



Survey Results Summary

April 14, 2022



Prepared for:
CITY OF HELENA



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SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

1.0. INTRODUCTION

To assist in identifying needs and areas of focus for the *Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan* and *Capital Improvements Plan*, an online survey was developed. The survey was intended to collect opinions and general feedback from the public to establish baseline conditions and identify potential issues and challenges. The survey also helped the planning team understand what is important to Helena residents, community members, and stakeholders. This document provides a summary of the survey results.

The survey was embedded in the *Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan* project page on the City's Be Heard Helena platform. The survey opened on March 2, 2022, and closed on April 4, 2022. The survey was announced through the City's Facebook page, an email to key stakeholders, and a press release sent to local media outlets. Several news channels picked up the story and requested interviews with the planning team.

1.1. Website Engagement Summary

The outreach conducted to announce the survey encouraged engagement with the plan website and other features. **Figure 1** shows the number of visits to the website, views of the pages within the website, and new registrations to the website. Over the month of March, 761 people visited the website and there were 1,504 total page visits and 17 new registrations. Two people commented on the interactive commenting map, 86 people downloaded or viewed documents and photos on the website, and no views of the introductory video were documented. As seen in **Figure 1**, the most engagement occurred after the press release and email blast were sent on March 8th.

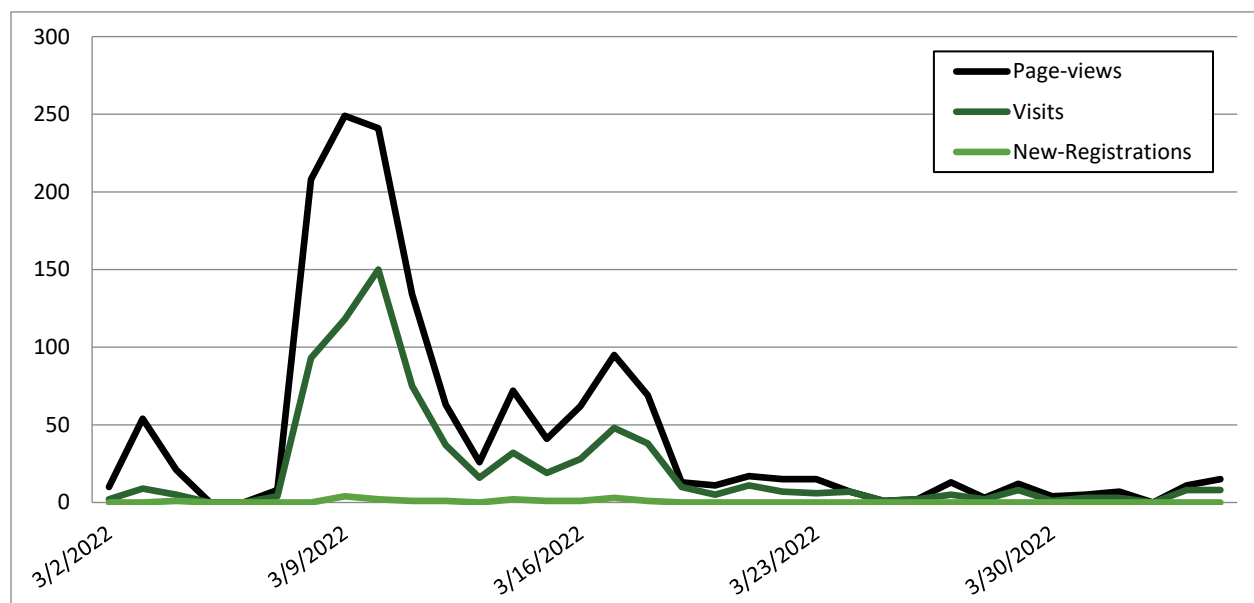


Figure 1: Website Engagement Summary (March 2 - April 4, 2022)

1.2. Survey Results

Participants were able to complete the survey at any time during the month-long timeframe. The survey consisted of 9 questions aiming to understand community travel and visitation habits within Downtown Helena, opinions on the condition of the City's infrastructure, priorities for various improvements and upgrades, and demographic information. A breakdown of the results is provided in **Appendix A**.

A total of 168 responses were received for the survey. Respondents were required to enter a screen name and an email address to participate. However, all responses reported in this summary are anonymous. All questions were optional and could be skipped at any time, and therefore the number of responses may vary for each question.

Q1: What is your connection to DOWNTOWN HELENA? Please select all that apply.

All 168 participants answered this question. **Figure 2** shows the number of responses for each category. Participants submitted 322 responses, reflecting the ability to select more than one category. The most popular connection to Downtown Helena is visiting for recreation (48% of responses). Community members who work Downtown (18%) or visit Downtown for work purposes (17%) were the next most common selections. Nine participants selected "other" and explained that they live close to Downtown, own or are considering owning tourism-related businesses connected to Downtown, visit Downtown for medical services, or travel Downtown to visit the library.



Figure 2: Question #1 Results

Q2: Indicate your frequency of visiting the following destinations within DOWNTOWN HELENA over the past 12 months.

Question #2 was answered by all participants. This question asked participants to indicate how often they visited each of the Downtown Helena destinations ranging from never to daily. Last Chance Gulch between Neill Avenue and 6th Avenue was the destination that participants most frequently indicated that they visit daily. Front Street, Cruse Street, the Great Northern Town Center, and Front Street were destinations that visitors indicated they visit the least frequently (either rarely or never).

A composite score is also shown on the graph for each option, which was calculated using a weighted average. Destinations visited more frequently received higher scores, for a maximum composite score of five. Based on this score, Last Chance Gulch between Neill Avenue and 6th Avenue (4.90) was the most frequently visited destination followed by the Last Chance Gulch Walking Mall (4.77) and Park Avenue (4.71). The least frequently visited destinations were the Great Northern Town Center and Front Street. **Figure 3** displays these results.

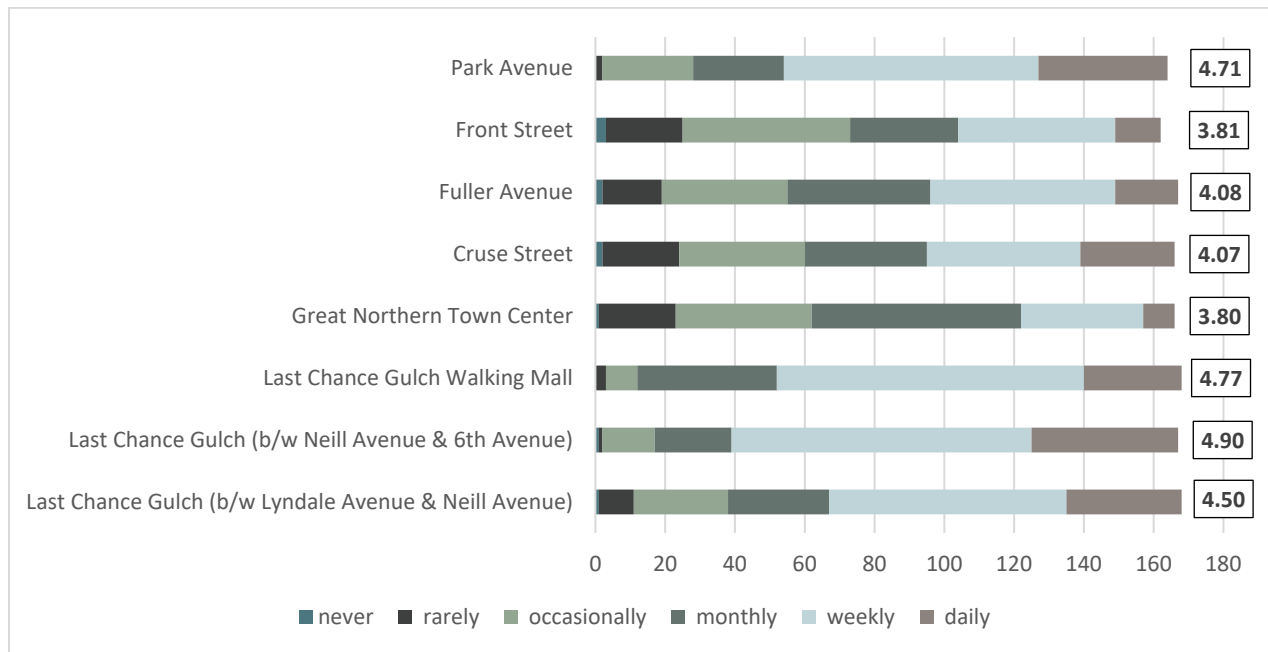


Figure 3: Question #2 Results

Q3: Indicate your preferred transportation mode(s) to access destinations within DOWNTOWN HELENA. Please select all that apply.

The third question asked participants to indicate which transportation modes they prefer to use when accessing Downtown Helena. All participants provided answers while several selected more than one option. **Figure 4** shows the number of responses for each transportation mode. Walking was the mode most preferred by participants, with 74 percent of users selecting this option. Personal vehicles and bicycles were selected as a preferred mode by 65 and 53 percent of participants, respectively. Transit, shared rides, and other options were selected by a combined 7 percent of participants, indicating either limited availability or a decreased preference for these travel options. Two participants selected “Other” and provided additional information. One respondent indicated that they run in Downtown Helena and the other explained that while transit would be their preferred transportation mode, options are limited, so driving is their main form of transportation with walking and biking being secondary modes a few days out of each year.

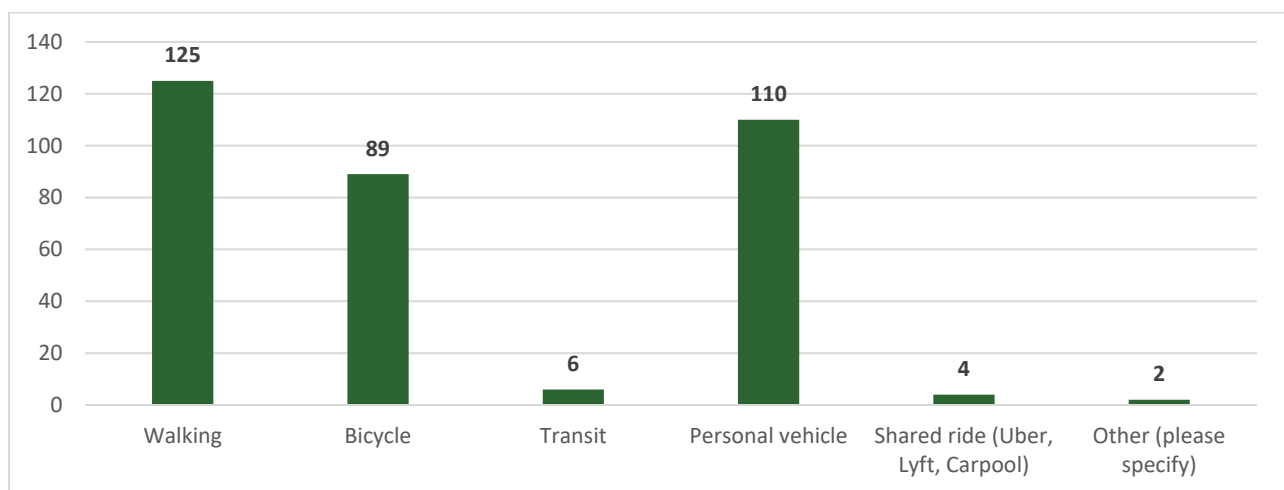


Figure 4: Question #3 Results

Q4: How would you rate the following in DOWNTOWN HELENA?

