

# **Downtown Lancaster Revitalization**

**Hourglass Community Opinion Panel**

**Survey Findings**

**August, 2006**

H O U R G L A S S



F O U N D A T I O N

123 North Prince Street  
Lancaster, PA 17603

# **Downtown Lancaster Revitalization**

## **Hourglass Community Opinion Panel**

### **Survey Findings**

To date, 308 Lancaster County residents have electronically signed up as members of the Hourglass Community Opinion Panel. For the initial community survey, 240 panelists completed the on-line survey. A sample of this size yields a sampling accuracy of +/- 6.2 percent at a 95% level of confidence.

NOTE: This survey is provided solely as a public service from the Hourglass Foundation, and does not necessarily reflect the views of either its Board of Directors or its membership.

The results of this survey reflect a broad-based representation of Lancaster County voting residents recruited by, and responding to questions developed and analyzed by a noted independent research firm.

**Research findings compiled by Polk-Lepson Research Group  
York, Pennsylvania**

## Survey Findings

### Question 1 - How important do you feel Downtown revitalization is to the overall vitality of Lancaster County and its quality of life of Lancaster residents?

**Researcher's Observations:** Regardless of where respondents reside within Lancaster County, the majority (77.9%) feel downtown revitalization is very important to the overall vitality of the County and the quality of life of County residents.

These were true regardless of:

- gender
- marital status
- level of education
- employment status
- having school age children
- type of school children attend
- length of time residing in Lancaster County
- annual household income
- political affiliation

### Findings:

- 77.9% Very Important
- 19.2% Somewhat Important
- 2.5% Somewhat Unimportant
- 0.4% Not at all important

## Question #2 - How would you assess efforts in the past 5 years to help revitalize downtown Lancaster?

**Researcher's Observations:** With 91.3% percent of respondents seeing either significant improvements (22.5%) or some improvements (68.8%) to downtown Lancaster over the past five years, there appears to be wide recognition that efforts are being made to revitalize downtown Lancaster.

Those who reside in Lancaster City are more likely to view that significant improvements have taken place in downtown Lancaster over the past five years.

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All areas	19.8%
Lancaster City	27.7%
All other areas	14.7%

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### Findings:

- 22.5% I see significant improvements
- 68.8% I see some improvements
- 5.0% I don't see any improvements
- 1.3% I see the downtown as getting worse
- 2.5% I don't know

**Question #3 - Thinking back on the Clipper Stadium project — When it was being discussed in the planning stage; describe your support or opposition to the proposed baseball stadium at that time.**

**Researcher’s Observations:** During the initial stages of planning, when the Clipper Stadium project was first being discussed, it would appear that the majority of residents were to some degree supportive of proposed project. At this stage of discussion, few respondents were opposed to building a facility for minor league baseball.

While residents, regardless of the length of time they lived in Lancaster County, were supportive, it was residents who have lived in the County for 10 years or less who were more likely to be supportive of Clipper Stadium.

Residents of both political parties shared similar views:

	<b>Democrat</b>	<b>Republican</b>
Strongly supportive	28.8%	34.2%
Somewhat supportive	38.1%	29.8%

**Findings:**

- 30.4% Strongly Supportive
- 32.9% Somewhat Supportive
- 6.7% Somewhat Opposed
- 1.3% Very Opposed
- 28.8% Don't know/No Response

**Question #4 - Now that it is complete and operating — describe your support or opposition to the new baseball stadium.**

**Researcher's Observations:** Upon its completion, it would appear that residents who were either somewhat supportive or opposed to the stadium shifted their position to being very supportive of the Clipper Stadium project.

Those respondents who are more likely to be strongly supportive include:

- males
- married persons
- persons who do not have school age children
- Lancaster City residents

**Findings:**

57.9% Strongly Supportive  
14.2% Somewhat Supportive  
1.3% Somewhat Opposed  
0.4% Very Opposed  
26.3% Don't know/No Response

**Question #5 - Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the new baseball stadium is helping revitalize Lancaster?**

**Researcher's Observations:** The data reveals a shared agreement among the majority of participants, that the new baseball stadium is playing a role in Lancaster City's revitalization.

**Findings:**

- 55.8% Strongly Agree
- 16.7% Somewhat Agree
- 0.8% Somewhat Disagree
- 1.3% Strongly Disagree
- 25.4% Don't know/No Response

**Question #6 - From the wish list below, please indicate the five projects or initiatives that you would most like to see more emphasis on as part of downtown revitalization.**

**Researcher’s Observations:** Those projects that retain Lancaster City’s historical culture, enhance entertainment opportunities, and create economic growth, are most favored by residents for aiding downtown revitalization.

Interestingly, selection of the Convention Center as a desired project was equal across all political affiliations.

**Findings:**

42.9%	Historic Building Restoration	14.2%	Hotels
35.4%	Downtown Beautification	13.8%	Kid-Oriented Venues
31.3%	Convention Center	12.5%	Parks
30.4%	Business Development	12.1%	Museums
29.2%	Movie Theatre(s)	11.7%	Art Galleries
27.5%	Restaurants	10.0%	Retirement Community
25.4%	Heritage Tourism	7.5%	Antique Shops
25.4%	Residential Housing	7.1%	Parking Lots
23.3%	After-Hours Entertainment	5.8%	On-Street Parking
22.1%	Farmers Markets	5.0%	Specialty Food Stores
20.8%	Unique Specialty Shops	3.3%	Up-Scale Clothing Stores
20.4%	Mass Transit	2.5%	Craft/Gift Shops
17.5%	Events/Festivals	2.5%	No Response
16.7%	Parking Garages	2.1%	One-Way Streets

**Question #7 - Have you been following the news of the proposed hotel/convention center and its controversy?**

**Researcher's Observations:** The majority of respondents (94.7%) have been making an effort to follow news relating to the proposed Hotel/Convention Center. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents (60.5%) perceive that they are very closely following information about the project.

