Town of Brookline, Economic Development Division

Coolidge Corner

CONSUMER SURVEY 2014

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Acknowledgements

This project was only possible due to the contributions of time, information and insights on the part of many individuals and organizations. Thank you to the partners that participated in and guided this project.

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Business Owners and Managers who took the time to complete the pre-survey questionnaire and helped to promote the survey through e-mails, website postings, and displaying signs and materials.

Coolidge Corner Merchants Association

And . . . Many , Many Thanks to **the over 1,700 people who responded to the survey!**

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Summary Highlights

People care about Coolidge Corner. The overwhelming response rate (over 1,740 completed surveys) from people who were so willing to provide information and opinions is testimony to how important this business district is to them.

Customers come from Brookline and surrounding communities. The customer mix is approximately two-thirds Brookline residents and one-third Greater Boston residents with a very small percentage of visitors. Customers are predominantly home owners, childless households and females. More than one-half walk to the district.

Customers come often – mostly, just as often or more than in the past. Brookline customers visit Coolidge Corner very frequently (76% come at least twice per week). Greater Boston customers visit somewhat less frequently but still very regularly. The vast majority of customers continue to come as often or more often than in the past few years. 56% reported no change in the frequency of their visits while 32% said the frequency had increased and only 12% said the frequency had decreased.

Customers come to eat, drink, shop, see a movie, and more. Customers come to Coolidge Corner for a variety of reasons -- eating and drinking top the list -- followed by convenience shopping, comparison and specialty shopping; visiting a bank, post office or library, and entertainment or recreation.

Most customers reported becoming aware of businesses they patronized by walking or driving by, underlining the importance of attractive storefronts and signage. Other commercial centers that Coolidge Corner customers frequent include Chestnut Hill, most popular among Brookline residents, and Harvard Square, most popular among Greater Boston residents.

Customers visit several businesses per shopping trip. The synergy between businesses is an important aspect of any commercial district; customers are often drawn to an area where they can accomplish several things in the same shopping trip. Coolidge Corner customers make multiple stops, on average visiting establishments in 2.7 business categories per shopping trip (which compares favorably with the national average for shopping malls).

The median expenditure is $25-49 per trip; the average is $60. Brookline residents reported spending more per trip than non-residents. Customers that drove spent more per visit than those using other transportation modes and 45 to 54 year-olds spent more per trip than any other age group.

For the most part, customers are quite satisfied. The majority of customers rated all aspects of Coolidge Corner as average or above. They find it an attractive, family-friendly place, easy to get around; a nice spot for socializing and people-watching, with a good selection of restaurants and good customer service. Customers appreciate the fact that Coolidge Corner is home to many unique, independent, locally owned businesses.

Customers are more satisfied with some aspects than others and Brookline customers are less satisfied than Greater Boston customers.

Parking is an issue for a significant portion of customers -- 41% of Brookline customers and 34% of Greater Boston customers rated ability to find parking as “poor” or “below average” and close to 30% expressed dissatisfaction with parking meter time limits.

Slightly less than one-half of the customers indicated satisfaction with public spaces and seating areas, 26% were dissatisfied, and 26% said they were unaware of the public areas.

Summary Highlights (cont'd)

Survey responses, particularly among Brookline residents, indicate that customers would like better information about the businesses in Coolidge Corner and what they offer as well as more events and activities.

In all, customers made over 1,600 suggestions for improvements and over 1,300 specific suggestions for new businesses they would like to see in Coolidge Corner.

There is opportunity to improve the customer experience. The survey results point to several areas that could enhance the customer experience and might encourage users to come more often, stay longer and spend more.

- Mitigating parking issues might increase customer frequency.
- Improving public seating areas and public spaces could create a more welcoming environment, more of a "living room" for the community that might lengthen customer visits.
- Better, more readily available information about the businesses and offerings available in Coolidge Corner could make business discovery easier and might increase customer volume.
- More events and activities, both inside and outside of the businesses, could create more of an experiential shopping environment, distinct from online shopping, that might help bond customers to the district, increase business awareness and boost shopper frequency.
- A wider variety of restaurants, more entertainment, and more clothing, food, sporting goods, and hobby stores might encourage more patronage.
- Traffic control improvements and additional bike amenities might also increase customer satisfaction.

The large amount of customer feedback provided by this survey is helpful to confirm that people continue to come to Coolidge Corner, most with the same or increased frequency, and they clearly like what the area has to offer. The consumer characteristics and behavior data may be of assistance to existing businesses as well as to prospective businesses considering a location in Coolidge Corner. The survey results also indicate several opportunities for enhancing the customer experience; these areas should be further explored with potential alternative strategies developed and tested.

1. Project Overview

1.1 Purpose and Objectives

The Purpose of the survey is to: help ensure that Coolidge Corner remains a vibrant commercial center by learning more about the customer base and proactively assessing customer satisfaction.

Objectives:

- Inform businesses about potential customers so they might be able to tailor goods and services to meet their needs (including lifestyle and demographic characteristics as well as shopping and dining habits and preferences).
- Gage customer satisfaction with several elements of the Coolidge Corner shopping & dining experience such as store selection, business hours, entertainment options, events, customer service and more.
- Provide input for the Town government about customer satisfaction with public realm elements such as public spaces, seating areas and parking.
- Offer some insight into the changes that customers would like to see in Coolidge Corner including the types of new businesses desired.

1.2 Process and Methodology

The survey was conducted during the time period of April 22 to May 16, 2014. The survey was targeted to the current users of Coolidge Corner and Brookline residents.

A total of **1,741 surveys were completed.**

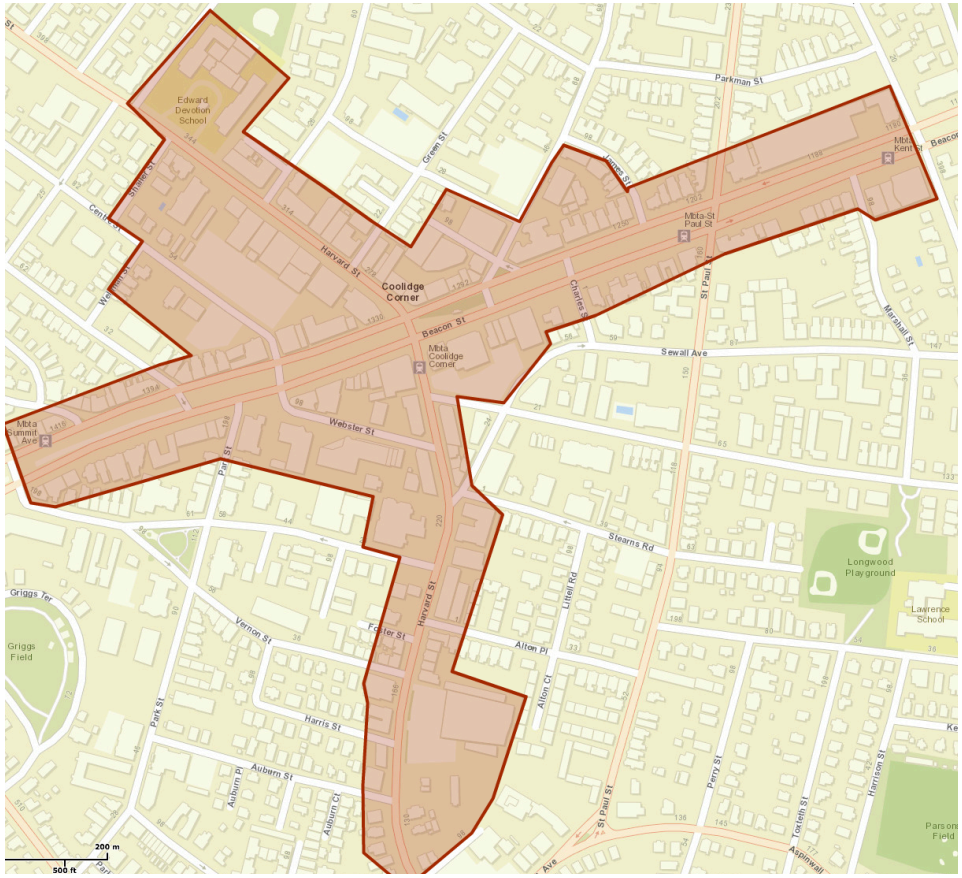
- In an effort to o obtain the most comprehensive and representative sample possible, several methods were used:
  - ☑ A customer intercept survey was conducted over the course of several days. People in Coolidge Corner were approached by surveyors and asked to complete a hard copy survey on the spot via interview or self-administration.
  - ☑ Cards with Quick Response (QR) codes were distributed in the district directing respondents to an online survey that could be taken via smartphone or other device.
  - ☑ Many businesses sent e-mails to their customers and advertised the online survey on their websites and facebook pages.
  - ☑ The Town sent e-mails to neighborhood association members, other resident e-mail lists and placed a notice on the Town website.
  - ☑ The online survey was also advertised through several media including local print media and online community newspapers.

