

Economic Sustainability Committee

Minutes

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Ante Room at 4:30pm

Attendance:

Councillor Mike Britton, Chair

Mayor Walter Sendzik

Dan Romanko (Chair, Downtown Development Revitalization Advisory Committee - DDRAC)

John Scott (Vice Chair, Parking Advisory Committee) ~ arrived at 4:38 p.m.

Kristine Douglas (Director of Financial Management Services)

Guests:

Dan Dillon, Director of Transportation and Environmental Services

Marco Marino, Economic Development Officer

Regrets:

Councillor Mat Siscoe

Jim Riddell (Director, Planning and Building Services)

Judy Pihach – (staff liaison) DDRAC

Staff Liaisons:

Leanne Kurek – Recording Secretary, ESC

Steve Bittner – (staff liaison) Parking Advisory

1. The Chair, Councillor Britton called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m.

2. Motion to approve the agenda

That the Economic Sustainability Committee adopt the agenda as presented

Moved by: Dan Romanko

Carried

3. Motion to approve the ESC minutes from: January 23, 2018.

Moved by: Mayor Sendzik

Carried

4. Business arising from the ESC minutes - NA

5. Business

5.1 DDRAC update ~ Dan Romanko

- Downtown Metrics: Attached
 - The first Downtown Performance Indicators Report Downtown Indicators Report 2018 – will be presented to Council soon
 - Includes downtown survey
 - Year over year metrics
 - Statistics set 2016 as baseline year.
- Open Streets Event
 - August 12, 2018
- Oakhill Park:
 - To coincide with Burgoyne Bridge as a gateway to downtown.
 - Established committee member participation on the Heritage Advisory Committee to provide input.
 - Heritage Advisory Committee to take the lead.
- Geneva/St. Paul Two-Way Conversion
 - There is not an appetite to open EA process to redesign intersection
 - Staff are trying to improve the design details to make it more pedestrian friendly.
- Committee endorsed Pilot Program for St. Paul Street 'Innovation Area'
 - Encourage business owners streamline process
 - Public realm improvements
 - Council approval authority
 - Ad hoc Task force to review and respond to proposals
 - Draft letter to business owners to solicit applications
- 201 St. Paul at James – 7 story office with ground floor retail
 - Timing for application summer 2018.
- Downtown Business Association to look after “Win this Space” contest to encourage qualified applications for tenants seeking downtown commercial space

- Downtown Safety Committee
 - Task force with DT Assoc., NRP, Fire, AGCO and Planning and Building Department to monitor health and safety issues related to licensed establishments
 - Downtown Assoc. has created Safety Committee to address: Syringes, mental health, lighting, graffiti and youth homelessness
 - Initiative from lack of foot patrol downtown
 - DT Assoc. willing to pay for it
 - This will be coming to Council to establish Terms of Reference.

Motion to receive the presentation from the DDRAC

Moved by: Kristine Douglas
Carried

5.2 Parking Advisory update ~ John Scott

- Downtown Parking Report
 - The committee reviewed the Downtown Parking Study and have submitted their recommendations. ~ see attached.
- Parking
 - Downtown vendors/ businesses are frustrated with increased rates.
 - Would like additional free lots.

Motion to receive the presentation from the Parking Advisory Committee and refer their list of recommendations to Council.

Moved by: Mayor Sendzik
Carried

5.3 Downtown snow clearing ~ Dan Romanko, Kristine Douglas and Dan Dillon

- Cost sharing agreement between the City and Downtown Association.
 - Expression of interest
 - Challenges for City – additional staffing, equipment and taking staff away from other areas in the city.

ACTION:

Dan Dillon to reach out to Tisha Polocko, Downtown Assoc. to explore best practices and cost sharing that other downtown associations are doing what other municipalities i.e. Guelph, Barrie and Kingston do for snow removal strategy and parking in the downtown during winter/snow events.

6. Other Business:

- Staff liaisons to add 'review of committee' as an agenda item for their next meeting, in advance of the next pillar meeting.
 - Committee to prepare comments.
 - Comments will be forwarded to the next term of council to help with committee structure.

7. Date of next meeting: Tuesday, August 28, 2018.
4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Ante Room

8. Motion to adjourn

That the Economic Sustainability Committee be adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Moved by: John Scott

Carried

Attachments:

- 2018 Downtown Indicator Report
- DRAFT: Parking Advisory Committee Minutes –May 22, 2018.
- Summary of recommendations for the Downtown Parking Study from the Parking Advisory Committee – May 22, 2018

CITY OF ST. CATHARINES
**DOWNTOWN
INDICATORS**
REPORT 2018



CITY OF ST. CATHARINES DOWNTOWN INDICATORS REPORT 2018

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BACKGROUND



LITERATURE REVIEW

Current literature on the practice of monitoring communities through indicators was consulted as a source to help guide the selection of indicators specific to Downtown St. Catharines. Studies warn that the selection of indicators is susceptible to the biases of those choosing them, and that indicators can reflect a desired image of a community, as opposed to reality. Other risks of community indicators include a lack of data, a lack of knowledge to interpret results correctly, and an oversimplified version of the results that can be misleading (Maclaren, 2001). Staff have taken these risks into consideration while designing the research and interpreting results. Generally, indicators fall under the three categories of Planning; Economic, Social, and Environmental (Hoernig & Mark, 2004). A handbook on developing, collecting, and analyzing indicators of Downtown health identifies that the process of selecting indicators should include public consultation and goals and visions set out from specific plans and policies (Smart Growth Vermont). After consulting with 24 Canadian communities, Maclaren (2001) noted typical criteria for choosing indicators:

- Scientific validity
- Cost effectiveness of collection
- Availability of data
- Relevancy to community goals, visions, and principles
- Relevancy to policy, plans
- Attractiveness to media
- Comparability to other jurisdictions (do they use same indicators that would facilitate comparison?)
- Potential to trigger action

BEST PRACTICES

When interpreting indicators, it is important to tell a story based on trends, change over time, and factors contributing to change. In addition, making connections to goals, plans, and policy, and comparable jurisdictions is useful. This report strives to utilize these criteria and interpret the results accordingly.

Local cities that monitor their downtown through the use of indicators include Guelph, Burlington, London, Kitchener, and Kingston. Mid-sized American cities, including Madison, Wisconsin and Norfolk, Virginia also provide useful examples for indicators and how best to communicate findings. When evaluating success of their downtown, comparable jurisdictions trend toward using economic and social indicators and smaller number of environmental indicators. The most commonly tracked indicators include demographics, employment, housing, new construction, commercial uses and cultural attractions. In general, indicator usage seemed to be more comprehensive in the United States when compared to Canadian examples, and published in an accessible fashion.

Knowing what indicators comparable jurisdictions are using is valuable for benchmarking Downtown St. Catharines within a larger framework.

CONSULTATION

Council has directed that, as part of this process, consultation be undertaken with the Downtown Development and Revitalization Advisory Committee, in partnership with City staff, Niagara Regional Police, Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario and the Downtown Business Improvement Association. Since the direction from Council, as part of the restructuring of Committees of Council in 2015, the former DDRC and DLEC were dissolved. Instead, the Downtown Development and Revitalization Advisory Committee (DDRAC) was formed. The DDRAC continues to act in an advisory capacity on matters that have an impact on the downtown, including opportunities and barriers that contribute to or detract from the downtown as a vibrant place to live, work, and play. Consultation has been undertaken as directed and is summarized below

DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT & REVITALIZATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On February 17, 2016 the Downtown Development and Revitalization Advisory Committee considered Council's direction. The DDRAC discussed possible performance indicators to help measure downtown revitalization objectives. Potential performance indicators included the following:

- Tree planting and tree canopy coverage.
- Methods to measure cleanliness, which may include tracking property standards complaints and uncollected garbage bags.
- Vacancy rates for office space and retail storefronts.
- Retail mix and business openings/closings.
- Number of special events and event attendance.
- Parking utilization rates, parking permits sold and parking permit wait list monitoring.
- Pedestrian foot traffic counts.
- Monitoring public safety by tracking NRPS crime statistics.

Following the February 2016 meeting, Staff set out to collect data on the recommended indicators. The results were then presented to the DDRAC for feedback at meetings on February 15, 2017 and April 12, 2017. At these meetings the Committee recommended that demographics and commercial vacancy rates also be used as an indicator, and be used for each indicator. Additionally, the Committee requested that graphics be utilized to illustrate findings.

INDICATORS

A major challenge in compiling this information is the differing boundaries for various data sources. In these instances, the closest boundaries containing the relevant data were used. The boundary used is clearly identified for each indicator, and Staff is confident that they closely represent the BIA boundary. Each indicator is listed with their corresponding boundary at the bottom of this page. In future reports, it is recommended that a definitive Downtown boundary be selected with consideration to all available and relevant data sets.

In addition to boundaries, some of the indicators represent different points in time based on when the data was collected. For example, demographic information was collected in 2016 for the Canadian Census, while our storefront vacancy survey was conducted in August 2017. For each indicator it will be made clear the time-frame that the data represents. Further, data such as the census is only collected at five year intervals, and can only be updated accordingly.

Ultimately, the selection of the indicators was based on recommendations from Council, the Downtown Development and Revitalization Advisory Committee, and best practices. These indicators attempt to tell a complete and objective story of Downtown.

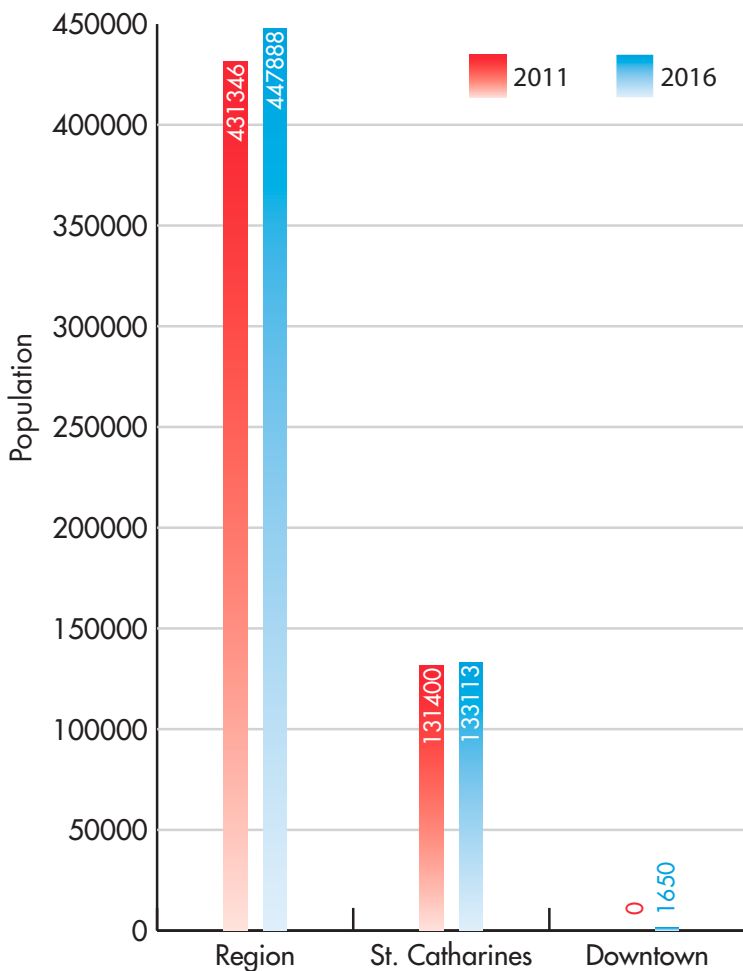
As some of these indicators are only being measured for the first time, identifying trends is only possible for a limited number of indicators. In future reports, staff will report on the same indicators in order to identify trends. Over time the data is expected to become more accurate as the methodology is refined and more data is collected. The indicators are also evolving, and in the future new developments may warrant new indicators or the exclusion of irrelevant indicators.

Indicator	Boundary
Storefront	BIA
Operating Hours	BIA
Construction	BIA
Employment	BIA
Crime and Complaints	BIA
City Trees	BIA
Office	BIA
Demographics	BIA dissemination areas
Transportation	BIA dissemination areas
Housing	CMHC
Facade Improvement	Facade Improvement Program Boundary
Parking	Parking Study Boundary
Property Tax	BIA

DEMOGRAPHICS

When using Statistics Canada's Census Tract of the Downtown, it shows a population change of +3.8% from 2011 to 2016 (not shown on graph). This indicates that Downtown St. Catharines is growing at a faster rate than the City of St. Catharines as a whole, and at a comparable rate to Niagara Region. However, the boundary area used to collect population data for the BIA shows no population change on the graph below from 2011 to 2016. This is due to the area being too small. Notably, Downtown is more dense and supports a larger population within a smaller land area. An increased density of both people and jobs will help support transit and attract commercial, recreational, cultural, and entertainment uses. Downtown also has smaller household sizes, likely due to both the type of housing available and the younger demographic distribution

