



VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION CENTRE (PIC) Downtown Streetscaping Class Environmental Assessment (EA)

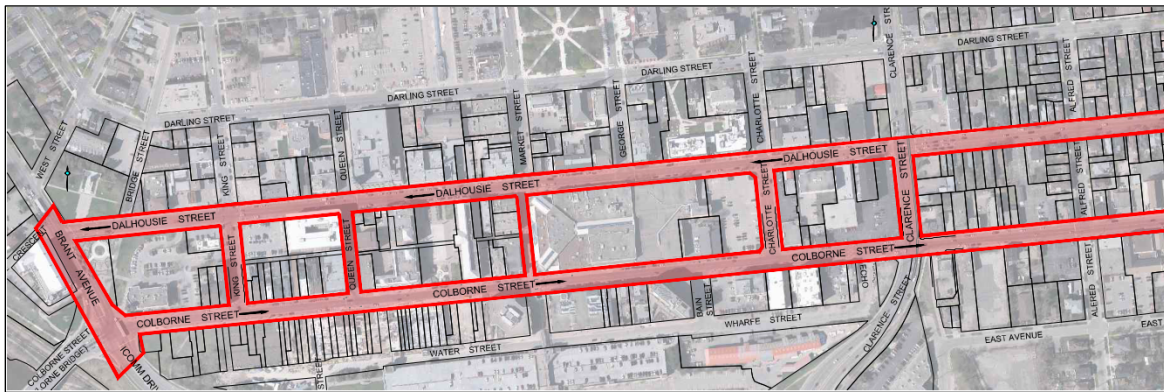
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



1.0 Introduction

The City of Brantford has initiated a Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for streetscaping the Downtown to improve walkability, accessibility, and underground infrastructure to allow for development, enhance the infrastructure for all transportation modes, and increase pedestrian capacity. The goal of the streetscaping improvements is to create a Downtown that is attractive, vibrant and safe for users and provides the infrastructure needed to accommodate expected growth.

The study area includes Colborne Street and Dalhousie Street from the junction, extending to Brant Avenue and Icomm Drive. It also captures the connecting north/south streets between this area including Brant Avenue, King Street, Queen Street, Market Street, Charlotte Street, and Clarence Street.



Map 1 - Close up of Study Area, Part 1



Map 2 - Close up of Study Area, Part 2

This document provides a consolidated question and answer list for comments submitted to the Project Team throughout Virtual Public Information Centre 1. The Public Information Centre (PIC) process to-date has included a presentation video, posted to the project webpage



on November 30, 2020, and a Question and Answer (Q&A) video, posted to the project webpage on December 21, 2020.

The PIC presentation and Q&A video can be viewed on the project webpage at:

www.brantford.ca/NewDowntown

To better understand the background of the Downtown Brantford Streetscaping Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA), please review the material presented in the PIC presentation and Q&A video prior to reviewing this document.

As a recap, the PIC presentation video featured information regarding the following topics:

- Review of study area, EA process, and status
- Vision – Problem/Opportunity Statement
- Review of key studies
- Review of key constraints and commonly identified priorities
- Review of results from stakeholder workshops
- Sample of Downtown cross-sections
- Draft Evaluation Criteria

2.0 Survey Results

In addition to the PIC video that was posted on November 30, 2020, a survey regarding the Downtown Brantford study area was available on the project webpage between October 13, 2020 and November 20, 2020. The survey included 11 questions, and received 418 responses. The following sections summarize results from the survey.



