

Colfax Avenue Survey: Summary & Report

When we were given this assignment, I admit I wasn't at all excited. I'm not the kind of individual who enjoys talking to people on the street. However, I found the implementation of the survey to be surprisingly enjoyable. As someone who primarily travels on foot, I tend to avoid sidewalk conversations as much as possible for a few reasons. Most likely, I'm in a hurry, since I'm always running late to wherever it is I need to be. Second, there's a good chance the person is going to ask for some kind of monetary donation. I might also have some concerns about my personal safety, depending on the time of day and the demeanor of the individual. Finally, there isn't much of a benefit involved, and people tend to assume that if someone speaks more than a quick hello that he or she should be avoided.

I enlisted the help of my friend Matt to assist in data collection and for some peace of mind, not that I mind walking around on Colfax at any hour of the day. When I'm alone, however, it's easier to blend in and not draw attention. On October 31, we set out on foot around 7pm and focused on the two blocks of Colfax Avenue adjacent to Ogden Street. Not only was it Halloween night, but there was also a concert at the Ogden Theatre. This provided us with an ample audience and a generally mixed crowd to sample. Most people were in a hurry or weren't interested, so in about an hour and a half we were able to gather 12 surveys. I brought along some candy for incentive, and the weather was cold, but not bitter.

Of the surveyed individuals, half were women and half were men. I was surprised at the number of females who participated, because of the reputation of the area. I imagine that because there were so many people out, and we were carrying clip boards, that we couldn't have appeared too intimidating. Because it was later in the evening, it was no surprise that people had come to Colfax for entertainment. I think that question might have been more appropriate if we had conducted the survey multiple times at multiple locations. I wasn't surprised that a majority of the people surveyed used public transit. Only four people said they used a car or truck as their primary mode of transport, and eight said they used public transportation at least once a week or more. These results seem to agree with each other as they were separate questions on the survey. Ten people said they would ride a trolley at least once a week or more if there were one on Colfax, so that number appears to be promising if it could be replicated in a larger population and then be sustained after the newness factor wears off. One interesting item to note is that although a majority said they liked Colfax the way it is today, the next highest answer to the question of improvement need was transportation options.

Finally, when people did answer question twelve, the open ended portion, I received some interesting responses. Some recalled an exciting event that they took part in, while most simply associated Colfax with having a good time. This could be due to the time of day the surveys were administered. There was, however, one man who said the street was "troubled but good." He was the same man who answered hotel for question four and jobs for question eleven. We talked more after the survey about the city's plans for the area and I gave him my opinion. He said he had heard the city is planning to make Colfax into another Cherry Creek and that decision doesn't sit well with him or his colleagues. After our short conversation he asked me to spare some change. I felt a little odd giving him a couple candy bars instead.