Question #4 asked participants to rate various amenities within Downtown Helena ranging from poor to excellent. All participants submitted answers for this question. Parks and open space received a rating of good or excellent by 60 percent of participants while 61 percent of participants rated bicycle lanes and paths as poor. A composite score is shown on **Figure 5**, reflecting a weighted average of the ratings. Amenities that were rated higher received higher scores, with a maximum composite score of 5. Overall, the highest composite score was 3.41 out of 5 points (parks and open space), indicating that all amenities could use some improvement. Bicycle lanes and paths received the lowest composite score (1.64) followed by parking facilities and pay kiosks (2.72) and sidewalks (2.83).

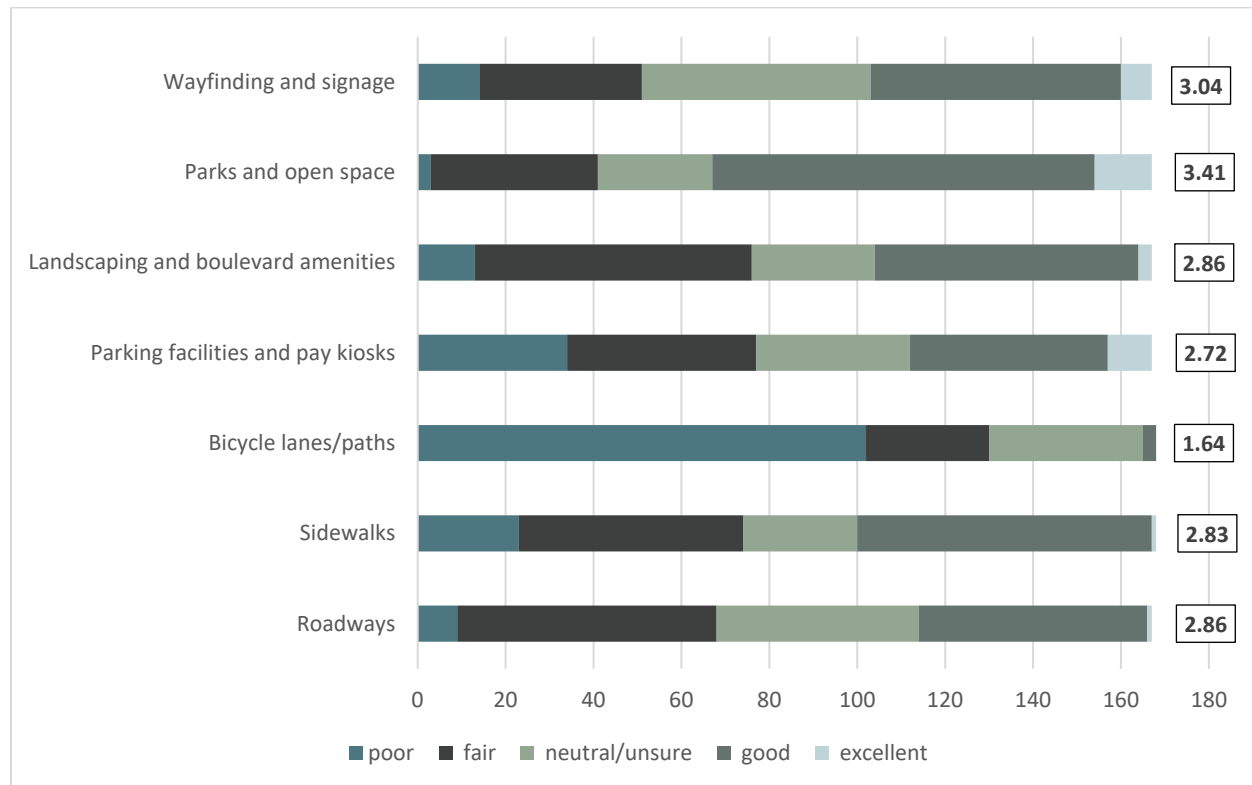


Figure 5: Question #4 Results

Q5: This plan will identify needs for infrastructure repair/replacement, ongoing maintenance/preservation, and/or new construction. Please rate the following in terms of priorities to you.

The fifth question asked participants to rate various accommodations in terms of their priority to improve each accommodation. All survey respondents answered this question, and their answers are shown on **Figure 6**. Pedestrian accommodations and bicycle accommodations were rated as a very high or high priority by 85 percent and 75 percent of participants, respectively. On-street parking and surface parking lots were rated as very low or low priority by 37 percent of participants. Composite scores were calculated for this question, with a maximum score of 5. All accommodations received a composite score of 3 or higher, indicating that improving all of these accommodations are fairly high priorities to participants. The highest ranked priority was pedestrian accommodations (4.35), followed by bicycle accommodations (4.13) and winter maintenance and snow removal (3.87). The lowest priorities were roadways (3.03), on-street parking and surface parking lots (3.04), and wayfinding and signage (3.07).

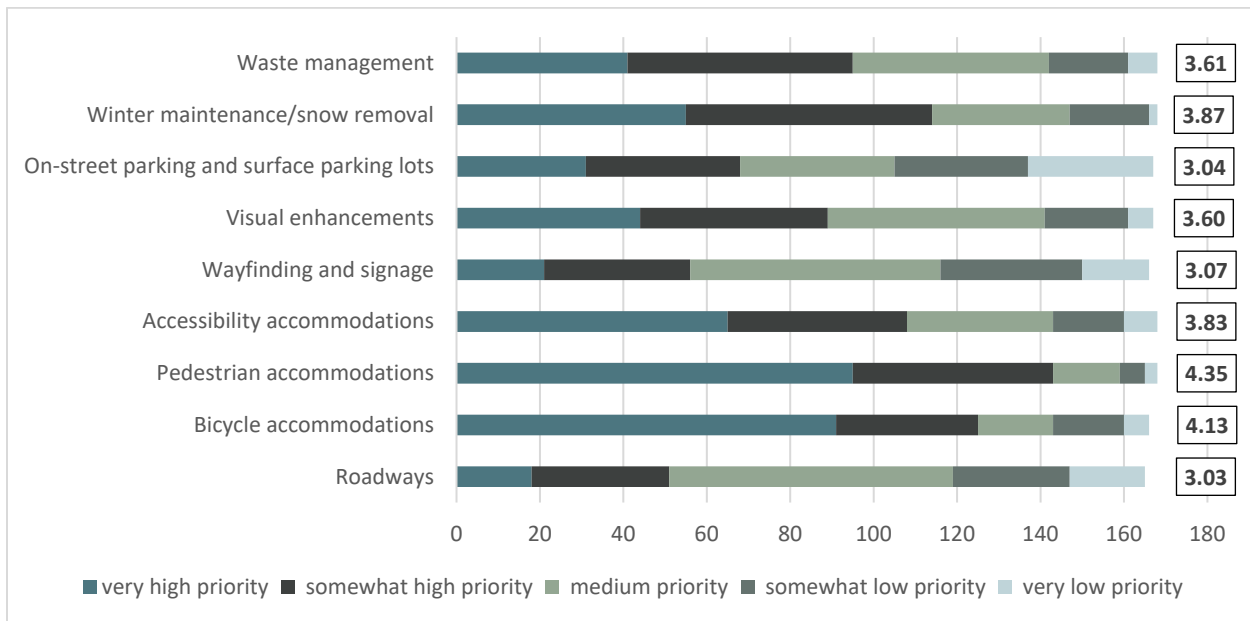


Figure 6: Question #5 Results

Q6: What would encourage you to visit the DOWNTOWN HELENA area more frequently? Please indicate the importance to you.

Question #6 was skipped by one survey respondent. The question asked which types of improvements would encourage the respondents to visit Downtown Helena more frequently by indicating their importance. A total of 78 percent of participants indicated that improved walkability/bikeability was a very important component to encouraging more frequent visitation. More restaurants and retail services were rated as very important by 75 and 70 percent of participants, respectively. Improved or increased parking was seen as an unimportant component to increased visitation by 34 percent of participants. Composite scores, on a scale of 1 to 3 with 3 indicating greatest importance, are provided on **Figure 7**. Improved or increased parking was the least important (1.93) to participants while improved walkability/bikeability (2.73) and more restaurants (2.70) were the most important.

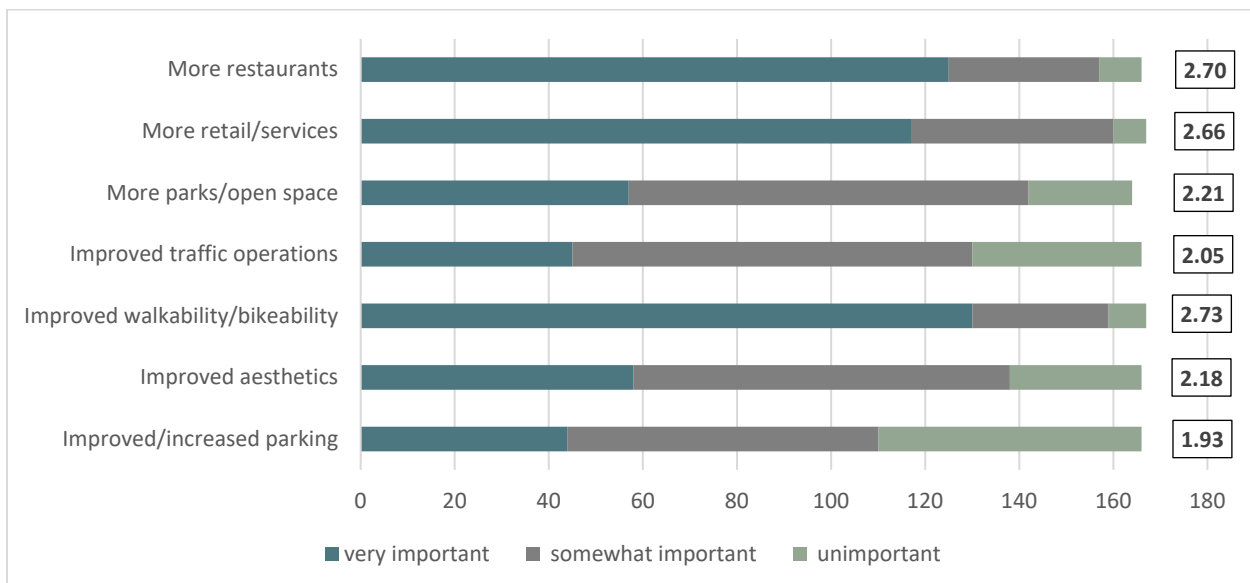


Figure 7: Question #6 Results

Q7: What is your zip code?

Question #7 asked participants to indicate their zip code. This question was asked to understand how many participants live in Helena compared to those who may live outside of Helena and visit. This question was skipped by 40 survey respondents. The responses, shown in **Figure 8**, indicate that 91 percent of those who answered the question live in Helena (59601 or 59602) with the majority living in the 59601 zip code. A few of the respondents indicated that they live in East Helena, Clancy, and Fort Harrison.