2.1 How do you usually travel to Downtown? (select all that apply)

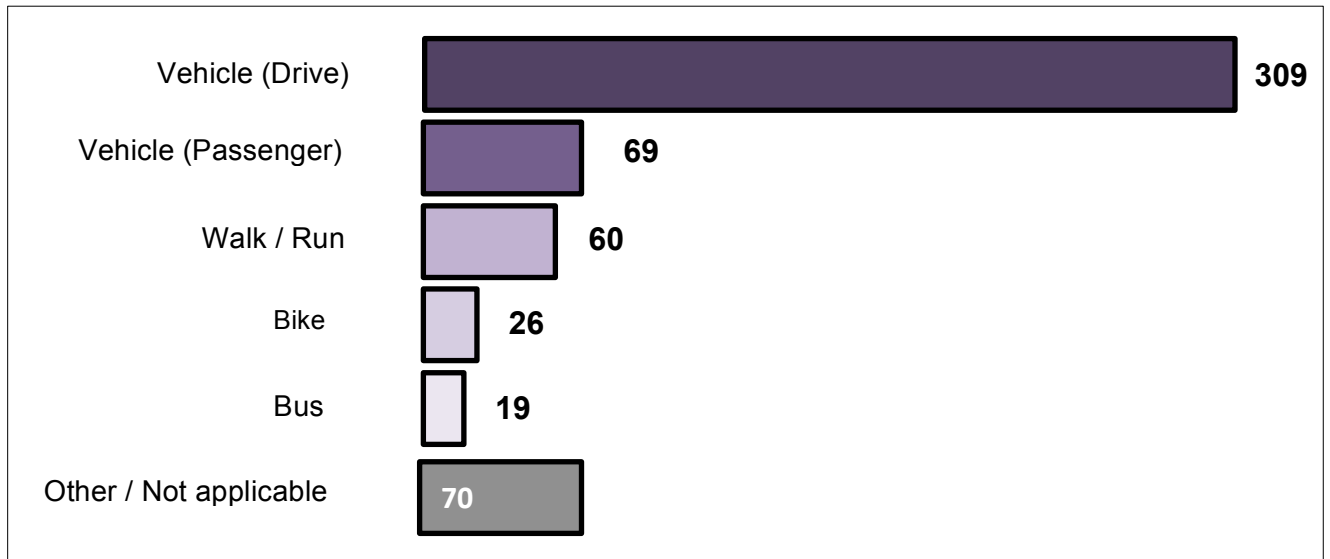


Figure 1 represents the results of the question regarding how people usually travel to Downtown.

Of the 418 responses, 309 people indicated that they drive to Downtown most commonly, and an additional 69 people indicated that they are passengers, which includes cabs. 60 people indicated that they walk or run, while 26 indicated that they bike, and 19 indicated that they take the bus. Of the responses, 70 people indicated “Other / Not applicable”, which could mean that they do not travel to Downtown, or that their selection was not listed.



2.2 How do you usually travel within Downtown? (select all that apply)

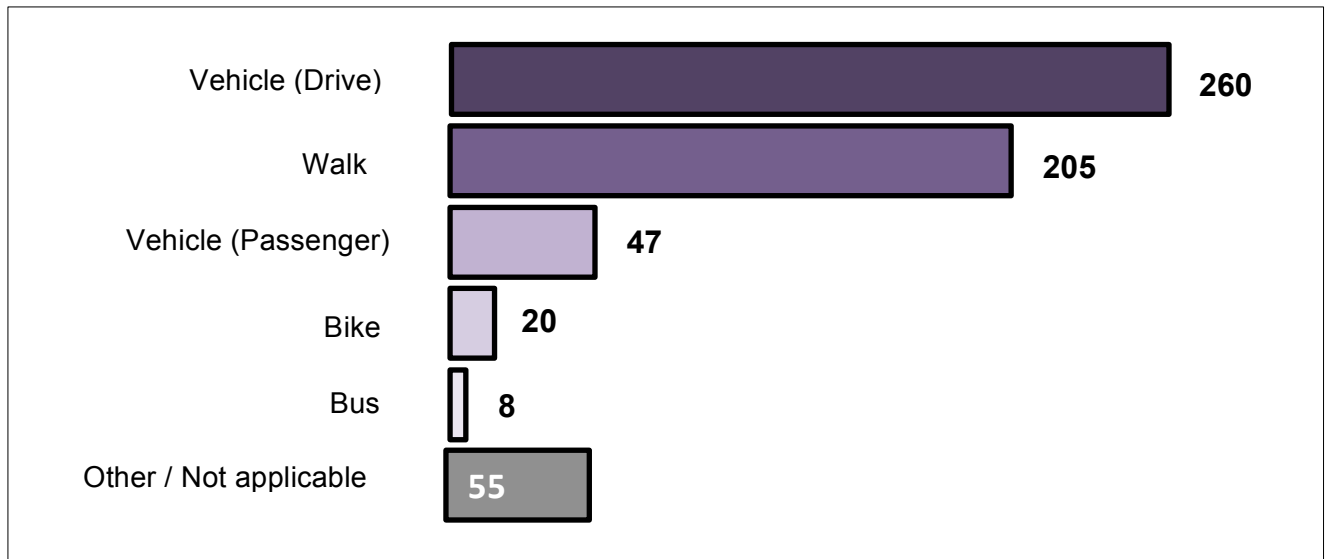


Figure 2 represents the results of the question regarding how people usually travel within Downtown.

