

*Salisbury Downtown Municipal Service District (MSD)*  
*(Business Improvement District)*

## PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

### Executive Summary

In April 2016 the City of Salisbury engaged downtown property owners, residents and business owners using an online survey to gauge the needs of the Downtown Municipal Service District (MSD) for FY2016-2017. In addition, input received during the 2014 “Beyond the Curb” Focus Group series provided relevant data about needs of the district.

Participants in the survey and focus groups identified the following outcomes and activities as most important:

- More outdoor gathering places and greenspace was a recurring theme across all groups surveyed.
- Property owners and residents responses showed:
  - Improving the overall appearance of downtown (50% and 63%, respectively) and rehabilitating vacant buildings (58% and 50%) should be top priorities.
  - When property owners were asked about *public* improvements, the top priorities that the city should pursue first were public restrooms (58%) and more parking (45%). Residents favored enhanced lighting (50%) and more greenspace or parks (38%).
- Among all responses, other priorities included:
  - Efforts to improve the overall business climate, such as reducing the vacancy rate (45%), recruiting new businesses (49%), marketing the downtown (46%) and increasing daily visitors to the downtown (51%).
- Participants in the focus groups had very favorable opinions about the level and caliber of the arts, theater and cultural activities available in the downtown, as well as restaurants, the Farmers Market and First Friday events.
- Participants in the focus groups generally felt the downtown was safe even at night (fairly safe 43%; very safe 29%), but public safety could be improved with more lighting. This was especially important among residents of downtown.

## Online Survey

- Letter mailed to all property owners in the MSD which included a link to the online survey and instructions on how to obtain a hard copy of the survey.
- Emailed survey link to downtown stakeholders, including property owners, residents and merchants.
- Announced the online survey at the April 2016 meeting of downtown merchants.
- The survey was open for 13 days, beginning on April 22.
- 78 total responses were received.
- Responses were made up of 72% business owners, 58% property owners and 17% residents, with many identifying in more than one group.

## Results and Feedback

- All Responses Combined:
  - When asked about the three most important outcomes that MSD tax proceeds should support, participants favored measures to enhance overall appearance and increase daily visitors and tourism.
  - The top three responses to the most beneficial activities and services included: Support redevelopment of vacant buildings, recruit new businesses and market the downtown.
  - The most important public elements to pursue first included: public restrooms, more parking and outdoor gathering spaces (multi-purpose plazas, outdoor seating).
- Comparison of Responses from Property Owners and Residents:
  - These groups agreed that improving overall appearance of downtown is the most important outcome that MSD tax proceeds should support, in addition to rehabilitation of historic buildings and efforts to reduce vacancy and diversify business activity.
  - Property owners and residents agreed that redevelopment of vacant buildings is the most beneficial activity to support for the growth and vitality of downtown.
  - Property owners identified public restrooms and parking as the most important public elements to pursue first, while residents favored enhanced lighting and more greenspace.

**\*\*\*See Detailed Results at the End of this Report\*\*\***

## **“Beyond the Curb” Focus Groups**

- “Beyond the Curb” focus group series was conducted in 2014 by Downtown Salisbury, Inc. in partnership with the City of Salisbury to solicit feedback from the following stakeholder groups regarding needs of the downtown MSD:
  - Frequent users of the downtown including residents and those who work in the downtown
  - Families with children
  - People who identify as Millennials
  - People who identify as Empty Nesters
- More than 140 persons participated, representing all age groups and stakeholder categories.
- Each stakeholder group responded to several questions about downtown needs using electronic polling with real time results displayed on-screen, followed by discussion break-out groups.
- Participants identified “likes”, what is working, what is missing and what needs to change.

## **Results and Feedback**

### Top Responses:

- Greenspace
- Open space
- Bike-able (bike share)/Multi model
- Address the issue of walkability
- Children’s activity spaces
- Dog park
- Wider sidewalks
- Clean
- Gathering places – more than benches
- Lighting
- Public restrooms
- Traffic Calming
- A more walkable, attractive and pedestrian friendly downtown

### Which missing elements should be pursued FIRST? (Top three responses)

- Public space - Green space, outdoor dining, restrooms
- Lighting - Safety concerns
- Diverse merchants - Dance, aerobic classes, Men’s retail, unisex fashion retail, art store, high end retail, some small chain stores, etc.

**\*\*\*See Detailed Results at the End of this Report\*\*\***

## ***Online Survey – Detailed Results***

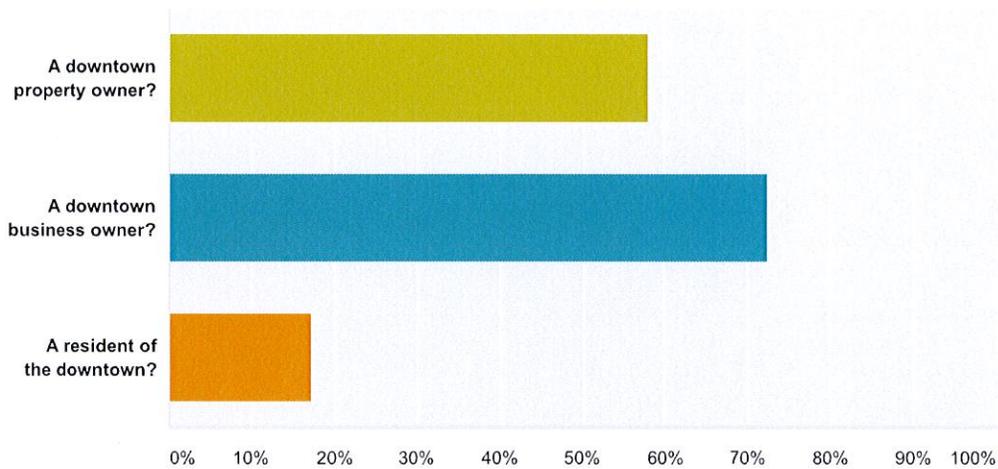
***The following pages include two sets of results:***