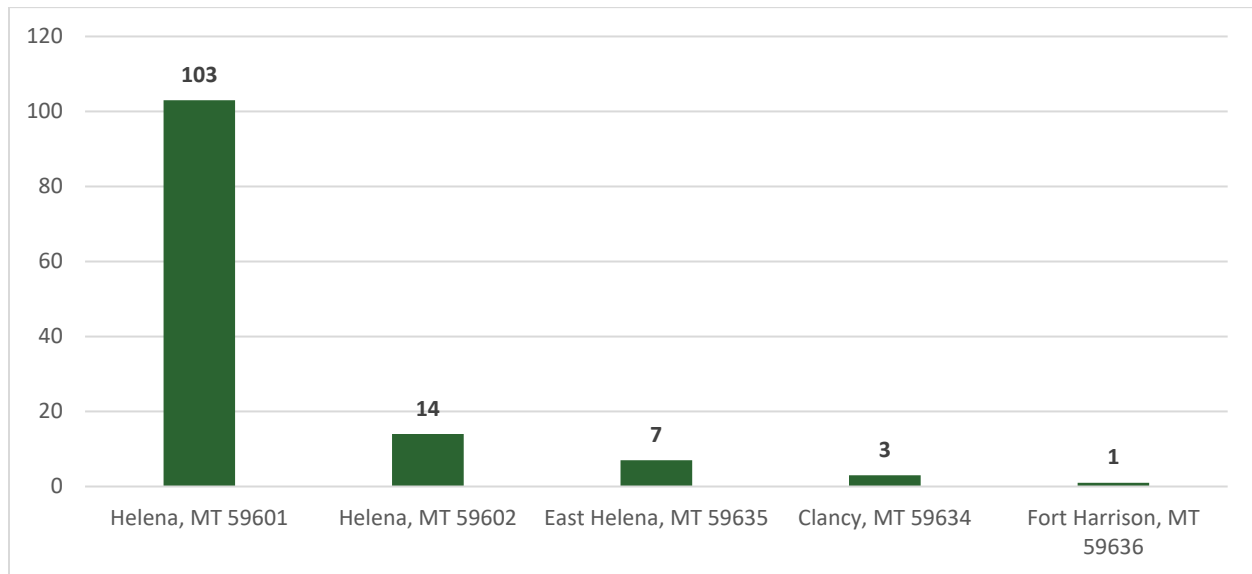


Figure 8: Question #7 Results

Q8: What is your age?

Question #8 asked participants to indicate their age range and all participants responded. All age groups were represented except the under 18 group. Most survey respondents were between the ages of 25 to 64 (73 percent) while the largest number of respondents fell in the 35 to 44 age group (30 percent). The distribution of participants' ages is shown in **Figure 9**.

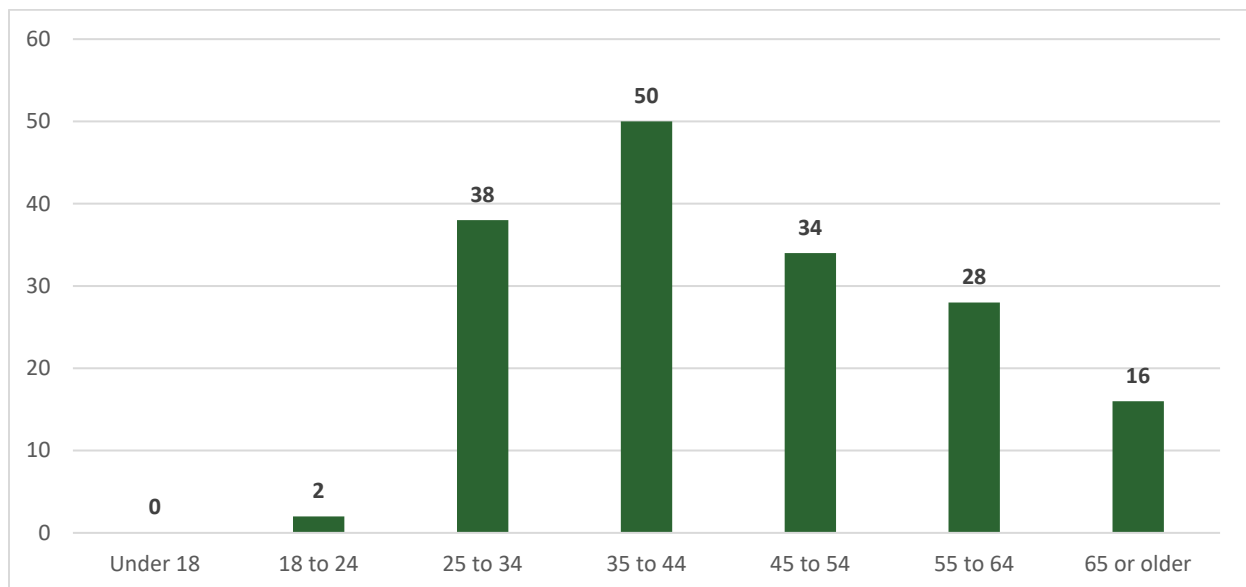


Figure 9: Question #8 Results

Q9: Please provide any additional information or suggestions that may be helpful for development of the Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan.

Question #9 was an open-ended question answered by 89 participants. The question asked participants to provide any additional thoughts that may be helpful for the planning team when developing the *Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan*. A summary of the responses received is provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Question #9 Feedback Summary

Category	Comments
Aesthetics	Several responses cited a desire to make the Downtown area more aesthetically appealing by planting more flowers and greenery, providing improved management of garbage and waste, decorating for different seasons/holidays, maintaining consistent architecture, and adding murals to the sides of buildings.
Bike Accommodations	There is a desire for bike lanes along several corridors including Park Avenue, Benton Avenue, Last Chance Gulch, and Cruse Avenue. Additional bike accommodations, including bike lanes, bike-friendly intersections, and bike parking were also mentioned in several responses. Keeping bike facilities clear of debris is also desirable to bicyclists.
Connectivity	Some respondents commented that they frequent both the Great Northern and Downtown Helena areas, though they don't often walk between the two due to poor connectivity. Other locations where connectivity to Downtown is desired include Centennial Trail and the mountain bike trailheads.
Homelessness	Several comments were received citing the homelessness population in the Downtown area and a desire to shelter them away from Downtown.
Infrastructure Repairs and Maintenance	Some community members expressed various repair and maintenance concerns, particularly regarding snow removal and sidewalk repair.
Intersections	A few participants commented that a roundabout at the Neill Avenue/Last Chance Gulch intersection would be beneficial, while several others stated that it is undesirable. A few other intersections of concern regarding safety were mentioned including the Fuller Avenue/Lawrence Street and Fuller Avenue/Placer Avenue intersections. Additional traffic control is desired at some intersections to facilitate better traffic flow.
Miscellaneous Amenities & Event	A few participants mentioned the need for additional amenities in the Downtown area including more restrooms, outdoor dining, designated smoking areas, better wayfinding signs, and elevators in buildings. Some participants recommended using the Downtown area for more community events.
Parking	Many respondents expressed frustration with the current parking facilities in the Downtown area. Several comments stated a desire for more free parking and the addition of a new parking garage(s).
Retail/Restaurants	Many comments recommended bringing more retail businesses and restaurants into the Downtown area as opposed to casinos, banks, and other offices. Many community members feel that the street-level storefronts should be retail stores and restaurants instead of professional offices.
Transit	Some comments cited poor transit services to and from the Downtown area.
Walkability	Participants expressed a desire for prioritizing walkability over motor-vehicle accommodations. The comments emphasized pedestrian safety at intersections and sidewalk maintenance.



DOWNTOWN HELENA MULTIMODAL PLAN

APPENDIX A:

Survey Results

Survey

SURVEY RESPONSE REPORT

08 February 2021 - 04 April 2022

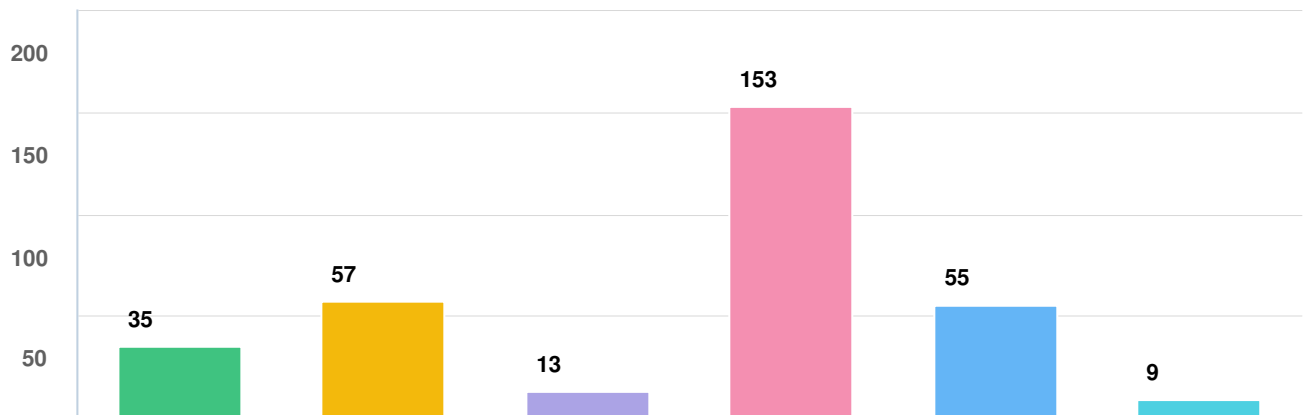
PROJECT NAME:

Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan



SURVEY QUESTIONS

Q1 What is your connection to DOWNTOWN HELENA? Please select all that apply.



Question options

- ☐ I live downtown ☐ I work downtown ☐ I own a business downtown
☐ I visit downtown for recreation (food, shopping, events, etc.) ☐ I visit downtown for work purposes ☐ Other (please specify)

Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

Q2 Indicate your frequency of visiting the following destinations within DOWNTOWN HELENA over the past 12 months.