POPULATION CHANGE



POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

Downtown 3,455



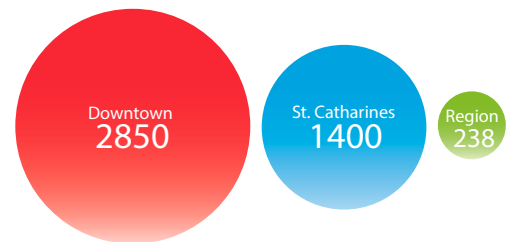
St. Catharines 133,113



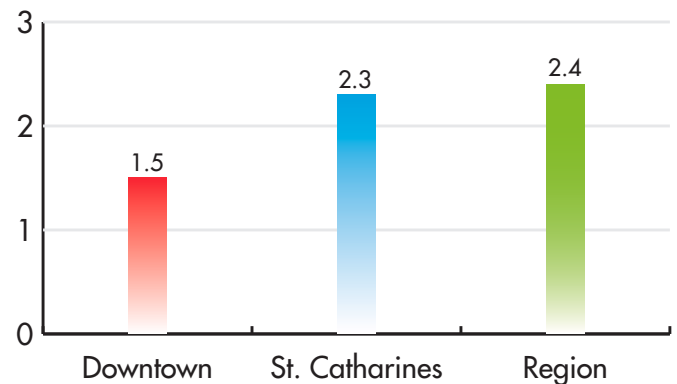
Niagara Region 447,888



POPULATION DENSITY PEOPLE PER SQUARE KILOMETRE



HOUSEHOLD SIZE PEOPLE PER HOUSEHOLD

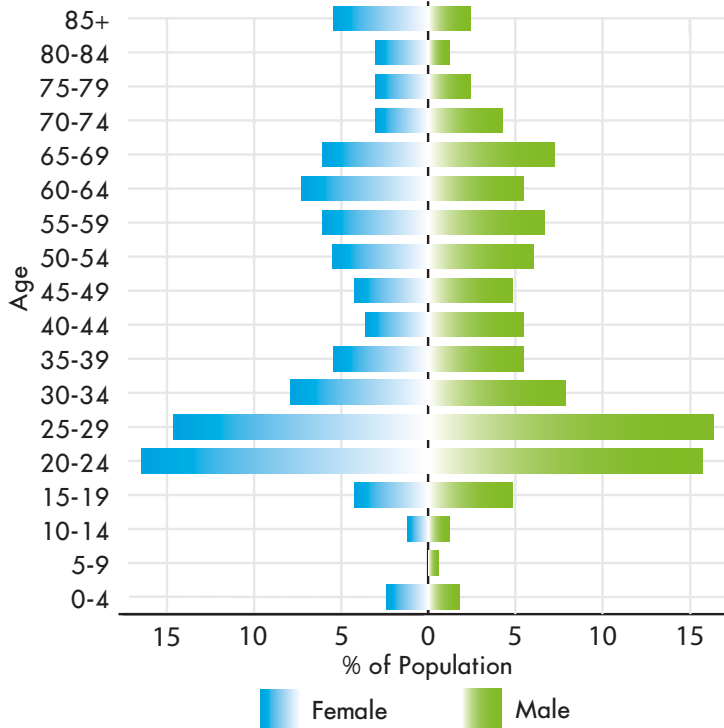


HOUSING UNITS AVAILABLE

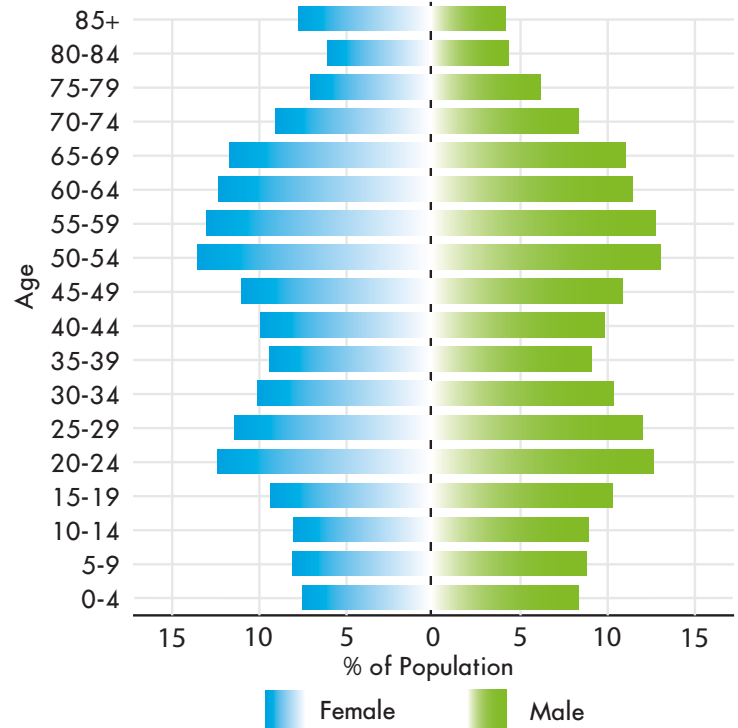
	Total Number of Dwelling Units	Total Number of Dwelling Units Occupied
Downtown	1,277 (Dissemination Areas)	991 Dissemination Areas)
St. Catharines	59,879	56,873
Niagara Region	196,241	183,828

DEMOGRAPHICS

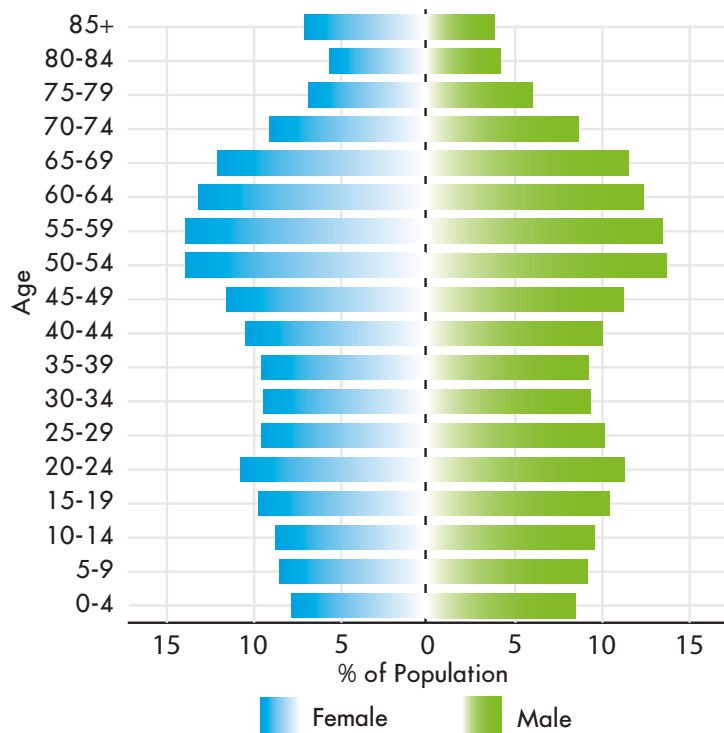
Downtown Age Distribution



City Age Distribution

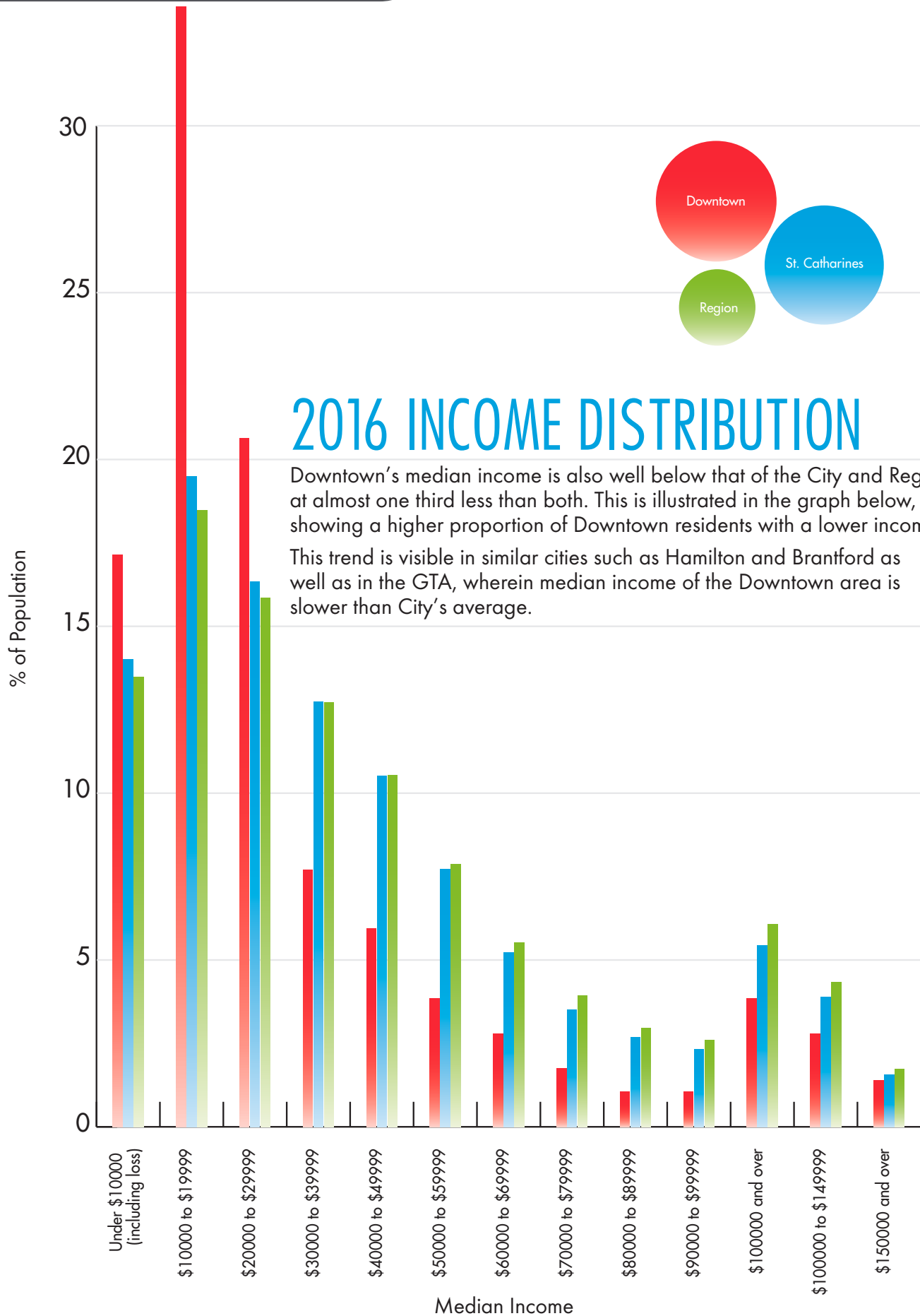


Region Age Distribution



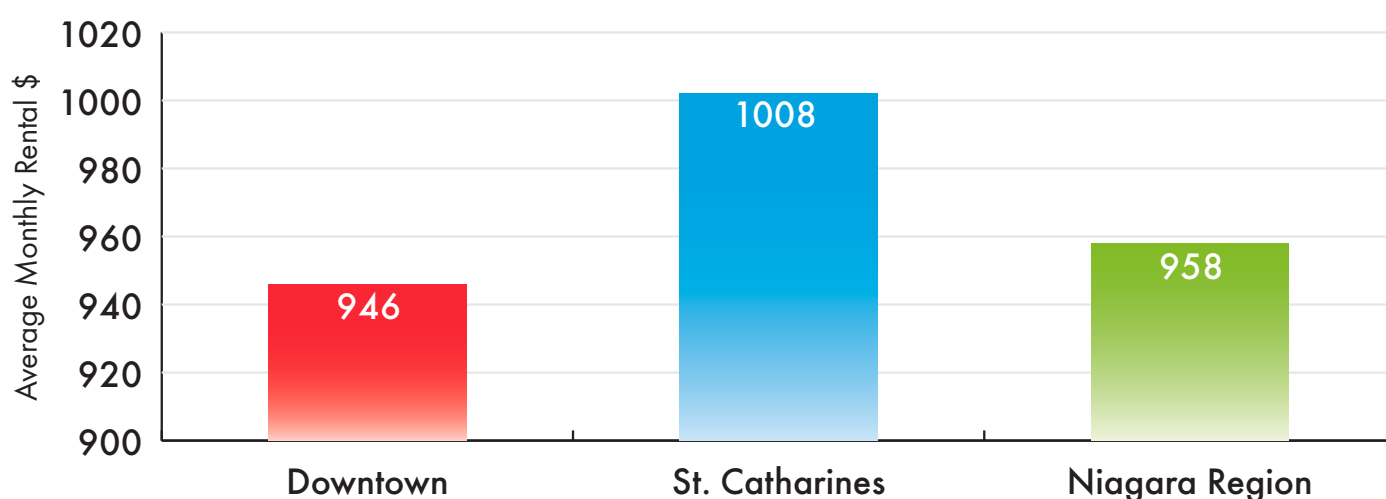
ANALYSIS

When compared with the City and Niagara Region as a whole, Downtown's age distribution differs greatly. Notably, roughly 39% of the Downtown population is between the ages of 20-35 whereas that age bracket accounts for only 20% of the City population and only 17% of the Regional population. Additionally there is a distinct lack of persons age 0-14 in the Downtown area. This indicates that Downtown St. Catharines attracts a larger number of young adults, or couples without children. Additionally the higher proportion of 20-35 year olds can be attributed in part to student populations of Brock University & Niagara College.



HOUSING

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) defines a unit as being available (Residential Availability Rate) if the existing tenant has given, or has received, notice to move, and a new tenant has not signed a lease; or the unit is vacant (Vacancy Rate). CMHC considers a unit vacant if, at the time of the survey, it is physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental. In general, Downtown has a higher Residential Vacancy Rate and Residential Availability Rate than the rest of the City and Region. The boundaries for housing also used the census tract area, except for Vacancy Rate. In this instance, the CMHC has not made the data available at the census tract level, and the next closest level is labeled "Core" see Appendix XX.



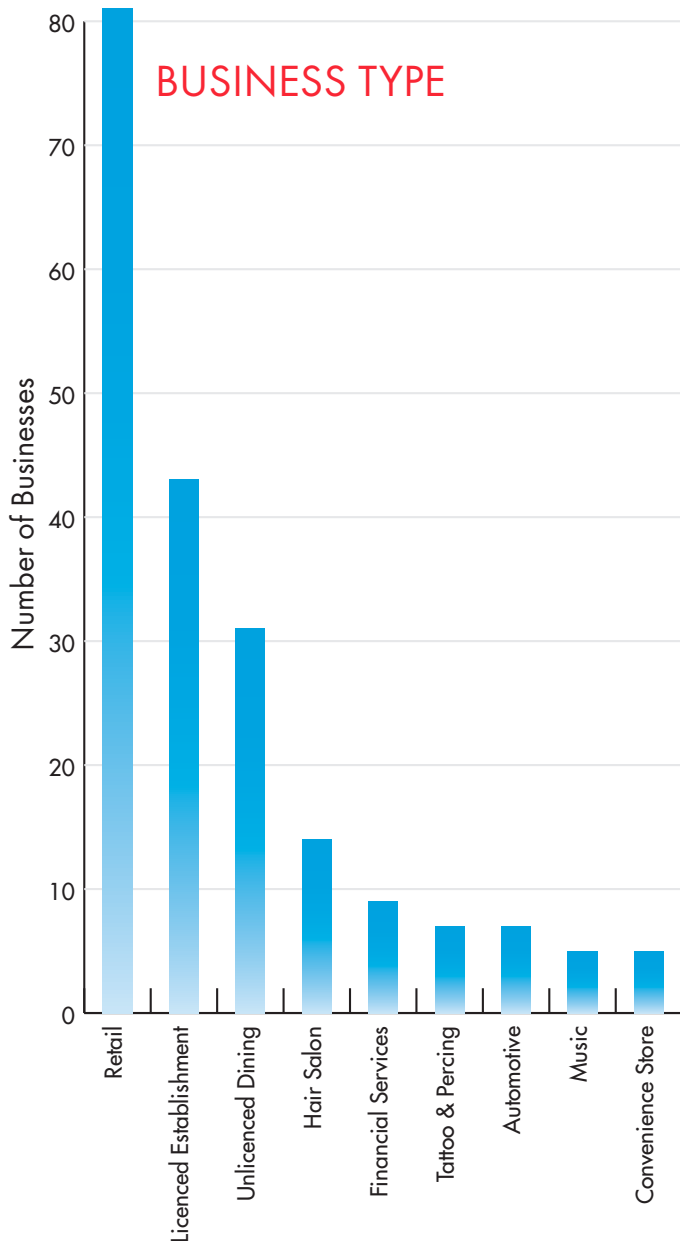
Housing Statistic	Downtown	St. Catharines(CY)	St. Catharines - Niagara (CMA)
Residential Availability Rate	5.7%(Census Tract)	3.9%	3.4%
Residential Vacancy Rate	3.1% (Core)	2.4%	2.2%
Households in Core Housing Need (2011) *2016 data not yet available	26.6% (Census Tract)	12.44%	11.6%

Core Housing Need is defined as falling below standards set out by CMHC, and having to spend 30% or more of your income to find a more adequate dwelling. Downtown St. Catharines has a much greater housing need than the City and Region, despite the average rent being more affordable than the rest of the City and Niagara. This may be a result of the higher proportion of people with a lower income living in the Downtown area.

