commercial property owners agreed. Residents were most likely to believe that conditions would improve with the provision of additional services.

Exhibit 10

Do you think that property values and economic conditions in Downtown Omaha would improve if some of the services were provided?

	Overall	Old Market	Downtown	Commercial Property Owner	Business Owner	Resident
Yes	51.6%	52.2%	51.4%	39.5%	43.5%	64.7%
No	22.1%	30.4%	18.1%	34.2%	30.4%	8.8%
Depends	25.4%	17.4%	29.2%	26.3%	26.1%	26.5%
No Opinion	0.8%		1.4%			
n	122	46	72	38	69	34

suggestions for change. Stakeholders offered a range of ideas to positively affect Downtown Omaha. Several topics were frequently mentioned. These included removing the homeless from certain areas and changing the location where the homeless are fed. Others would clean up the streets, add flower boxes and clean up the streets. Increasing the availability of parking was also a common suggestion.

Exhibit 11

If you could add or change one thing to positively affect Downtown Omaha, what would it be?

- Add everyday businesses, such as grocery stores, video rental stores, etc.
- Add parking
- All business owners to keep their property cleaned up daily. Repair walks and vacant store fronts.
- Ban the people responsible for this survey.
- Better nightlife
- BID
- BID
- Bring this back to a classy area again - move the heart of Omaha back downtown
- Business owners would police/improve the area in front of businesses
- Cheaper parking
- Clean it up - especially Old Market - trash, garbage, etc.
- Creating a bright and positive image through use of colorful signage and media advertising.
- Dissolution of current BID Board and an effort to use existing organizations to achieve some of the same goals (Chamber, DT Omaha, OMBA)
- Eliminate the gathering of "people" around the park and public library.
- Festivals and parades mot to W. Omaha
- Free parking!

Grocery store/video store

I think a BID is not a good idea. The City should provide better services -- the WHOLE City benefits from the Old Market and Downtown. The Old Market area is a BIG asset to Omaha. If any additional taxing or assessments of significance are involved, I believe the net effect to be likely negative. (Q7) The City actively embracing and supporting the Old Market District, providing the service improvements noted in Q5 above, and positively recognizing the economic contribution the Market makes to the whole city.

Keep downtown Omaha clean!

Keep Heartland Park restrooms open until 11:00 pm.

Landscaping and sidewalk improvements - particularly 13th Street

Leave us alone - lower taxes

Make it bigger

Make it cleaner

Make sure the pedestrian bridge goes forward - it can be Omaha's "symbol" - much like the Arch in St. Louis

Marketing

More parking

Not at this time.

Not impose a BID

Outdoor festivals i.e. Dundee Days, etc.

Parking efficiency, traffic control and flow

Parking, congestion - Qwest Center, homeless sleeping in Mall. Our taxes are high enough and if government didn't waste money on exorbitant salaries for high up politicians there would be money for these improvements.

Recycling services

Remove homeless people from Downtown/Old Market

Remove parking meters in the Old Market

Require owners of vacant buildings to renovate or tear down. This is very important need in Old Market District.

Social services to combat homelessness, street populations

Special events inside of Old Market

Stop having to fence in outdoor dining spaces and have more plants and trees on sidewalks and hang plants from overhangs and lamps

The Old Market is dirty and there are too many bums drinking, loitering and begging for money. They even have pooped on my property! Gross!

Ticket more people that do not give pedestrians the right of way

A unified business development plan and vision

Add walking tours, historical tours of Downtown - Boston has these and they're self-guided.

Added vibrancy along 16th Street

Address homeless issue

Approach the vagrancy issues

Boarded up buildings, trash, landscaping, panhandlers

Build buildings on a human scale - not these long expanses of concrete! Even the new "Holland" center is not inviting on this scale. People need to feel like there are other people around, and things to look at to feel comfortable in an urban area. We are creating destinations only. We can only expect people to go to the destination, then leave, without making them feel engaged and safe in the area around the "destination."

Cheap and accessible public parking, better public landscaping. But, this should not be done

through a BID.

Clean up and restore old buildings

Clean up the whole area it looks Dirty

Cleaner environment with landscaping

Encourage more diversity in business owners (especially Old Market)

Enforce existing laws - reduce taxes - continue established plan, without another layer of taxes and management expenses

Feed homeless some place else. No other city I am aware of does it this way.

Feed the homeless away from Lahey Park.

Find a way to help the large population of contingent workers

Get bums out of the park and stop feeding them there.

Get rid of Prohaski's Ownership

Get rid of the bums and homeless

I guess a lot of people and business owners have requested improvement in certain areas with no avail. I will put my two cents in when it comes to the corner of 12th & Howard. As a business owner, we desperately need help in this block. Trees in big containers. flowers. you can go outside any time of day and watch people turn around at 12th & Howard. If we had some of the basics going into this block, I think it would help Tremendously! Trees, flowers, etc.!!

Improve on-street parking and parking garage opportunities.

Keep homeless off the streets - i.e. (Gene Leahy Mall & entire area around the Sienna Francis House) Such an eyesore for the new Qwest area, plus effects the safety for Creighton Students. How many will feel safe living at the new "InPlay" building on 16th & Cuming with all the homeless walking around, sitting outside buildings, etc.?

Lower property tax so I can invest back into property

Lower residential prices

More attention paid to area from 16th to 20th Streets, Dodge to Leavenworth

More banners and flower pots - downtown Des Moines does a nice job with this. Assessments should be proportionately levied based on income/sales. Small businesses could struggle if assessments were unrealistic. Large companies should bear the greatest responsibility for improvements otherwise you'll lose successful smaller businesses taxed with greater expense.

More free parking

More police protection

More retail

More retail development

More retail stores for convenience

More street-level businesses, landscaping, signage

More tourists

Move Francis-Sienna House

Move Old Market out west - do you really want to be next to all that crap

New development - tourism district with links to other parts of city through trolleys and marketing

Nothing

Parking (more of it)

Promotion re: activity

Reduce property taxes - stop work on BID

Remove the vagrants and homeless from library and Gene Lahey Mall

Rent out vacant buildings

Sanitation

Services for transient population between 30th W, 20th E, Leavenworth S, and Harney N, This area seems to be forgotten

Take bums, homeless, money beggars, drug dealers off the streets.

Too many homeless people/people begging

We are concerned that taxes will make it tougher

Would also "definitely consider" Free Wi-Fi for buildings in downtown area to post ad's, address concerns, spread info easily. The one thing to positively affect downtown would be to change description and responsibilities of the parking meter patrol to address "clean and secure" aspects of you proposal.

Would not consider paying for any services through a BID assessment because we are a very small non-profit business.