Those who are most likely to perceive that they are very closely following the news include:

- males
- people who do not have school age children
- Lancaster City residents

**Findings:**

60.5% Yes — very closely  
34.2% Yes — somewhat  
5.3% No — not at all

**Question #8 - From what you know or have heard from different points of view, would you say you feel...**

**Researcher's Observations:** The research finding suggests that information furnished to the general public relating to the Convention Center has not provided the majority of participants with enough information to formulate a very clear understanding of the issues associated with this proposed project.

Those participants who are more likely to be confused about the project include:

- females
- those with annual household income under \$50,000

**Findings:**

22.1%	Very Clear
40.0%	Somewhat Clear
26.7%	Somewhat Confused
4.6%	Very Confused
6.7%	Unsure/No Response

**Question #9 - Based on what you know about the proposed hotel/convention center — do you support or oppose it being built?**

**Researcher's Observations:** Based on the information they have received, participants appear to be mixed in their support of the Convention Center with more in favor of the project than opposed to it.

Those most likely strongly supportive are:

- males
- college graduates
- Lancaster County residents of 10 years or more
- persons with annual household income over \$100,000
- Lancaster City residents

Those most likely strongly opposed are:

- married people
- retirees
- those with school age children
- residents outside Lancaster City

**Findings:**

- 27.9% Strongly Support
- 28.8% Somewhat Support
- 17.5% Somewhat Oppose
- 16.3% Strongly Oppose
- 9.6% Don't Know/No Response

**Question #10 - If you would consider the proposed project as two separate projects, a hotel and a convention center, what are your feelings?**

**Researcher’s Observations:** While there are participants who support both the hotel and convention center, participants appear more supportive of the hotel portion of the project than the convention center. Interestingly, political affiliation does not appear to be an issue about whether a participant is more inclined to support either the hotel or convention center.

	<b>Republican</b>	<b>Democrat</b>
Very supportive of hotel	36.8%	39.2%
Very supportive of Convention Center	28.1%	28.9%

**Findings:**

**Hotel:**

- 36.7% Strongly Support
- 37.9% Somewhat Support
- 10.4% Somewhat Oppose
- 7.1% Strongly Oppose
- 7.9% Don’t Know/No Response

**Convention Center:**

- 27.5% Strongly Support
- 27.9% Somewhat Support
- 17.1% Somewhat Oppose
- 19.2% Strongly Oppose
- 8.3% Don’t Know/No Response

**Question #11 - Costs, personalities and proposed plans aside, do you agree or disagree with the idea that a new hotel/convention center can help revitalize downtown Lancaster?**

**Researcher's Observations:** When the sole issue of the Hotel/Convention Center is whether the project can help revitalize downtown Lancaster, the majority of respondents (64.6%) to some degree have the perception that the Hotel/Convention Center will help downtown Lancaster.

Most likely to agree are:

- annual household income \$75,000 or more
- Independent voters
- Lancaster City residents

Most likely to disagree are:

- annual household income \$25,000 or less
- retired persons
- residents outside Lancaster City

**Findings:**

32.5%	Strongly Agree
32.1%	Somewhat Agree
14.6%	Somewhat Disagree
13.3%	Strongly Disagree
7.5%	Don't Know/No Response

**Question #12 - Do you feel that the county commissioners should give their support to or take action to stop the hotel/convention center project?**

**Researcher's Observations:** While there are mixed views of whether County commissioners should give their support to the project, approximately one-half of participants (50.8%) favor commissioners giving their support. In fact, more than twice as many respondents think the Commissioners should support the project than those who feel they should stop the project.

Most likely favor commissioners supporting project:

- males
- full-time workers
- those who do not have school age children
- Lancaster County residents of 10 years or more
- those with annual household income over \$100,000
- Independent voters
- residents of Lancaster City

Most likely to favor commissioners acting to stop the project:

- non-college graduates
- those who have school age children
- residents outside Lancaster City

**Findings:**

- 50.8% Commissioners should give their support to the project
- 21.7% Commissioners should take action to stop the project%
- 27.5% Unsure/No Response

**Question #13 - Some people have expressed the following concerns about the hotel/convention center. Please indicate how serious you personally feel about each of these concerns as they pertain to the hotel/convention center.**

**Researcher’s Observations:** While participants have serious concerns about the proposed Convention Center, what appears to be causing the most anxiety is how in-fighting over the issue is hurting the community.

**Findings:**

	<b>Very Concerned</b>	<b>Somewhat Concerned</b>	<b>Not At All Concerned</b>	<b>Unsure / No Responses</b>
In-fighting is hurting the community	65.80%	15.80%	10.10%	8.30%
Nothing is happening	45.40%	28.30%	13.80%	12.50%
No downtown revitalization master plan	45.40%	34.60%	9.60%	10.40%
Saving the historic buildings on site	43.80%	33.80%	15.80%	6.70%
The costs are too high	40.40%	36.70%	11.30%	11.70%
Too much public money involved	39.60%	27.50%	21.30%	11.70%
Too little private money involved	38.80%	28.80%	22.10%	10.40%
Resolving the parking problems	37.10%	42.50%	10.40%	10.00%
If not successful, taxes will go up	36.30%	26.70%	27.10%	10.00%
The convention center won’t succeed	35.40%	33.30%	22.50%	8.80%
There are better uses for building/site	23.30%	24.60%	28.30%	23.80%
The hotel won’t succeed	18.80%	42.90%	28.80%	9.60%
The project won’t help the downtown	16.70%	29.62%	43.30%	10.40%
Fairness to tourism hoteliers	13.30%	26.70%	50.80%	9.20%