1. Project Overview

1.3 Description of the Study Area

- In this study, we collected and analyzed data pertaining to the Coolidge Corner business district in Brookline, Massachusetts. The district is centered around the intersection of Beacon Street and Harvard Street.
- The map illustrates approximate boundaries.

Coolidge Corner Business District

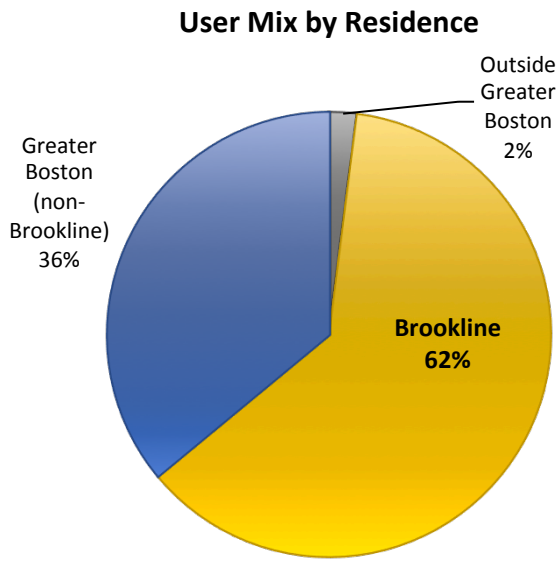


* Boundaries are approximate

2. User Profile

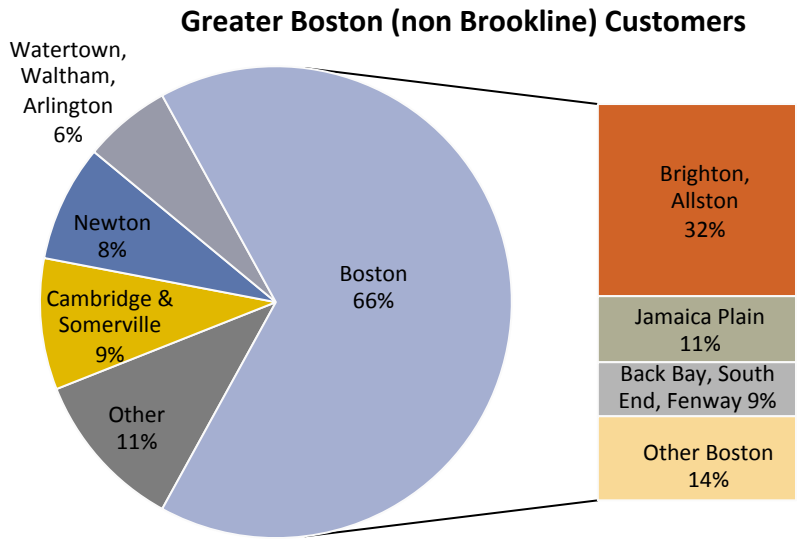
2.1 Who Shops, Eats & Plays in Coolidge Corner?

- The Coolidge Corner business district serves customers from the surrounding communities as well as visitors. Based upon the survey responses that originated in the district, we estimate that the user mix is approximately two-thirds Brookline residents and one-third Greater Boston residents with a small percentage of visitors.



2.2 Where do non-Brookline Customers come from?

- Two-thirds of the customers coming from Greater Boston Communities outside of Brookline reside in the City of Boston. There appears to be a substantial customer draw from the nearby Boston neighborhoods of Allston, Brighton and Jamaica Plain.
- One-third of the customers reside in other surrounding communities with a large portion from Newton, Somerville and Cambridge.



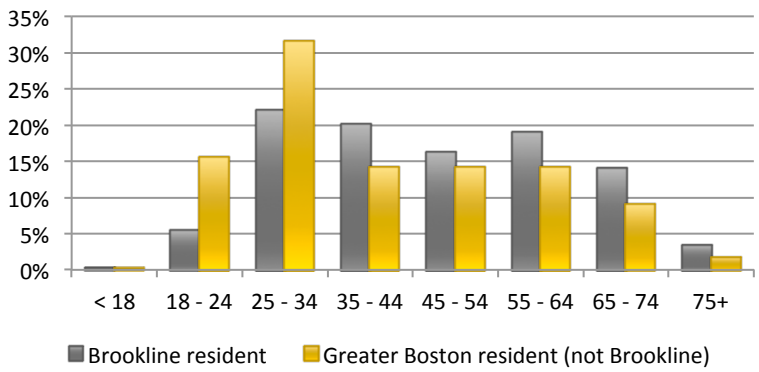
- A small number of visitors residing outside of the Greater Boston Area completed the survey. Approximately 60% were from out of state and the balance were from western Massachusetts and Cape Cod.

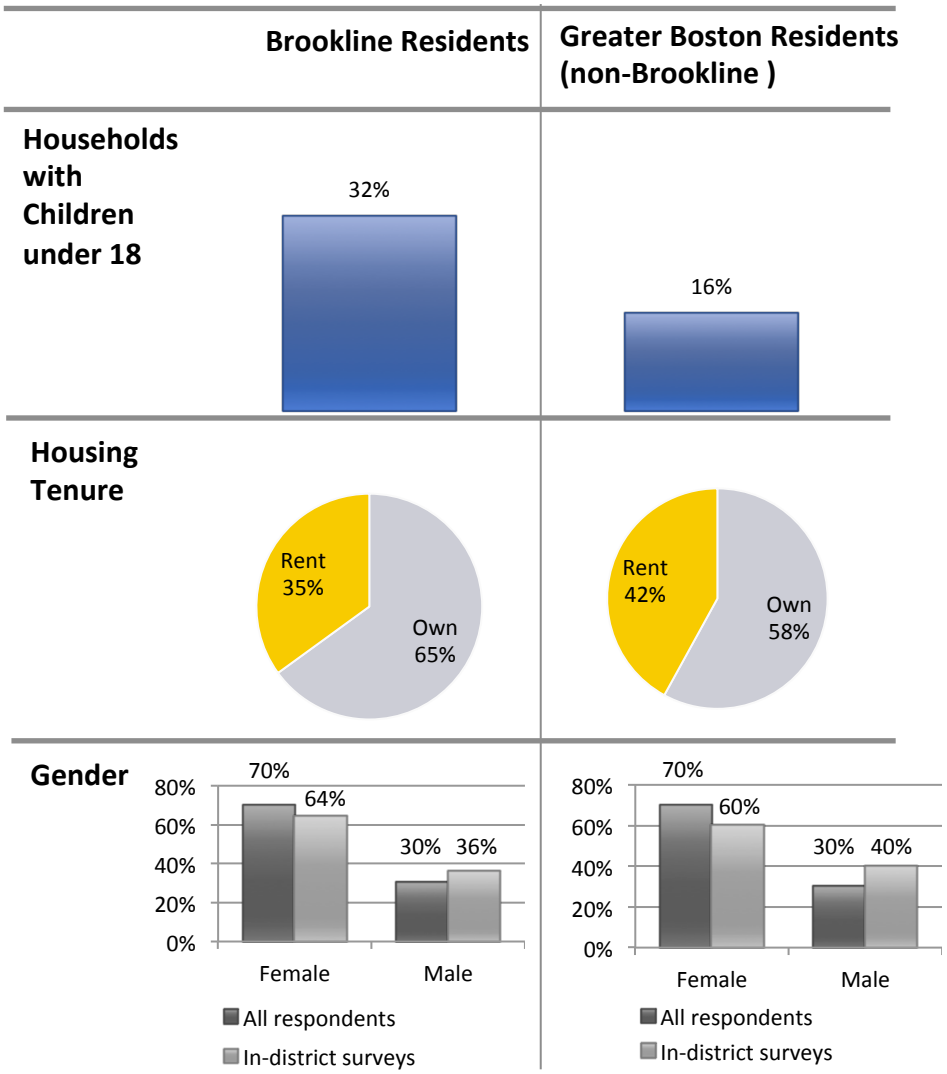
2. User Profile

2.3 Consumer Characteristics

- Coolidge Corner attracts customers of all ages. Among the Greater Boston (non Brookline) resident segment, the strongest following appears to be from 25 to 34 year olds.
- Approximately one-third of the Brookline customers have children in the household compared to only 16% among non Brookline customers.
- Close to two-thirds of Brookline customers own their home. The homeownership rate is somewhat lower among Greater Boston customer, but still close to 60%.
- More than one-half of Coolidge Corner customers are female. We estimated that the mix is around 60 -65% female and 35 – 40% male.