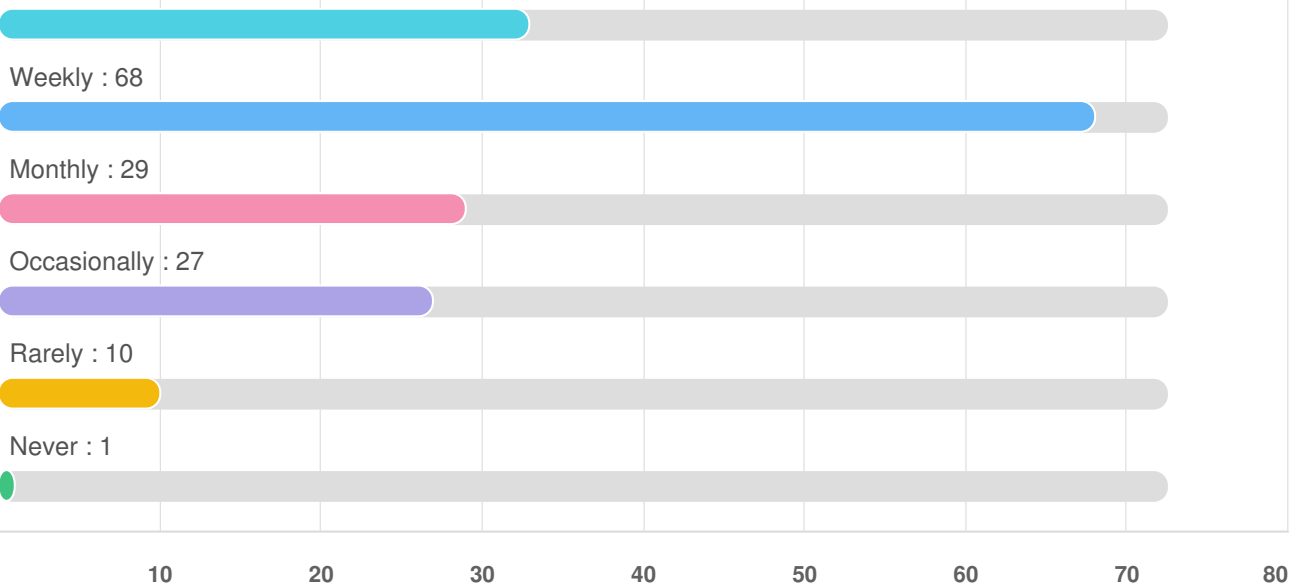


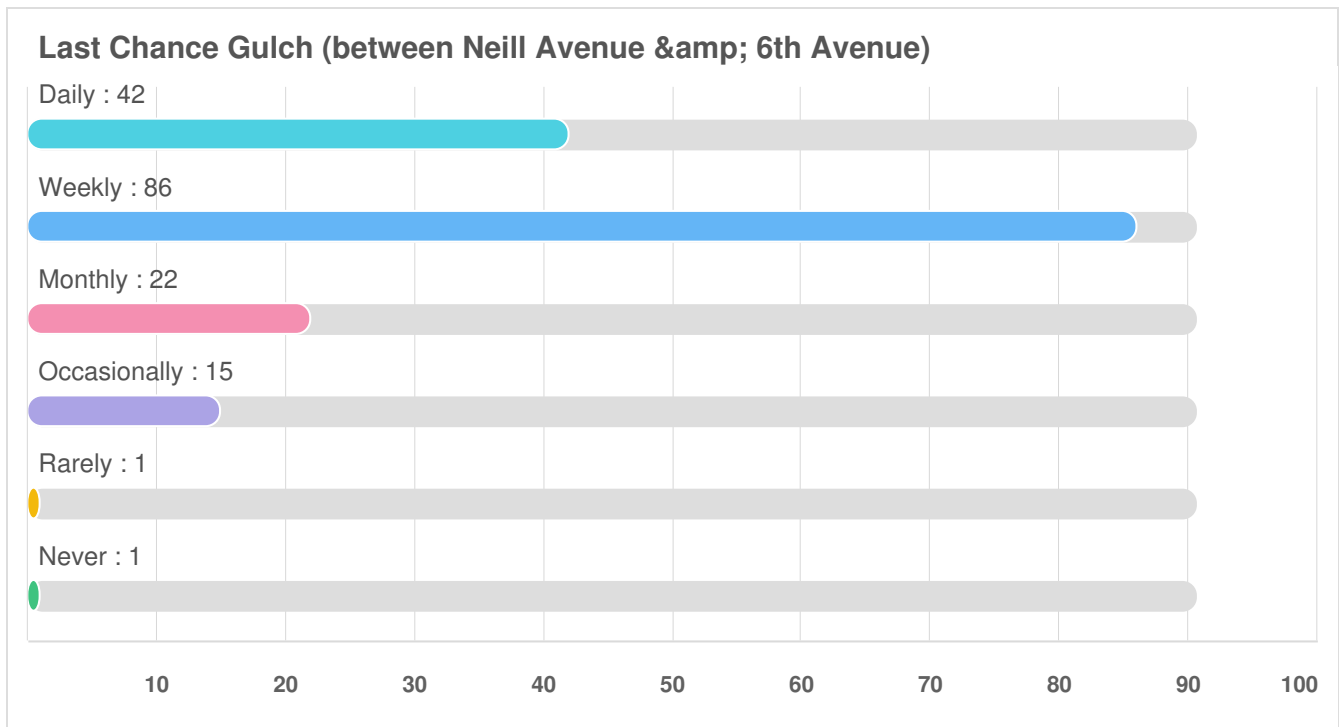
Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

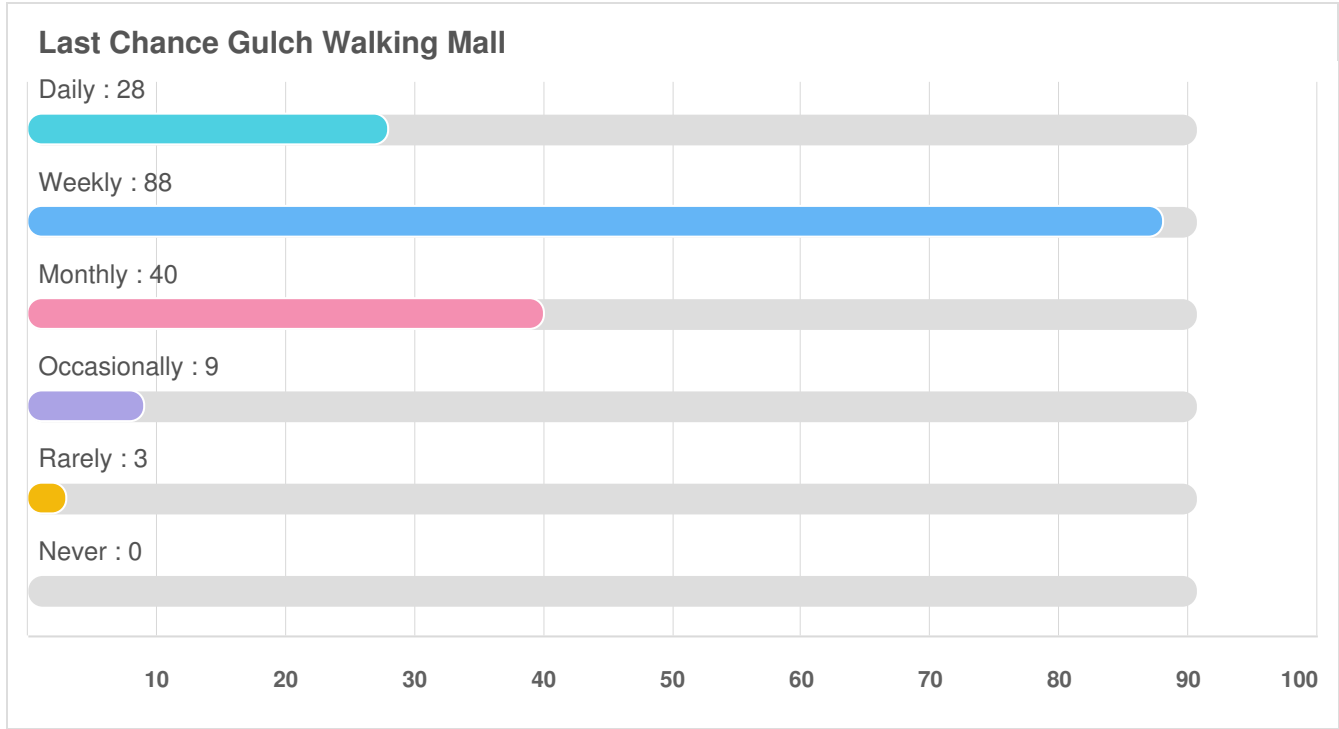
Question type: Likert Question

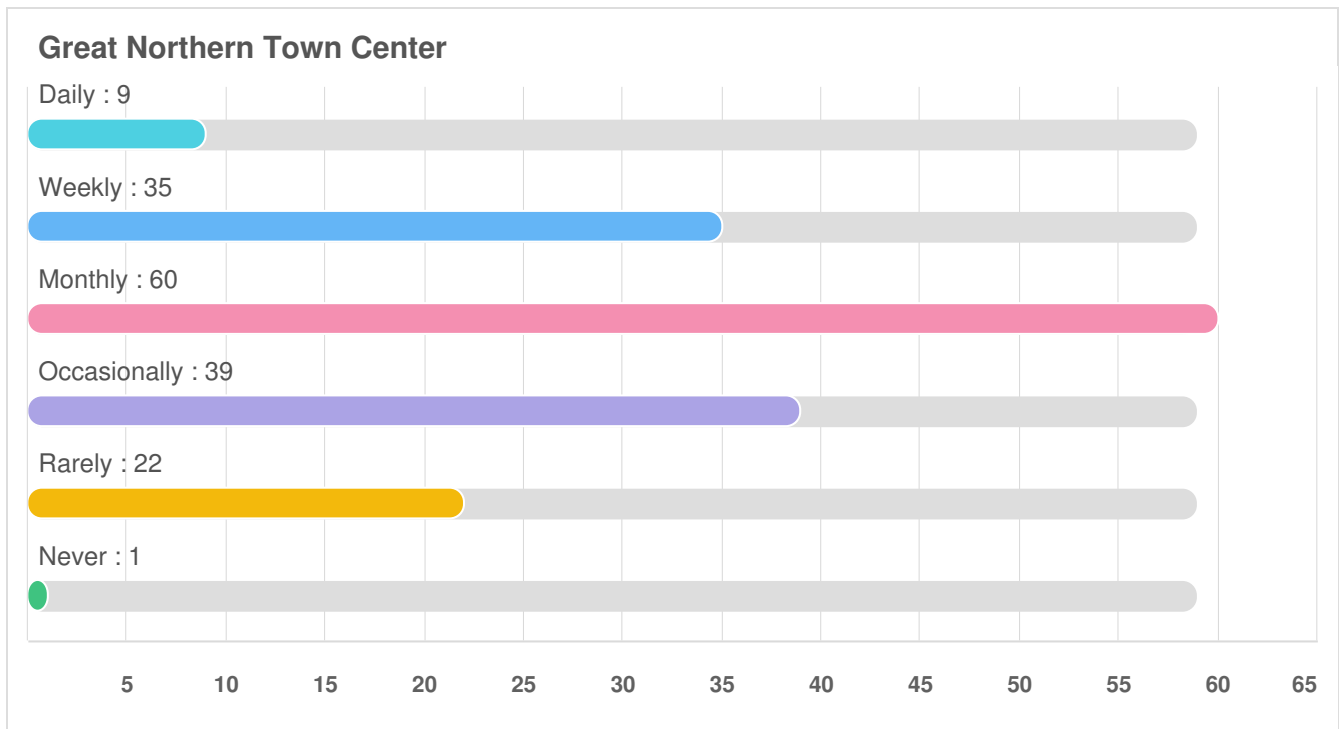
Q2 | Indicate your frequency of visiting the following destinations within
DOWNTOWN HELENA over the past 12 months.