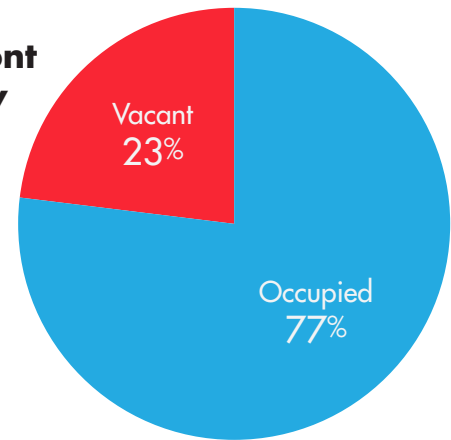
ECONOMICS

COMMERCIAL

Downtown St. Catharines has a total of 232 storefronts. Out of these, 54 were vacant as of August 3rd, 2017. This works out to a 23% vacancy rate. The composition of Downtown storefronts is illustrated below. Retail makes up the largest portion of storefronts, followed by licensed establishments and unlicensed dining.



Storefront Vacancy



Below is a chart summarizing the average operating hours for specific business categories, for both weekday and weekend. During the week, convenience stores have the earliest opening time average (7:37 AM) and licensed establishments have the latest closing time average (10:48 PM). During the weekend, financial services have the earliest opening time average (8:00 AM) and licensed establishments once again have the latest closing time average (10:30 PM).

Business Type	Average Weekday Opening Time	Average Weekday Closing Time	Average Weekend Closing Time	Average Weekend Opening Time
Automotive	8:36AM	5:12PM	8:30AM	1:00PM
Bank	8:55AM	5:04PM	8:45AM	6:50PM
Convenience Store	7:37AM	8:22PM	8:00AM	4:00PM
Dining Unlicensed	9:06AM	7:01PM	9:13AM	4:30PM
Hair Salon	9:30AM	6:07PM	12:42PM	10:30PM
Licensed	11:42AM	10:12PM	10:00AM	4:50PM
Music	8:12AM	7:06PM	10:14AM	4:44PM
Retail	9:37AM	6:09PM	11:36AM	8:36PM
Tattoo and Piercing	11:12AM	7:55PM	10:27AM	7:43PM

ECONOMICS

PROPERTY TAXES

Downtown generated \$1,660,814.00 in property taxes in 2017. This accounts for 1.68% of the \$98,655,444.55 City wide taxes levied, year to date (including supplemental billing). Additionally, the properties within the BIA boundary are valued at a combined total of \$198,574,334.

EMPLOYMENT

In 2016, Downtown St. Catharines had a total of 424 employers and 3167 employees. Note that 2016 was the first year this employment survey was undertaken, and not all employers provided feedback to the survey. The responses rate was not 100% and in fact the number of employees is likely higher.



FACADE IMPROVEMENT

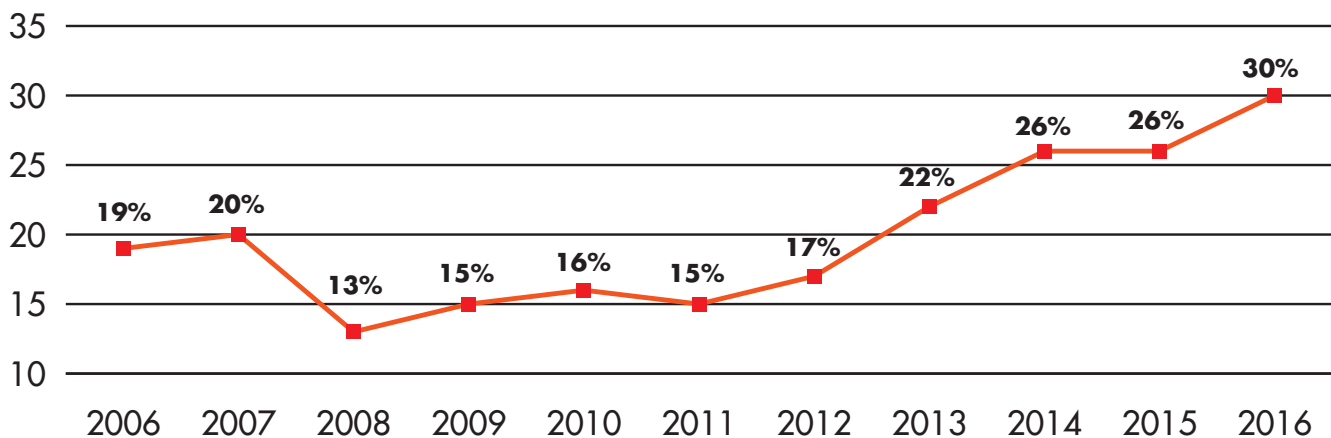
This program offers a grant to offset a portion of project costs for commercial and mixed-use façade improvement projects on most streets Downtown, portions of Queenston Street and St. Paul Street West. The City provides a grant equal to 50% of the eligible project costs spent on the façade, up to a maximum of \$10,000. In 2016, 10 properties applied to the program resulting in an estimated City payout of \$85,120 and an estimated private investment of \$278,360. Reporting on this figures annually will give an indication of the amount of private investment Downtown.

ECONOMICS

OFFICE VACANCY RATES

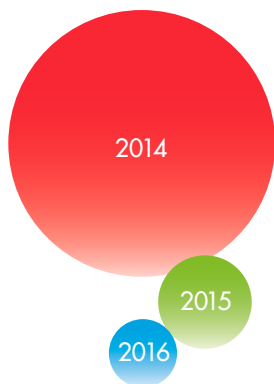
The vacancy rate for all Class 'A' Office Floor Space Downtown is tracked by the City. The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) defines Class 'A' offices as "generally the most attractive building built with the highest quality materials and construction methods". The Class 'A' Commercial Office Vacancy Rate has trended upwards throughout the past five years. CIP Policy supports the conversion of underutilized office space into residential. It is important, however, to retain adequate office space and ensure a vibrant Downtown both during the day and after office hours.

CLASS A COMMERCIAL OFFICE VACANCY RATE



DOWNTOWN CONSTRUCTION VALUE

Through the use of internal building permit tracking software, Staff are able to track the number of building permits issued, construction value, and total square footage of work addition and alteration in the BIA. Below is a summary of the results for 2016. When looking at the The Downtown Construction Values, 2014 was uncharacteristically high due to additional large scale developments (such as the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre).



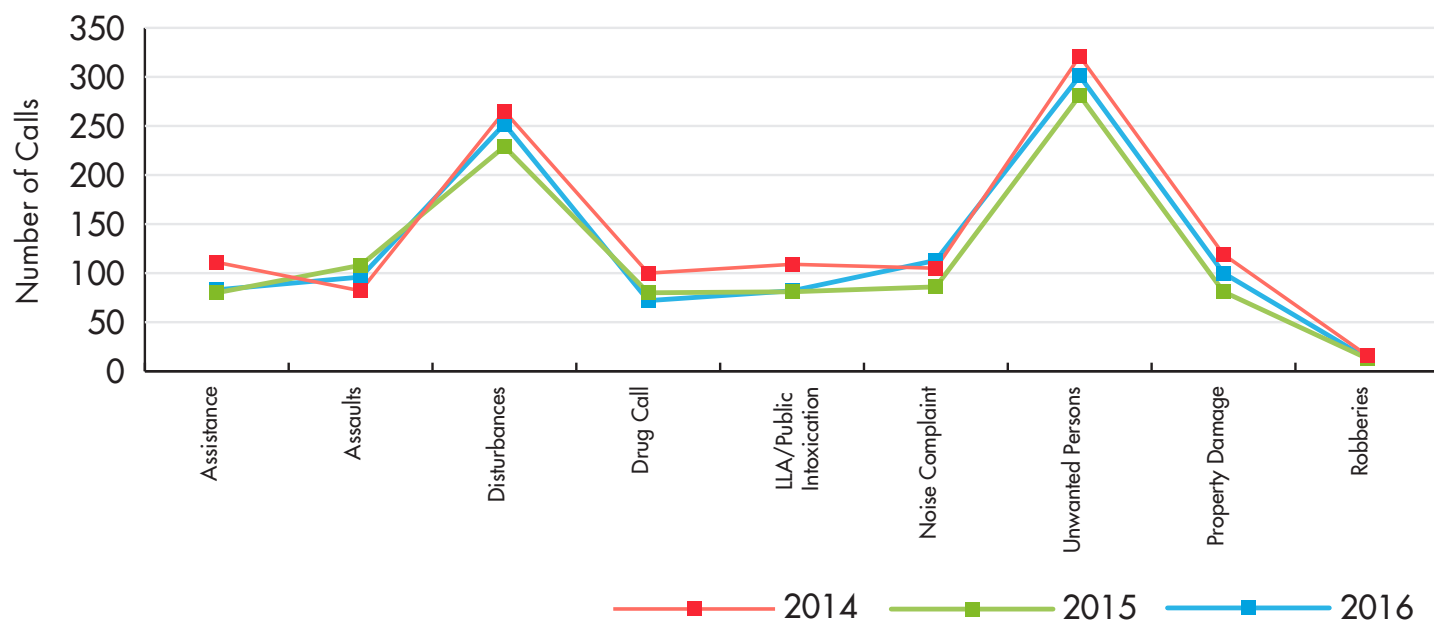
2014	\$38,900,843.00
2015	\$4,784,300.00
2016	\$2,543,590.00

Permit type	Construction Value	Floor Area	Permits
Residential	\$390,000.00	0	4
Comercial Assembly	\$355,500.00	224	7
Business Personal Service	\$1,458,500.00	0	6
Comercial Merchantile	\$61,100.00	0	6
Industrial	\$278,490.00	0	1
Total	\$2,543,590.00	224	24

Crime & Complaints

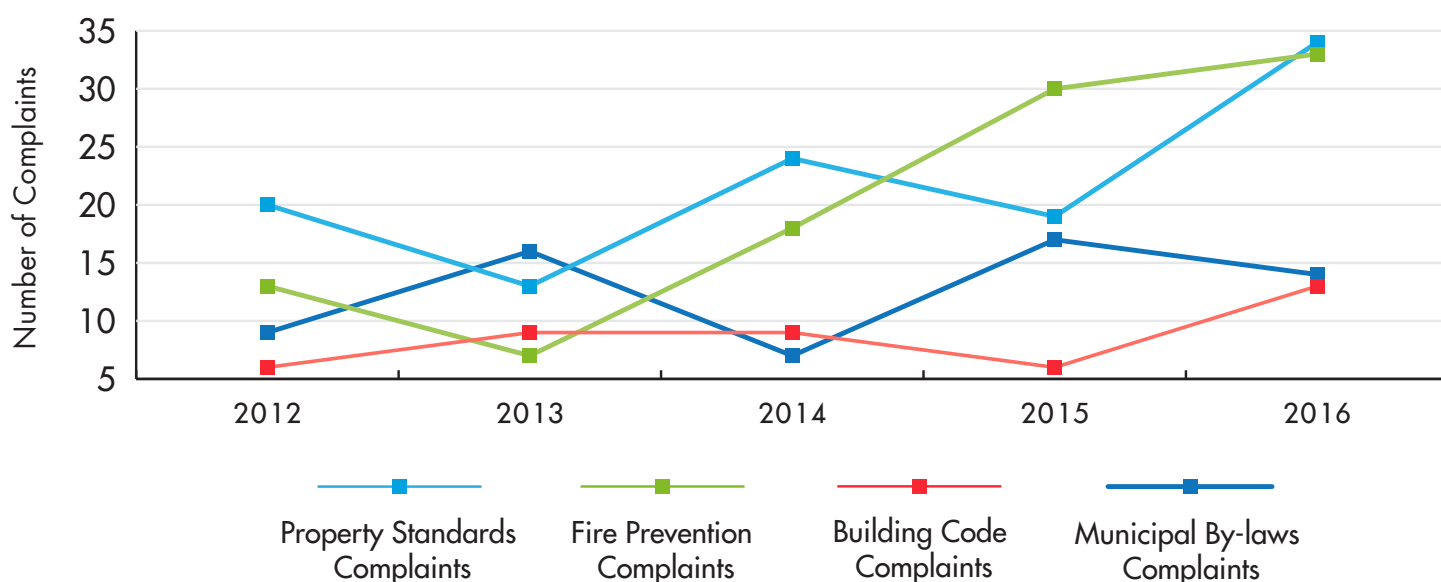
SERVICE CALLS BY TYPE AND YEAR

This is the number of service calls to the Niagara Regional Police from Downtown St. Catharines. Crimes have stayed fairly consistent from 2014 to 2016. Disturbances and Unwanted Persons continue to be the largest source of calls.



MUNICIPAL COMPLAINTS

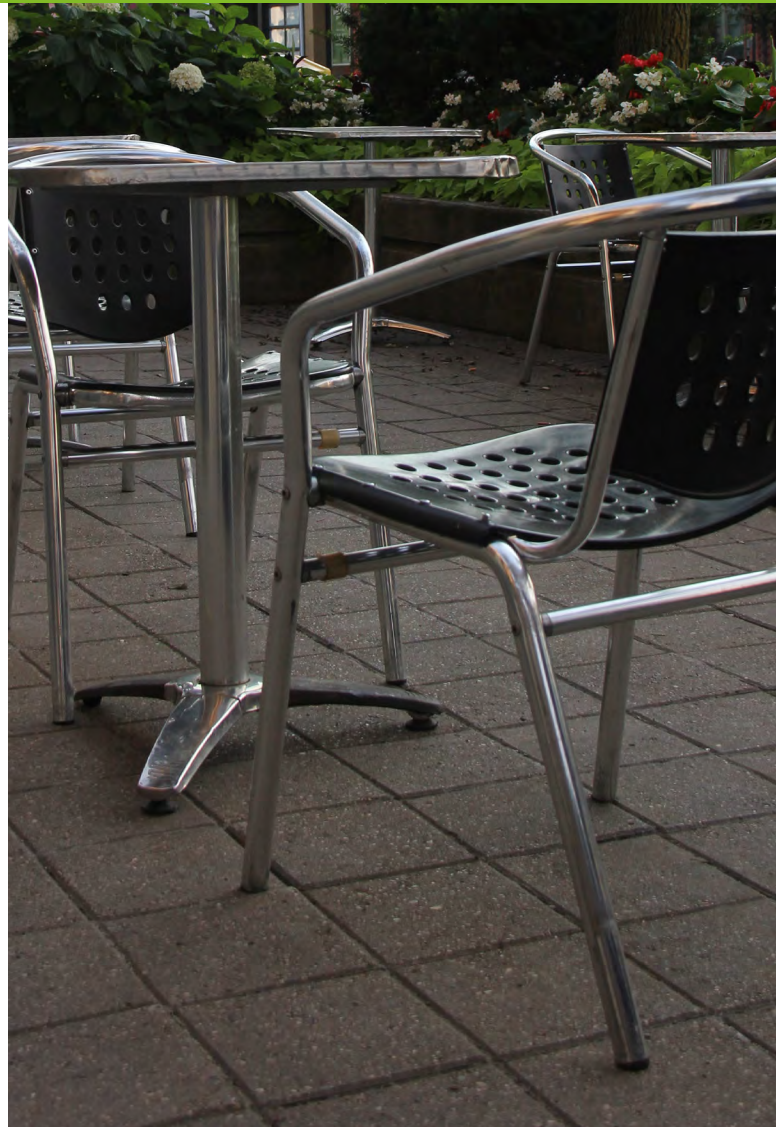
Building Code, By-law, Fire Prevention and Property Standards complaints are tracked by the City. Results show a general rise in fire prevention and municipal By-law complaints from 2012 to 2016. Building Code and property standards complaints have stayed fairly consistent.