Age



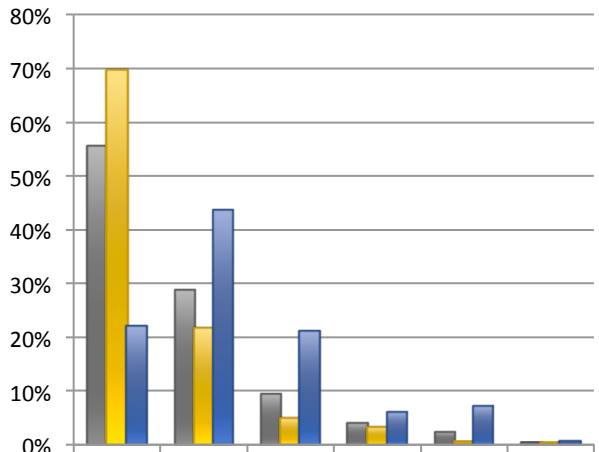


2. User Profile

2.3 Mode of Transportation

- Approximately 60% of the survey respondents said they walked or biked to Coolidge Corner for their last visit. Close to 30% drove and about 11% took public transportation.
- Brookline residents are more likely to walk to Coolidge Corner and Greater Boston (non-Brookline) residents are more likely to drive or take public transit.

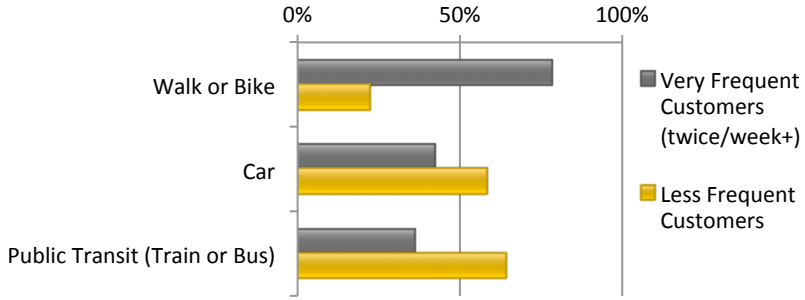
Transportation Mode by Residence



	Walk	Car	Train	Bike	Bus	Taxi
All Respondents	56%	29%	9%	4%	2%	0%
Brookline Residents	70%	22%	5%	3%	0%	0%
Greater Boston Residents (Non Brookline)	22%	43%	21%	6%	7%	1%

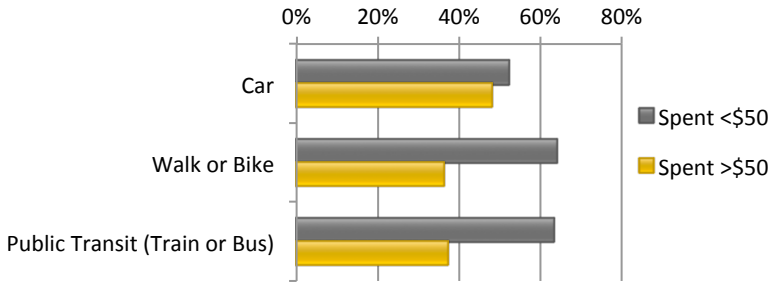
- Customers who walked or biked to Coolidge Corner were more likely to be very frequent customers (coming twice per week or more) than customers who drove or used public transit.

Transportation Mode by Visit Frequency



- Spending amount appears to have some impact on transportation mode or vice versa. Customers who drove to the district were more likely to spend over $50 than customers using other transport modes.

Transportation Mode by Spending

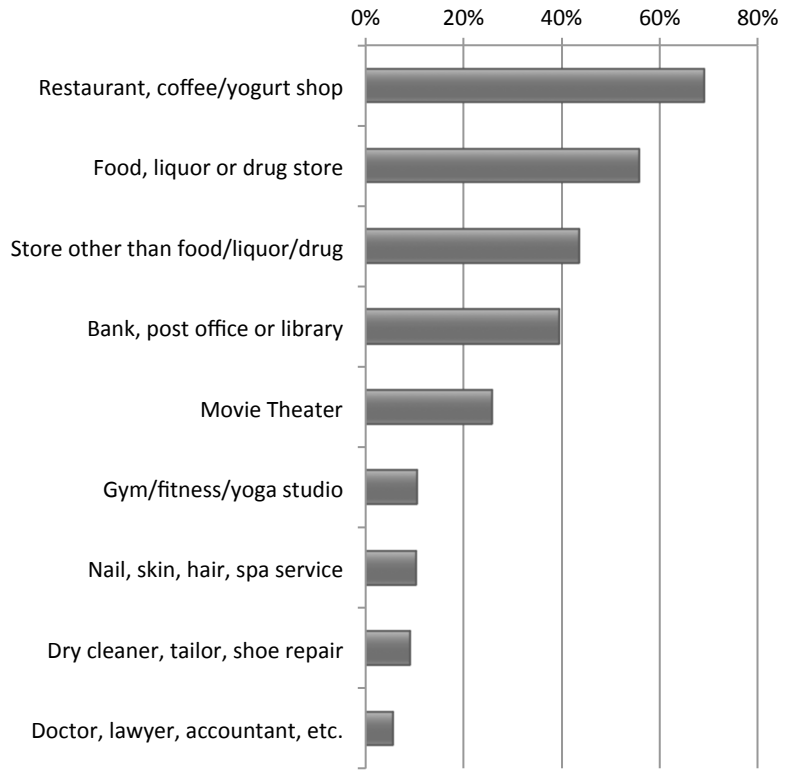


3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.1 Why do Customers come to Coolidge Corner?

- Customers come to Coolidge Corner for a variety of reasons -- eating and drinking top the list.

Businesses Patronized During Last Visit



- **Eating & Drinking** - Food service is a major draw and a frequent destination for Coolidge Corner customers. Almost 70% of survey respondents went to a restaurant, coffee or yogurt shop during their last visit.
- **Convenience Goods Shopping** - Coolidge Corner is also a destination for everyday needs such as groceries, liquor and drugstore items. More than one-half of the customers shopped for convenience goods during their most recent visit.
- **Comparison & Specialty Goods Shopping** – Customers come to Coolidge Corner for specialty and comparison goods such as clothing, accessories, furnishings and more. During their last visit, 43% of customers went to a comparison goods or specialty store (i.e., a retail store other than food, liquor or drug store).
- **Entertainment & Recreation** – Many customers look to Coolidge Corner for entertainment and recreation**.** The Coolidge Corner Movie Theater is a large draw; one-quarter of survey respondents cited the theater as one of the reasons for their recent visit. In addition, 10% of customers said they went to a fitness center.
- **Institutions** – The post office, banks and library attract significant customer traffic. Almost 40% of customers went to one of these institutions when last visiting the business district.
- **Services** – About 15% of the customers went to a personal service provider such as hair salon or dry cleaner and 5% went to a professional service provider such as doctor or lawyer.

