

Morris Township  
Madison Avenue Development/  
Redevelopment Study

Conducted by Princeton Strategic Communications

Presented October 4, 2021

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## Executive Summary

The Madison Avenue corridor in Morris Township is undergoing change. Some properties have changed owners, some are renovating, and others are seeking approvals to renovate. The township wants to be forward thinking in deciding how the corridor may be redeveloped to best serve the interests of businesses and residents.

To help accomplish this effort, the township engaged Princeton Strategic Communications to assess the opinions of commercial property owners about redevelopment on the corridor. The firm designed a 23-item interview questionnaire and a 22-item online survey. They questionnaires were very similar and contained several common questions.

The township's Economic Development Advisory Committee approved the questionnaires. They also provided PSC with target lists of interview and survey candidates.

On August 12, Mayor Jeffrey Grazel sent an email to all interview and survey candidates before research began. The letter explained the purpose behind the research and introduced Rick Alcantara and Princeton Strategic Communications to the recipients.

PSC began its research days after the mayor sent his letter. They conducted the interviews via Zoom and the survey via SurveyMonkey. They initially called seven owners to participate in the interviews and emailed 10 owners to participate in the online survey.

PSC later made two rounds of follow-up calls and sent one round of follow-up emails to the interview candidates. They also sent two rounds of email reminders to survey candidates.

By September 13, the researchers interviewed two property owners and received just two survey responses. On September 20, the mayor's office sent a follow-up request to property owners requesting additional participation in the surveys. PSC subsequently sent the online survey to interview candidates who had not participated in the Zoom discussions.

The second outreach generated two additional survey responses.

Overall, the interviews and surveys generated some valuable insights. However, the research's small sample sizes and limited responses make it difficult to extrapolate the results to the broader group of Madison Avenue property owners.

### Key Findings:

1. The most important factors cited in deciding to purchase a property in Morris Township include location, residential housing, access to public transit, and medical facilities.
2. Owners cited Madison Avenue's proximity to the train as a major asset.
3. Two out of five owners indicated that neighboring businesses have a very positive effect on their property. Three owners felt the impact was neutral.

4. Owners would like to see more mixed-used residential, walkways, retail, bars and restaurants.
5. Four of six owners rated the benefits their properties receive by being located on Madison Avenue as “very good.” Two said it was “good.”
6. Owners expressed a disparity of opinions when asked if the township’s interests aligned with theirs. Two said “yes,” one said “no,” and one reported not knowing the township’s goals.
7. Interview candidates cited no drawbacks to having their properties located on Madison Avenue. However, two survey respondents cited the lack of a centralized business district, two cited the age and location of buildings, one cited cost and one cited access to food and shopping as drawbacks.
8. For properties to realize their greatest value, owners want the township to create a more walkable corridor, approve more applications, such as Restoration Hardware, and lower taxes.
9. Similarly, property owners would like the township to approve more mixed-use options, conduct outreach to businesses, fix curbs and sidewalks, and consider redevelopment applications.
10. Owners cited various factors that would affect their decision to stay, redevelop or leave Madison Avenue, including construction costs, proximity to hospitals and the train, need for conveniences.
11. Owners suggested various improvements they’d like to see on the Madison Avenue corridor: walkway to the train, creation of a “metroburbs” to increase pedestrian traffic, and the addition of lighting and streetscapes.
12. When asked about the condition of their properties, two owners said their properties are working well, three said they need updating and one said it needs redevelopment.
13. Owners recommended several zoning changes that could improve Madison Avenue, including a mixed-use overlay, more commercial zoning, high-density residential.
14. COVID-19 impacted owners in various ways: led to a decrease in traffic, caused restaurants to close, spurred companies to initiate work-from-home options.
15. None of the owners said that COVID-19 affected their real estate strategy.
16. When asked to rate the impact Restoration Hardware’s redevelopment of the Abbey would have on their businesses, one-third of owners said “great benefit,” one-third said “some benefit,” one person said “no benefit” and one was undecided.
17. When asked how Restoration Hardware’s redevelopment would affect their real estate strategy, two survey respondents said, “not at all,” one said “somewhat,” and one was unsure.
18. One interview participant expressed excitement over the introduction of a retail destination on Madison Avenue.