URBAN FORESTRY

The benefits of trees in urban areas have been well documented, including the reduction of the urban heat island effect, improved air quality and benefits to mental health. Section 6.6 of the Garden City Plan establishes measures to promote the Urban Forest. In total, there are 238 City-owned trees that are found within the BIA boundary. Unfortunately, trees on private property are not tracked.

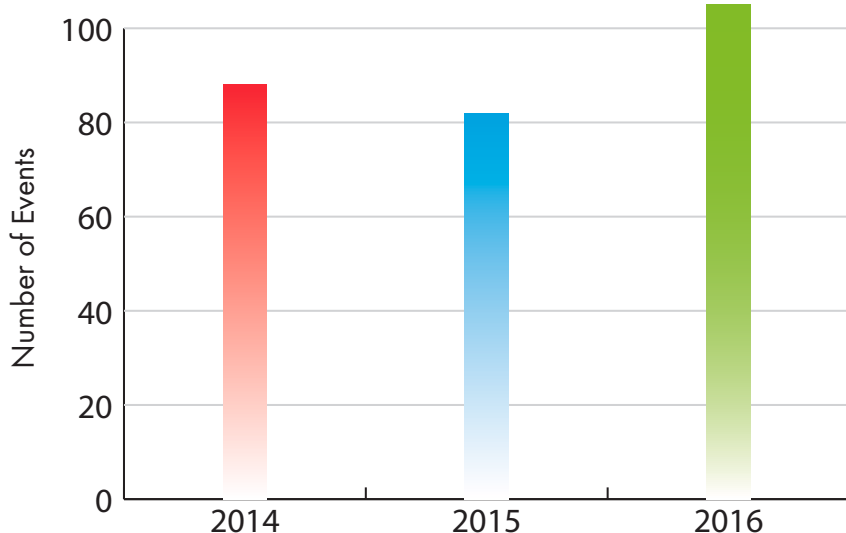


Culture & Entertainment

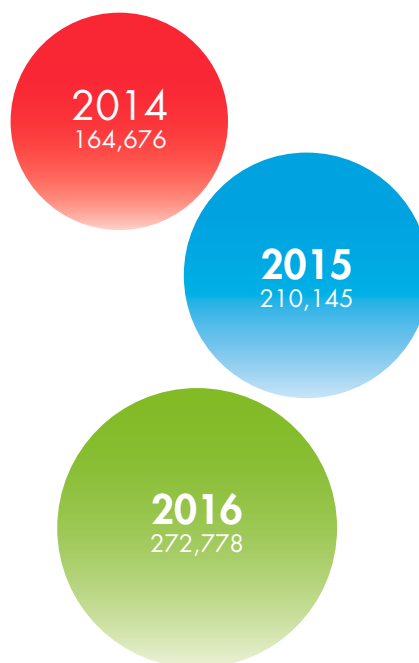
MERIDIAN CENTRE

The Meridian Centre has seen an increase in both the number of events offered at the venue and the level of attendance from 2014 to 2016

NUMBER OF EVENTS BY YEAR



ATTENDANCE



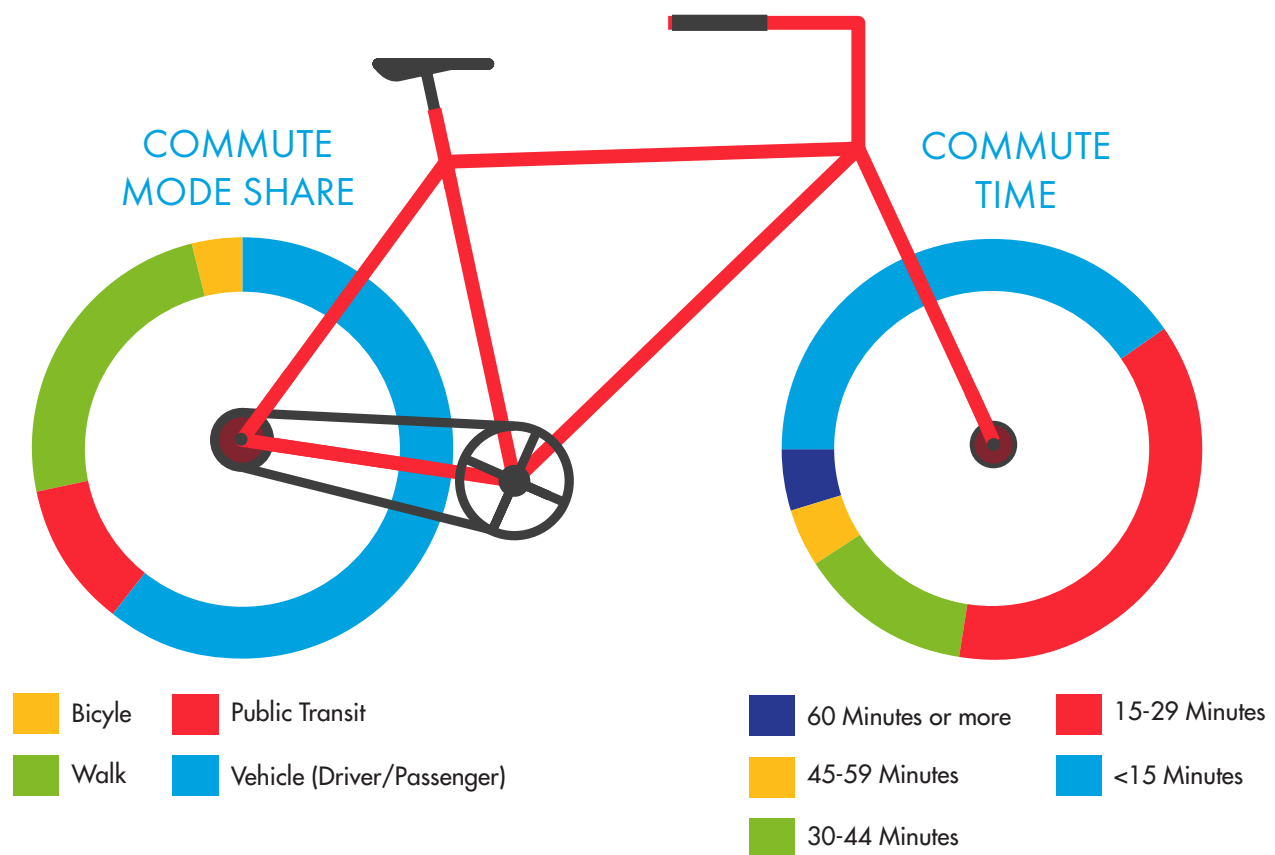
FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

The Performing Arts Centre was open for its first full season in 2016. In total for 2016, the Centre held 647 events, including non-ticketed events, performances, open houses and film screenings, with an estimated 70,000 to 80,000 patrons passing through the doors.



TRANSPORTATION

Vehicles are still the primary method of commuting to and from work with approximately 60% of Downtown residents either driving – or riding as a passenger – to work in a vehicle each morning. Walking is the second most popular method of commute, accounting for 24% of the mode share and followed by Public Transit (11%) and Biking (4%) respectively. 40% of Downtown residents commute less than 15 minutes to and from work, and only 23% of the population spend more than 30 minutes or more on their commute each morning and night.



PARKING

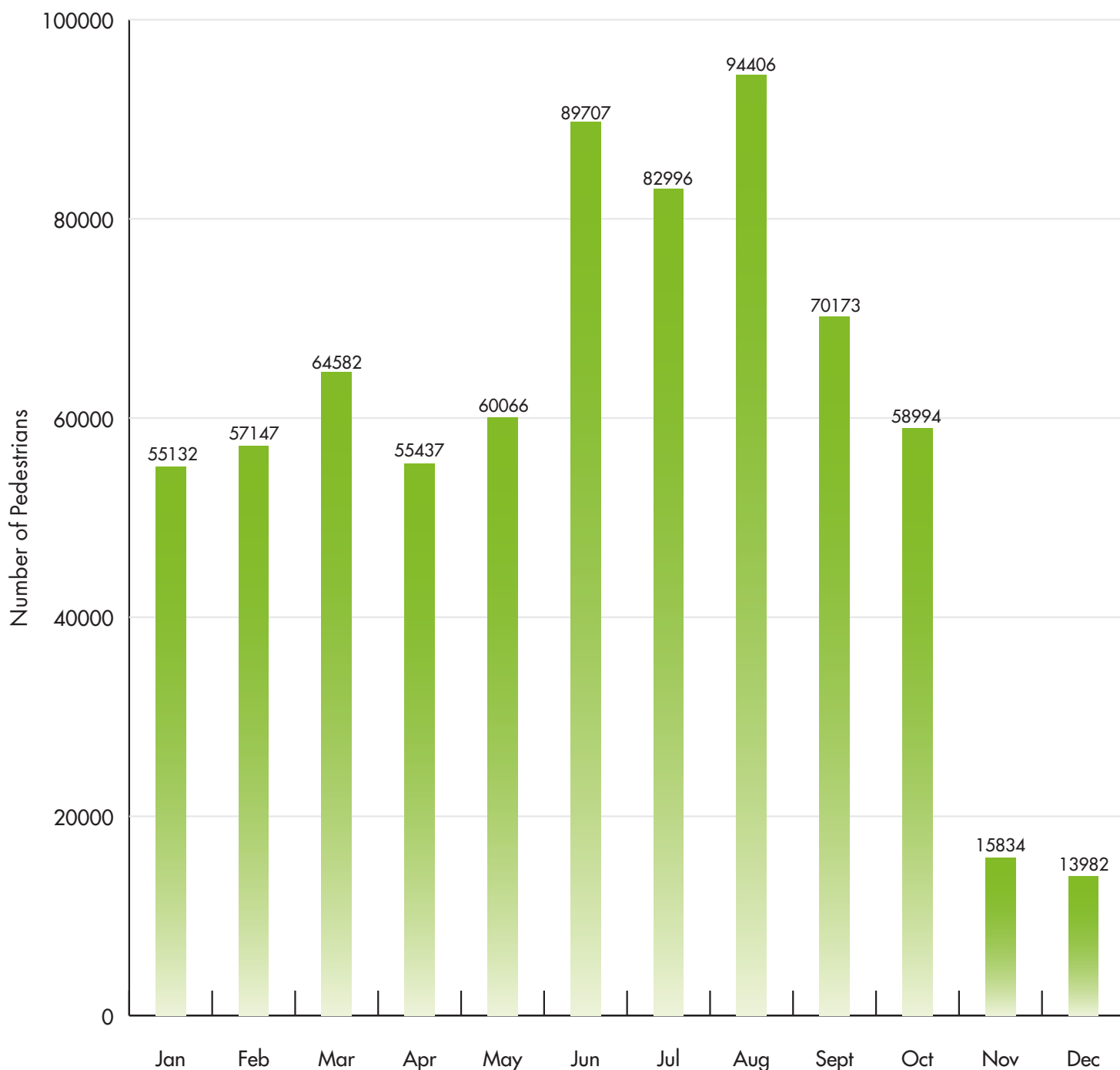
In 2015 a parking study was complete that included a highly detailed profile and analysis of parking Downtown. The study boundary matched that of the Official Plan's Downtown area and showed a surplus of parking supply. While Staff are unable to go into the detailed level of analysis of the study, information is available to report on the number of cars using City-owned parking lots during special events. This is a good indication on the number of visitors coming Downtown for special events. A summary of these results can be seen in the graph below. The graph shows a comparison from 2015 to 2016 of the number of cars that parked in the Garden Park/Carlisle Garage, Ontario Street Garage, Ice Dogs Way Lot, and the Garden Park Lot. Overall, there appears to be an increase in the number of cars using the City's public parking garages and surface parking lots, which indicates an increase in the number of visitors coming to the Downtown for special events.

Location	2015	2016
Garden Park/Carlisle	10384	18132
Ontario Street Garage	14530	16718
Ice Dogs Way	348	1065
Garden Park Lot	953	3800

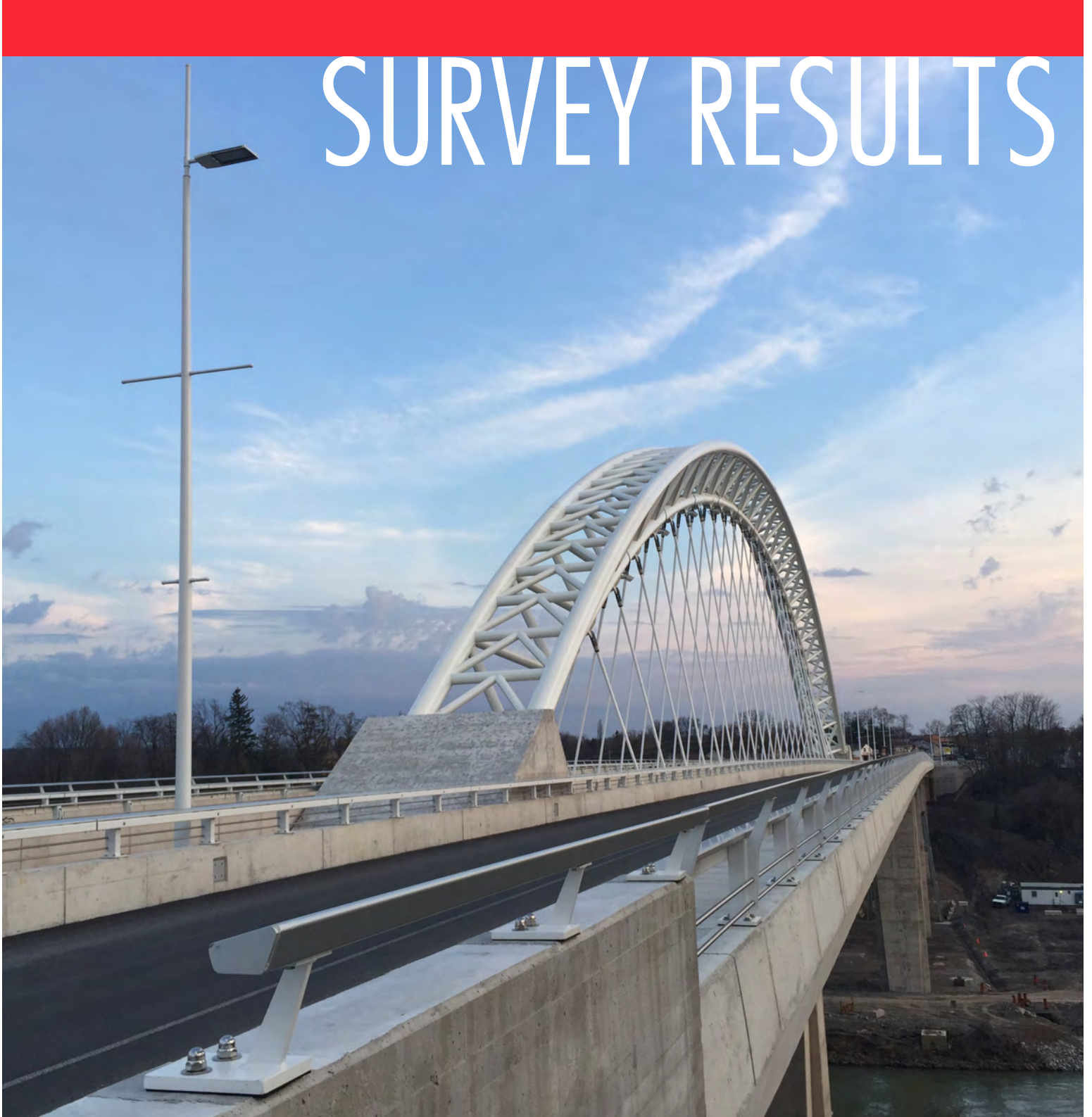
PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC

DOWNTOWN PEDESTRIAN TRAFFIC

A pedestrian counter, operated by the St. Catharines Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), is located at the intersection of St. Paul, and James Street and measures the pedestrian activity at this intersection. Between January and November of 2017 a total of 688,640 people passed by the counter. January saw the lowest number of pedestrians, and August the highest. Pedestrian counts correlate generally with the changing of seasons.



