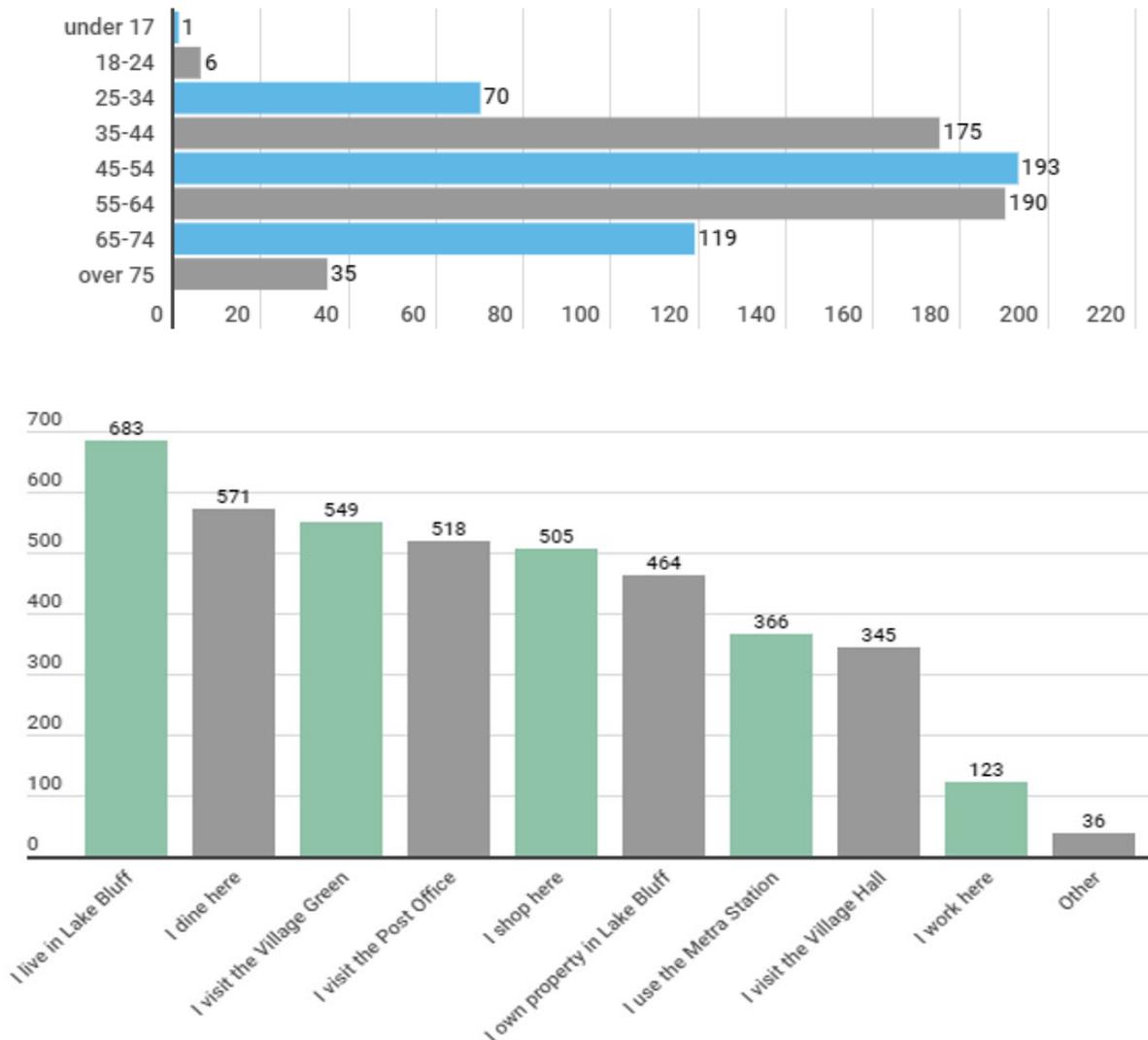




LAKE BLUFF DOWNTOWN STREETScape PLAN | POLL SUMMARY

Many thanks to the 797 participants who shared their input as part of the ‘Lake Bluff Downtown Streetscape Plan’ Neighborhood Poll. Between August 27th- September 26th, 2021, we heard from a wide range of ages and various connections to Downtown Lake Bluff. From residents (86%), folks who dine there (72%), visit the Village Green (69%), visit the post office (65%), shop here (63%), own property (58%), use the Metra Station (46%), visit Village Hall (43%), work here (15%), and other (4%). “Other” responses include respondents who grew up in Lake Bluff and/or visit family (6), bike here (3), visit the library (6), live in neighboring communities (3), pay taxes (1), own business (1), work remotely (1), and paint (1).