3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.1 Why do Customers come to Coolidge Corner? (cont'd)

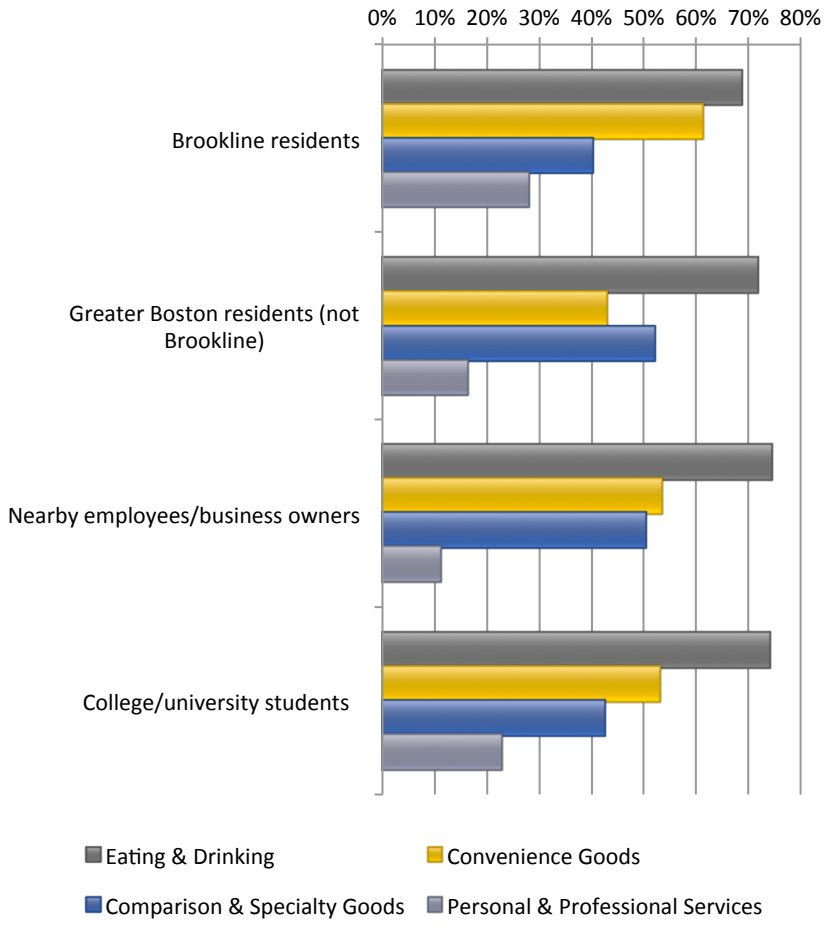
Eating & Drinking by Segment

- **All segments** -- Among all customer segments, eating and drinking is the most common consumer behavior while in Coolidge Corner. Close to 70% of four primary segments said they engaged in this activity during their most recent visit.

Shopping by Segment

- **Brookline residents** comprise the largest market segment and they come to the district for all types of retail and services. As might be expected given their proximity, compared to non-Brookline residents, a higher percentage of this segment comes to the district for convenience goods (i.e., food, liquor, drugstore items) and personal services in addition to comparison and specialty shopping.
- When **Greater Boston (non-Brookline) residents** come to Coolidge Corner, they are more likely to come for comparison and specialty shopping -- about one-half said they engaged in comparison/specialty goods shopping during their last visit. However, this segment also patronizes convenience stores – as evidenced by the full 40% that shopped for convenience shopping during their visit.
- The **employee segment** (62% of whom are also Brookline residents) indicated they engage in convenience and comparison/specialty shopping at about the same rate. The **college student segment** (50% of whom are also Brookline residents) indicated they were somewhat more likely to shop for convenience goods than comparison/specialty goods.

Purpose of Visit by Segment



3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.2 Crossover Shopping

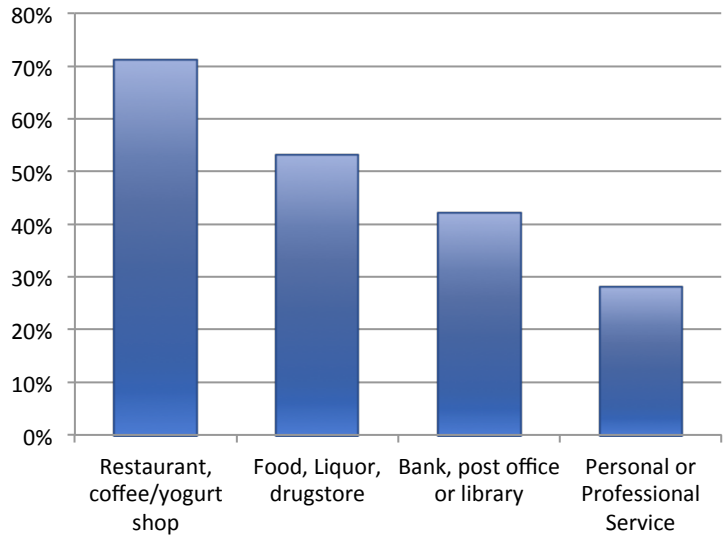
- The synergy between businesses is an important aspect of any commercial district. Customers are often drawn to an area where they can accomplish several things in the same shopping trip. Coolidge Corner customers make multiple stops during their shopping trips. On average, customers visited establishments in 2.7 business categories during their last trip*. The average among Brookline residents was slightly higher (at 2.8) while the average among the Greater Boston (non-Brookline) residents was somewhat lower (at 2.4). The average among the college student market segment was also somewhat lower (at 2.4).

- It seems that no matter what else customers are doing in Coolidge Corner, there is better than a 50-50 chance they might also visit some type of food service establishment. There is a particularly strong connection between dining and entertainment. Approximately 80% of movie theater customers said they also visited a restaurant, coffee or yogurt shop.

- Customers appear to frequently add convenience shopping to their routine errands, personal care and fitness regimens. Close to two-thirds of fitness center, salon and bank/post office/ library customers indicated that they also went to a food, liquor or drugstore during their most recent visit.

- Comparison and specialty goods shopping is often combined with convenience goods shopping. Approximately one-half of the customers visiting comparison/specialty goods stores also visited convenience goods retailers.

What else do Comparison/Specialty Goods customers do during shopping trip?

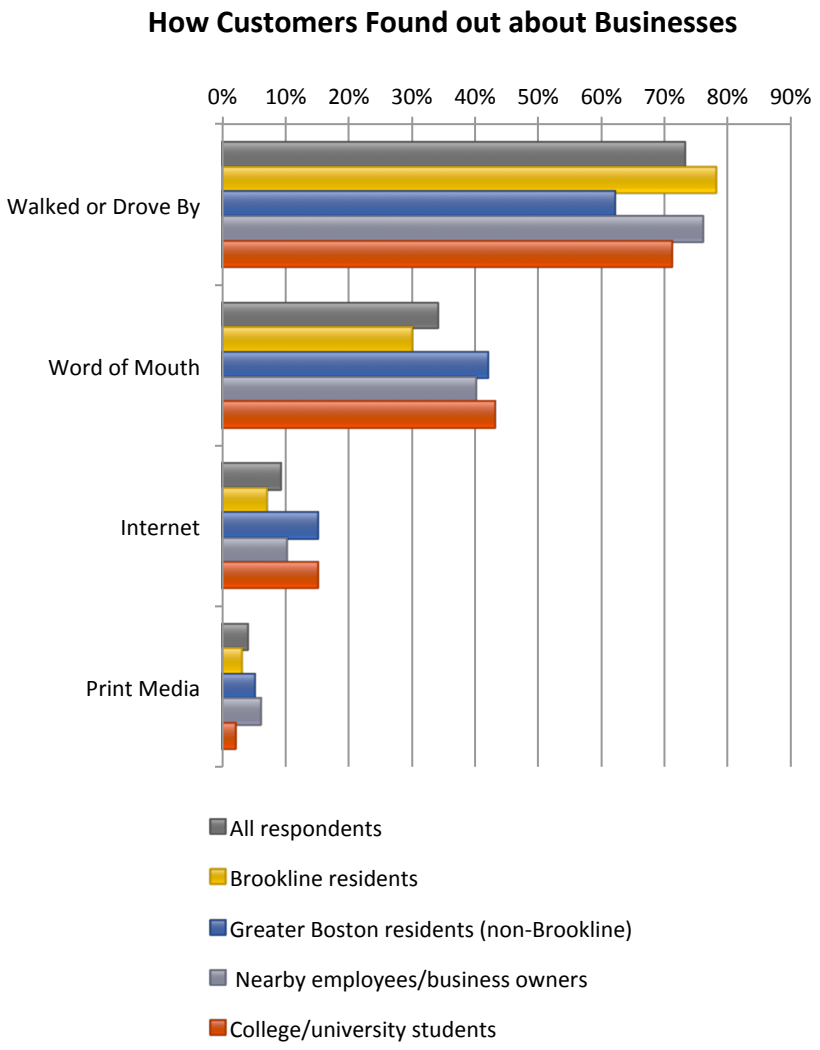


**Note: This compares favorably with the national average for crossover shopping at shopping malls. According to the International Council of Shopping Centers, customers enter an average of 2.9 stores per visit. The survey results indicate that Coolidge Corner customers visit establishments in 2.7 categories which could denote more than 2.7 establishments.*