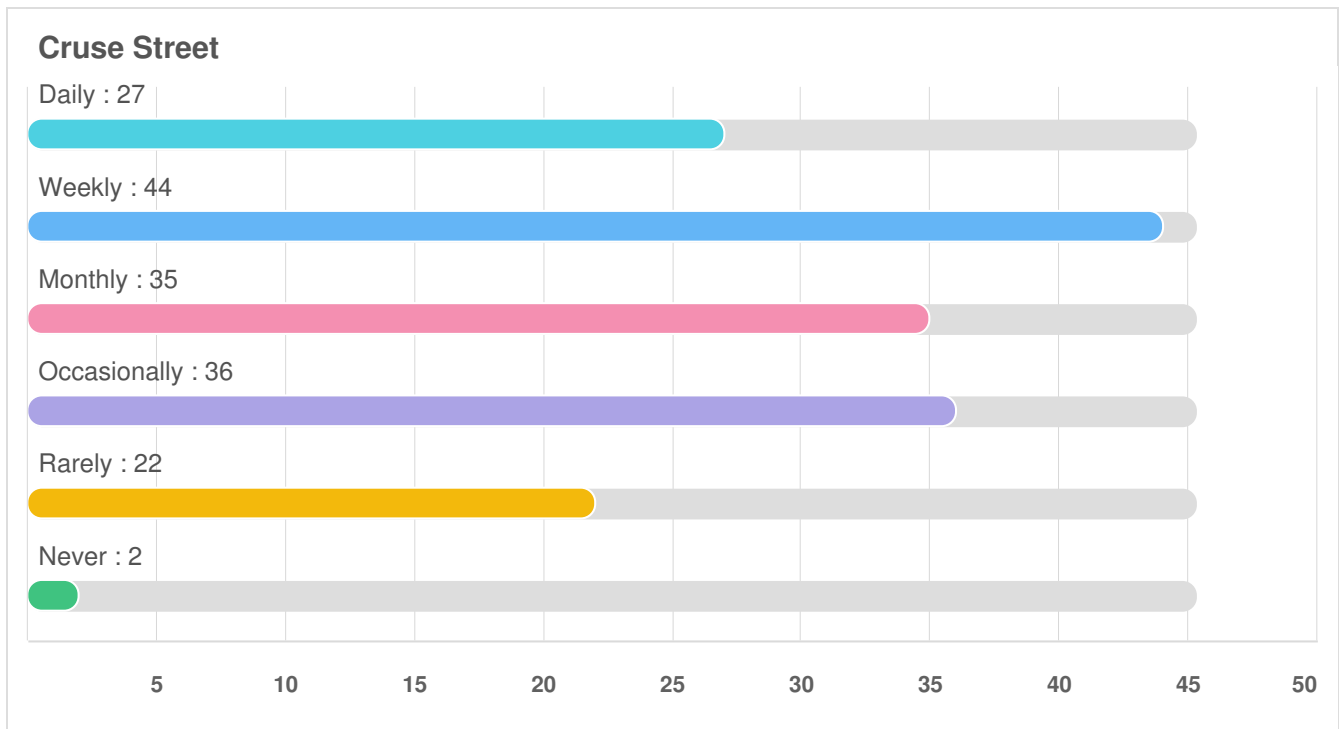
Last Chance Gulch (between Lyndale Avenue & Neill Avenue)

