



Retail-Commercial Development Plan 2020

Chapter 5

Community Opinion Survey

Results of Tonganoxie Commercial Growth Community Opinion Survey

INTRODUCTION

In order to better identify the issues to be addressed by the Plan and to solicit ideas for goals and action steps, a community opinion survey was drafted by the planning consultants and the City. In August 2008, the survey was sent to 1,200 randomly-selected Tonganoxie-area households. A total of 400 completed surveys were returned to the City and tabulated by the planning consultants. The survey included questions on the existing attributes of business districts in Tonganoxie and the needs and desires for future commercial development. The results of the survey have been essential to the creation of the plan and in creating a vision for the future commercial growth of Tonganoxie.

Who Responded to the Survey?

Those that responded to the survey were primarily citizens and property owners in Tonganoxie; 35 business owners and 11 elected officials also received and responded to the survey. Only 13 percent of the respondents work in Tonganoxie, while 44 percent work outside of Leavenworth County.

Of the 400 people that completed the survey, most identified work as the top reason for travelling outside of the Tonganoxie area. This is due to the fact that so many of the respondents and their spouses work in other cities, particularly in the Kansas City area and in Lawrence. Respondents to the survey also identified shopping for everyday goods, medical needs, and school as other common reasons for travelling outside of Tonganoxie.



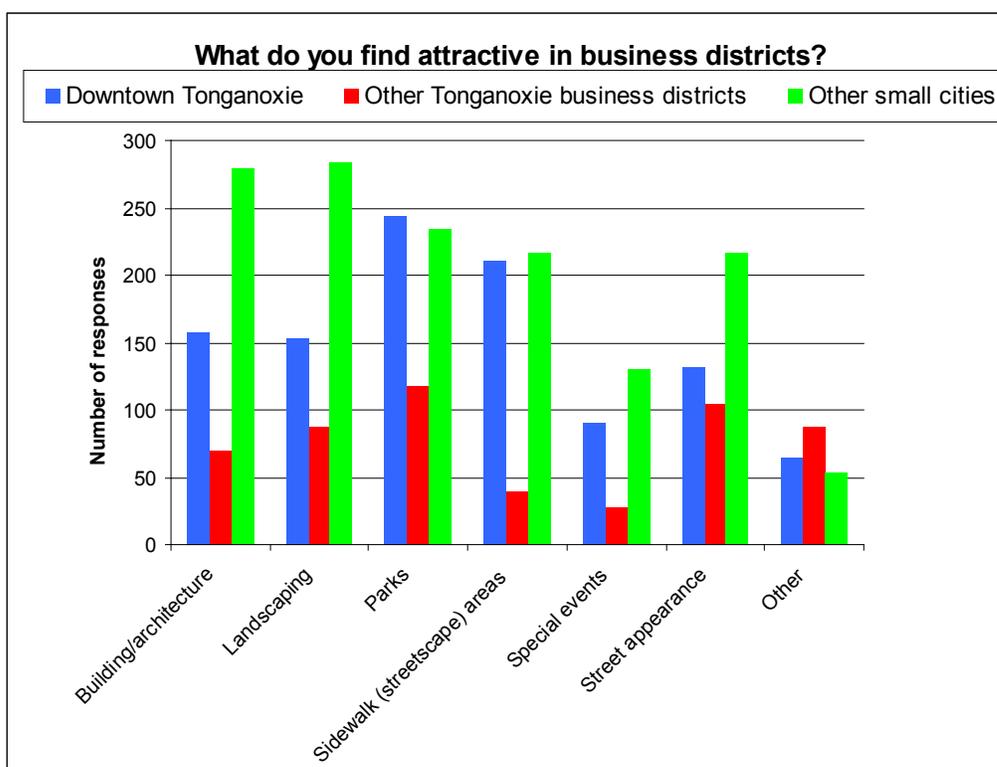
	Number	Percent
Citizen	280	70.0%
Property Owner	256	64.0%
Business Owner	35	8.8%
Other	14	3.5%
Student	14	3.5%
Elected Official	11	2.8%

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The results of the survey show that the rising cost of gasoline has affected travelling patterns for those living in Tonganoxie and has the potential to impact the location and market area of future businesses in the area. In response to the price of gasoline, 81 percent of respondents reported that they are reducing the number of vehicular trips that they make. Of these who said they are reducing trips, 63 percent are combining trips and 58 percent are driving less. Shopping on the internet (17 percent) or carpooling with someone to and from work (9 percent) were also ways that people have reduced trips.