# Madison Avenue Online Redevelopment Survey

## Madison Avenue Redevelopment Survey

### Madison Ave Development/Redevelopment Survey

The Township of Morris Economic Development Advisory Committee seeks the opinion of business owners regarding potential development/redevelopment on the Madison Avenue Corridor. Your input will help the committee build a strategy around the future of the corridor. Your responses will be tabulated by Princeton Strategic Communications and reported to the committee anonymously. **Please complete the survey by 11:59 p.m. on September 24.**

**\* 1. How many years has your business been located on Madison Avenue?**

- Less than one year
- One to three years
- Four to six years
- Seven or more years

**\* 2. How important were the following factors to you in deciding to purchase an investment property or open a business on Madison Avenue?** (Rank each item on a scale of one to five with five being the most important.)

|  | 1                     | 2                     | 3                     | 4                     | 5                     |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Location                                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Cost   | <input type="radio"/> |
| Building layout/space                        | <input type="radio"/> |
| Access to public transit                     | <input type="radio"/> |
| Township resources (police, fire, emergency) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Proximity to Morristown                      | <input type="radio"/> |
| Availability to customers                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Availability to hotels                       | <input type="radio"/> |
| Residential housing                          | <input type="radio"/> |
| Education                                    | <input type="radio"/> |
| Parks and recreation facilities              | <input type="radio"/> |
| Medical facilities                           | <input type="radio"/> |

Other (please specify)

**\* 3. How would you rate the impact other Madison Avenue businesses have upon your operations?**

- Very positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Very negative
- Don't know

**\* 4. What other types of business would you like to see on Madison Avenue?**



**\* 5. How would you rate the benefits your business/property receives by being located on Madison Avenue?**

- Very good
- Good
- Neutral
- Poor
- Very poor
- Don't Know

**\* 6. Do you believe that the township's interests are aligned with your interests?**

- Yes
- No
- If you answer 'no,' please explain why.



\* 7. **What drawbacks, if any, are there to being located on Madison Avenue?** (Check all that apply.)

- Cost
- Access to food and shopping
- Traffic
- Age and location of buildings
- Lack of centralized business district
- Surrounding business/commercial entitites
- Other (please specify)

[Redacted]

8. **For your business/property to realize its greatest financial value, what should the township keep doing?**

[Redacted]

9. **For your business/property to realize its greatest financial value what should the township start doing?**

[Redacted]

10. **What factors will affect your decision to stay, redevelop or leave Madison Avenue? Why?**

[Redacted]

**11. What infrastructure improvements would you like to see on Madison Avenue?**

- Sidewalks/walkways
- Streetscapes (Campus or downtown features)
- Lighting
- Pedestrian Areas
- None
- Don't Know

**\* 12. How would you rate the condition of your property?** (if you respond 'working very well', skip to question 15.)

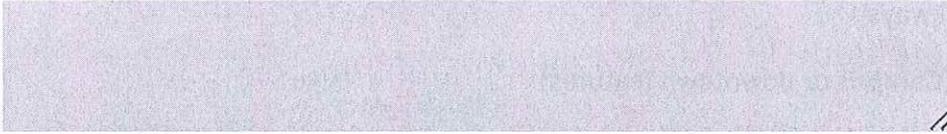
- Working very well
- Needs updating
- Needs redevelopment

**13. If your property needs redevelopment, how many years of useful life remain?**

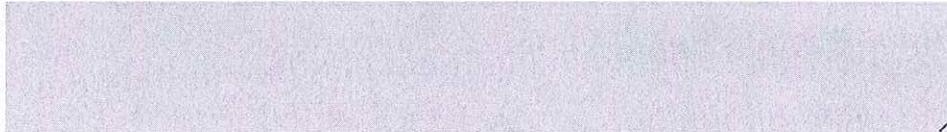
**14. if your property needs redevelopment, how can the township help you?**

**15. What zoning changes could improve Madison Avenue?**

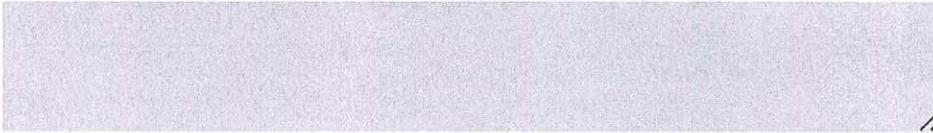
16. **If you have tenants, what could the township do to help you retain them?**



17. **If you have tenants, what might make them consider leaving?**



18. **What needs, requests or concerns do your tenants have around COVID-19?**



\* 19. **In what ways has COVID-19 affected your real estate strategy on Madison Avenue?**



\* 20. **How much benefit will your business/property receive from Restoration Hardware's redevelopment of The Abbey?**

- Great benefit
- Some benefit
- Undecided
- Minimal benefit
- No benefit
- Don't know

\* 21. **How has Restoration Hardware's project affected your real estate strategy?**