***A. All Responses***

***B. Property Owners and Residents***

### Q1 Are you.....(select all that apply):

Answered: 69 Skipped: 9

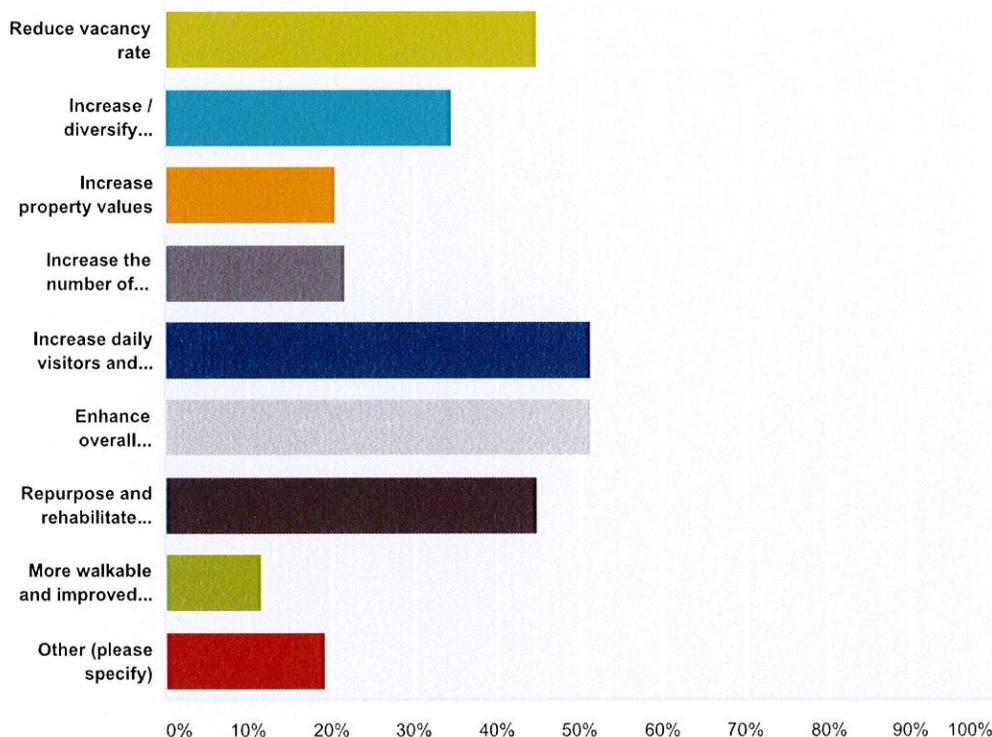


Answer Choices	Responses
A downtown property owner?	57.97% 40
A downtown business owner?	72.46% 50
A resident of the downtown?	17.39% 12
<b>Total Respondents: 69</b>	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Interested in downtown	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	President of the Chamber of Commerce	5/3/2016 5:12 PM
3	nearby resident	5/3/2016 10:23 AM
4	a city resident - not downtown	5/3/2016 8:31 AM
5	Involved with many downtown organizations	5/2/2016 6:06 PM
6	Also an employee in downtown.	5/2/2016 5:00 PM
7	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
8	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM
9	Downtown employee	4/29/2016 9:29 AM
10	A resident on the downtown border, but not levied the MSD tax.	4/29/2016 9:05 AM
11	Local business owner outside downtown area.	4/27/2016 6:32 AM
12	Downtown Business Representative	4/26/2016 4:36 PM
13	I work downtown	4/26/2016 4:29 PM
14	Work in downtown	4/26/2016 4:24 PM
15	Run a business downtown	4/26/2016 4:13 PM

### Q2 In your opinion, what are the three (3) most important outcomes that MSD tax proceeds should support?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Reduce vacancy rate	44.87% 35
Increase / diversify business activity	34.62% 27
Increase property values	20.51% 16
Increase the number of residents living downtown	21.79% 17
Increase daily visitors and tourism	51.28% 40
Enhance overall appearance	51.28% 40
Repurpose and rehabilitate historic buildings	44.87% 35
More walkable and improved transportation options	11.54% 9
Other (please specify)	19.23% 15

**Total Respondents: 78**

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	DO NOT GIVE PARKING TICKETS!!!!	5/4/2016 12:29 PM
2	Entrepreneurial Development support	5/3/2016 5:12 PM