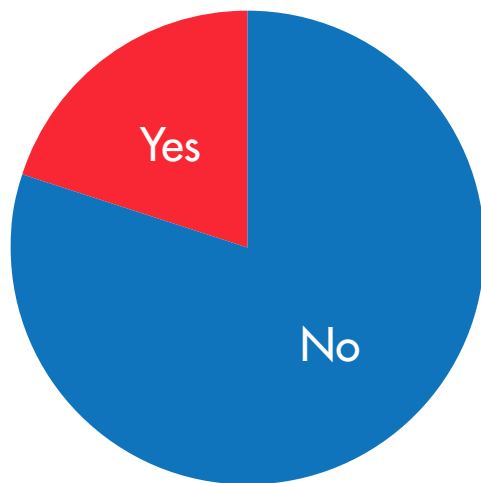
SURVEY RESULTS



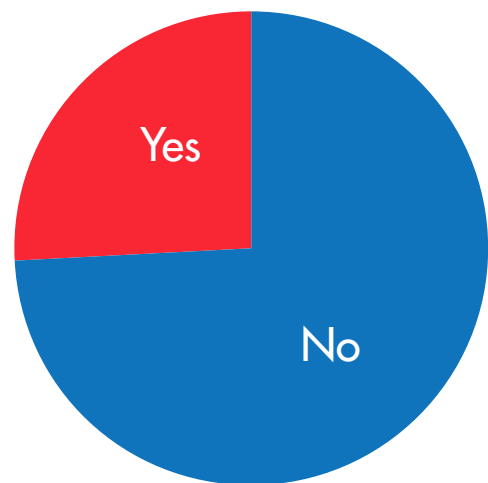
SURVEY STATISTICS

From November 12th to December 30th, 2017, the City undertook a Downtown Perception Survey in order to gain an understanding on the public opinions of Downtown St. Catharines. The survey covered a wide range of topics such as parking availability, safety, and what would attract people to Downtown. This section of the report will summarize the quantitative and qualitative data gathered from the survey results. The survey was completed a total of 486 times within the given time frame. Of those responses, 305 were female, 177 were male, and 4 did not identify as either.

The next several pages will visualize the quantitative results of the survey.

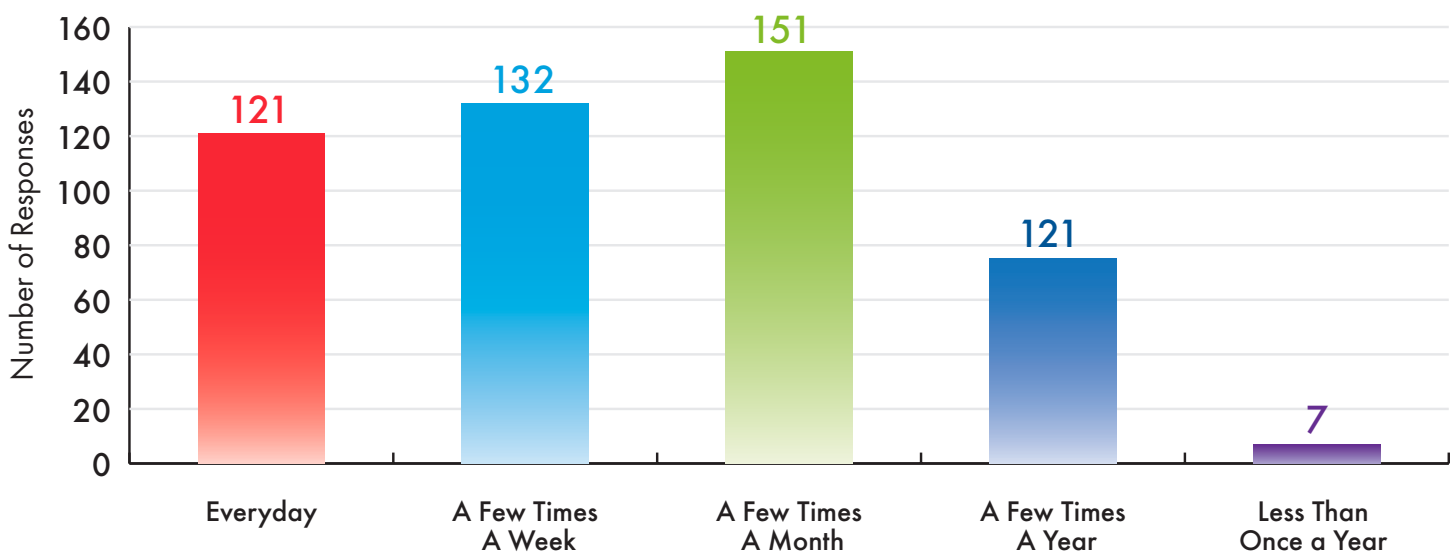


Do You Live Downtown?



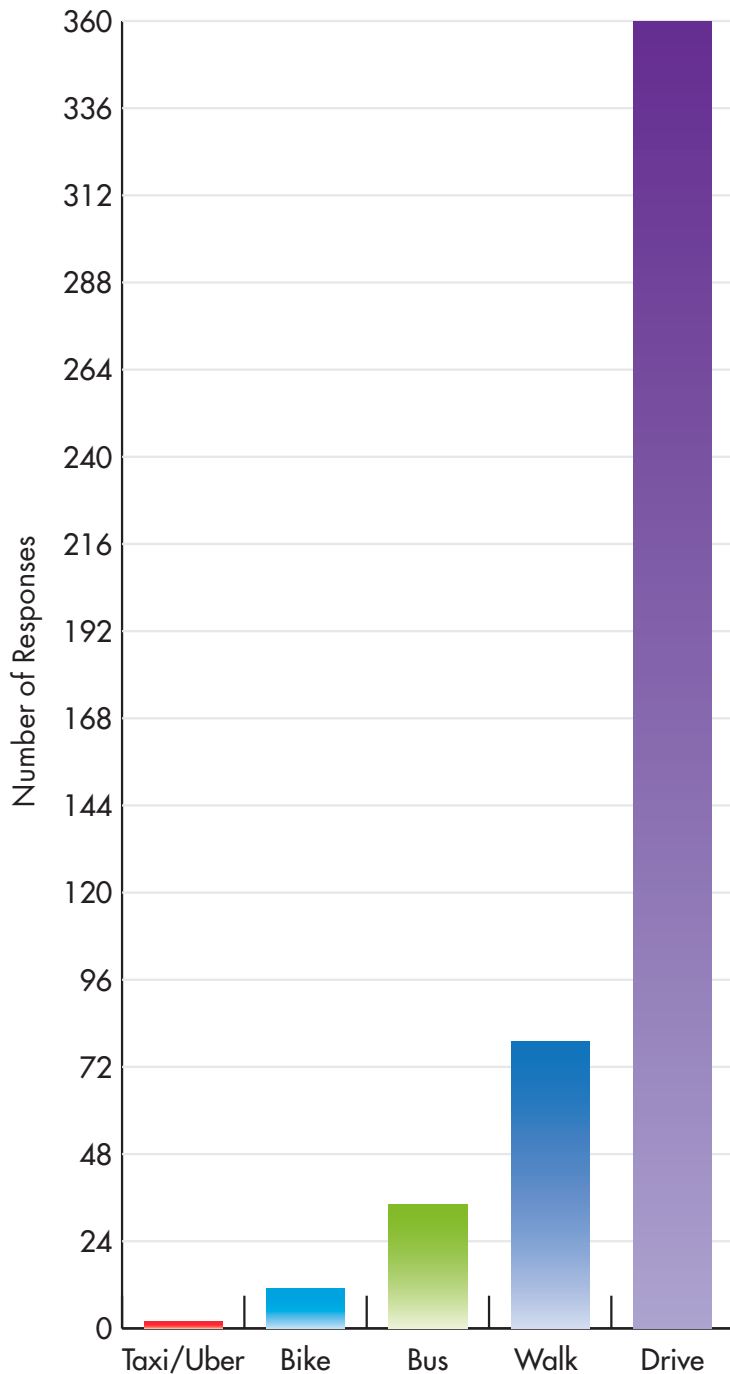
Do You Work Downtown?

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT DOWNTOWN?

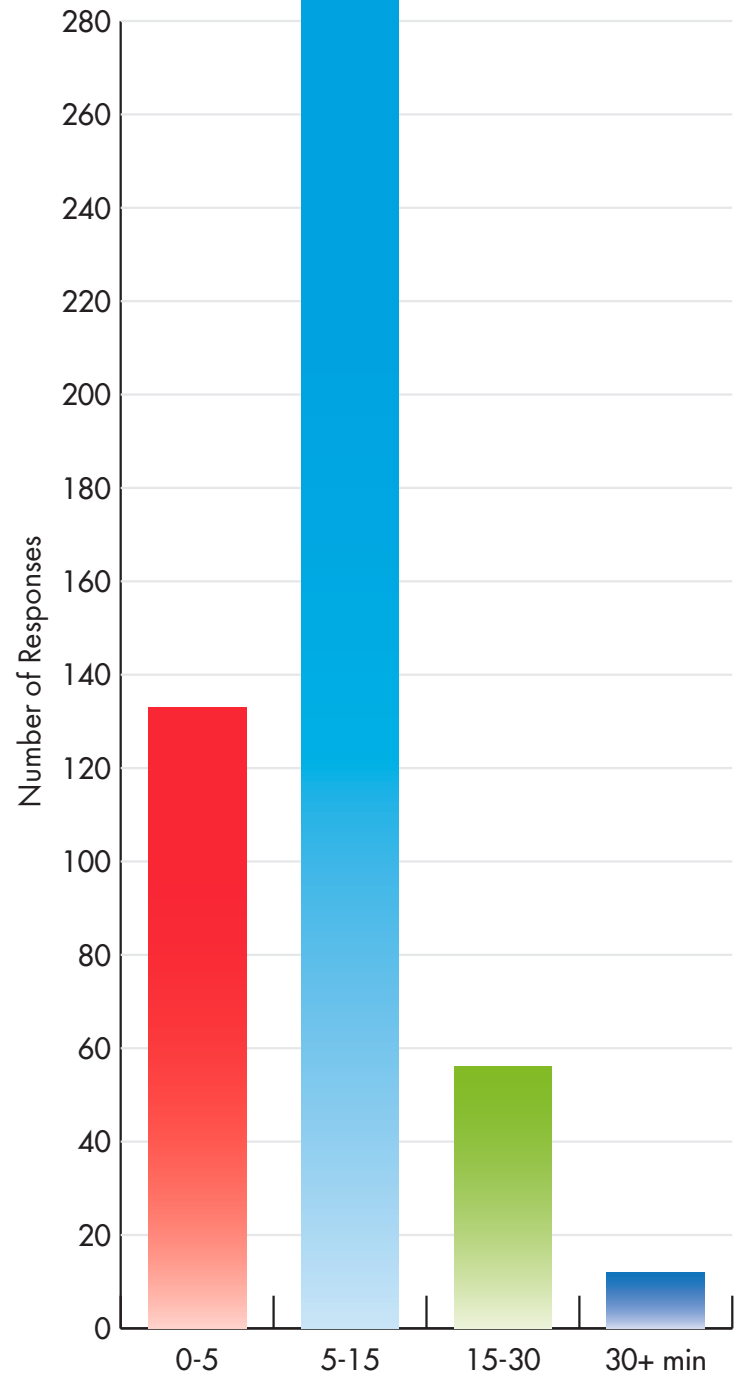


SURVEY STATISTICS

HOW DO YOU GET DOWNTOWN?

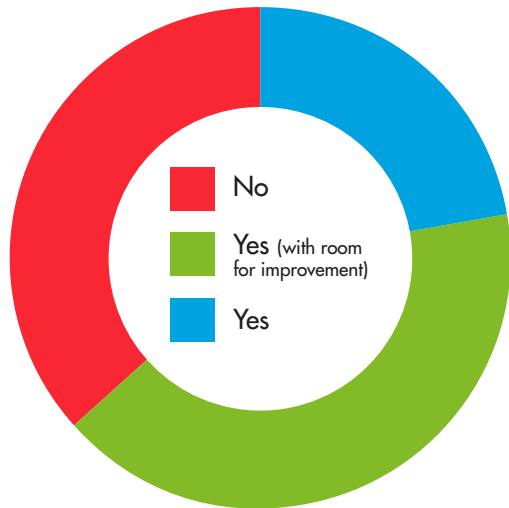


HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE YOU TO GET DOWNTOWN?