- Greatly
- Somewhat
- Unsure
- Minimally
- Not at all
- Don't know

## Madison Avenue Zoom Interview Questionnaire

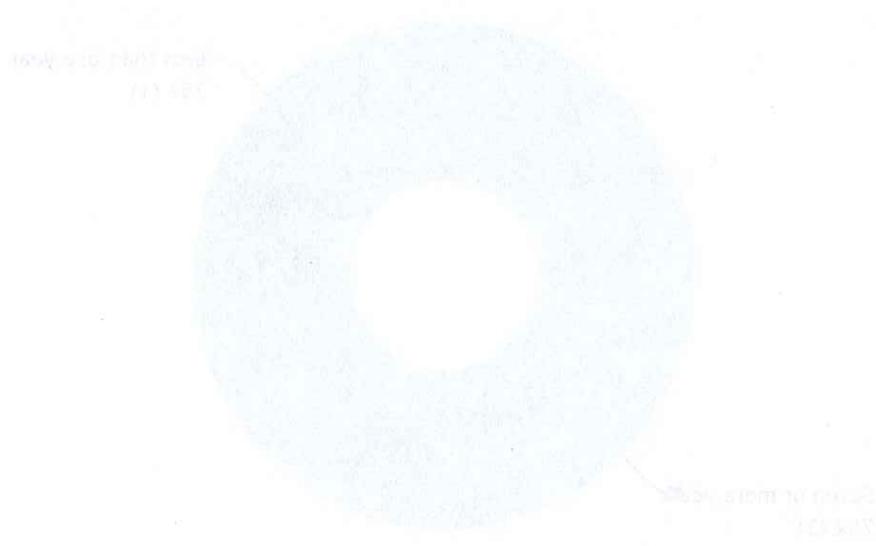
1. What is the location of your property/business?
2. How long has your property or business been located on Madison Avenue?
3. Thinking back to when you purchased your business or property on Madison Avenue, what factors went into your decision-making process?
  - a. Are these factors still important to you?
  - b. If not, what factors are most important to you now?
4. How positive or negative would you rate the impact other Madison Avenue businesses have on your property/business? Very Positive, Positive, Neutral, Negative, Very Negative, or Don't Know
5. What other types of businesses would you like to see on Madison Avenue?
6. How would you rate the benefits your business receives by being located on Madison Ave? very Good, Good, Neutral, Poor, Very Poor or Don't Know?
7. Do you believe the township's interests are aligned with yours? (You answered 'no,' why is that?)
8. Are there any drawbacks to having your property/business on Madison Avenue?
9. For your business or property to realize its greatest financial value, what should the township **keep** doing?
10. For your business or property to realize its greatest financial value, what should the township **start** doing?
11. What factors would make you stay, redevelop or leave Madison Avenue?
12. What infrastructure improvements would you like to see on Madison Avenue?
13. Would you say that your business or property is working very well, needs updating, or needs redevelopment?
14. If your property needs redevelopment, how many years of useful life remain?
15. If your property needs redevelopment, how can the township help you?
16. Can you think of any zoning changes that could improve Madison Avenue?
17. Do you have any tenants?
18. What can the township do to help you retain them?
19. What might make your tenants leave?
20. What needs, requests or concerns do your tenants have around COVID-19?
21. In what ways has COVID-19 affected your real estate strategy on Madison Avenue?

Two questions related to Restoration hardware's redevelopment of The Abbey

22. How much benefit will your business or property receive from the project?
23. Has it affected your real estate strategy? If so, how?

Q1 How many years has your business been located on Madison Avenue?