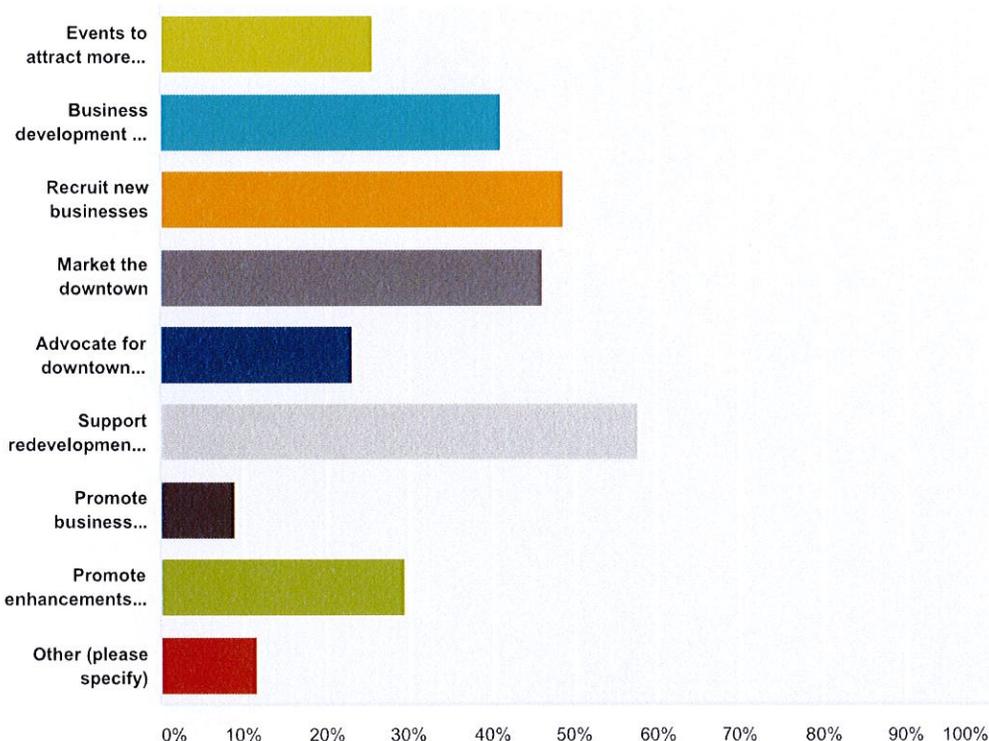
## Downtown Salisbury Municipal Service District

SurveyMonkey

3	Parking	5/3/2016 11:46 AM
4	more police presence	5/3/2016 11:38 AM
5	greenspace in the MSD, without it their are limits to urban living	5/3/2016 10:47 AM
6	improved overall appearance of the property fronts (more friendly and alive like Stitchin' Post).	5/3/2016 8:31 AM
7	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
8	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM
9	promotions and events, the hiring of a manager for ds.	4/28/2016 2:52 PM
10	If the organization increases visitors/tourism, reduces vacancy, diversifies business activity, enhances appearance and makes DT pedestrian friendly, It will ultimately increase property values. It is not 3...It is all of the above. DSI needs to be engaged on all of it.	4/28/2016 12:32 PM
11	Bring jobs/employees to the downtown by recruiting employers willing to locate here.	4/28/2016 11:37 AM
12	Promotion of Downtown buinesses and attractions	4/28/2016 11:29 AM
13	Parking and Restroom availability.	4/28/2016 9:57 AM
14	DSI should be the most important outcome of this tax but under current leadership it is not.	4/27/2016 3:18 PM
15	Funds to support events	4/26/2016 4:33 PM

### Q3 In your opinion, which three (3) services and activities would be most beneficial for the growth and vitality of the downtown?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Events to attract more people downtown	25.64% 20
Business development / support for existing businesses	41.03% 32
Recruit new businesses	48.72% 38
Market the downtown	46.15% 36
Advocate for downtown interests	23.08% 18
Support redevelopment of vacant buildings	57.69% 45
Promote business diversity	8.97% 7
Promote enhancements that make the downtown more livable	29.49% 23
Other (please specify)	11.54% 9

Total Respondents: 78

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	First Fridays; get rid of Paula Bohland	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	Entrepreneurial Development support	5/3/2016 5:12 PM

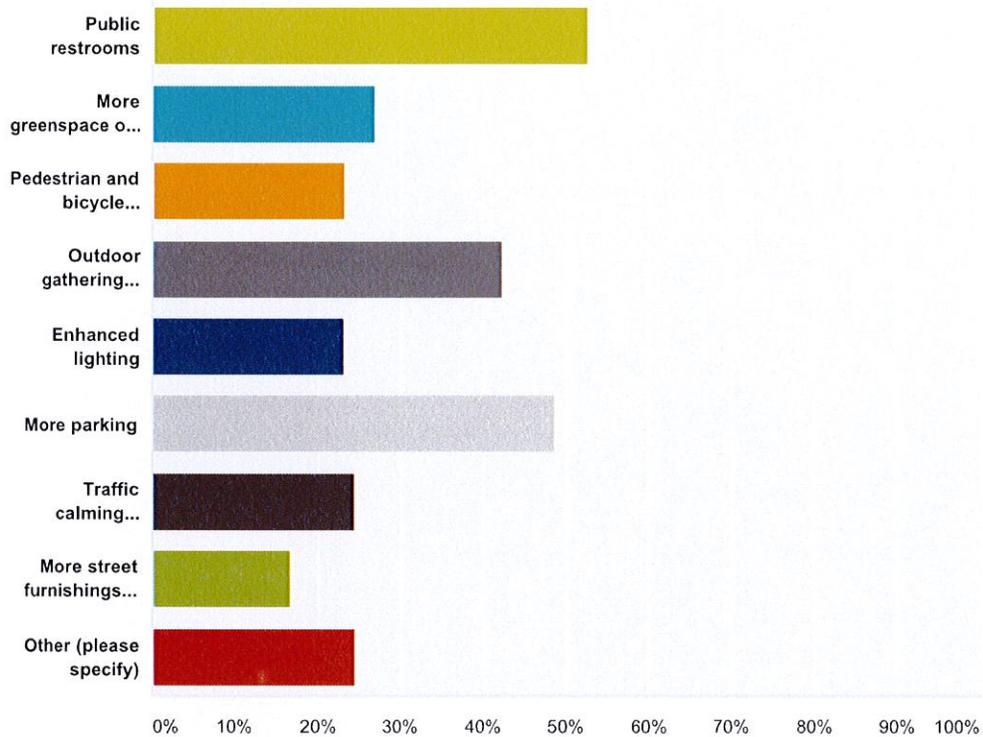
## Downtown Salisbury Municipal Service District