3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.3 Business Discovery

- It appears that most customers become aware of businesses in Coolidge Corner by walking or driving by. This was the overwhelming response (73%) when customers were asked how they found out about the businesses they visited. This underlines the importance of attractive storefronts and signage that send a clear message.
- 34% of respondents said they found out about businesses through word of mouth, 9% cited the Internet and only 4% pointed to print media as the source.
- A somewhat higher percentage (around 15%) of the Greater Boston (non Brookline) resident segment and the college student segment indicated they had discovered businesses through the Internet. Word of mouth was also cited more frequently among these segments (42 - 43%).
- The percentage of customers discovering businesses by driving or walking by was lower among the Greater Boston residents but still quite high at 62%.



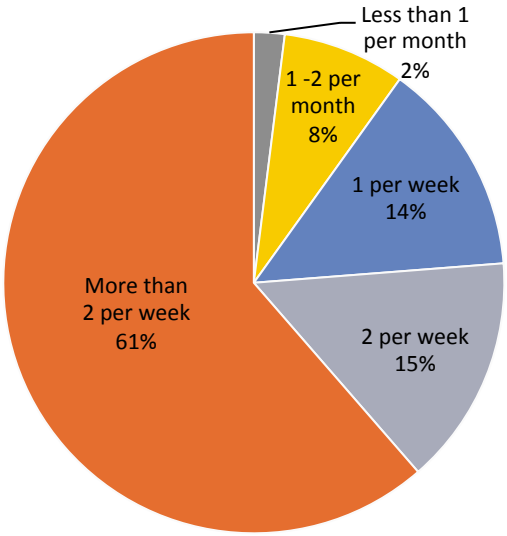
3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.4 Visit Frequency

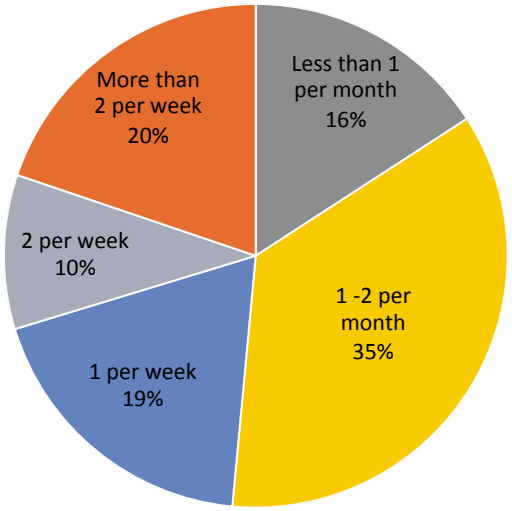
- **Brookline Resident Customer Segment –** Brookline customers visit Coolidge Corner very frequently. Three-quarters of the Brookline customers visit the district at least twice per week or more. Over 60% visit more than twice per week.

- **Greater Boston (non-Brookline) Customer Segment** – The Greater Boston customers visit less frequently than the Brookline residents but still quite regularly. One-half of the Greater Boston customers visit the district once per week or more. 20% visit more than twice per week.

Brookline Customers: Visit Frequency



Greater Boston (non Brookline) Customers: Visit Frequency



3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

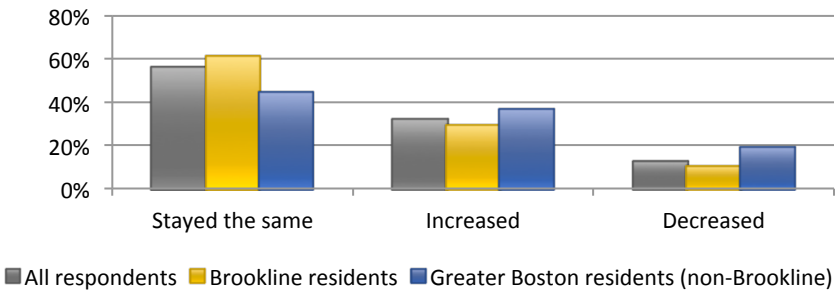
3.5 Change in Visit Frequency

- Overall, the vast majority of customers report the frequency of their visits has either stayed the same or increased over the last few years. More than one-half (56%) indicated no change. A full **32% said the frequency of their visits has increased**.

- Not all respondents gave an explanation about why they are coming to Coolidge Corner more often, but the most common reasons cited were: 1.) moving closer, 2.) seeing more movies or becoming a member of the movie theater and 3.) going regularly to a fitness center (gym, yoga studio).

Reasons Why Visits Have Increased	Total	Brookline Residents	Greater Boston (non-Brookline)
Moved Closer	102	79	23
Movie theater/became member	21	10	11
Going to fitness center there	20	16	4
Have more time, retired	18	13	5
Like to walk there, walk with baby	17	15	2
Now work closer	16	7	9
Family/friends in the area	15	7	8
More dining options (Ottos)	15	13	2
New offerings, became aware of shops	14	9	5
Trader Joes	11	8	3
Booksmith/Events	8	3	5
Doctor appointments	8	3	5
Like the environs/feeling	7	4	3
Want to buy local	6	6	0
Like to bike there	5	3	2

Has the frequency of customer visits changed?



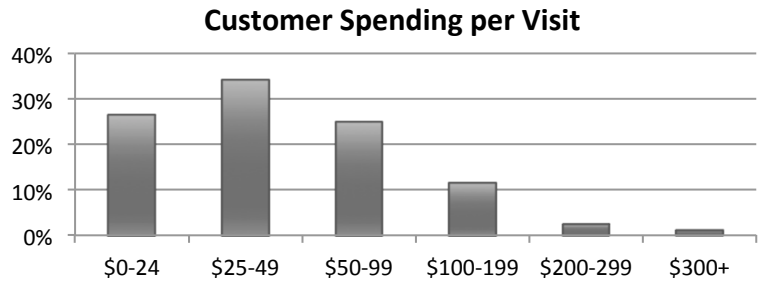
- **12% of customers said the frequency of their visits has decreased**. The most common reasons cited were: 1). moved further away, 2.) parking (including availability, cost and tickets), and 3.) dissatisfaction with the mix of businesses (including less variety, fewer unique shops & restaurants; too many chains, banks & cell phone stores.