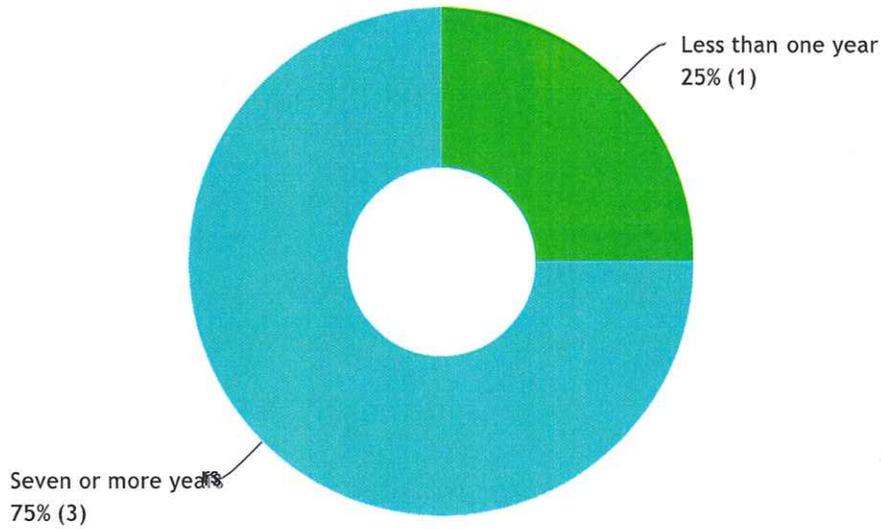
Responses: 10



## Survey Summary Data

# Q1 How many years has your business been located on Madison Avenue?

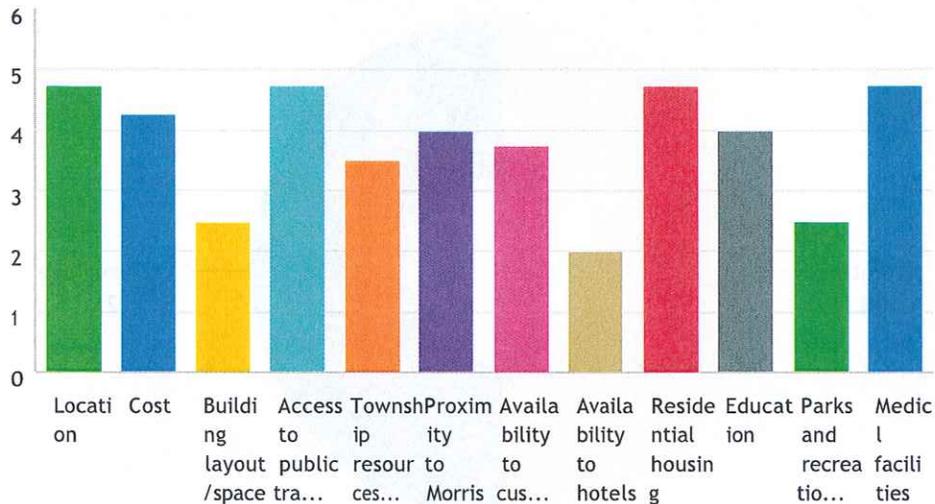
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES      | RESPONSES |   |
|---------------------|-----------|---|
| Less than one year  | 25%       | 1 |
| One to three years  | 0%        | 0 |
| Four to six years   | 0%        | 0 |
| Seven or more years | 75%       | 3 |
| TOTAL               |           | 4 |

## Q2 How important were the following factors to you in deciding to purchase an investment property or open a business on Madison Avenue? (Rank each item on a scale of one to five with five being the most important.)

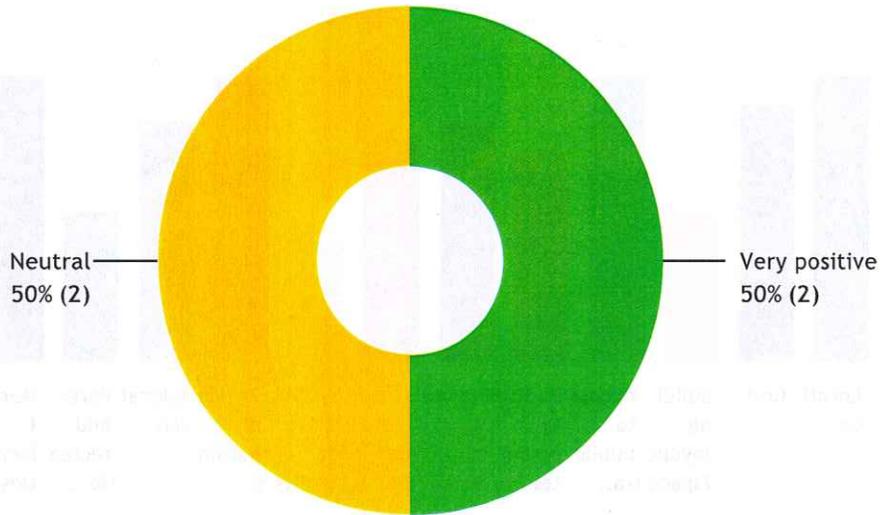
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