SurveyMonkey

3	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
4	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM
5	More parking	4/28/2016 2:12 PM
6	The Main Street Program is supposed to be all of the above done well, simultaneously. A qualified director and a board that represents the those paying the tax is the first step. We are not getting a return on the MSD \$ spent.	4/28/2016 12:32 PM
7	Bring jobs/employees to the downtown by recruiting employers willing to locate here.	4/28/2016 11:37 AM
8	Find a more effective director for DSI who puts the downtown interests above their own personal properties directly outside the MSD.	4/27/2016 3:18 PM
9	Aesthetic(sidewalk, painted light posts); Infrastructure will sport additional growth	4/27/2016 5:56 AM

### Q4 Which three (3) public elements should the City of Salisbury pursue first?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
Public restrooms	52.56% 41
More greenspace or parks	26.92% 21
Pedestrian and bicycle improvements	23.08% 18
Outdoor gathering places (multi-purpose plazas, outdoor seating)	42.31% 33
Enhanced lighting	23.08% 18
More parking	48.72% 38
Traffic calming measures	24.36% 19
More street furnishings (trash and recycle bins, bike racks)	16.67% 13
Other (please specify)	24.36% 19

**Total Respondents: 78**

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	Less downtown slumlords; No colored lights	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	Free WiFi	5/3/2016 5:12 PM
3	Clean up buildings ie awnings, make the buildings pretty, not worn and old looking	5/3/2016 1:34 PM

## Downtown Salisbury Municipal Service District

SurveyMonkey

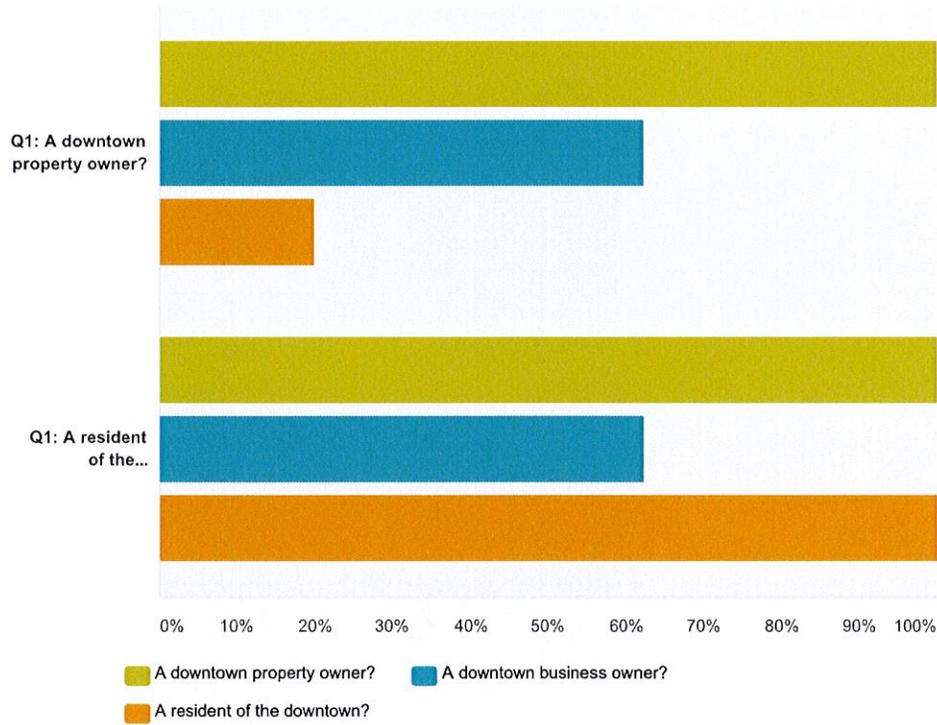
4	more police presence	5/3/2016 11:38 AM
5	engaging shop owners in simple atmosphere enhancement with plants, lights, seating, art...	5/3/2016 8:31 AM
6	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
7	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM
8	Sidewalk maintainence	4/28/2016 5:02 PM
9	Grocery store	4/28/2016 4:43 PM
10	deal with the loitering vagrants and undesirables and enforce the minimum building standards ordinance	4/28/2016 2:52 PM
11	Don't ask the merchants and property owners, ask the customers. I want to do whatever they think will make them want to linger, return and spend money. They hold the purse strings to our success.	4/28/2016 12:32 PM
12	Increased police presence beginning at dusk to enhance the feeling of safety.	4/28/2016 11:37 AM
13	Reduction in crime/increase in police presence	4/27/2016 8:16 PM
14	Keep merchants out of parking spaces	4/27/2016 10:45 AM
15	Common Sidewalks thru downtown; Public Restrooms will be a problem	4/27/2016 5:56 AM
16	clean up what we have. Hide trashcans, get rid of advertising boxes, replace ripped awnings, improve the look of vacant storefronts, clean the sidewalks, paint the rysty light poles, improve the park by integro, keep the sidewalks and curbs clean	4/26/2016 6:04 PM
17	promote historical sites	4/26/2016 5:30 PM
18	Fix sidewalks and beautify the streetscape	4/26/2016 4:29 PM
19	Designated courthouse parking	4/26/2016 4:16 PM