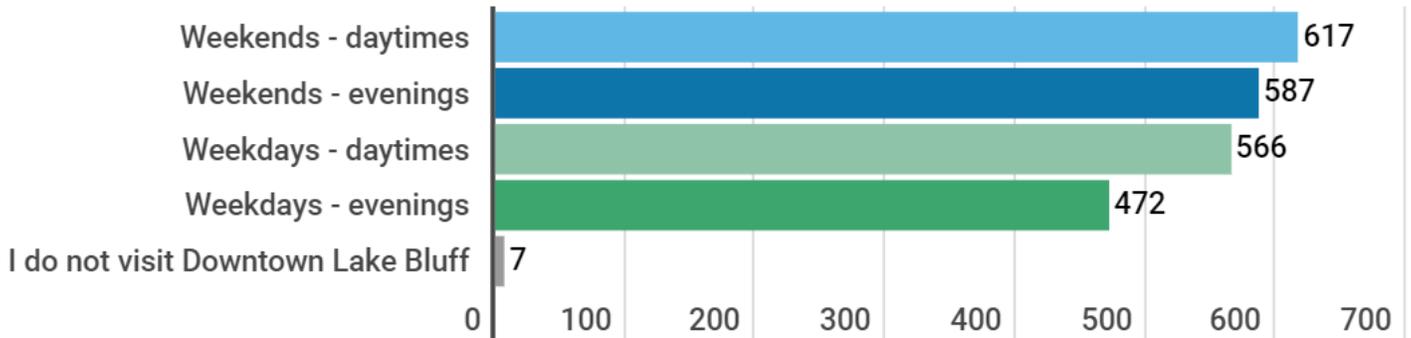
Participant Profile | Age + Neighborhood Connection





When do you typically visit Downtown Lake Bluff? (Select all that apply)

When asked when folks typically visit Downtown Lake Bluff, less than 1 percent stated they didn't visit downtown. Most visits occurred on weekends with 78% visiting during daytime and 74% in the evenings. During weekdays, 72% visited during the daytime and 60% in the evenings. In the comments, respondents explained why they visit, including dog walking and getting coffee in mornings (4), attending farmers market on Fridays (2), and dining in the evenings (6).



How do you usually travel to Downtown Lake Bluff?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
Walk	417	199	63	63
Bicycle	162	278	145	128
Drive	430	235	104	14
Metra Train	31	101	169	346