Of the 418 responses, 260 people indicated that they drive when getting around in Downtown, and 205 people indicated that they walk to get around within Downtown. Meanwhile, 47 people indicated they were passengers, 20 people use a bike, and 8 use the bus. Of the responses, 55 people indicated “Other / Not applicable”, which could mean that they do not travel within Downtown, or that their selection was not listed.



2.3 What are some things that make you want to visit a City's Downtown?

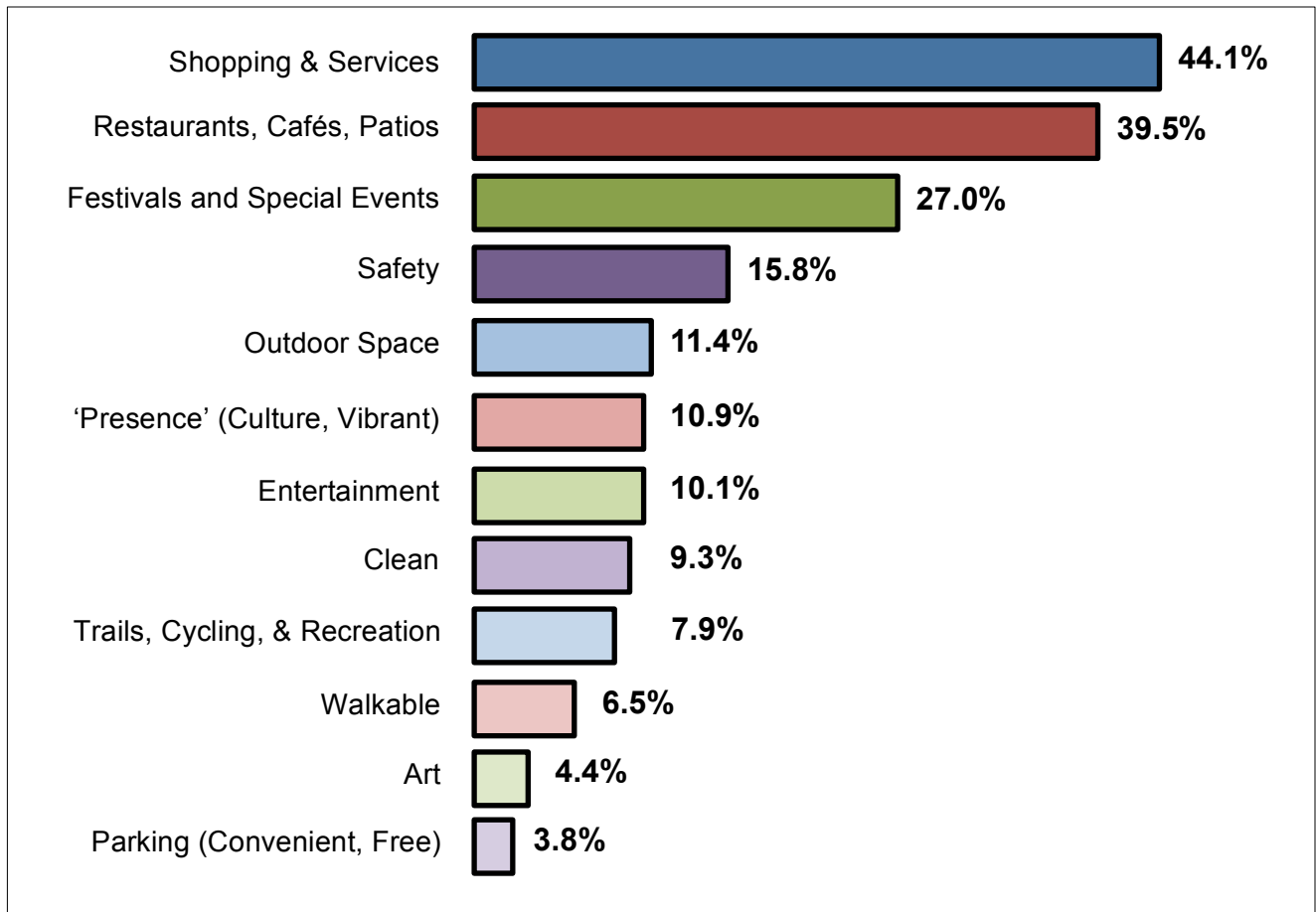


Figure 3 represents the results of the question about what makes people want to visit a City's Downtown.

This question was open ended, and allowed each respondent to provide their own response. The use of key phrases or references for all respondents were reviewed and tabulated. The percentages shown in this figure reflect the number of respondents who indicated that the listed items would make them want to visit a City's Downtown.

Of the respondents, 44.1% of people indicated that they visit Downtown for the shopping and services, and another 39.5% indicated that restaurants, cafes and patios were the draw for them. Festivals and special events are what draw another 27%. Also, 15.8% percent said they visit Downtown if it is safe, 11.4% visit for the outdoor space, 10.9% indicated that the presence, culture and vision were important to them. Other responses to this question included entertainment, cleanliness, trails, cycling and recreation, walkability, art, and convenient parking.



2.4 When thinking about Downtown Brantford, which of these elements are most important to you? (rank options below from 1 to 10, 1 = most, 10 = least)

	#1 Priority (%)	Average Rank
Enhancing Public Safety	201 (50.9%)	2.9
Attracting New Businesses	54 (13.7%)	3.9
Better Walkability	32 (8.1%)	5.4
Keeping Streets/Walkways Clear of Litter	24 (6.1%)	4.8
More Greenery	24 (6.1%)	5.2
More Places to Sit and Socialize	20 (5.1%)	5.4
Bike Lanes & Parking	13 (3.3%)	7.8
More Vehicle Parking	11 (2.8%)	6.8
More Outdoor Events	9 (2.3%)	6.0
Enhancing Corridors into Downtown	7 (1.8%)	6.4