**Q1 Are you....(select all that apply):**

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0

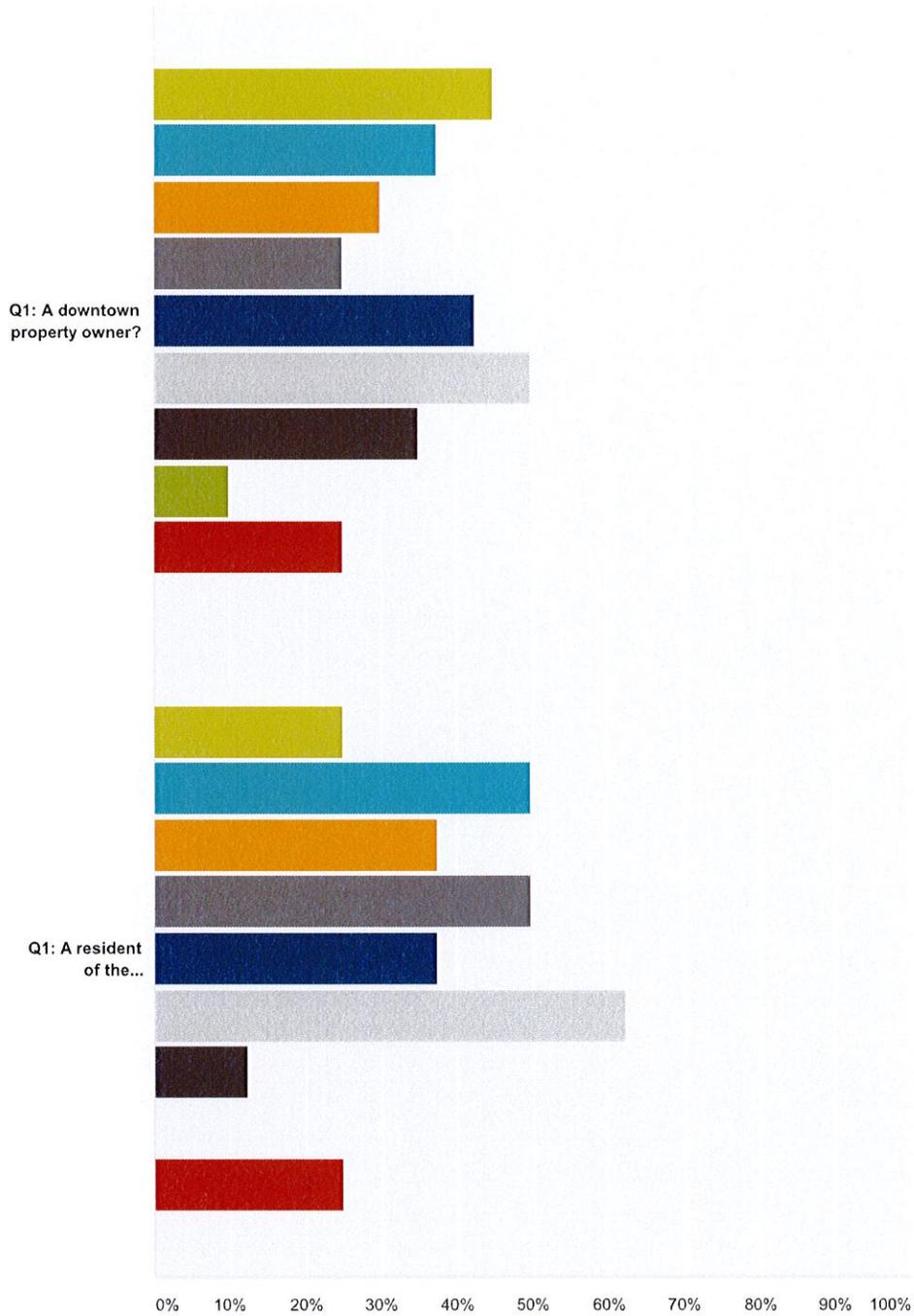


	A downtown property owner?	A downtown business owner?	A resident of the downtown?	Total
Q1: A downtown property owner?	100.00% 40	62.50% 25	20.00% 8	182.50% 73
Q1: A resident of the downtown?	100.00% 8	62.50% 5	100.00% 8	52.50% 21
<b>Total Respondents</b>	40	25	8	40
		<b>Other (please specify)</b>		<b>Total</b>
Q1: A downtown property owner?			4	4
Q1: A resident of the downtown?			2	2

#	Q1: A downtown property owner?	Date
1	Interested in downtown	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
3	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM
4	A resident on the downtown border, but not levied the MSD tax.	4/29/2016 9:05 AM
#	Q1: A resident of the downtown?	Date
1	Interested in downtown	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	Residential property owner should not pay this tax.	4/29/2016 7:30 PM