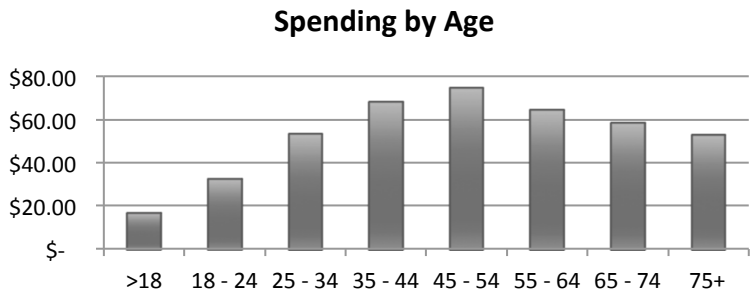
Reasons Why Visits Have Decreased	Total	Brookline Residents	Greater Boston (non Brookline)
Moved further away	45	10	35
Parking (availability, cost, parking tickets)	40	28	12
Mix of businesses (less variety, fewer unique shops & restaurants, too many chains, banks & cell phone stores)	24	22	2
Traffic congestion	7	6	1
Have less time, more kids	7	6	1
Changed job	6	3	3
Lack of green space, seating areas, pedestrian amenities	3	3	
Friend/relative moved	4		4

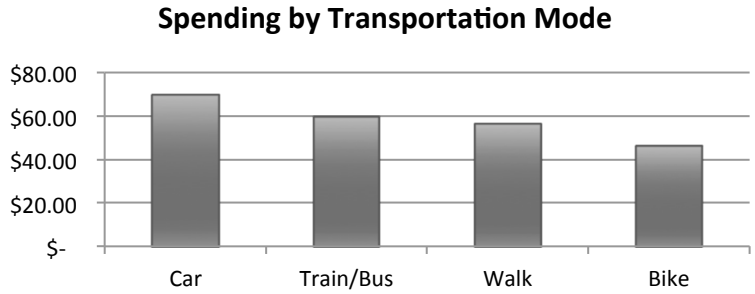
3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.6 Spending Habits

- The median expenditure reported by customers per visit was $25-49. The estimated average is $60.*
- Brookline residents reported spending close to 15% more than Greater Boston (non Brookline) customers during their visit. Visitors from outside of Greater Boston reported spending the most per visit, however this segment comprises only a very small percentage of the customer base (estimated around 2%).
- Employees spent close to the overall average per visit for Coolidge Corner customers while college students spent 28% less than the average. Female customers reported spending just slightly more (4%) per trip than their male counterparts.
- Spending per trip varied significantly by age. Customers in their mid forties to mid fifties reported spending the most per visit.
- Consumers arriving by car spent more per trip than those using other modes of transportation. It is possible that customers might prefer a car when carrying larger amounts of merchandise and/or going out for more extensive dining and entertainment.







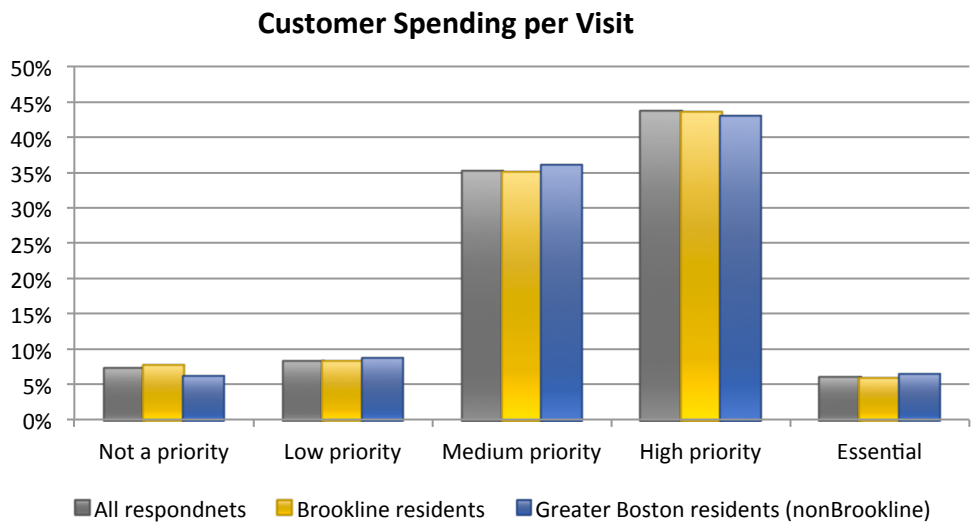
Market Segments	Estimated Avg. per Visit
Visitor from Outside Greater Boston	$123
Brookline Resident	$62
Greater Boston (non-Brookline) Resident	$54
Nearby Employee/Business Owner	$61
College Student	$43
Female	$61
Male	$59

*(*Note: Customers visited businesses where they might not have made a per visit expenditure such as a bank, fitness center or medical office, however they might be making annual or other types of expenditures not captured here.)*

3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.7 Preference for Independent/Locally Owned Businesses

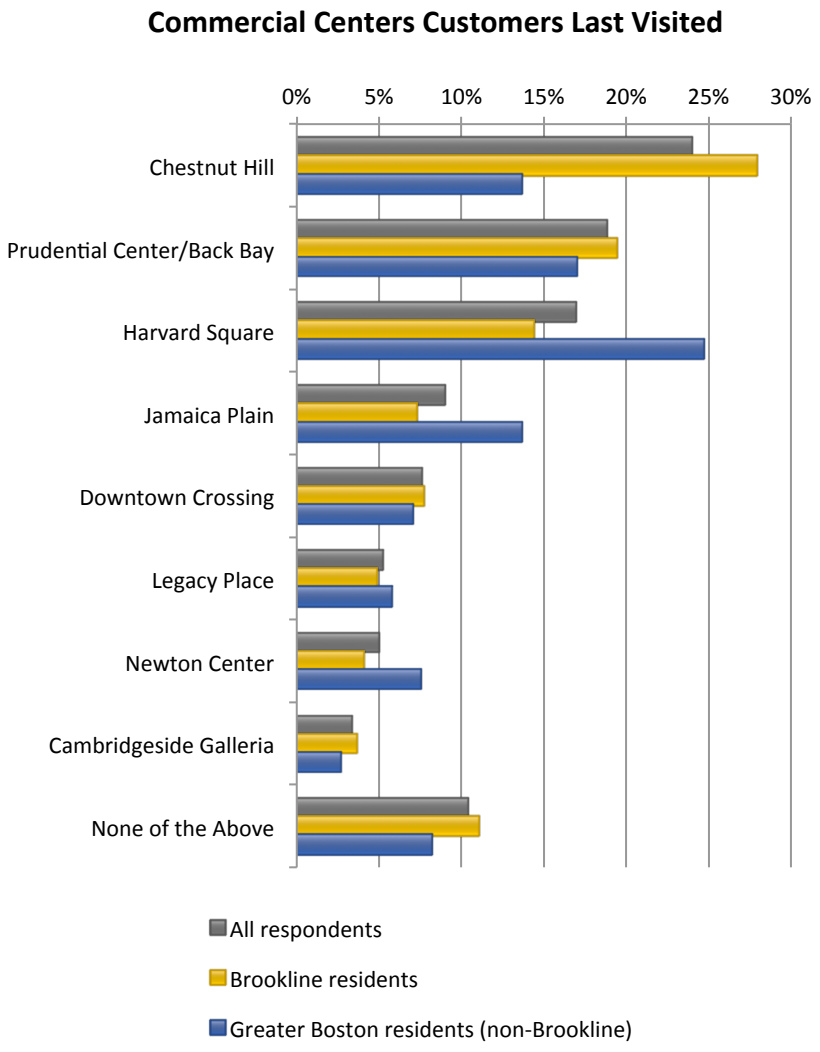
- Coolidge Corner customer buying decisions appear to be influenced by whether a business is independent/locally owned. Close to one-half of the customers indicated that purchasing from an independent/locally owned business is a "high priority" or "essential". Around one-third rated this as a "medium priority" and 15% rated this as a "low priority" or "not a priority".
- The degree of influence on buying decision is very consistent among both Brookline and Non-Brookline customer segments.



3. Consumer Patterns & Preferences

3.8 Other Commercial Centers Patronized

- The top three commercial areas (other than Coolidge Corner) most frequently visited by customers include: 1.) Chestnut Hill, 2.) Prudential Center and 3.) Harvard Square.
- Chestnut Hill is most popular among Brookline residents and Harvard Square is most popular among Greater Boston (non Brookline) residents.



4. Public Spaces/Seating Areas

4.1 Satisfaction with Public Spaces/Seating

- Slightly under one-half of the customers indicated satisfaction with public spaces/seating areas in Coolidge Corner. Around 10% said they were happy with the public areas and use them often. Just under 40% said the public spaces/seating areas were adequate and they don't use them often.
- Slightly more than one-half of the customers indicated that they were either unsatisfied or unaware of the public spaces/seating areas. 26% rated them as uninviting or uncomfortable and said they would use them if improved. 26% indicated they never noticed any public seating areas.
- Brookline residents appear to be somewhat more aware of the public spaces/seating areas and also more dissatisfied than the Greater Boston (non-Brookline) residents.