Planning for Commercial Growth

Survey respondents generally agreed that downtown Tonganoxie is overall more attractive than other business districts in the City, such as along the Highway 24/40 corridor. However, respondents generally felt that both of these districts are generally less attractive than other small cities. When asked what specific features they find attractive, respondents generally thought that the building architecture, landscaping, streetscape areas, and the parks of Downtown Tonganoxie were significantly more attractive than other business districts in town. For example, 244 people selected the parks as being attractive in downtown as compared to 118 in other business areas. When visiting other small cities, people find landscaping and buildings/architecture as being the most attractive features. Parks, street appearance, and sidewalk/streetscape areas are also features that people find attractive in other small cities.



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Since respondents were allowed to select as many items as they wanted, the number of total responses to these three questions can be used as a measure of the total attractiveness of these areas. For “other small cities,” the listed features were marked as attractive a total of 1,412 times, compared to 1,052 times for Downtown Tonganoxie and only 535 for “Other Tonganoxie business districts.”

When asked what types of businesses and restaurants they would like to see in downtown Tonganoxie in the future, food stores (204 responses), household goods stores (172), and home improvement stores (169) were the most popular responses. The most common types of food stores mentioned were large grocery stores and organic food stores. Similarly, a large home improvement store was the most mentioned type, followed by a smaller store that would be similar to the Pelz’s store that was formerly in Tonganoxie.

The number of responses that favored a full or limited service restaurant was more than double the number of responses for fast food restaurants. The most mentioned type of restaurant was Mexican (49), followed by Chinese (24), Italian (10), and home style (8). In addition, there was also a lot of emphasis on any new restaurant that provides high-quality service. Another response that was put in several different categories was the desire for a coffee/bagel/donut shop.

Two survey questions asked what people would like to see happen at the intersection of Highway 24/40 and 4th, and also along Highway 24/40 in general. No examples were provided on the survey, rather blank lines allowing the respondent to write in their own responses. Because of this, these responses are somewhat difficult to quantify, as the responses were purely textual and every response varied somewhat from even the most similar.

The survey, as well as the workshops, revealed that most Tonganoxie residents want something to be done to the intersection of Highway 24/40 and 4th Street. The most common response for what to do at this intersection was to tear down the existing buildings and landscape the four corners. Other ideas included:

- Reopening the gas station,
- Reusing the other buildings for small, locally-owned businesses,
- Creating a park on one corner with welcome signage,
- Locating the Parks and Recreation Commission and Chamber of Commerce,
- Building a commuter parking lot,
- Building a tourist information center and rest area for travelers, and
- Annexing the lots to the adjacent ones to create a more versatile lot.

The survey allowed respondents to specify the types of businesses or restaurants they would like to see along Highway 24/40. Food stores, household goods stores, home improvement stores, and restaurants were the most common responses. Other recurring responses included:

- Hotel or motel,
- Department store such as JC Penney,
- Auto parts store,
- Entertainment venue such as a movie theatre or bowling alley,
- Antique stores,
- Dry cleaner and tailor shop
- Golf course.
- Do not building anything on this piece of road; preserve the natural environment and focusing development in other parts of Tonganoxie.

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One focus of the survey was to determine how Tonganoxie can attract “day-trippers” to the area. Respondents chose dining as the attraction most likely to cause them to day-trip to another city. Specialty shopping and recreation/sporting events were other primary day-trip attractions. When asked what activities Tonganoxie has today to attract day trippers, respondents convincingly identified “visiting friends and family” as the primary attraction for most day-trippers to Tonganoxie. Other top responses were “recreation/sporting events” (due to the County Lake and Fair grounds) and “concerts, plays, etc.” (due to Annie’s Country Jubilee). The two most selected attractions that respondents thought could be expanded in the future to attract day trippers were dining and specialty shopping.

A portion of the survey presented a series of statements and asked for the respondent to rate

each statement on scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The responses reveal a strong support for the enhancement of downtown, the improvement of the 24/40 and 4th Street intersection, and public and private sector cooperation to attract and retain businesses.

In summary, Tonganoxie residents generally support for enhancing and strengthening the downtown area through recruitment of restaurants and specialty shops along with improving the appearance of entrances, especially the 4th street and Hwy 24/40 intersection entrance to the downtown area. The results of the Commercial Growth Community Opinion Survey provide insight into how the community should move forward to attract quality businesses and create a quality commercial environment in downtown and along Highway 24/40.