|  | 1           | 2           | 3           | 4           | 5           | TOTAL | WEIGHTED AVERAGE |
|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------|------------------|
| Location                                     | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 75.00%<br>3 | 4     | 4.75             |
| Cost   | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 50.00%<br>2 | 4     | 4.25             |
| Building layout/space                        | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 4     | 2.50             |
| Access to public transit                     | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 75.00%<br>3 | 4     | 4.75             |
| Township resources (police, fire, emergency) | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 4     | 3.50             |
| Proximity to Morristown                      | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 50.00%<br>2 | 25.00%<br>1 | 4     | 4.00             |
| Availability to customers                    | 25.00%<br>1 | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 75.00%<br>3 | 4     | 3.75             |
| Availability to hotels                       | 50.00%<br>2 | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 4     | 2.00             |
| Residential housing                          | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 75.00%<br>3 | 4     | 4.75             |
| Education                                    | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 50.00%<br>2 | 4     | 4.00             |
| Parks and recreation facilities              | 25.00%<br>1 | 25.00%<br>1 | 0.00%<br>0  | 50.00%<br>2 | 0.00%<br>0  | 4     | 2.50             |
| Medical facilities                           | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 0.00%<br>0  | 25.00%<br>1 | 75.00%<br>3 | 4     | 4.75             |

### Q3 How would you rate the impact other Madison Avenue businesses have upon your operations?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |
|----------------|-----------|
| Very positive  | 50% 2     |
| Positive       | 0% 0      |
| Neutral        | 50% 2     |
| Negative       | 0% 0      |
| Very negative  | 0% 0      |
| Don't know     | 0% 0      |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>4</b>  |

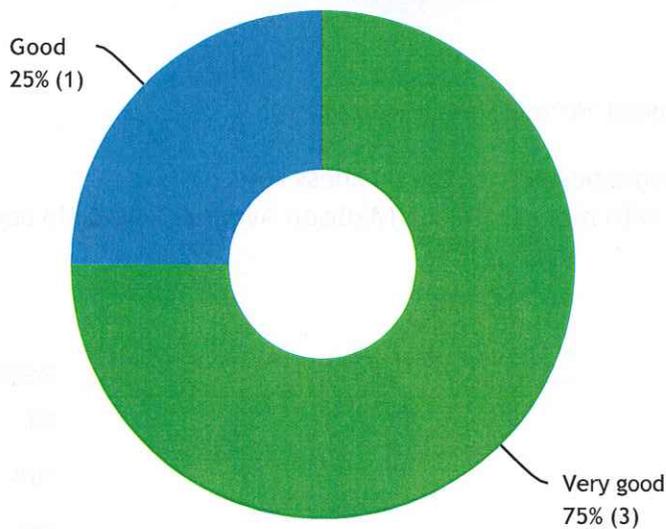
## Q4 What other types of business would you like to see on Madison Avenue?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

- Conveniences: Food, coffee, services. Morris Twp needs more conveniences to avoid Madison of Morristown
- Mixed-use residential
- Bar, restaurant, coffee place
- Retail, apartments

## Q5 How would you rate the benefits your business/property receives by being located on Madison Avenue?

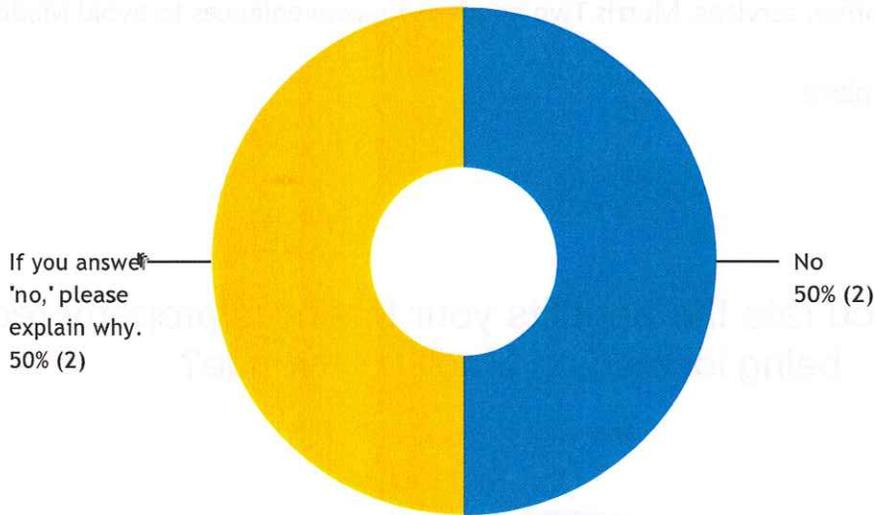
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | RESPONSES |          |
|----------------|-----------|----------|
| Very good      | 75%       | 3        |
| Good           | 25%       | 1        |
| Neutral        | 0%        | 0        |
| Poor           | 0%        | 0        |
| Very poor      | 0%        | 0        |
| Don't Know     | 0%        | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |           | <b>4</b> |