**Q2 In your opinion, what are the three (3) most important outcomes that MSD tax proceeds should support?**

*Answers: 17 | Surveyed: 17*



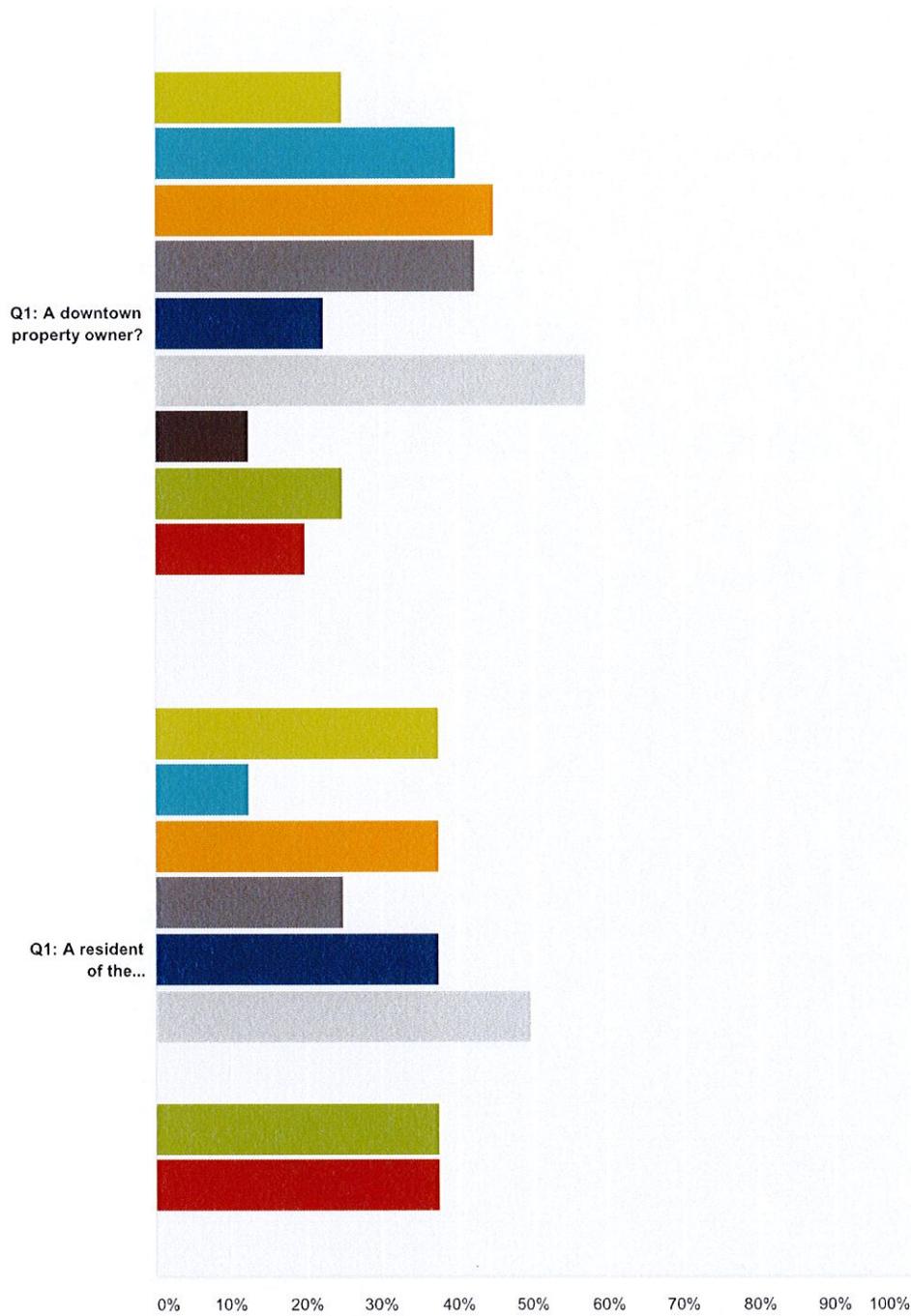
- Reduce vacancy rate
  Increase / diversify business activity
  Increase property values
- Increase the number of residents living downtown
  Increase daily visitors and tourism
- Enhance overall appearance
  Repurpose and rehabilitate historic buildings
- More walkable and improved transportation options
  Other (please specify)

	Reduce vacancy rate	Increase / diversify business activity	Increase property values	Increase the number of residents living downtown	Increase daily visitors and tourism	Enhance overall appearance	Repurpose and rehabilitate historic buildings	More walkable and improved transportation options	Other (please specify)	Total
Q1: A downtown property owner?	45.00%	37.50%	30.00%	25.00%	42.50%	50.00%	35.00%	10.00%	25.00%	300.00%
	18	15	12	10	17	20	14	4	10	120
Q1: A resident of the downtown?	25.00%	50.00%	37.50%	50.00%	37.50%	62.50%	12.50%	0.00%	25.00%	60.00%
	2	4	3	4	3	5	1	0	2	24
<b>Total Respondents</b>	18	15	12	10	17	20	14	4	10	40

#	Q1: A downtown property owner?	Date
1	Parking	5/3/2016 11:46 AM
2	greenspace in the MSD, without it their are limits to urban living	5/3/2016 10:47 AM
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6	If the organization increases visitors/tourism, reduces vacancy, diversifies business activity, enhances appearance and makes DT pedestrian friendly, It will ultimately increase property values. It is not 3...It is all of the above. DSI needs to be engaged on all of it.	4/28/2016 12:32 PM
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**Q3 In your opinion, which three (3) services and activities would be most beneficial for the growth and vitality of the downtown?**

ANSWER HERE



- Events to attract more people downtown
- Business development / support for existing businesses
- Recruit new businesses
- Market the downtown
- Advocate for downtown interests
- Support redevelopment of vacant buildings
- Promote business diversity
- Promote enhancements that make the downtown more livable
- Other (please specify)

Events to attract more people downtown	Business development / support for existing businesses	Recruit new businesses	Market the downtown	Advocate for downtown interests	Support redevelopment of vacant buildings	Promote business diversity	Promote enhancements that make the downtown more livable	Other (please specify)	Total
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Downtown Salisbury Municipal Service District