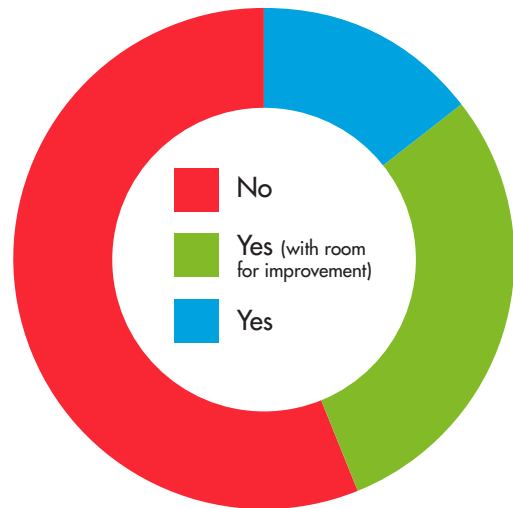


SURVEY STATISTICS

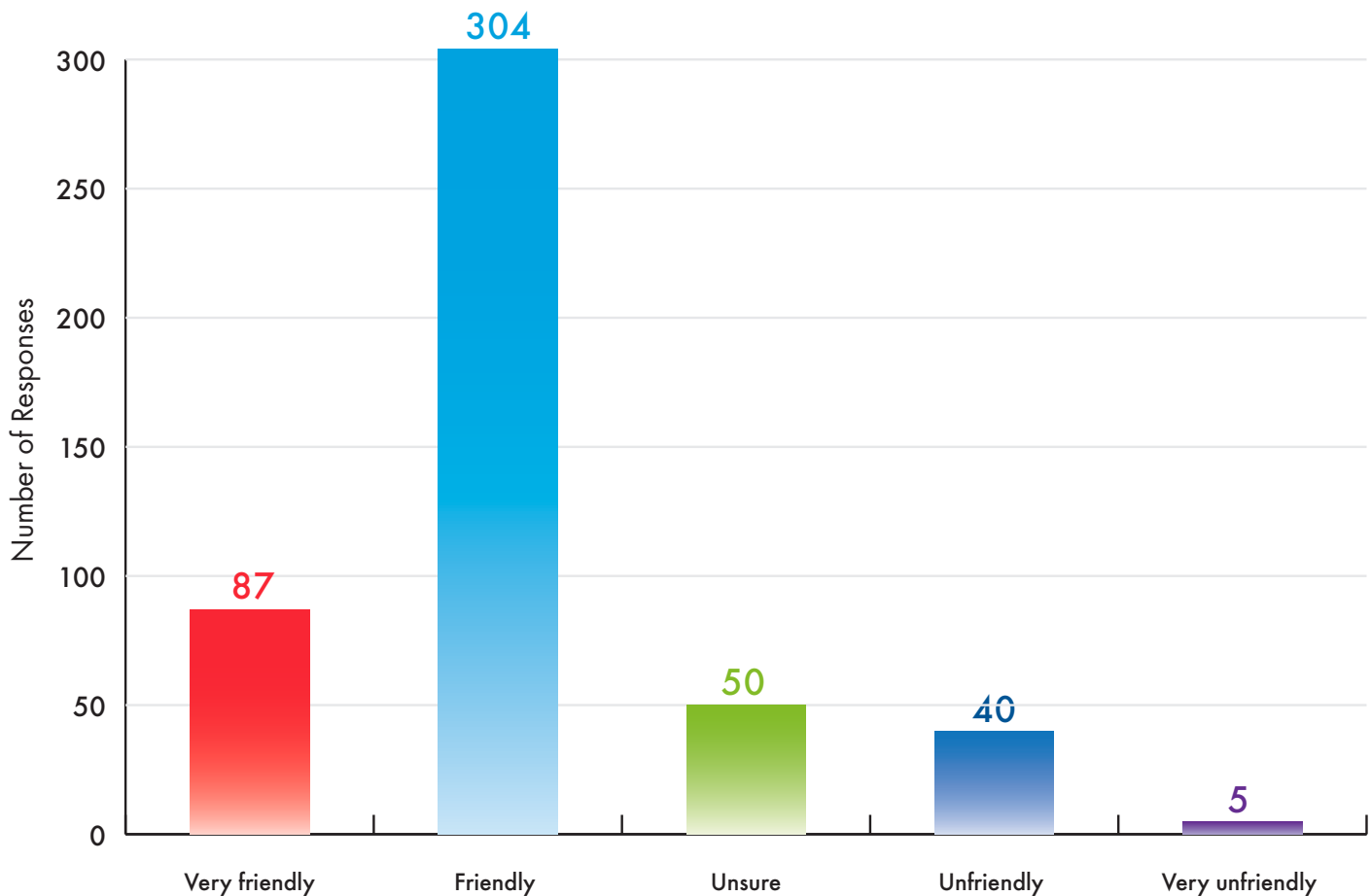
IS THERE ADEQUATE PARKING?



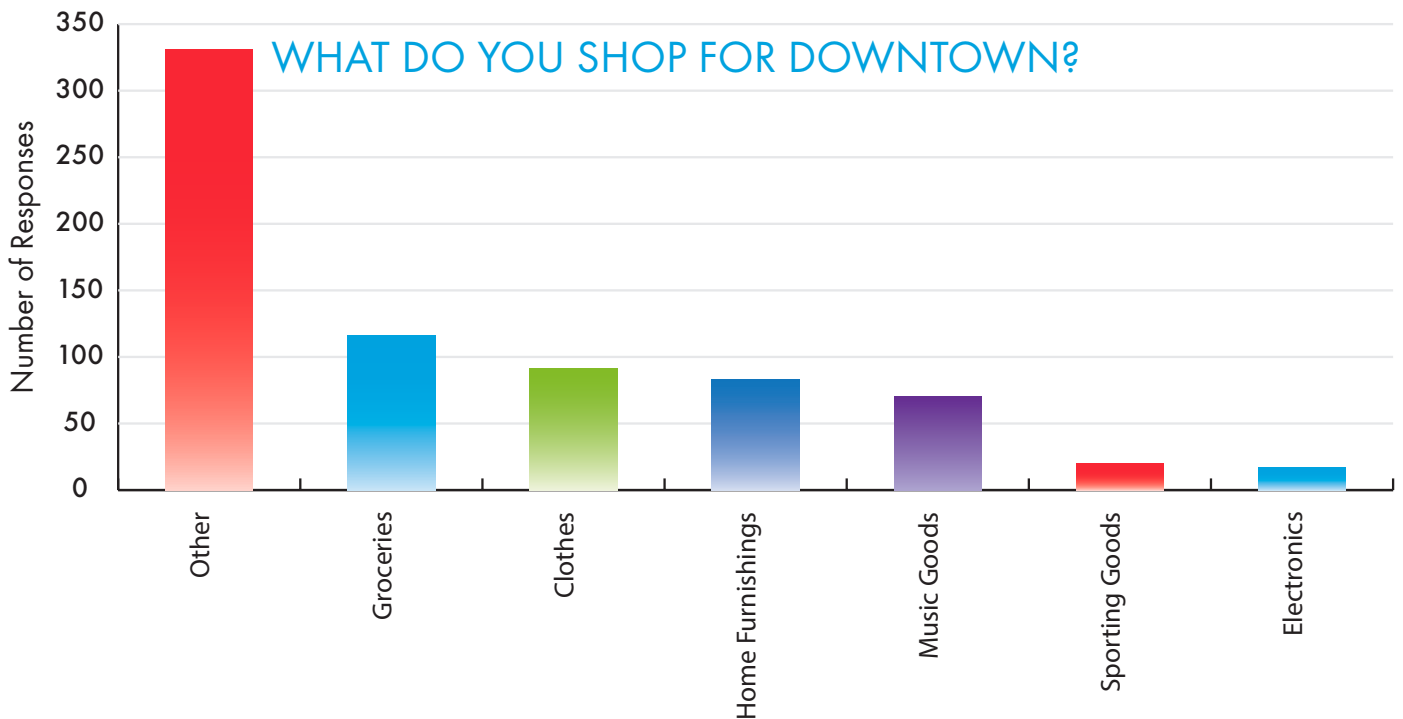
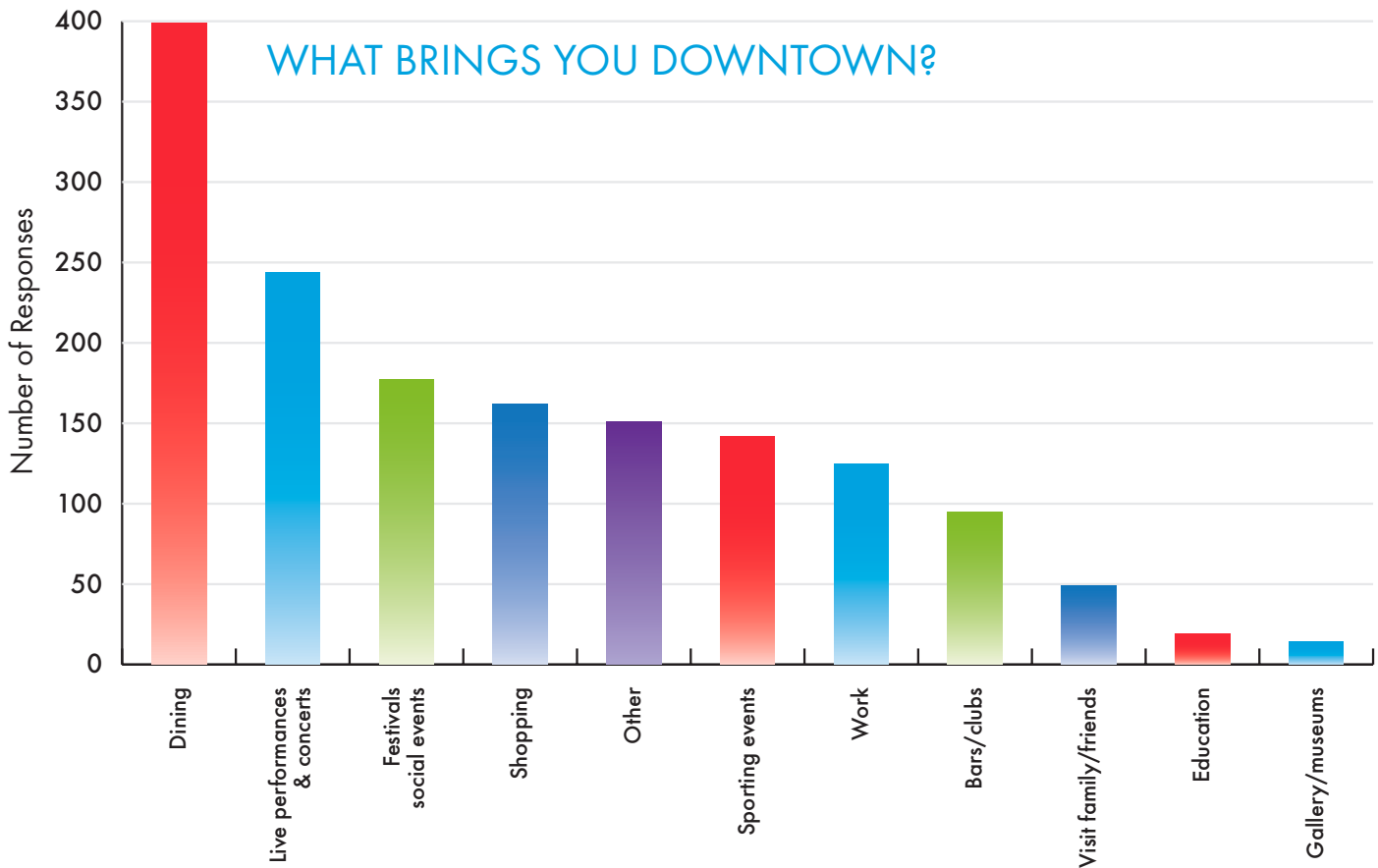
IS THERE ADEQUATE BIKE PARKING?



HOW PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY IS DOWNTOWN?

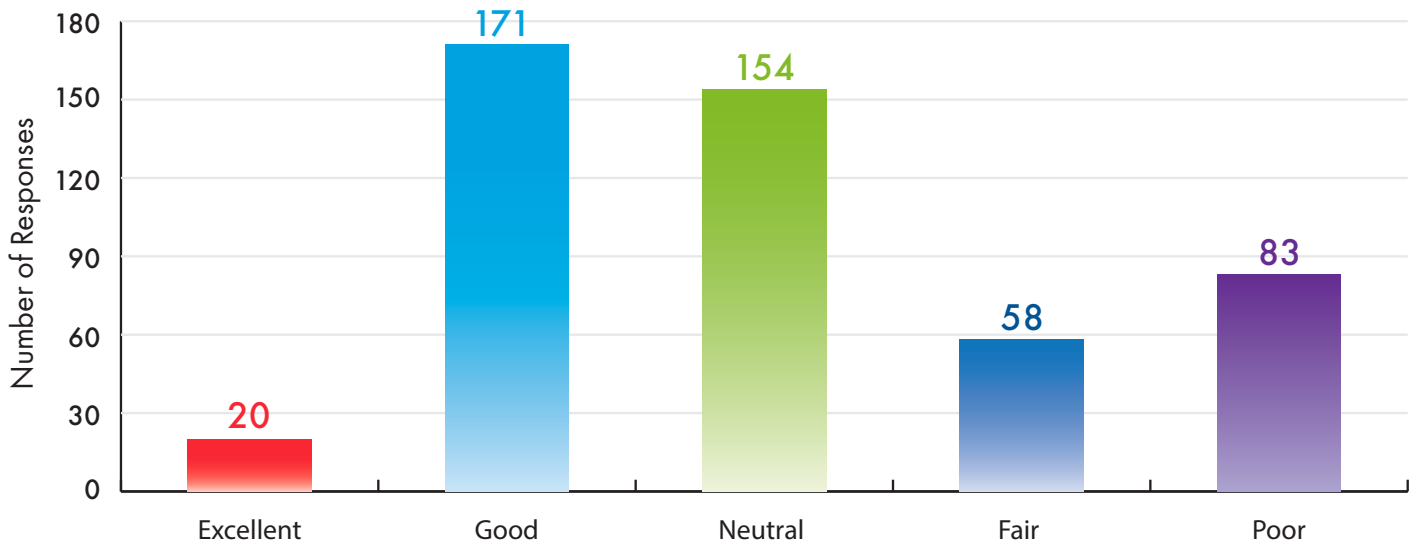


SURVEY STATISTICS

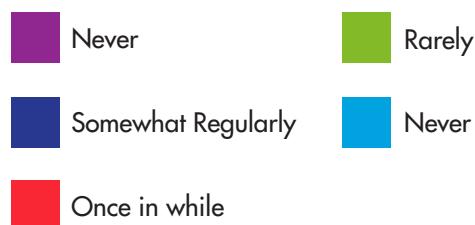


SURVEY STATISTICS

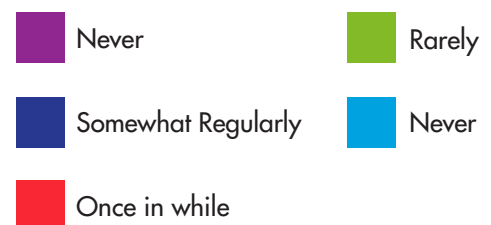
HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE DOWNTOWN SHOPPING EXPERIENCE?