# Q6 Do you believe that the township's interests are aligned with your interests?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



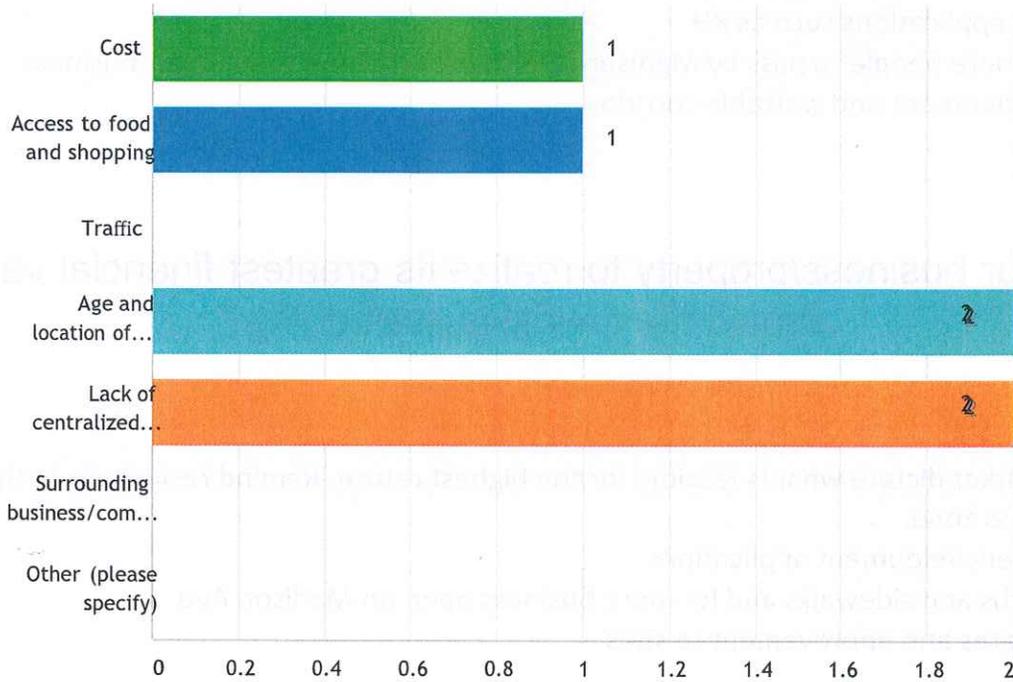
The two individuals who responded 'No' made these suggestions:

- Township needs to welcome business in the business zone
- My business gains value with more traffic on Madison Avenue. Township considers less traffic on Madison Ave.

| ANSWER CHOICES                          | RESPONSES |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| Yes                                     | 0%        | 0        |
| No                                      | 50%       | 2        |
| If you answer 'no,' please explain why. | 50%       | 2        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            |           | <b>4</b> |

## Q7 What drawbacks, if any, are there to being located on Madison Avenue? (Check all that apply.)

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES                           | RESPONSES | Count |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Cost                                     | 25.00%    | 1     |
| Access to food and shopping              | 25.00%    | 1     |
| Traffic                                  | 0.00%     | 0     |
| Age and location of buildings            | 50.00%    | 2     |
| Lack of centralized business district    | 50.00%    | 2     |
| Surrounding business/commercial entities | 0.00%     | 0     |
| Other (please specify)                   | 0.00%     | 0     |
| Total Respondents: 4                     |           |       |

## Q8 For your business/property to realize its greatest financial value, what should the township keep doing?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 1

- Approving applications such as RH
- We need more people to pass by Madison Ave. in order for me to get their business
- More development and walkable corridor

## Q9 For your business/property to realize its greatest financial value what should the township start doing?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

- Let the market dictate what is feasible for the highest return. Remind residences in the area that this is a business zone.
- Consider redevelopment applications
- Fix the curbs and sidewalks and let more business open on Madison Ave.
- More updates and improvement to sites