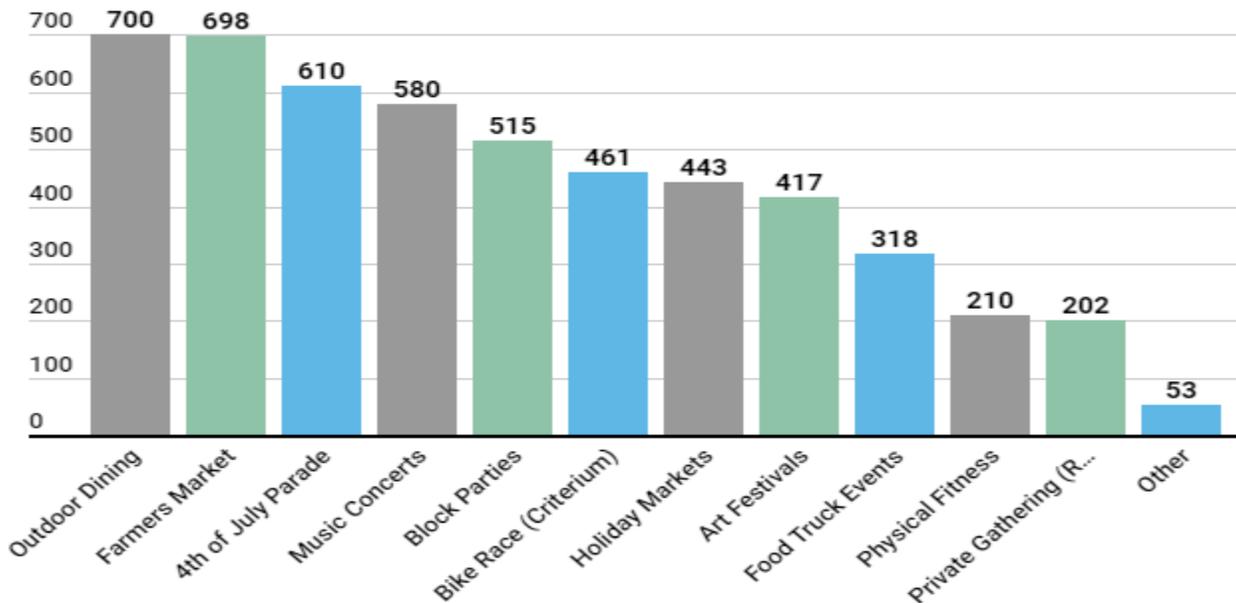


When visiting Downtown Lake Bluff by car, where do you typically park?

	OFTEN	SOMETIMES	RARELY	NEVER
On-Street in the Downtown Area	621	118	28	12
On-Street in the Residential Area	54	199	250	180
Public Parking Lot	57	221	190	227
Metra Station Parking Lot	30	111	191	340

What types of events or experiences bring you downtown? (Consider existing events and experiences, as well as potential future events. Select all that apply.)

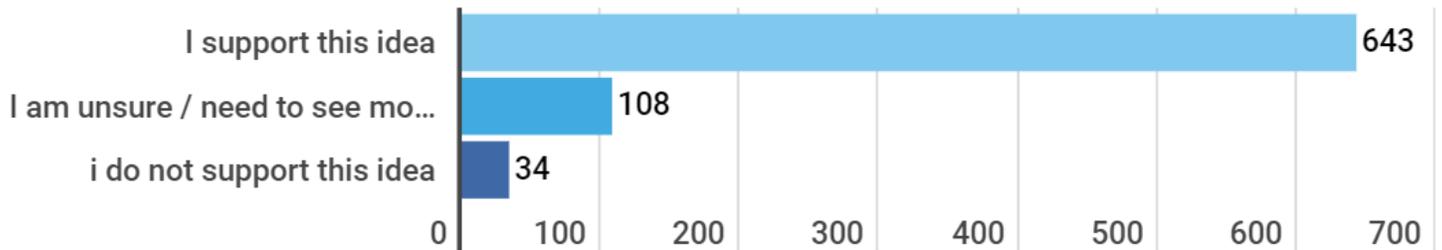
The top 3 events or experiences that brought the respondents downtown included outdoor dining (89%), farmers market (89%), and 4th of July parade (77%), followed by music concerts (74%), block parties (65%), bike race (59%), holiday markets (56%), art festivals (53%), food truck events (40%), physical fitness (27%), and private gatherings (26%). The “other” (7%) responses included running errands such as banking and visiting the post office (11), dining/ coffee (10), Rib Fest (3), visiting the Library (9), and dog walking (4).





Lake Bluff has tested flexible streetscape functions, such as temporarily reallocating on-street parking for outdoor dining and events. How likely are you to support similar flexible parking and dining arrangements in the future?