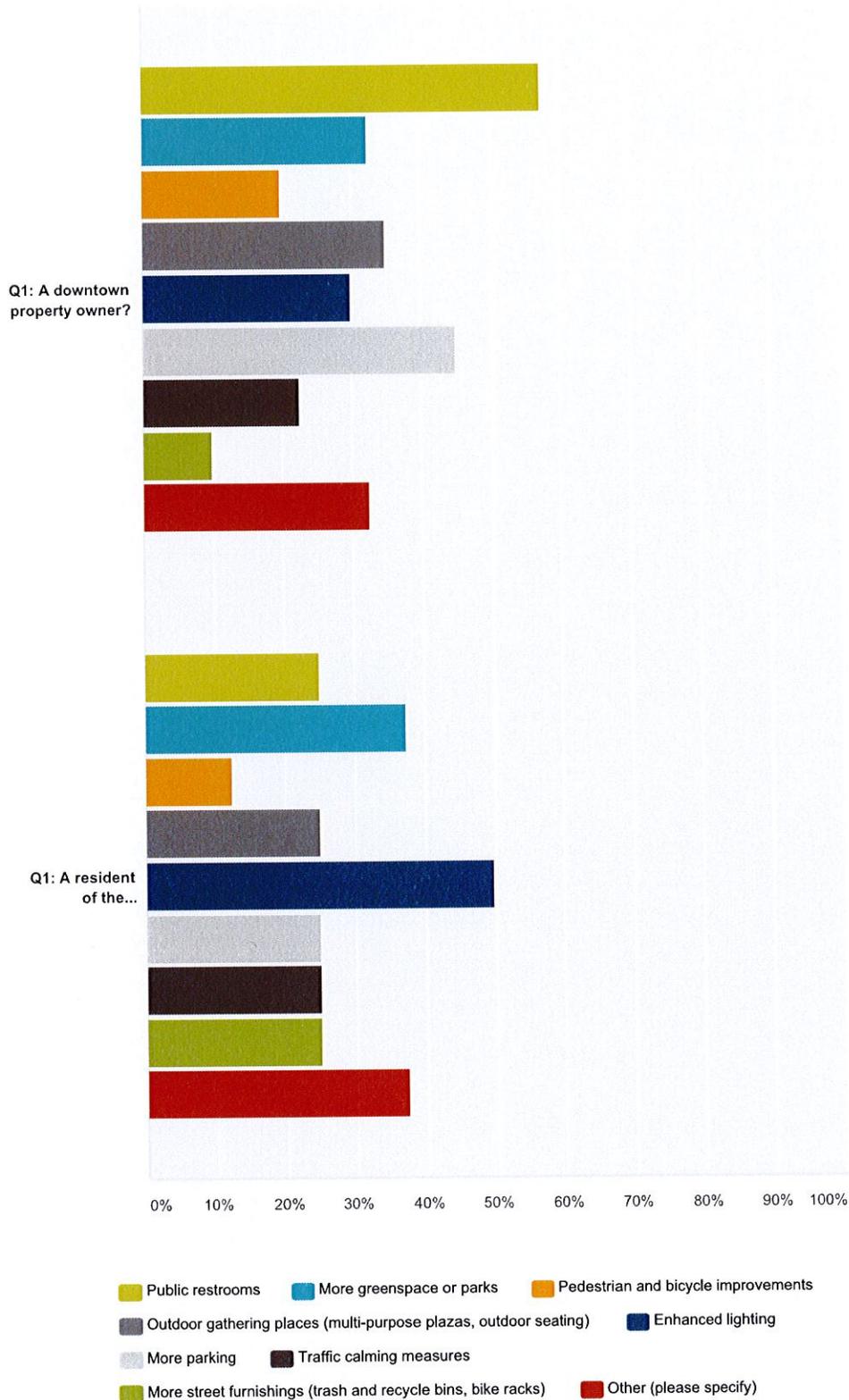
SurveyMonkey

Q1: A downtown property owner?	25.00%	40.00%	45.00%	42.50%	22.50%	57.50%	12.50%	25.00%	20.00%	290.00%
	10	16	18	17	9	23	5	10	8	116
Q1: A resident of the downtown?	37.50%	12.50%	37.50%	25.00%	37.50%	50.00%	0.00%	37.50%	37.50%	55.00%
	3	1	3	2	3	4	0	3	3	22
<b>Total Respondents</b>	10	16	18	17	9	23	5	10	8	40

#	Q1: A downtown property owner?	Date
1	First Fridays; get rid of Paula Bohland	5/4/2016 9:39 PM
2	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3saU5racsGE</a>	5/2/2016 1:15 PM
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### Q4 Which three (3) public elements should the City of Salisbury pursue first?

Answered: 40 Skipped: 0

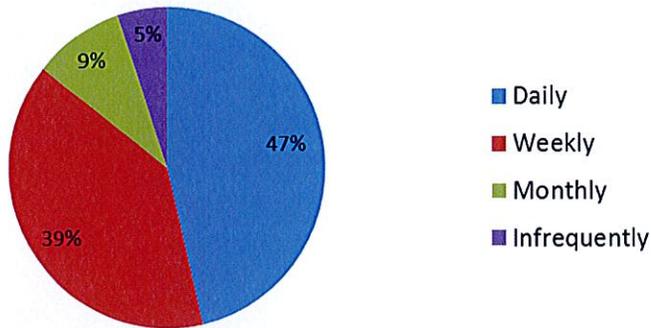


	Public restrooms	More greenspace or parks	Pedestrian and bicycle improvements	Outdoor gathering places (multi-purpose plazas, outdoor seating)	Enhanced lighting	More parking	Traffic calming measures	More street furnishings (trash and recycle bins, bike racks)	Other (please specify)	Total
Q1: A downtown property owner?	57.50%	32.50%	20.00%	35.00%	30.00%	45.00%	22.50%	10.00%	32.50%	285.00%
	23	13	8	14	12	18	9	4	13	114
Q1: A resident of the downtown?	25.00%	37.50%	12.50%	25.00%	50.00%	25.00%	25.00%	25.00%	37.50%	52.50%
	2	3	1	2	4	2	2	2	3	21
<b>Total Respondents</b>	23	13	8	14	12	18	9	4	13	40