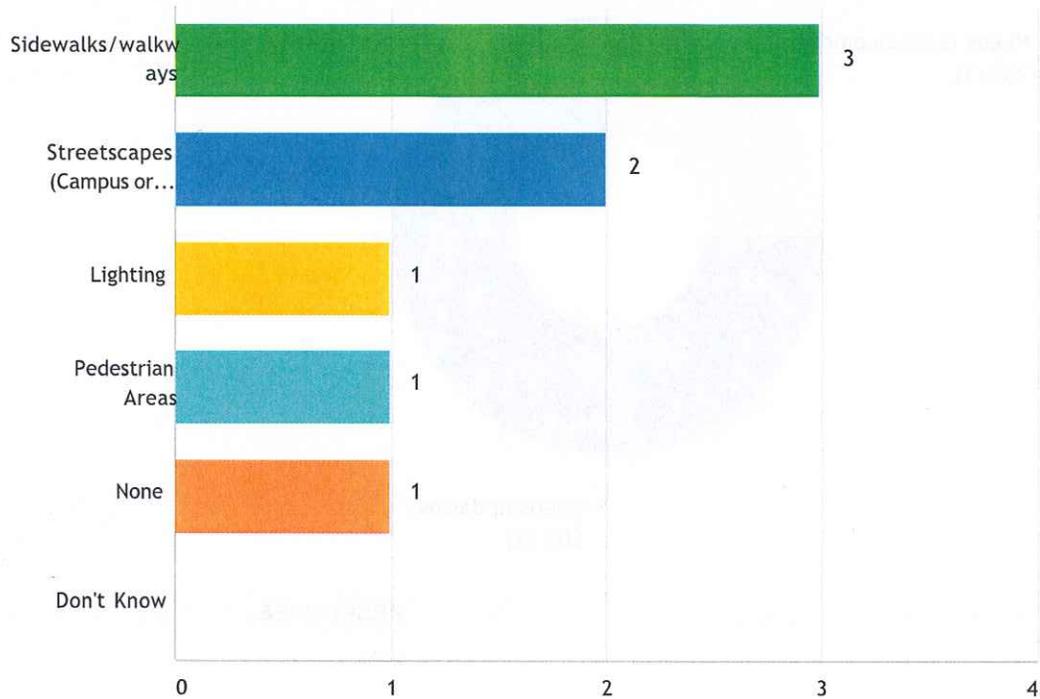
## Q10 What factors will affect your decision to stay, redevelop or leave Madison Avenue? Why?

Answered: 3 Skipped: 1

- Need for conveniences, food, coffee and services. Proximity to hospital, office buildings, easier to get to a park than Madison or Morristown
- Construction cost
- Township should let us to extend our business

# Q11 What infrastructure improvements would you like to see on Madison Avenue?

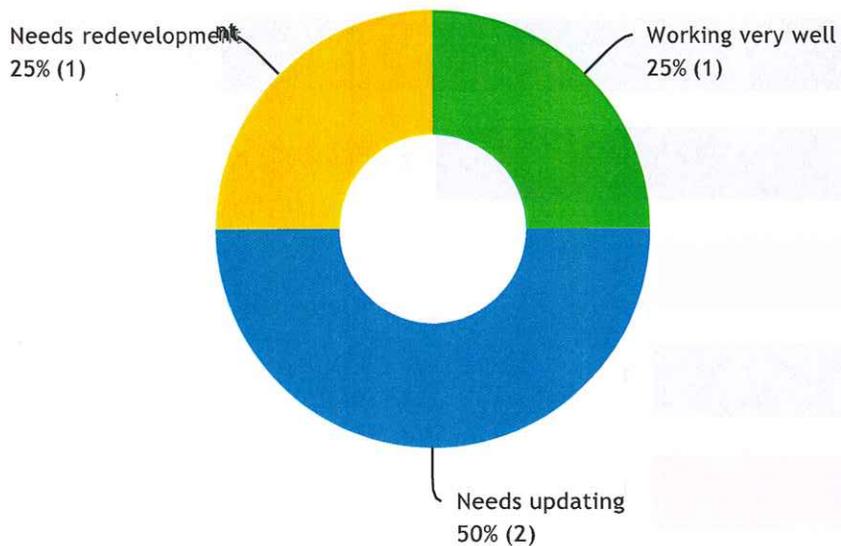
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES                             | RESPONSES | Count |
|--|-----------|-------|
| Sidewalks/walkways                         | 75%       | 3     |
| Streetscapes (Campus or downtown features) | 50%       | 2     |
| Lighting                                   | 25%       | 1     |
| Pedestrian Areas                           | 25%       | 1     |
| None                                       | 25%       | 1     |
| Don't Know                                 | 0%        | 0     |
| Total Respondents: 4                       |           |       |

# Q12 How would you rate the condition of your property? (if you respond 'working very well', skip to question 15.)

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES      | RESPONSES |          |
|---------------------|-----------|----------|
| Working very well   | 25%       | 1        |
| Needs updating      | 50%       | 2        |
| Needs redevelopment | 25%       | 1        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>        |           | <b>4</b> |

Q13 If your property needs redevelopment, how many years of useful life remain?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 4

- No responses

Q14 if your property needs redevelopment, how can the township help you?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 3

- Consider our pending application for mixed-use bank/residential

Q15 What zoning changes could improve Madison Avenue?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

- Be more open and accepting of different businesses. Not limit types and style
- Mixed-use overlay
- More commercial zoning
- More residential multi-family

Q16 If you have tenants, what could the township do to help you retain them?