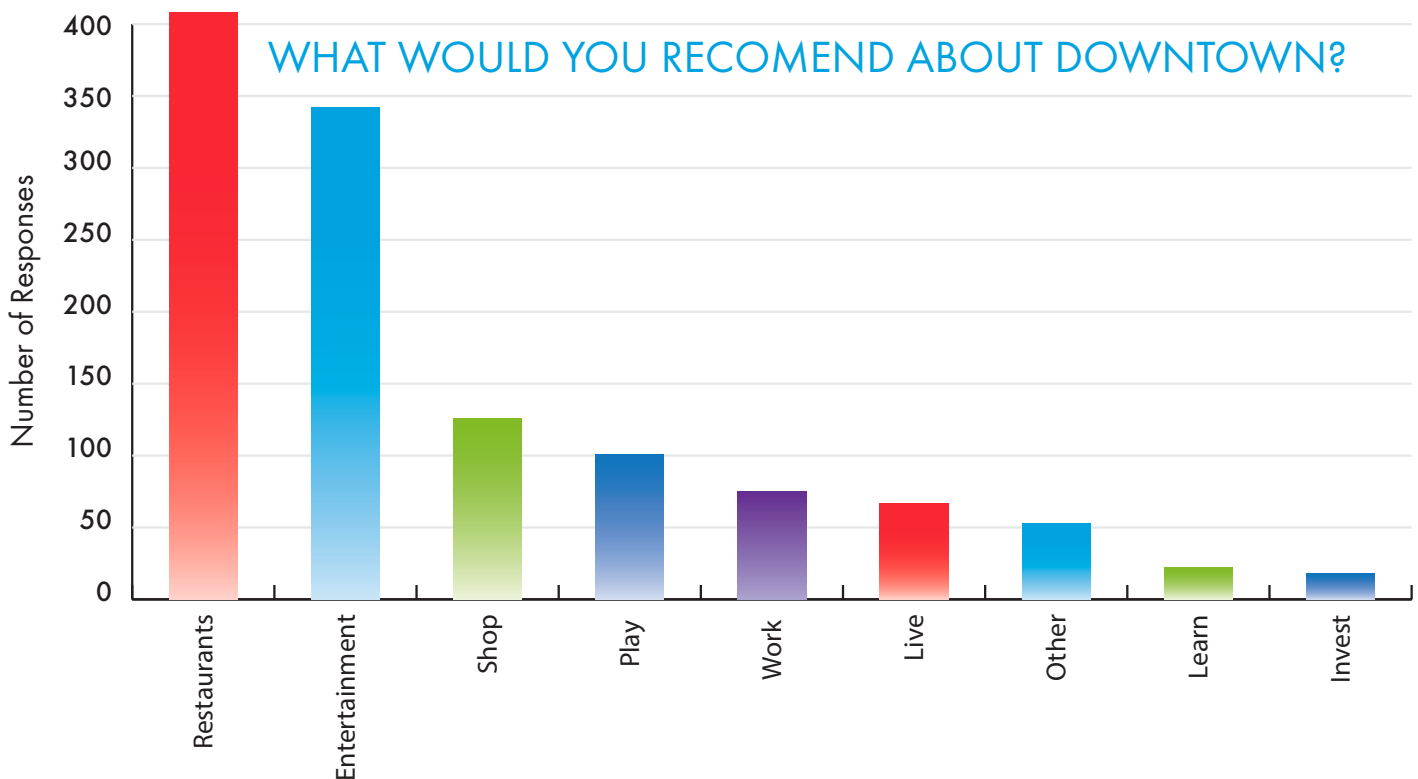
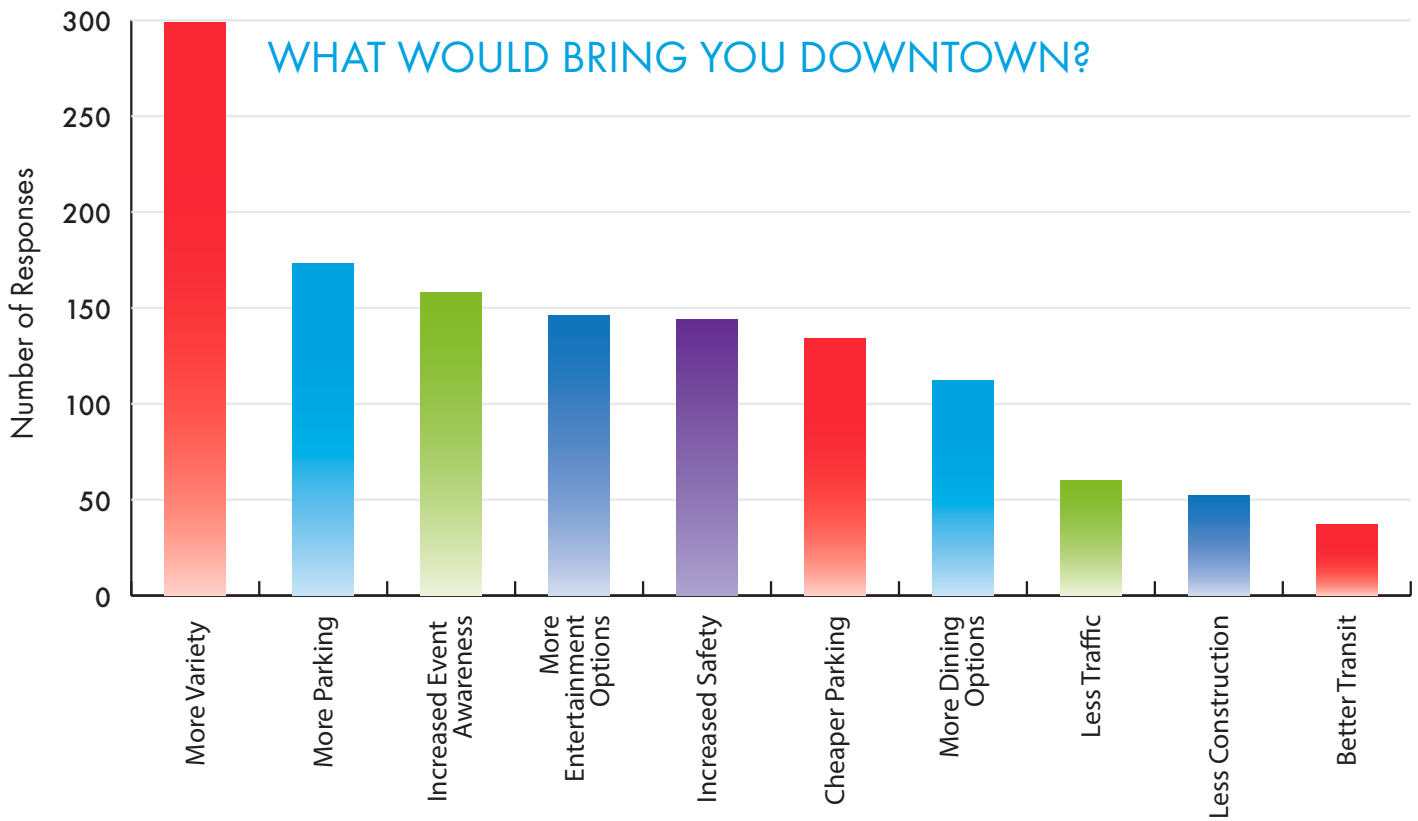
HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND EVENTS AT THE FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE?



HOW OFTEN DO YOU ATTEND EVENTS AT THE MERIDIAN CENTRE?

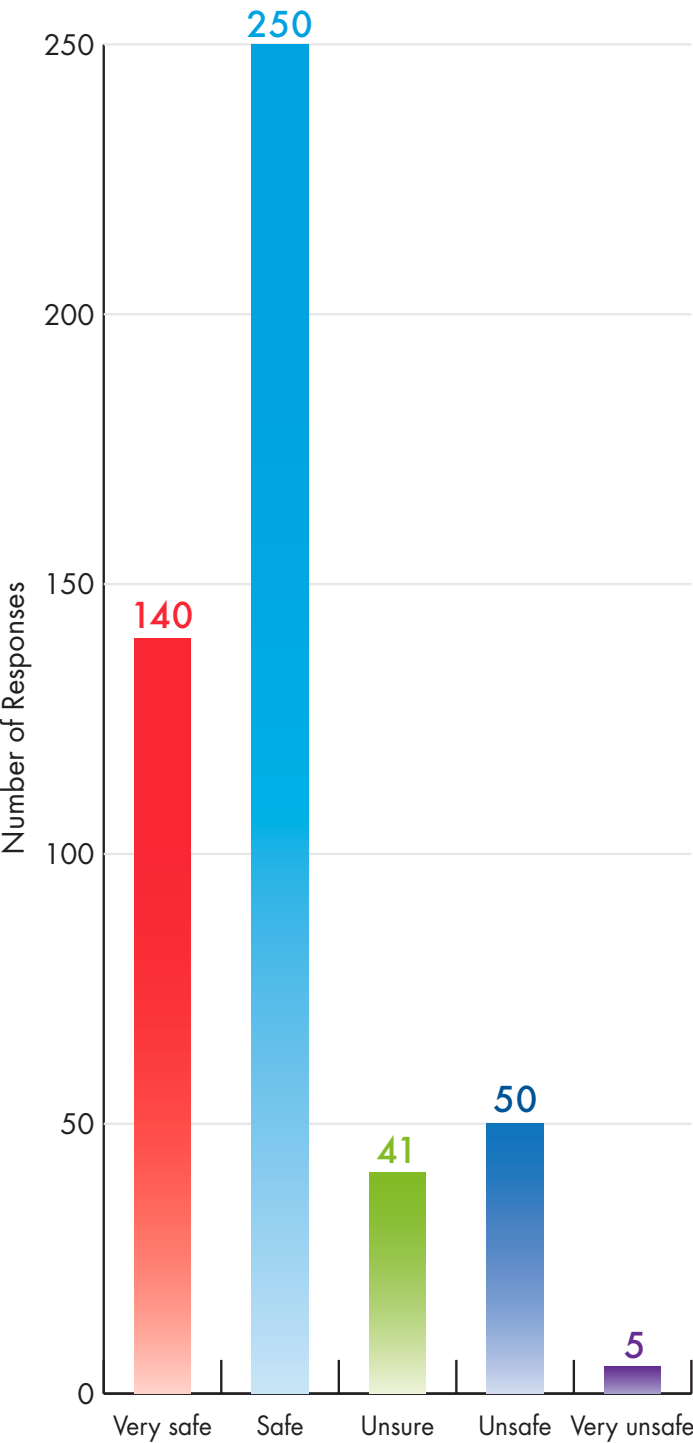


SURVEY STATISTICS

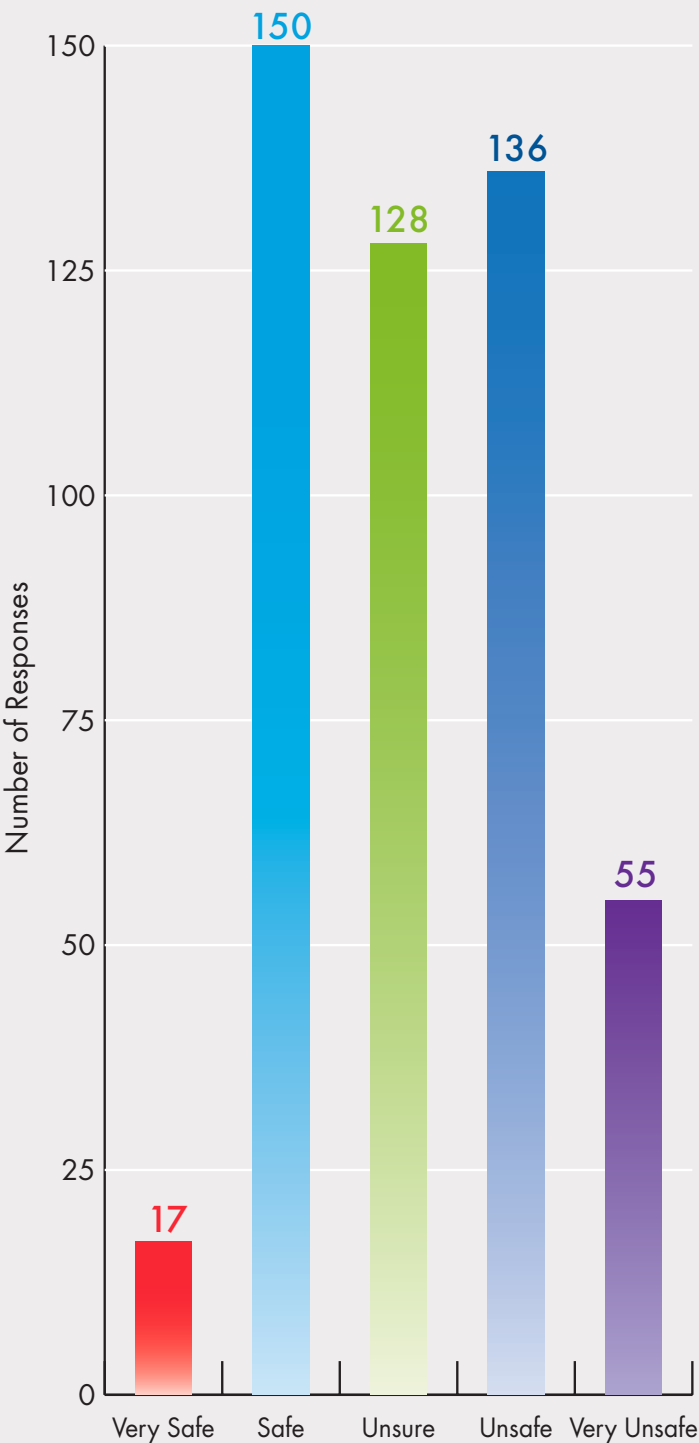


SURVEY STATISTICS

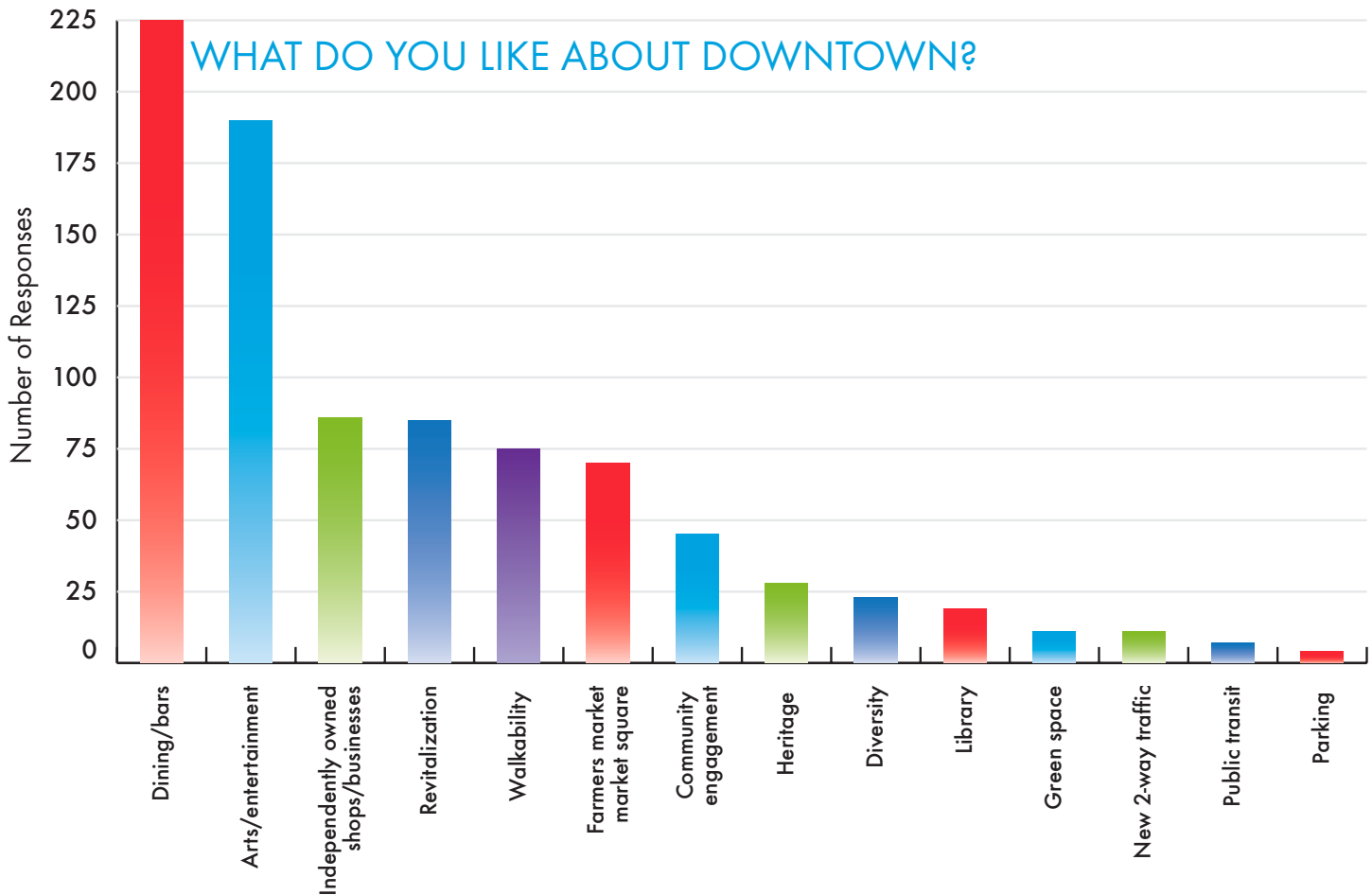
HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL
DOWNTOWN DURING THE DAY?



HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL
DOWNTOWN AT NIGHT?



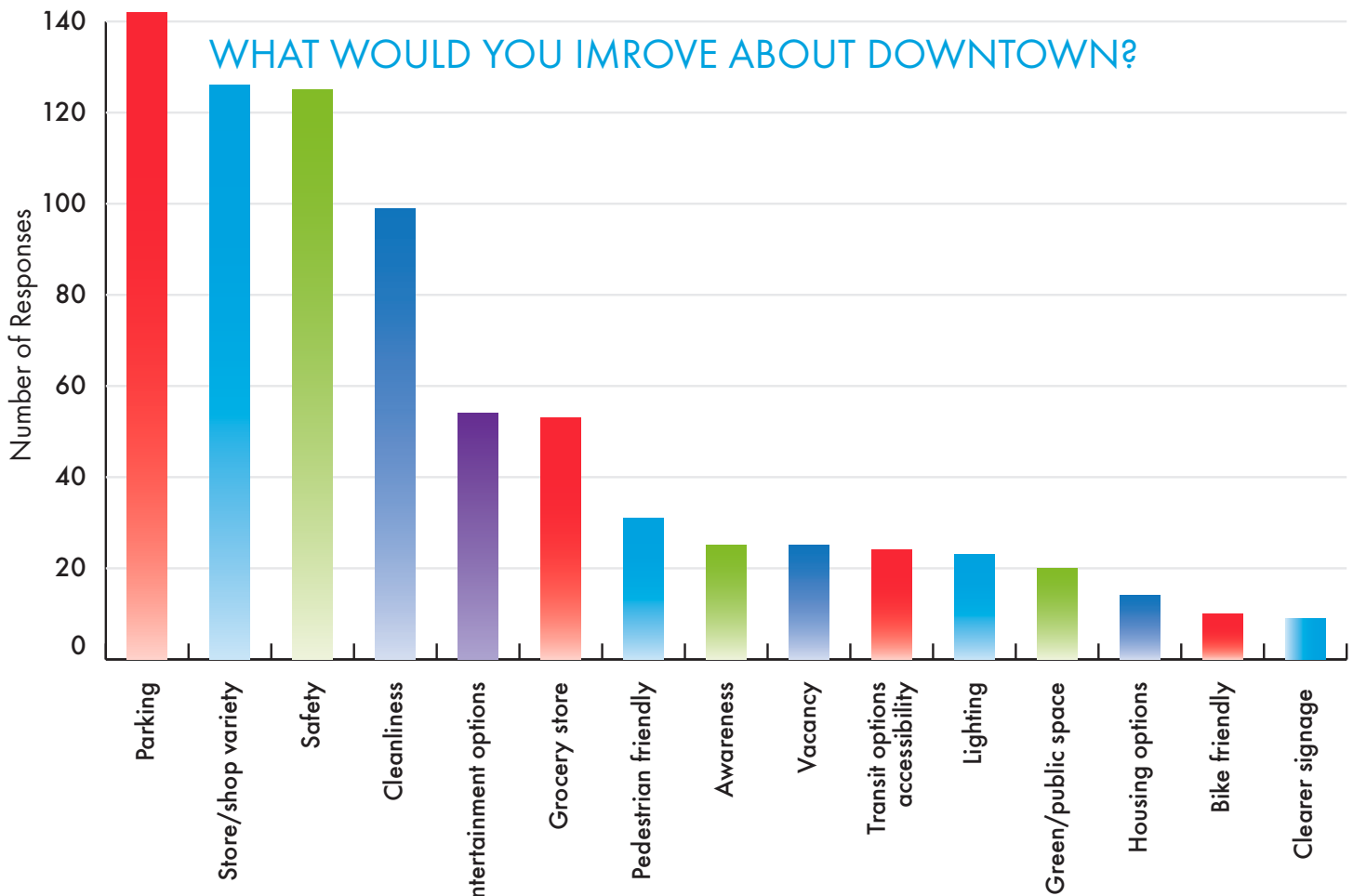
SURVEY STATISTICS



ANALYSIS

Participants were very clear to mention their inclination towards independently owned shops and business rather than commercial chain or “big box” stores. The Downtown area was found to be fairly clean by most. There was a general enjoyment of outdoor patios as well as consistent responses that included great appreciation for the Performing Arts Centre and Meridian Centre. With regard to dining many people made a point of noting how much they enjoyed Beechwood donuts. There was consistent acknowledgment of the larger sidewalks along St. Paul Street and how much easier this has made it for pedestrians. Montebello Park was especially popular. Respondents seem to want more festivals and public events, pedestrian oriented infrastructure as well as continued development and revitalization of the area.

SURVEY STATISTICS



ANALYSIS

Parking was a very common cause of concern amongst many of the participants. It was found to be consistently unavailable, over-priced and inconsistent in terms of rates and fees. There was mention of meters being out of service in particular areas which was a source of frustration for these individuals. Free parking after 5pm instead of 6pm was suggested, as well as free parking throughout the month of December.

Respondents were persistent in their desire for more independently owned businesses, shops, stores and less bars and restaurants. People want to have a more unique shopping experience when they come to downtown and are fairly satisfied with the level of restaurants and bars that are currently available to them.

With regard to safety, over 65% of participants reported feeling less safe Downtown during the night. During the day, the majority of people found the Downtown area to feel safe. Many suggested a greater prevalence of the number of police at night as well as an improvement to the lighting to help alleviate this issue. Interest was also expressed towards the renovation of areas vacant and/or dated buildings which could also help improve safety. The bus station was mentioned by many, noting that in its current state it is unsafe.

WHAT WOULD YOU IMPROVE?

Expanding on common themes identified from the survey respondents, the following list was compiled to reflect these themes and highlight the publics suggested improvements to the Downtown:

- Wider sidewalks
- Increase in seasonal road closures to support special events
- A bike share program and more bike friendly access to Downtown
- Increased flexibility of transit passes and increase night service
- Decrease in homelessness, mental health and drug related events
- Increase maintenance of vacant properties
- Greater opportunity and support for local arts community to build on the First Ontario Performing Arts Centre and the Meridian Centre
- Increase public spaces
- More effective communication of events

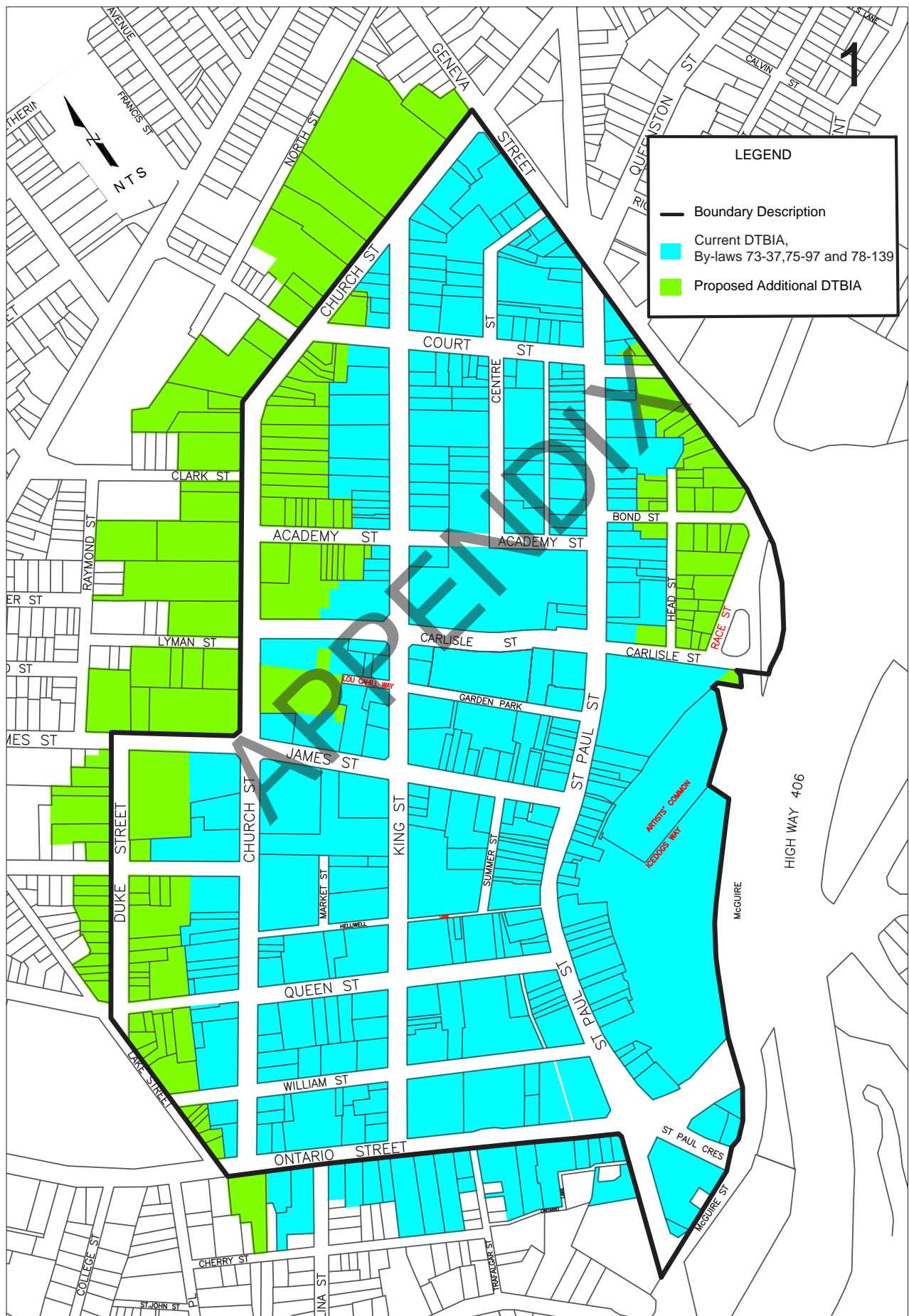
CONCLUSION

This is the first of a series of future reports that will track indicators of Downtown St. Catharines. Since many of these indicators had not been measured previously, it is not possible to draw conclusions on whether they are positive or negative. In some instances, however, data from previous years is available to provide a benchmark. Additionally, matching data is available for the City of St. Catharines as a whole and Niagara Region for both context and comparison purposes.

For those indicators that it is possible to draw conclusions on, there are mixed results. Some indicators shows signs of a healthy Downtown while others illustrate the need for improvement. Many of the economic indicators, such as construction activity, show a high level of investment. Other economic indicators, however, such as store-front and office vacancy rates, are more telling of less activity happening Downtown. Some of the social indicators also contrast with increasing development Downtown, namely income distribution and high proportion of those in core housing need.

It is recommended that this report be taken into consideration when prioritizing actions allocating resources to enhance and improve Downtown St. Catharines.





REFERENCES

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- Maclaren, V. (2001). *Blighted or Booming? An Evaluation of Community Indicators and Their Creation*. Canadian Journal of Urban Research, 275-291.
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Minutes

Tuesday, May 22, 2018

City Hall – Ante Room at 5:00 p.m.

Attendance:

Mike Sullivan, Bruce Sinclair, Elizabeth Krajewski, David Ringler, John Scott, David Cooperman

Guests:

Tisha Polocko

Absent:

Mike Sullivan, David Ringler

Staff Liaison:

Brian Applebee, Steve Bittner

1. **Call meeting to order**
5:10
2. **Additions/Deletions to Agenda**
3. **Motion to Approve the Agenda**
 - Moved: B. Sinclair Carried.
4. **Motion to adopt the minutes of the previous meeting**
 - Moved: B. Sinclair Carried
5. **Presentations (Invited Guests)**
 - None
6. **Business**

7.1 Downtown Parking Study

B. Applebee presented an overview of the draft recommendations for the Downtown Parking Study (attached)

7. **Date of next meeting**

- To be determined.

8. **Motion to Adjourn – 6:05 pm**

Moved: D. Cooperman Carried

Downtown Parking Study – Summary of Recommendations

Current as of May 22, 2018

1. Upgrade the on-street meters and Pay-and-Display meters to smart meter technology.
2. Reduce the on-street maximum parking time limit from 3 hours to 2 hours, except for those patrons who are Accessible Permit Holders, which will remain at 3 hours.
3. Extend weeknight paid parking hours, except at Library, City Hall and the two garages
4. Introduce Saturday paid parking at the on-street meters
5. City staff are recommending a policy for future rate increases for both hourly and monthly parking permits
6. Review, on a site-by-site basis in consultation with the directly affected / adjacent businesses, the potential to convert select loading zones to parking spaces during free parking periods on weekday evenings and weekends in a phased manner to ensure no unintended consequences arise
7. Review, on a site-by-site basis in consultation with the directly affected / adjacent businesses, the potential to convert underutilized on-street paid parking spaces to permit parking spaces
8. Monitor the ongoing population and employment changes and the resulting parking patterns. On a yearly basis, undertake parking utilization studies for publicly available daily parking lots (private and public)
9. Investigate methods to promote Traffic Demand Management (TDM) including improving and supporting pedestrian and cycling routes and facilities, carpooling, car sharing and improving public transit (ensuring transit-friendly road design on key routes, service frequency and reliability)
10. Maintain the existing Special Events Policy and continue implementation of such
11. Continue to review, annually as per the Agreement, the potential for further expansion of the pay-by-phone program
12. Plan for the upgrading of the parking management system at the Ontario Street garage