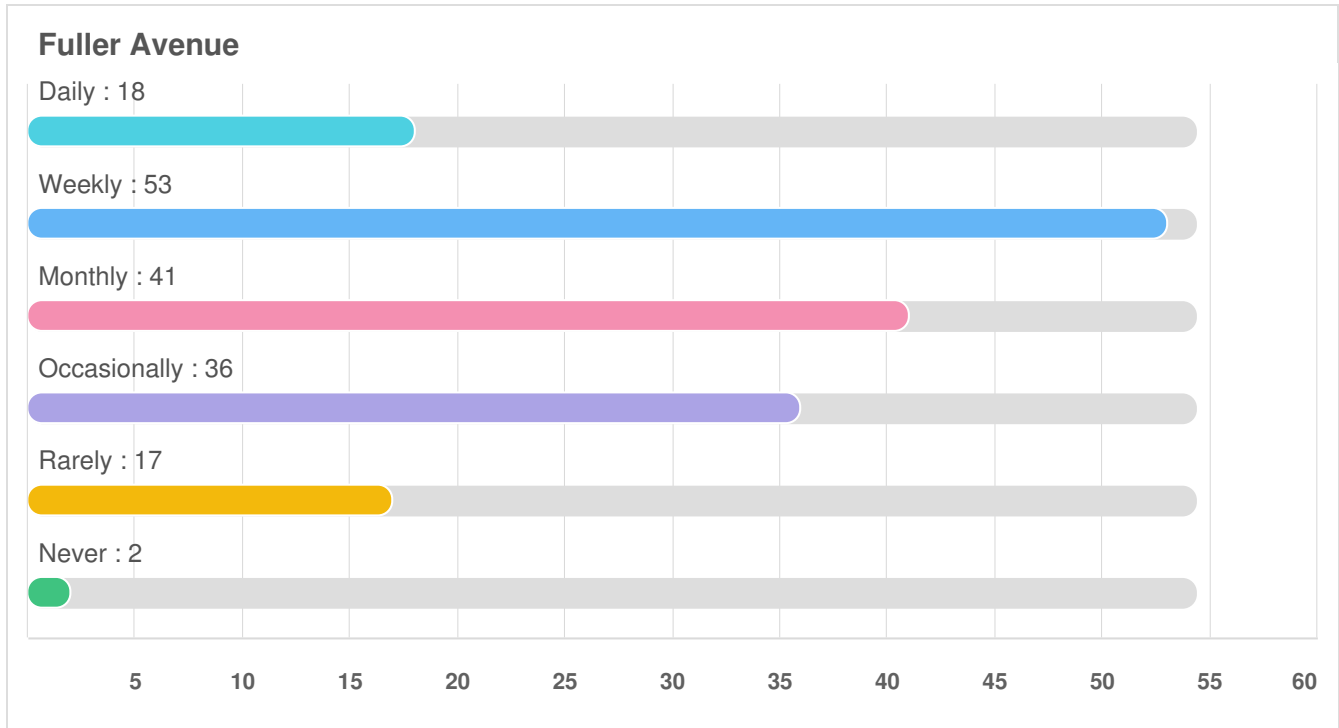


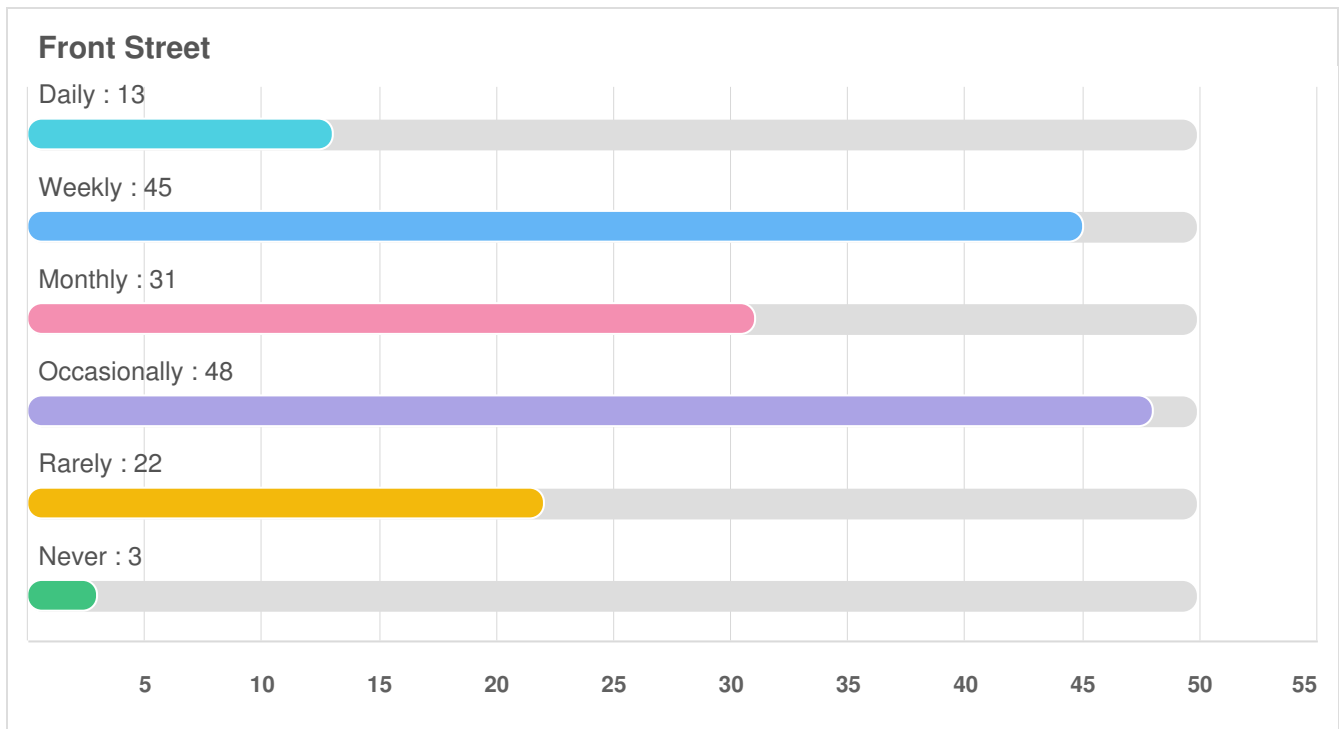


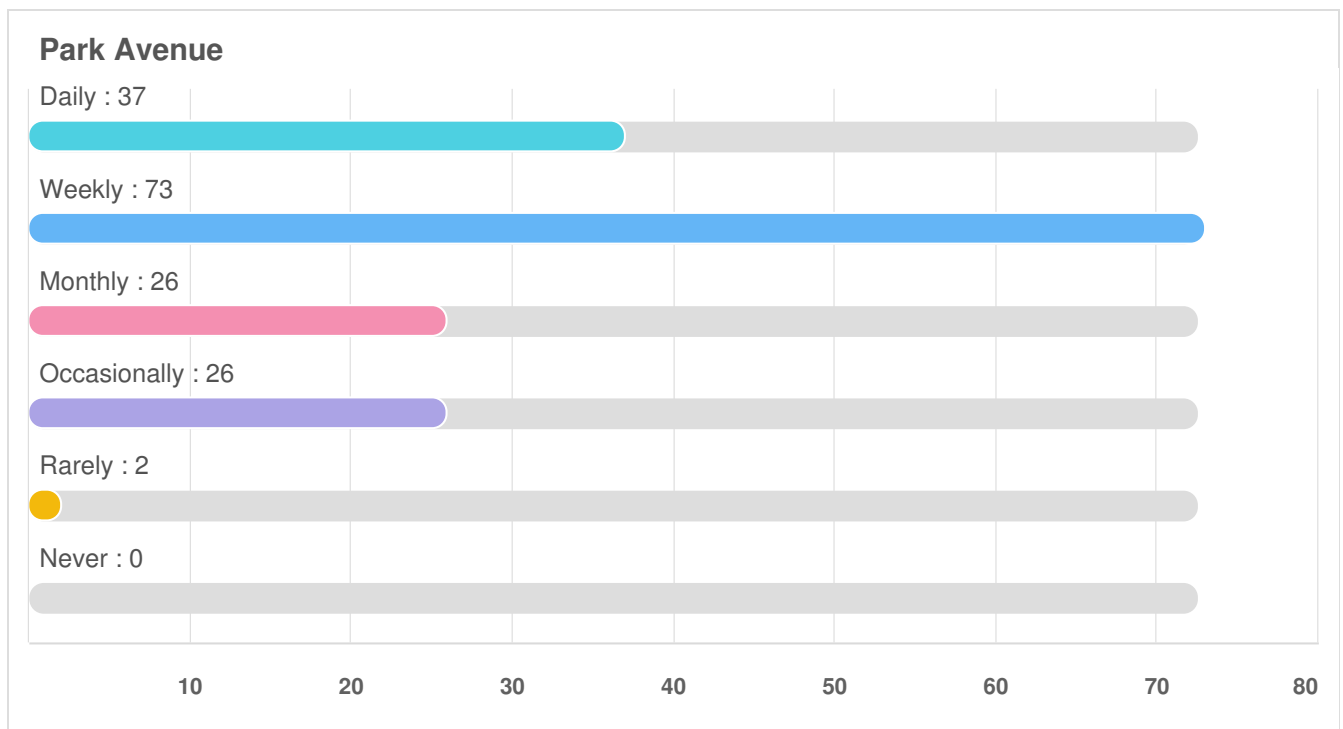




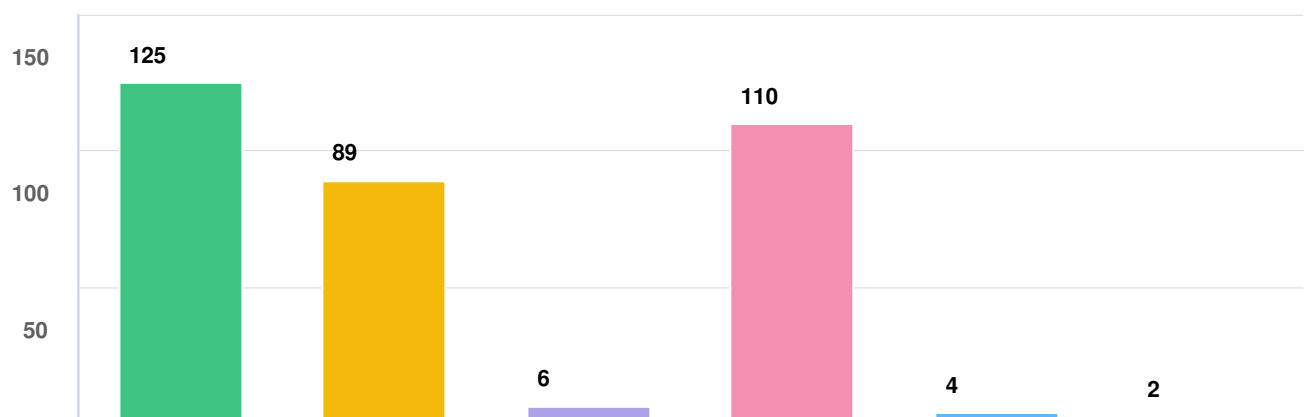








Q3 Indicate your preferred transportation mode(s) to access destinations within DOWNTOWN HELENA. Please select all that apply.



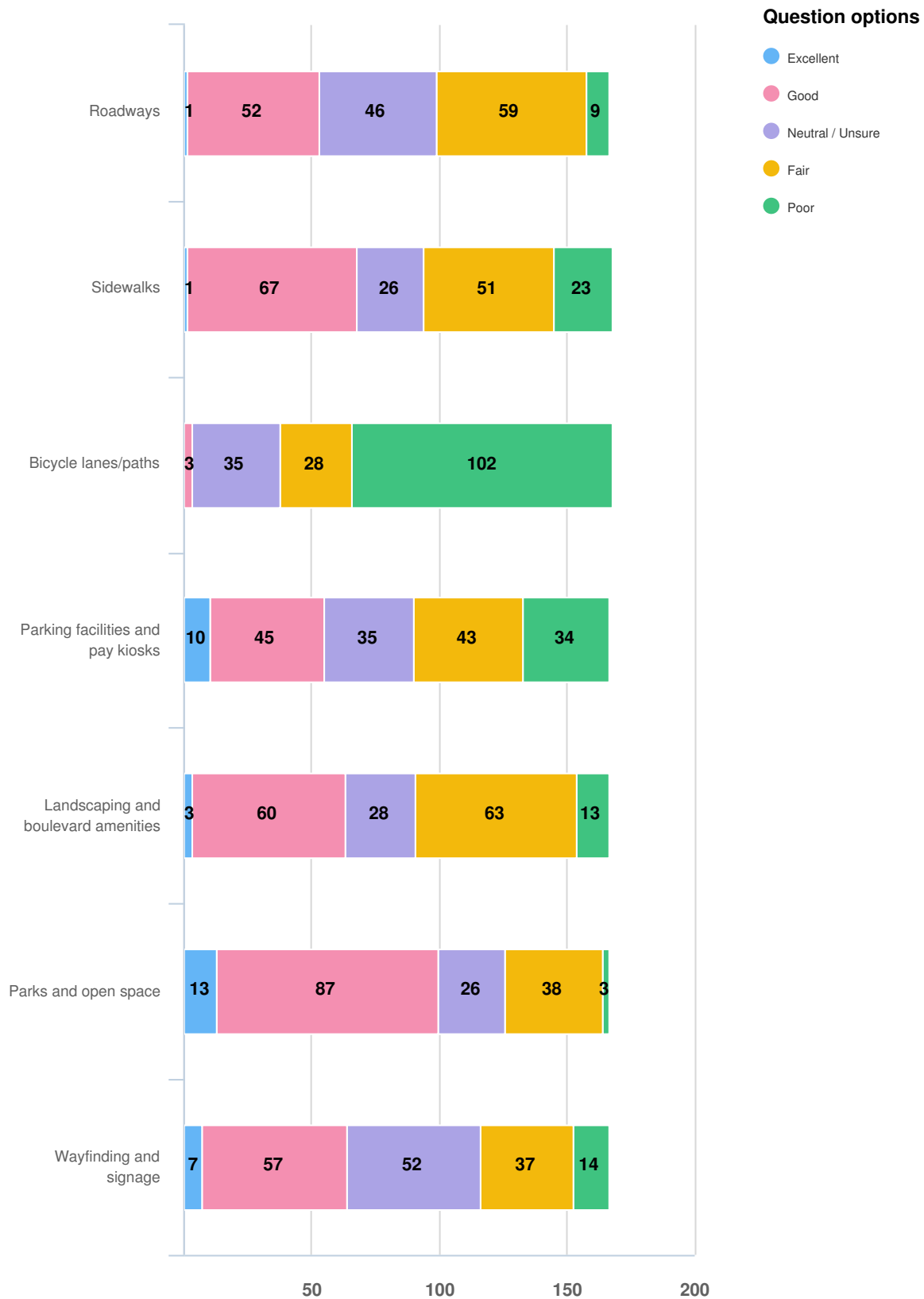
Question options

- Other (please specify)
- Shared ride (Uber, Lyft, Carpool)
- Personal vehicle
- Transit
- Bicycle
- Walking

Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Checkbox Question

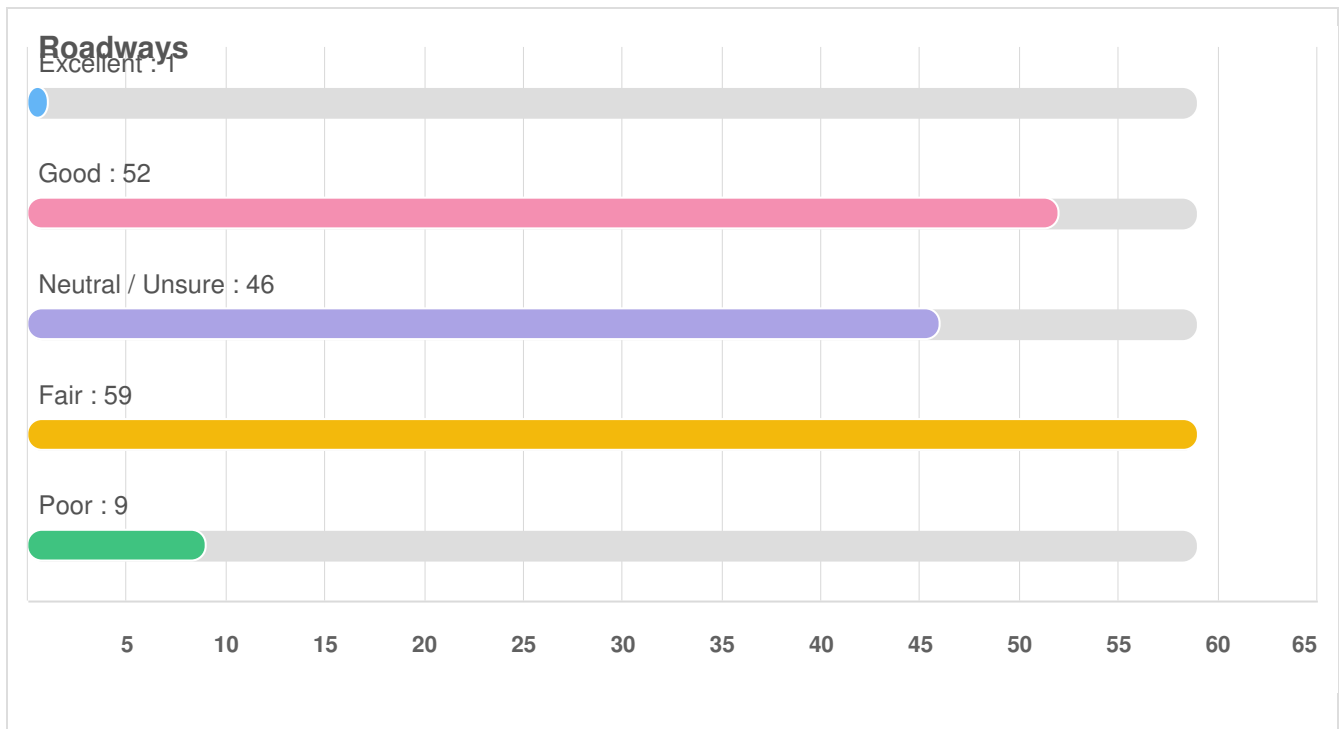
Q4 How would you rate the following in DOWNTOWN HELENA?