Perceptions of Public Spaces/ Seating Areas	All	Brookline Residents	Greater Boston (non Brookline)	Visitor from Outside Greater Boston
Happy with them; I use fairly often.	9%	8%	13%	19%
Adequate to meet my needs; I don't use often.	39%	39%	37%	31%
Not inviting/comfortable; I would use if improved.	26%	29%	18%	13%
What public seating areas? I never noticed any.	26%	24%	33%	37%

4.2 Current Usage of Public Seating Areas

- Approximately 13% of customers reported using public seating during their last visit to Coolidge Corner.
- Usage did not vary much among market segments.

Segment	% Used Public Seating During Visit
All Respondents	13%
Brookline Residents	12%
Greater Boston (non-Brookline)	15%
Visitor from Outside Greater Boston	17%
Employees	15%
College Students	16%

5. Customer Satisfaction

5.1 Customer Ratings of Various Aspects

- The majority of customers rated all aspects of Coolidge Corner as average or above. However, customers appear to be more satisfied with some aspects than others and Brookline customers are less satisfied than Greater Boston (non-Brookline) customers.
- More than 50% of Brookline and Greater Boston customers rated the following aspects as "above average" or "very good".
  - ☑ Ease of finding your way around
  - ☑ Family-friendly environment
  - ☑ Customer service, business friendliness
  - ☑ Attractiveness
  - ☑ Selection of restaurants
  - ☑ Place for strolling, socializing, people-watching
- In addition, more than 50% of Greater Boston residents rated the following aspects as "above average" or "very good":
  - ☑ Selection of retail stores
  - ☑ Entertainment options
- More than 20% of customers rated the following aspects as "poor" or "below average". Ability to find parking tops the list, securing this low rating from 41% of Brookline customers and 34% of Greater Boston customers.
  - ☑ Ability to find parking
  - ☑ Parking meter time limits, ability to complete activities
- In addition, 20% or more of Brookline residents rated the following aspects as "poor" or "below average"
  - ☑ Information about businesses & what they offer
  - ☑ Place for strolling, socializing, people-watching
  - ☑ Events & activities (festivals, arts, culture)

	Above Average or Very Good		Average		Poor or Below Average	
	BR	GB	BR	GB	BR	GB
Ease of finding your way around	75%	67%	22%	31%	2%	2%
Family-friendly environment	70%	65%	27%	32%	3%	3%
Customer service, business friendliness	65%	67%	32%	31%	3%	2%
Attractiveness	63%	71%	29%	26%	9%	3%
Selection of restaurants	60%	65%	30%	31%	10%	5%
Place for strolling, socializing, people-watching	52%	59%	27%	28%	22%	13%
Selection of retail stores	47%	61%	37%	32%	15%	7%
Entertainment options	42%	54%	40%	35%	18%	11%
Hours that businesses are open	36%	35%	52%	55%	12%	10%
Events & activities (festivals, arts, culture)	35%	42%	45%	46%	20%	12%
Information about businesses & what they offer	23%	27%	55%	55%	22%	18%
Parking meter time limits, ability to complete activities	21%	21%	50%	49%	29%	29%
Ability to find parking	19%	27%	40%	39%	41%	34%

BR = Brookline residents, GB = Greater Boston residents (non-Brookline)

5. Customer Satisfaction

5.2 Customer Ratings by Market Segment

- The average ratings assigned to the aspects of Coolidge Corner were fairly consistent among the various customer segments. The difference in average ratings between Brookline residents and Greater Boston (no- Brookline) residents was less than 10% in all categories.
- A few segments expressed a somewhat higher satisfaction level in selected areas.
- Visitors, college students and new Brookline residents (less than 1 yr.) rated the ability to find parking 13 - 16% higher than survey respondents overall.
- Visitors and college students rated Coolidge Corner as a place for strolling, socializing and people-watching 11 - 17% higher than respondents overall.
- Visitors also provided ratings that were 11 - 15% higher in the following categories:
  - ☑ Attractiveness
  - ☑ Selection of restaurants
  - ☑ Events & activities (festivals, arts, culture)
  - ☑ Information about businesses & what they offer

	All	BR	GB	V	NB	Emp	CS
Ease of finding your way around	4.02	4.06	3.93	4.33	4.04	3.87	4.12
Family-friendly environment	3.88	3.9	3.84	4.12	4.09	3.79	4.05
Customer service, business friendliness	3.83	3.82	3.87	4.17	3.95	3.79	4.05
Attractiveness	3.78	3.71	3.95	4.33	4.05	3.76	4.05
Selection of restaurants	3.7	3.66	3.79	4.22	3.69	3.67	3.72
Place for strolling, socializing, people-watching	3.52	3.47	3.64	4.11	3.67	3.36	3.92
Selection of retail stores	3.49	3.41	3.68	3.72	3.49	3.46	3.31
Entertainment options	3.38	3.31	3.56	3.59	3.35	3.35	3.53
Hours that businesses are open	3.32	3.31	3.33	3.65	3.35	3.34	3.34
Events & activities (festivals, arts, culture)	3.25	3.09	3.39	3.67	3.18	3.21	3.19
Information about businesses & what they offer	3.05	3.02	3.13	3.38	3.15	3	3.1
Parking meter time limits, ability to complete activities	2.87	2.87	2.88	2.89	3.04	2.74	3.01
Ability to find parking	2.74	2.68	2.89	3.11	3.18	2.66	3.1
Average Total Rating	**3.45**	**3.41**	**3.53**	**3.79**	**3.56**	**3.38**	**3.58**

BR = Brookline residents, GB = Greater Boston residents (non-Brookline), V = Visitors (from outside Greater Boston, NB = New Brookline residents (less than 1 yr.), Emp = Employees/Owners of nearby businesses, CS = college students

6. Desired Improvements and New Businesses

6.1 Desired Improvements

- We received almost 1,600 suggestions from customers about improvements they would like to see in Coolidge Corner. The chart on the right shows the major areas that customer comments fell under and the approximate frequency. The top five desired improvements are described below.

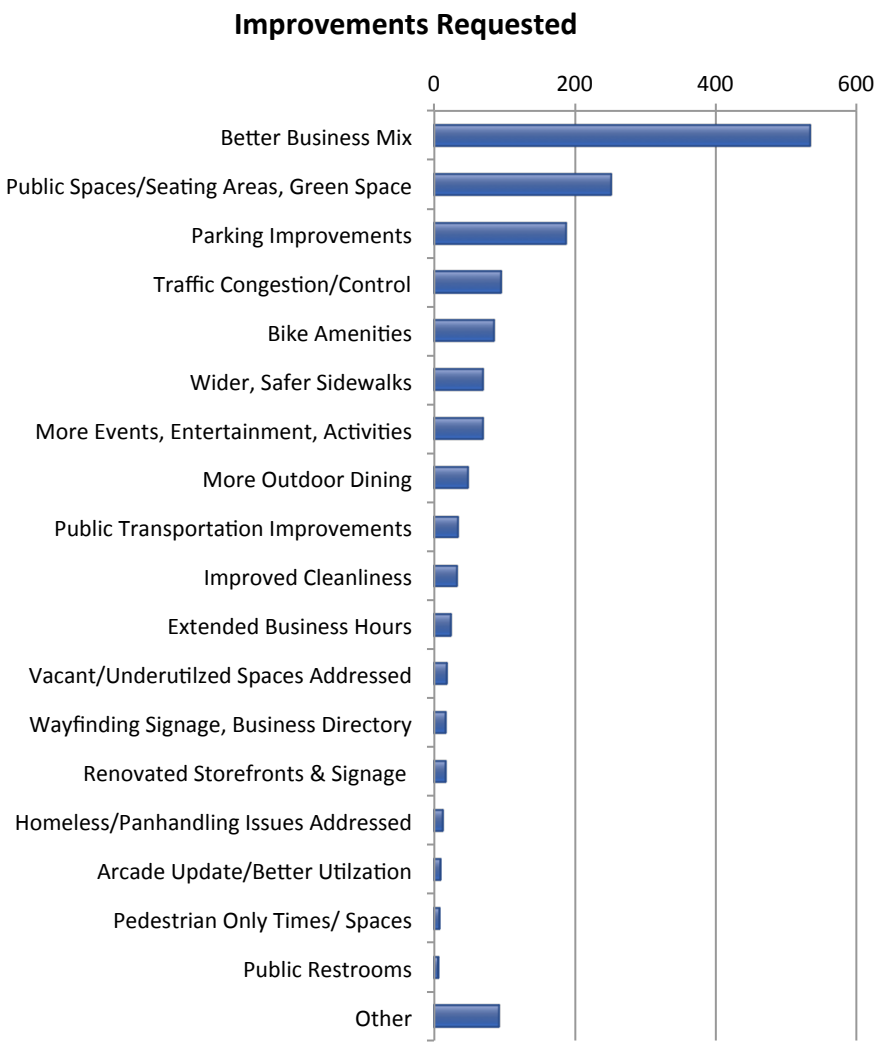
- Business Mix – Major themes:
  - ☑ No more banks, cell phone stores, yogurt shops
  - ☑ More local, independent, unique businesses and less chains
  - ☑ Bigger variety of restaurants

