

September 15, 2007  
Patricia Torres Najera, Project Director  
Center for Urban Initiatives and Research

The Lincoln Village Business Association (LVBA) is located in the City of Milwaukee along Lincoln Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> streets. It is a unique and significant historical neighborhood with a number of commercial buildings with businesses on the first floor and residences above the businesses. Two national landmarks; the Basilica of St. Josaphat and the Forest Home Cemetery serve as anchors for the street.

In 1998, leaders in the community incorporated the Lincoln Village Business Association because of a growing need to address issues for commercial business owners in this historic neighborhood. Over the years, LVBA realized that their commercial district was well-respected and often attempts were made throughout the City of Milwaukee and other communities to replicate the model.

For this reason, LVBA applied and became the first Main Street community in the City of Milwaukee. LVBA has been working collaboratively with all other designated Main Streets in Milwaukee since the expansion of the program in 2005. Some of the key components of Main Street Milwaukee are to utilize a neighborhood approach to neighborhood economic development that utilizes a proven method to increase investment in urban neighborhoods, create new businesses, create jobs and create wealth in urban communities.

In order to capture the sentiments and opinions of property owners on Lincoln Village, LVBA requested UWM's Center for Urban Initiatives and Research to create a survey instrument that explored the local interests of local businesses in the Lincoln Village area. Each property owner was asked to indicate the level of importance for specific features in the Lincoln Village Area. All of the district preferences were categorized in the following areas: Streetscape Features, Safety Features, Avenue Clean-up Features, Seasonal decorations, Advertising and promotions, Main Street Technical Assistance. The other major priority of the survey was to determine the level of support for the creation of a Lincoln Village BID. A Business Improvement District is when property owners in designated geographic areas voluntarily collect annual assessments that are spent on projects that enhance the local business environment. These may include improvements to the streetscape, marketing efforts, business recruitment activity, and security programs.

The Project Director in consultation with the Executive Director of LVBA developed a survey for all property owners on Lincoln Street between 5<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Streets. A cover letter by LVBA was mailed to all business owners with an invitation to complete the survey. The survey was mailed to 125 business owners in the designated areas. In order to increase the response rate, multiple phone calls were made to business owners during the summer-time. When necessary or evident, the Project Director conducted the phone-calls in Spanish. In addition, LVBA staff conducted personal visits to businesses to encourage completion of the survey. The total number of respondents was 26 business owners with a 21% response rate.

## Key Findings

For each of the following questions, respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance as a commercial business owner. The first question addressed *streetscape features*:

- **81% - placement of City of Milwaukee garbage cans**
- **81% - creation of newly decorated garbage cans**
- 77% - felt trees and plantings were important
- 77% - hanging flower baskets were important
- 65% - decorative sidewalks were important
- 42.3% believed wider sidewalks were somewhat important, 46.2% did not think wider sidewalks were important
- 40% - public art is important

The second question addressed *safety features*:

- **96% rank increased police presence important**
- 92% rank cameras for public spaces as important
- 85% would like discounts for burglar systems
- 81% stated that security vehicle patrols were important
- 77% would like to have regular meetings with police

The third question addressed *clean-up features*:

- **92% believed that cleaning up the street and removing graffiti was very important**
- 89% believed that weed and/or snow removal was important

The fourth question addressed related to *seasonal decorations*:

- **89% ranked lighting in the park with importance**
- 85% ranked holiday street pole banners with importance
- 86% ranked decorations on street poles with importance
- 73% ranked holiday lightings for building important

The fifth question addressed **methods to best promote Lincoln Village**:

- **85% would like to see the development and promotion of “Lincoln Village”**
- 81% ranked multi-business advertising with importance
- 69% ranked individual business website development as important
- 65% ranked merchandise branding of “Lincoln Village” (cups, t-shirts, hats...) as somewhat important

September 15, 2007  
Patricia Torres Najera, Project Director  
Center for Urban Initiatives and Research

The sixth question addressed specific *technical assistance needed from the Main Street office* as it relates to the following:

- **92% ranked promoting the district-wide important**
- 92% ranked grant development and preparation important
- 86% ranked business planning as important
- 85% ranked one-on-one consulting services important

Each property owner was asked to indicate their level of support for the creation of Business Improvement District along Lincoln Avenue. An overwhelming amount of respondents, 73% stated they would support the creation of a BID. Only 19% stated they would not support the BID and 4% were unsure if they would support.

When asked if others along Lincoln Village would be willing to create and join a Lincoln Village BID, 54% stated they thought their neighbors would join. Many of the respondents stated (67%) stated they are interested in attending a meeting to explore the creation of a BID.

The final question asked the property owner which method they preferred to learn about and/or participate with matters related to the creation of a BID in Lincoln Village. The preferred option by the majority of people was to attend a community meeting or by a personal visit or telephone call. The other methods chosen were by newsletters, website and group emails.

In conclusion, the majority of stakeholders who responded to the survey recognized the efforts necessary and many of the district preferences are core components to a Business Improvement District. Of those that responded to the survey, many of them were likely to support the creation of the Lincoln Village BID.