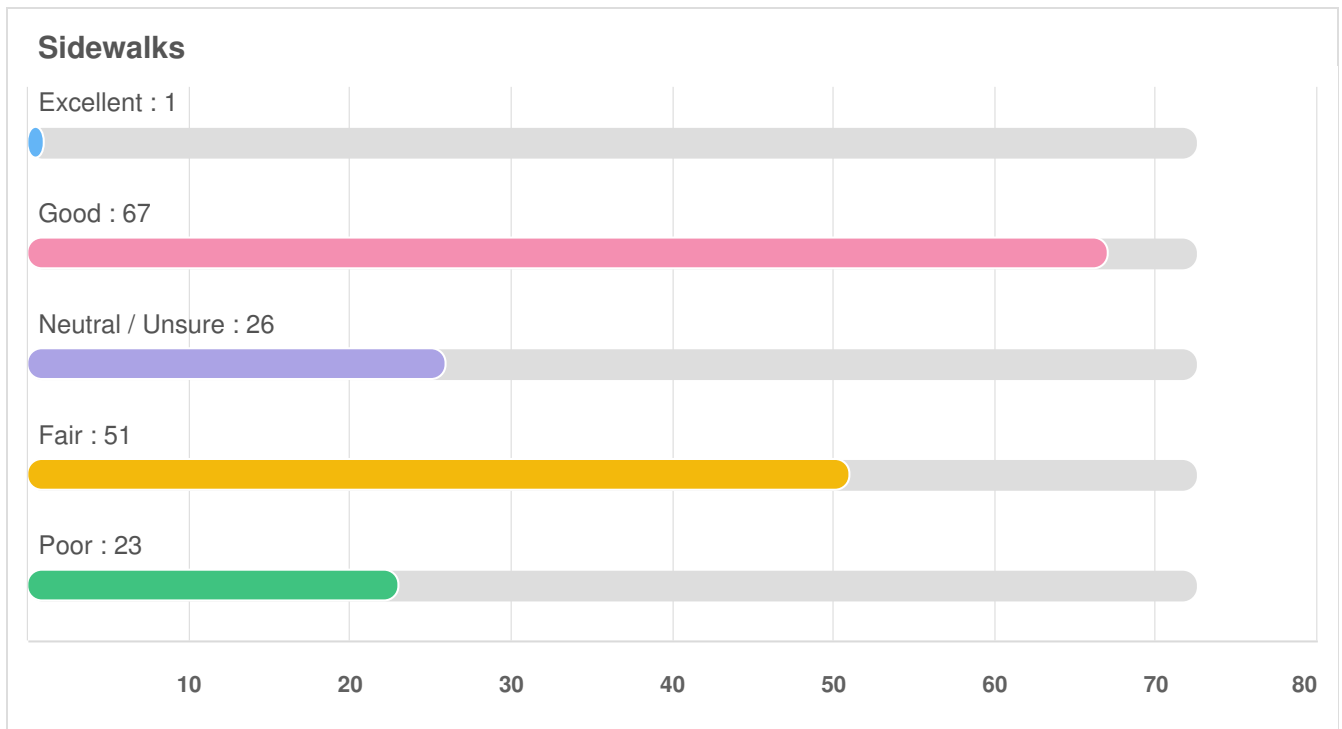


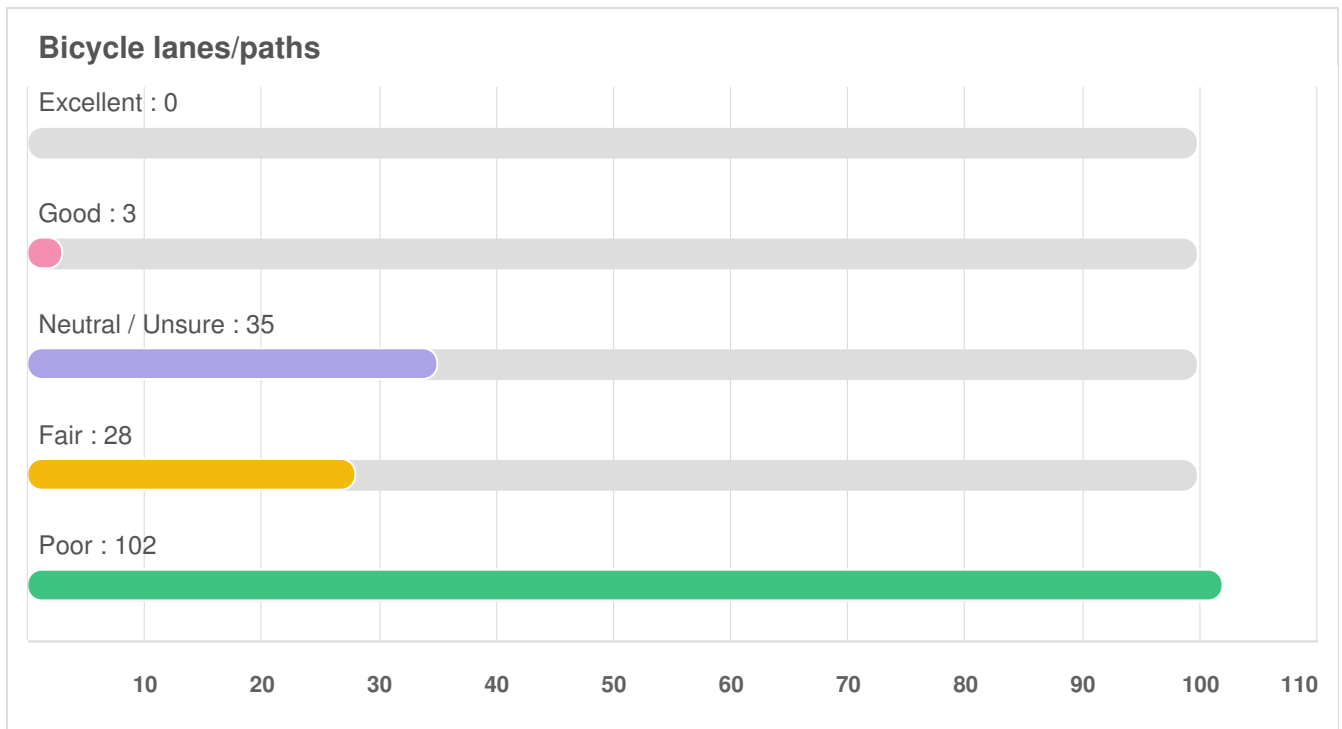
Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

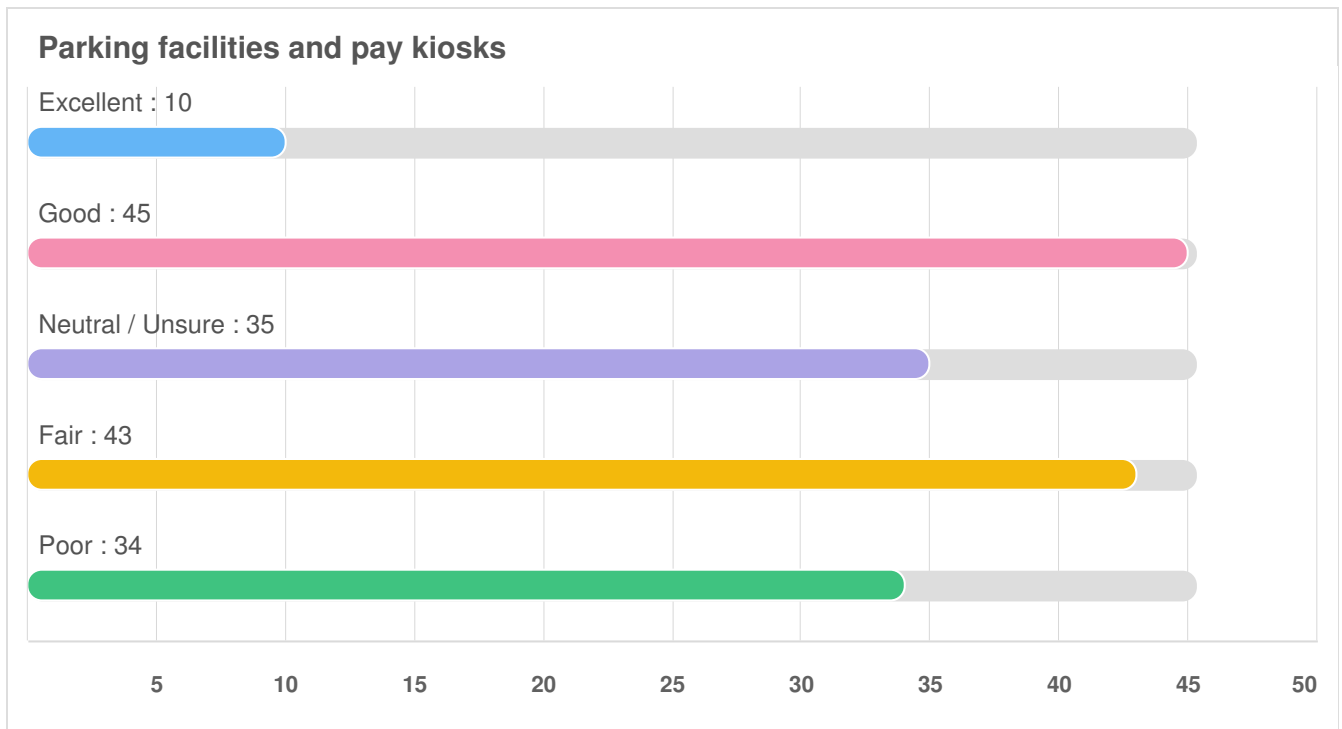
Question type: Likert Question

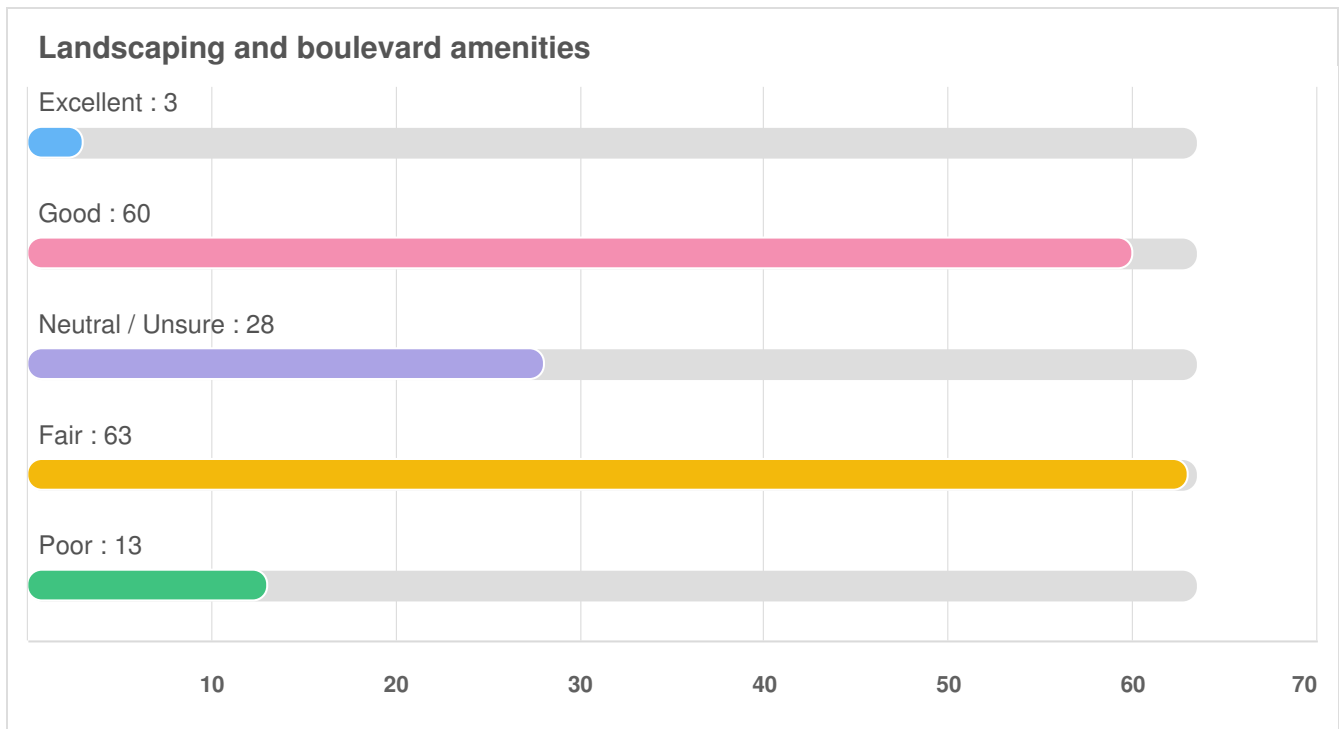
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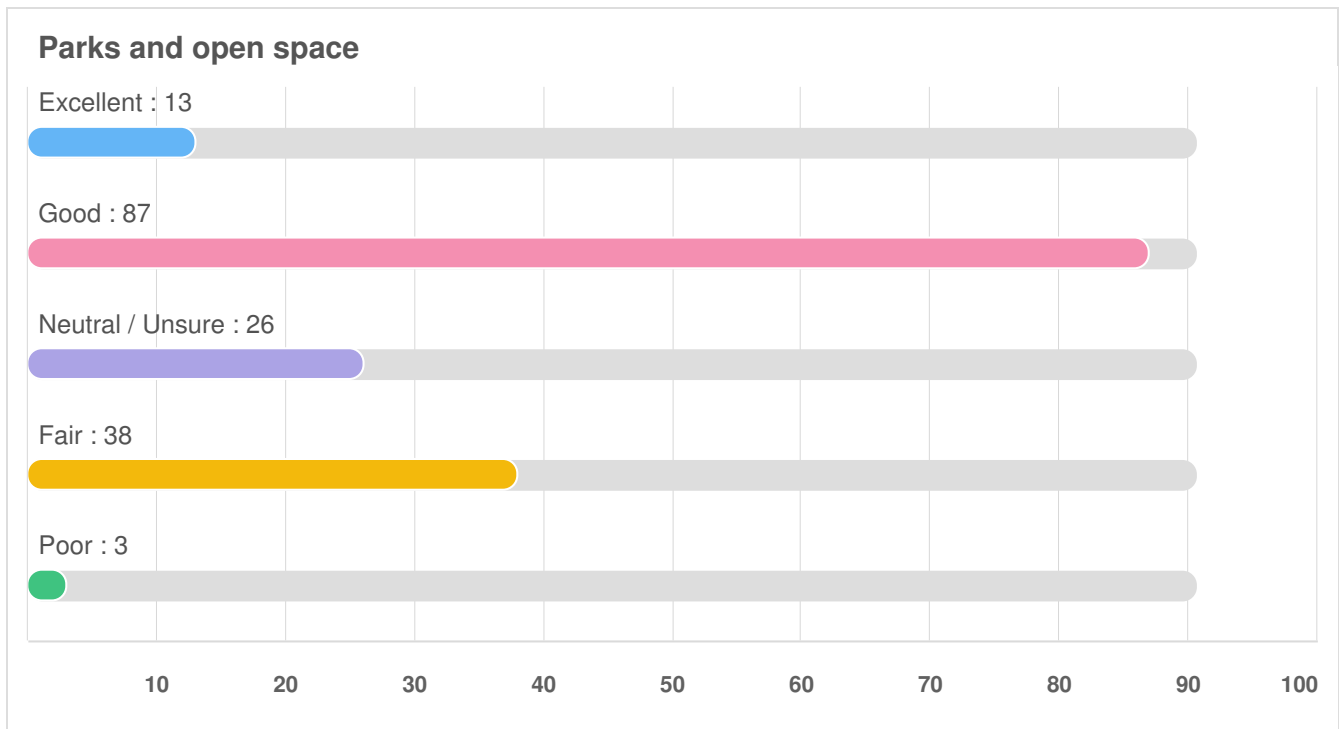