- Public Spaces, Seating Areas, Green Space – Major themes:
  - ☑ Desire for more and better public seating areas
  - ☑ Need for social gathering spaces
  - ☑ Desire for more greenery, trees, flowers

- Parking – Major themes:
  - ☑ Need for more and better parking
  - ☑ Dissatisfaction with meter system, aggressive enforcement
  - ☑ Desire for longer term parking options, overnight parking

- Traffic Congestion/Control – Major themes:
  - ☑ Need for better and safer pedestrian crossings
  - ☑ Better traffic control

- Bike Amenities – Major themes:
  - ☑ More bike parking corrals, racks, etc.
  - ☑ More Hubway stations



6. Desired Improvements and New Businesses

6.2 Desired New Businesses

- We received over 1,300 suggestions for new businesses the respondents would like to see in Coolidge Corner. The chart on the right shows the major categories that customer suggestions fell under and the approximate frequency. The top five desired businesses are described below.

- Eating & Drinking – Major themes:
  - ☑ Healthy food options, organic, vegetarian, vegan, salad restaurant, juice bar (examples: Life Alive, Sweet Greens, Jamba Juice)
  - ☑ Moderate priced dining, burgers, diner, sandwiches, another breakfast place
  - ☑ More bars, wine bar
  - ☑ Independent coffee shop
  - ☑ More ethnic variety, more restaurants, gastropubs

- Clothing & Accessories – Major themes:
  - ☑ Women's, men's & children's clothing

- Food & Beverage Stores – Major themes:
  - ☑ Bakery, specialty/gourmet foods
  - ☑ Green grocer/produce, healthy food
  - ☑ Prepared foods/take-home meals

- Sporting Goods, Hobby, Books – Major themes:
  - ☑ Bike shop, sporting goods
  - ☑ Craft store, yarn shop
  - ☑ Music store

- Arts, Entertainment & Recreation – Major themes:
  - ☑ Live music & theater venues
  - ☑ Bowling alley
  - ☑ Children's play space, baby gym

- In addition to specific business suggestions, many responses (40+) were received expressing each of the two general sentiments below:
  - ☑ More independent, local shops (type not specified)
  - ☑ More retail, no more banks or phone store

Conclusion

The Coolidge Corner business district is very important to Brookline residents and all of its customers, as evidenced by the overwhelming response to the survey (1,740 completed surveys).

Customers come often and the vast majority continue to come at least as often, if not more, than they have in the past. They come from Brookline as well as surrounding communities to eat, drink, shop, see a movie, go to a fitness center and more -- typically visiting several businesses per shopping trip. The district also attracts a very small number of visitors from outside of Greater Boston.

For the most part, customers are quite satisfied and rate many aspects of Coolidge Corner highly. They find it an attractive, family-friendly place, easy to get around; a nice spot for socializing and people-watching, with a good selection of restaurants and good customer service.

There is one thing, in particular, that customers would like to stay the same. Customers expressed a strong affinity for unique, independent, locally owned businesses and they want to make sure Coolidge Corner remains a home for these types of enterprises.

There is also opportunity for improvement. The survey results point to several areas that might enhance the customer experience and encourage users to come more often, stay longer and spend more.

- Parking is an issue for a significant portion of customers, both being able to find parking and parking meter time limits; mitigating these issues might encourage customer frequency.
- Improving public seating areas and public spaces could create a more welcoming environment, more of a "living room" for the community that might lengthen customer visits.
- Better, more readily available information about the businesses in Coolidge Corner and what they offer could make business discovery easier and increase customer volume.
- More events and activities, both inside and outside of the businesses, could create more of an experiential shopping environment, distinct from online shopping, that might help bond customers to the district, expand business awareness and increase frequency of shopping trips.
- An even wider variety of restaurants, more entertainment, and more clothing, food, sporting goods, and hobby stores might encourage more patronage – many customers said they would like to see these additional businesses in Coolidge Corner.
- Traffic control improvements and additional bike amenities might also increase customer satisfaction.

The large amount of customer feedback provided by this survey is helpful to confirm that people continue to come to Coolidge Corner, most with the same or increased frequency, and they clearly like what the area has to offer. The consumer characteristics and behavior data may be of assistance to existing businesses as well as prospective businesses considering a Coolidge Corner location. The survey results also indicate several possible opportunities for enhancing the customer experience; these areas should be further explored and potential alternatives should be formulated and tested.

Appendix: Survey Questions

1. Please select all of the following characteristics that apply to you.
Brookline resident; Greater Boston resident (not Brookline); Brookline resident (less than 1 year); Visitor from outside Greater Boston; Work/own business nearby; College/university undergrad or grad student

2. What is your home zip code? (if college student, your local zip code)

3. How did you get to Coolidge Corner today or whenever you last visited? Select one.
Walk; Bike; Train; Bus; Car; Taxi

4. Please select all of the places you went during your last visit to Coolidge Corner (either today or whenever you last visited).
Restaurant, coffee/yogurt shop; Movie theater; Food liquor or drugstore; Store other than food/liquor/drug; Bank, post office or library; Doctor, lawyer, accountant, etc.; Gym/fitness/yoga studio; Nail, skin, hair, spa service; Dry cleaner, tailor, shoe repair; Special event or activity; Public bench/public seating area; None of the above

5. How did you first find out about the businesses you went to? Select all that apply.
Word-of-mouth; Walked or drove by; Print media; Internet; N/A

6. How much do you plan to spend in Coolidge Corner today or did you spend last visit?
$0-$24; $25-$49; $50-$99; $100-$199; $200 $299 $300+; N/A

7. About how many visits have you made to Coolidge Corner in the past 6 months?
Less than one per month; 1 -2 per month; 1 per week; 2 per week; More than 2 per week

8. In the last few years, has the frequency of your visits to Coolidge Corner changed?
No, stayed the same; Yes, increased; Yes, decreased; Does not apply
If the frequency of your visit has changed, why do you think that might be?

9. How do you feel about public spaces/seating areas in Coolidge Corner?
Happy with them, I use fairly often; Adequate to meet my needs, I don't use often; Not inviting/comfortable, I would use if improved; What public spaces? I never noticed any

10. Please rate the following aspects of Coolidge corner. If don't know, leave blank.
Rating scale: Poor, Below Average, Average, Above Average, Very Good
Aspects: Selection of retail stores; Selection of restaurants; Events and activities (festivals, arts, culture); Entertainment options; Information about the businesses and what they offer; Ease of finding your way around; Attractiveness; Ability to find parking; Parking meter time limits, ability to complete activities; Hours that businesses are open; Customer service, friendliness of businesses; Prices; Family-friendly environment; Place for strolling, socializing, people watching

11. Are there any additional businesses you would like to have in Coolidge Corner?

12. Any other changes you would like to see?

13. Does whether a business is independent/locally owned influence your buying decision?
Not a priority; Low priority; Medium priority; High priority; Essential

14. Which of the following commercial centers did you last visit? Select one.
Cambridgeside Galleria; Chestnut Hill; Downtown Crossing; Jamaica Plain; Harvard Square; Legacy Place; Newton Center; Prudential Center/Back Bay; None of the above

15. How old are you?
Less than 18; 18 to 24; 25 to 34; 35 to 44; 45 to 54; 55 to 64; 65 to 74; 75+

16. Do you have children under 18 living in the household? Yes; No

17. Are you…? Female; Male

18. Own or rent your home? Own; Rent