Answered: 1 Skipped: 3

- None

Q17 If you have tenants, what might make them consider leaving?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 4

- No responses

## Q18 What needs, requests or concerns do your tenants have around COVID-19?

Answered: 2 Skipped: 2

- Desire for curbside pickup, drive throughs and conveniences
- None

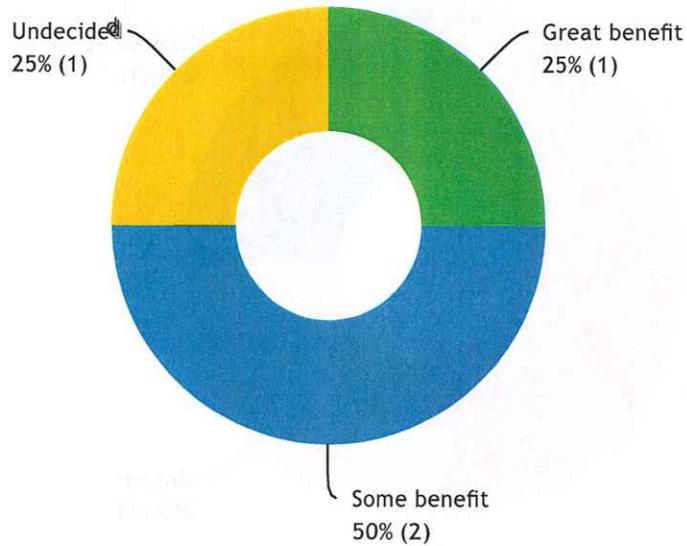
## Q19 In what ways has COVID-19 affected your real estate strategy on Madison Avenue?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0

- It has hurt in decrease of traffic, restaurants closed
- None
- Hold my decision
- Needed more space

## Q20 How much benefit will your business/property receive from Restoration Hardware's redevelopment of The Abbey?

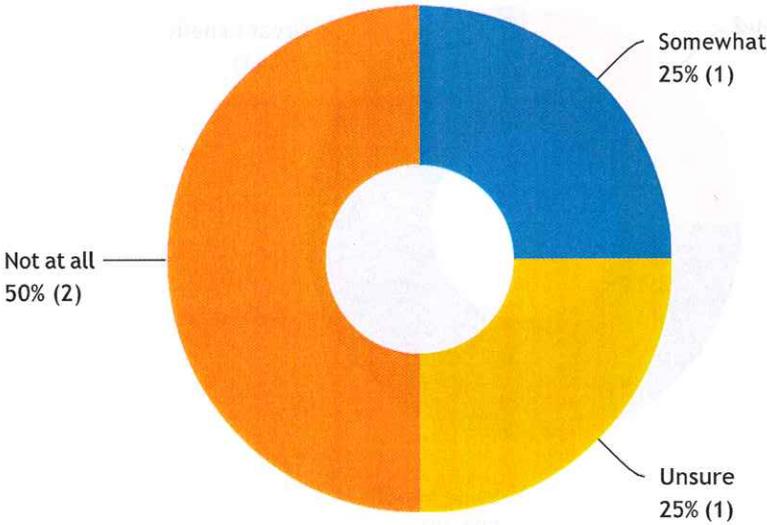
Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES  | PERCENTAGE | RESPONSES | COUNT    |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Great benefit   | 25%        |           | 1        |
| Some benefit    | 50%        |           | 2        |
| Undecided       | 25%        |           | 1        |
| Minimal benefit | 0%         |           | 0        |
| No benefit      | 0%         |           | 0        |
| Don't know      | 0%         |           | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>    |            |           | <b>4</b> |

# Q21 How has Restoration Hardware's project affected your real estate strategy?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 0



| ANSWER CHOICES | PERCENTAGE | RESPONSES | COUNT    |
|----------------|------------|-----------|----------|
| Greatly        | 0%         | 0         | 0        |
| Somewhat       | 25%        | 1         | 1        |
| Unsure         | 25%        | 1         | 1        |
| Minimally      | 0%         | 0         | 0        |
| Not at all     | 50%        | 2         | 2        |
| Don't know     | 0%         | 0         | 0        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   |            |           | <b>4</b> |

Q22 If the Restoration Hardware project affected your strategy in any way, how did it affect it?

Answered: 0 Skipped: 4

- No responses