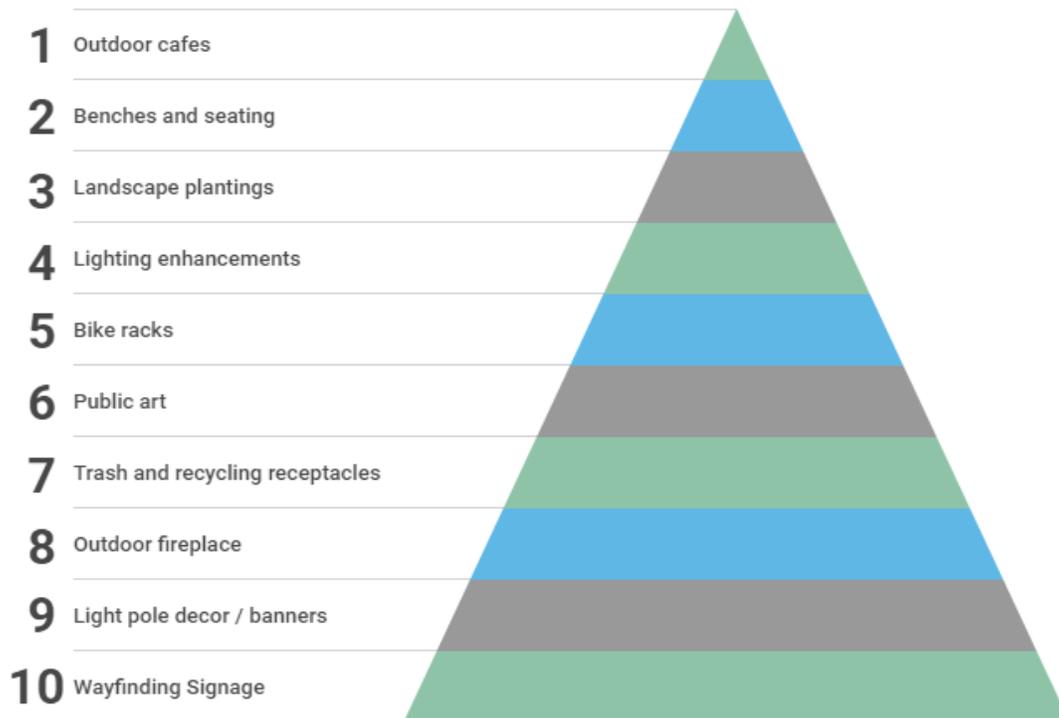
When asked about the temporarily reallocated on-street parking for outdoor dining and events (such as the outdoor dining area at the south side of Scranton Ave in Block 1), respondents were supportive of this for the future (82%). Some indicated they were unsure and needed more information (14%). Very few respondents indicated they did not support this idea (4%). In the comments, respondents favorably referenced the partial closure of Scranton Ave at the south side of Block 1 (35). Some mentioned that they would like to see a more visually appealing solution (7). Some indicated that they like that this installation is “flexible” (10) and not “permanent” (12). A few suggested installation of a pedestrian only street (6).



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Based on the list below, please rank the streetscape amenities that are most important to you (click and drag the items below, placing the highest priority at the top of the list):

When asked to rank the importance of various streetscape amenities, an overwhelming 77% (613) respondents ranked “Outdoor cafes” as their top priority. 69% of respondents also indicated “Benches and Seating” within their top 3, and 48% included “landscape plantings” in their top 3.



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What about Downtown Lake Bluff is special and should be protected?

When asked about what makes Downtown Lake Bluff special today, 526 open ended responses were provided. A summary of common themes follows below:

1. **Small Town Ambiance.** Small town feel, including charming buildings, mix of businesses, and ‘low stress’ parking; neighborhood commercial ambiance; New England feel.
2. **Downtown ‘Gems’.** Unique places such as Village Green, Gazebo, Village Hall Fountain, Scranton Alley and outdoor dining.
3. **Quaint Details.** Charming features such as the historic storefronts, seasonal planters, and holiday lighting.
4. **Variety of Gathering Options.** Outdoor street dining, lawn spaces, and seating nooks.
5. **Fests + Events.** Bluffinia, 4th of July parade, bike races, Rib Fest, Block Parties, Music in the Park, Farmers Markets.
6. **The People.** Welcoming spirit of neighbors and businesses, family friendly setting, ‘community, comfort, safety’.