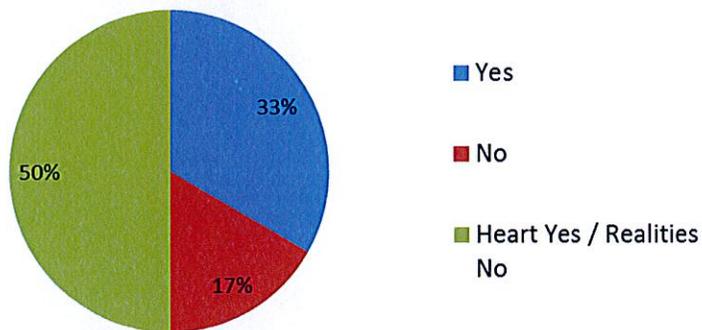
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## ***“Beyond the Curb” Focus Groups – Detailed Results***

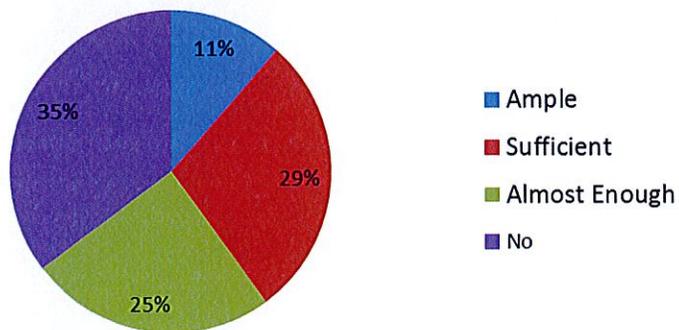
### How often do you use Downtown?



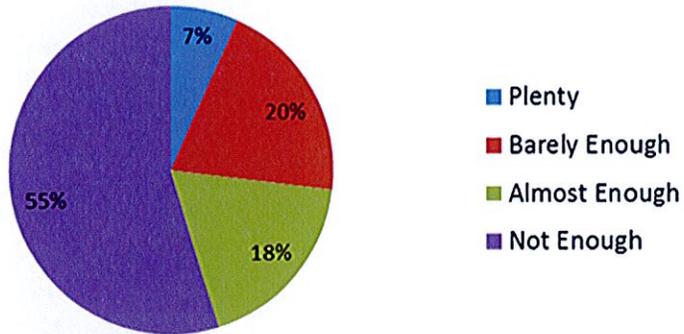
### Would you live in Downtown?



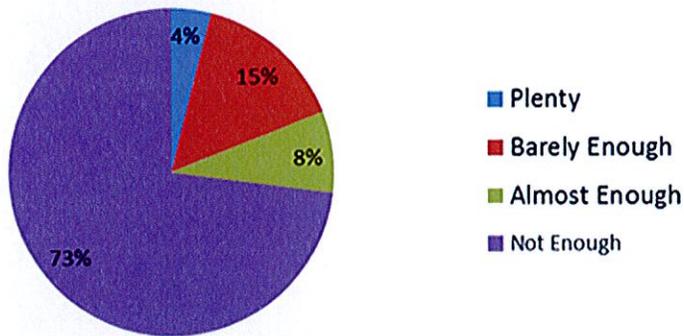
### Is there enough parking?



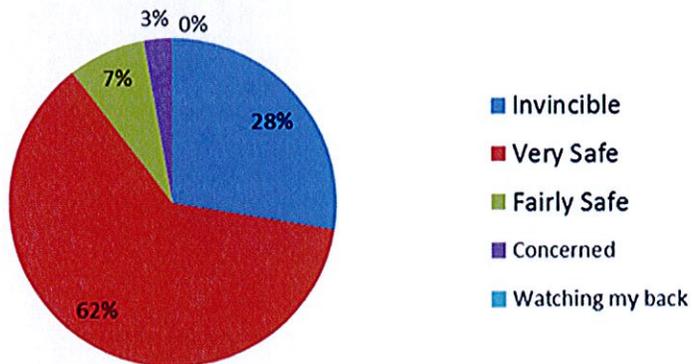
### Is there enough open/public space?



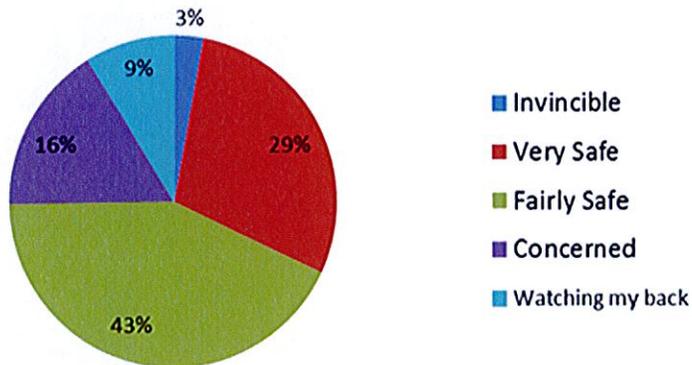
### Is there enough green space?



### How safe do you feel during DAY?



## How safe do you feel at NIGHT?



### Discussion Group Summaries

#### What is working?

- First Friday's/ Extended hours during First Friday events
- Theater/Arts/Symphony
- Restaurants and Farmer's Market

#### What needs to be improved?

- Extended store hours/Sunday hours
- Accessibility (walkability, bike-friendly, green space, public space, lighting, youth-friendly activities)
- Communication (marketing & promotions, signage)

#### What is missing?

- Public space (greenspace, restrooms, benches)
- More diverse/cultural restaurants and retail stores (men's store – fashion, hardware)
- Anchor stores (Trader's Joe, Target, Outdoor Outfitters)

#### "Which missing elements should Downtown Salisbury, Inc. or the City of Salisbury actively pursue FIRST"?

- Public space (Green space, Condo's, restrooms)
- Lighting (safety concerns)
- Diverse merchants (dance, aerobic classes, unisex fashion retail, art store, etc.)