Figure 4 is a table representing the results of the question that asked respondents to rank specific elements of Downtown in order of most to least important.

The 10 items to choose from are listed to the left, with the centre-column noting the number of instances in which each item was noted as the #1 priority (with % of #1 ranking in parentheses). The final column indicates the average ranking out of 10 based upon all responses provided. Of the responses, 201, or 50.9% indicated that enhancing public safety was their biggest priority. Next, 54 people, or 13.7% indicated attracting new business, 32 or 8.1% indicated better walkability, 24 or 6.1% indicated keeping streets/walkways clear of litter. More greenery, place to socialize, bike lanes and parking, outdoor events, and enhancing corridors received a range of 1.8% to 6.1% of respondents indicating they were their number 1 priority.



3.0 Frequently Asked Questions

A number of questions and comments were submitted to the Project Team throughout the first Virtual Public Information Centre process. Questions and comments were grouped into various themes in the section below.

Question Theme Index

3.1	Evaluation Criteria.....	9
3.2	Safety Downtown	9
3.3	Curbside Management	10
3.4	Downtown Parking	10
3.5	Accessibility	11
3.6	Attraction to Downtown	11
3.7	Active Transportation	12



3.1 Evaluation Criteria

Will the evaluation criteria have equal weighting during the evaluation of the options?

At this stage, it has not been determined if all criteria will have an equal weighting. We may look to maintain equal weight and combine criteria under subheadings which would allow for a more equal weighting.



3.2 Safety Downtown

How will this study address perceived safety issues that make some people reluctant to go Downtown?

One of the key objectives of this study is to construct a downtown that is safe for all users (pedestrians, cyclists, residents, etc.). What some people perceive as safety issues are related to complicated social issues (such as homelessness) that are being addressed by the City’s Community Services and Social Development Commission in partnership with community agencies throughout the city.