The following quotes were provided:

- *“Outdoor dining Love the use of the Alley! Maybe more of these hidden gems would be cute!”*
- *“Ease of parking without a lengthy search for a space”*
- *“The ability to gather outside, whether that be dining on the sidewalks and street or the lawn. Our village is quaint, friendly, and welcoming. It is a place where you can casually meet friends and neighbors.”*
- *“Village green, the beautiful garden club display, and everything that promotes the togetherness and sense of community we have.”*
- *“Lack of commercialism... franchise restaurants and corporate stores”*
- *“Its charm! Find balance between attracting people to downtown LB and keeping it quaint and charming”*
- *“Restaurants, businesses and community events. Keeping it clean, green, artsy and fun is what attracts.”*
- *“I love that our downtown is bustling, yet still feels intimate, not over commercialized. I love that it is safe for our children. I also really appreciate that our shops/restaurants are local/not chains. It should remain small, fitting of a town our size.”*
- *“Unpretentious relaxation and enjoyment of Lake Shore life / Lake Bluff style in a safe environment that is accessible to all - visitors and residents.”*

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- *“Scranton Alley; Farmers Market; restaurants, cafes and pubs; scenic outdoor dining —I don’t like the concrete barriers near the village green. Make all of downtown lake bluff as scenic and charming as Scranton alley! Make the whole downtown area charming.”*

What about Downtown Lake Bluff should be improved upon?

When asked to provide comments about opportunities for improvement in Downtown Lake Bluff, 483 open ended responses were provided. A summary of common themes follows below:

1. **People first.** More spaces for people and less space for cars; wider sidewalks with less clutter.
2. **Traffic calming.** Improve pedestrian crossings throughout, incorporate lighting and a sense of arrival at Sheridan Road / Scranton Avenue.
3. **Parking.** Make better use of existing parking areas, incorporate more parking and handicapped spaces.
4. **Seating and gathering.** Accommodate sidewalk cafes. Prioritize public outdoor seating for all to use (ie. not associated with private establishments); improve the appearance of the temporary outdoor dining areas; site trash bins away from benches.
5. **Amenities.** More amenities for all users (dogwalkers, runners, bikers, adults, and kids), such as Adirondack chairs, fire pits, bike racks, bottle fillers and dog waste bags.
6. **Maintenance.** Maintain trees, empty trash bins
7. **Power.** Provide access to power for farmers markets and EV charging stations.
8. **Lake Bluff is nearly perfect -- don’t change it too much!**

The following quotes were provided:

- *“Love the flexible streetscape functions, but the cement blocks are eyesores. Yes safety is a priority, but is there something matching the downtown’s charm and character. Also, I miss a downtown ice cream place. Better yet, pizza and ice cream”*
- *“Figuring out how to have outdoor seating and tables so u r not walking into them while you walk down the street Personally, I don’t think restaurants should be able to put reserved signs on tables on public property There needs to be a balance so u can sit with friends and not have to order from a restroom to be there.”*
- *“More general seating (not so restaurant specific) Parking could be improved on if more areas are shut down or blocked off for events, though even for the Farmer’s Market and weekend evenings it’s never been impossible to find parking.”*
- *“Too many portable signs on the sidewalk (particularly along the south side of Scranton); outdoor seating too crowded on public walk outside of Prairie Espresso, particularly with portable signage on sidewalk; pedestrian access from Metra station; add wayfinding signs to encourage parking at Metra; narrow road/tighten corners to allow for easier pedestrian crossing at intersections”*

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- *“Persistent vacant storefronts are an eyesore, they don’t really add to our tax base and they don’t provide convenience to residents. Perhaps additional zoning flexibility or mixed-use should be considered to encourage use of existing structures.”*
- *“I’d love to see an expansion of retail, as an example possibly a locally owned higher end clothing store. I’d always be interested in new good restaurants! The outdoor fireplace idea is great.”*
- *“Great already. Keep / expand the block parties and other weekend events. Expand sitting / dining venues. Make it a place to “hang out” even without buying a meal. Exploit underutilized parking spaces - especially train station and bank.”*
- *“Adirondack chairs through for comfortable seating Tree Lighting with tiny white lights year-round would be beautiful, Bikes that you can rent and ride”*
- *“Organization of space to support outdoor dining by creating a space out of the way of main pedestrian traffic. Your proposed plan appears to do this. More amenities ie a public restroom, more trash/recycling containers and seating spaces are also welcome.”*

***Thank you for your helpful insights, Lake Bluff!
It is much appreciated and is informing next steps: concept development.***

***For more information and to learn about upcoming meetings and events, please see the
project webpage:***

<https://www.lakebluff.org/village-news/11-village-news/1091-downtown-streetscape-plan>