While social issues will not be directly addressed in this specific Environmental Assessment, a key part of the study will explore options informed by “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design” (CPTED) principles, to assess their impact on improving public safety throughout downtown.



What is the process behind deciding on two-way versus one-way traffic as this will impact cyclist safety in the Downtown area?

Through the EA, a detailed evaluation of one-way versus two-way traffic is being conducted. This evaluation will look at how the traffic through downtown will impact surrounding traffic routes. The inclusion of active transportation is very important to the City and through this EA we will look at way to integrate the existing cycling networks to improve safety and connectivity for cyclists.

3.3 Curbside Management

Will the study consider the amount of garbage and litter on the sidewalks and around the Downtown area?

Improving curbside management is a key objective of this EA, which includes garbage collection, loading and unloading, etc. Excessive garbage in the streets is a comment has been received quite frequently, and is something that will be addressed in this streetscaping EA. Currently there is insufficient infrastructure to contain the garbage that is collected daily, and with the reconstruction, we will look at including infrastructure that will increase the storage capacity of garbage. Improvements to the infrastructure for businesses to store garbage will keep the garbage off the streets, and proper storage areas may help reduce the frequency at which garbage collection is required.

3.4 Downtown Parking

Will parking spaces be increased Downtown through this study?

Parking is a significant focus of the EA. Specifically, how much parking, what type of parking and where the parking will be located. Part of the EA includes a detailed evaluation of the utilization of the existing parking lots, and a look at the amount and use of on-street parking. As we move forward through the EA, we will be working towards providing a parking strategy that ensures adequate parking for all users, including accessible parking.



3.5 Accessibility

What distinct accessibility features will support and attract users of Downtown that experience varying degrees of mobility?

A key objective of this EA is to design a streetscape in the downtown that is accessible. There are some challenges regarding connecting the existing built form which we will look to address in the design. As an example, there are buildings that currently have a step up or down to the front door and so we will look to find ways to minimize the impact of these accessibility features. The streetscape design will follow all AODA standards and barrier free design, so through redesign, accessibility should be much less of a concern for users to enjoy the downtown area.

How will the 8 domains of age-friendly programming into the plans for Downtown?

In addition to the past and concurrent studies that City has conducted such as the Transportation Master Plan, Official Plan, etc., the Project Team will be looking at other City strategies including the Age-Friendly Plan to ensure that any options are consistent with those directions. The 8 domains addressed in the age-friendly planning guide will be addressed throughout the design in various ways such as creating more accessible sidewalks, as well as other features. Once further into the design phase, these components will be addressed in more detail.

3.6 Attraction to Downtown

What specific features of Downtown will make it a hotspot destination people to visit?

At this stage of the EA, we are still trying to gauge what type of events and activities the public and the City would like to see occurring downtown. Through the EA and streetscape design, we intend to include features that allow the downtown to be flexible so a wide variety of events can be held downtown, including street festivals, concerts, and any other type of event that may come up in the future. Some examples may include removable bollards to close sections of the street, power sources at street lights, Wi-Fi to name a few. We will make sure that as we reconstruct the downtown, that the infrastructure that is put in place



is flexible so that it can support a wide variety of potential downtown programming.

How will this Streetscape project attract more businesses to the downtown, in order to create an interest to people?

The Downtown Brantford Business Improvement Area and Brantford-Brant Chamber of Commerce are stakeholders in this project. As a project team we have been in contact with them regularly and their feedback is critical to ensuring that the plans for Downtown Brantford meet the needs of the business community as a whole.

3.7 Active Transportation

What are some elements that can be incorporated into the streetscape to improve active transportation?

The inclusion of active transportation in the downtown is important to the City, and through the EA we are looking at ways to integrate the cycling networks that exist into the downtown. For cyclists, it is important that there be connectivity with the trails and bike paths used surrounding the downtown. The Grand River is so close to the downtown, and as part of the design we will look at ways to create connections with this trail system as well as others. Active transportation also includes pedestrians, and so we will also be looking at ways to make downtown more walkable. This can be done with widening sidewalks, improving the overall pedestrian experience, and increasing the level of pedestrian safety.



Comments/Questions

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