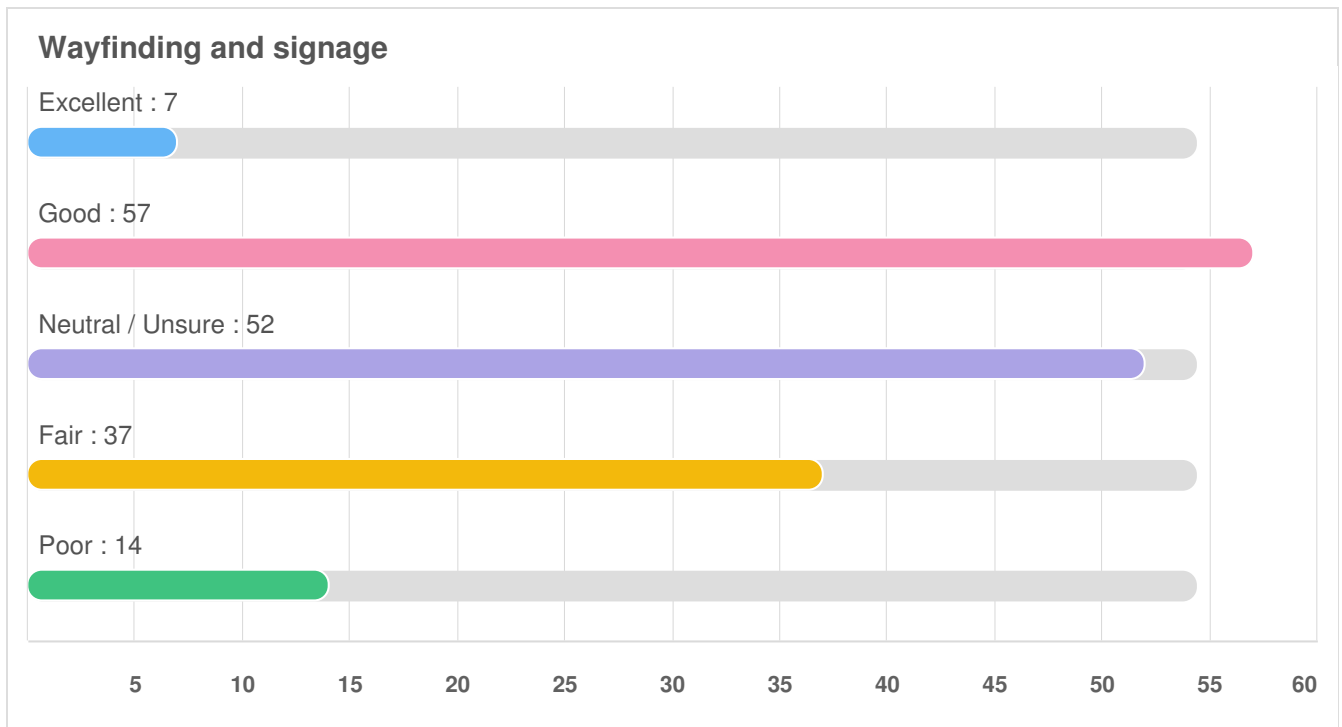












Q5 This plan will identify needs for infrastructure repair/replacement, ongoing maintenance/preservation, and/or new construct...

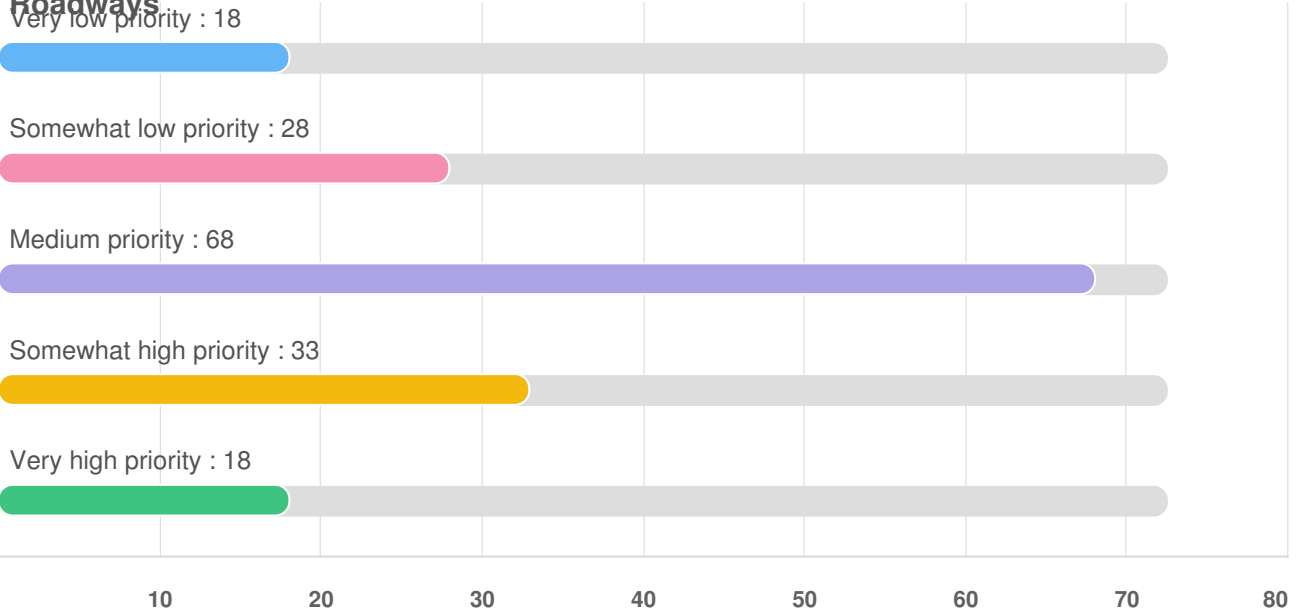


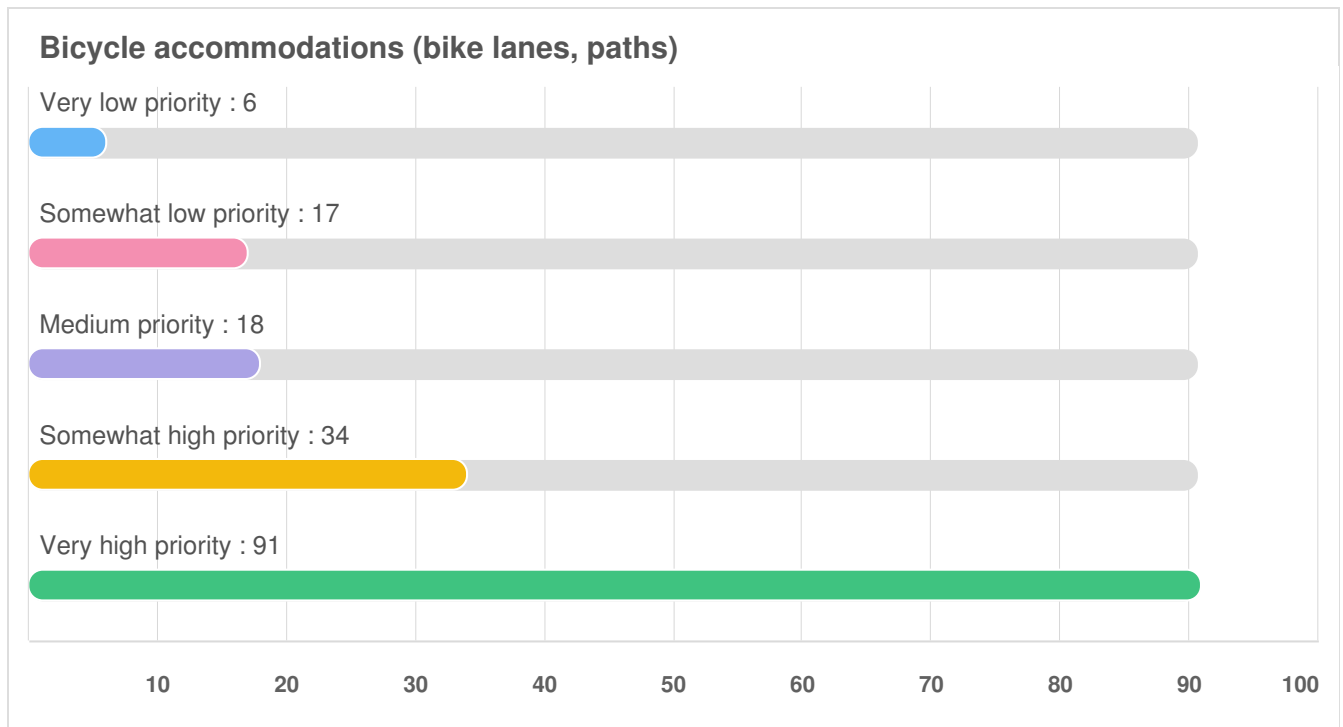
Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

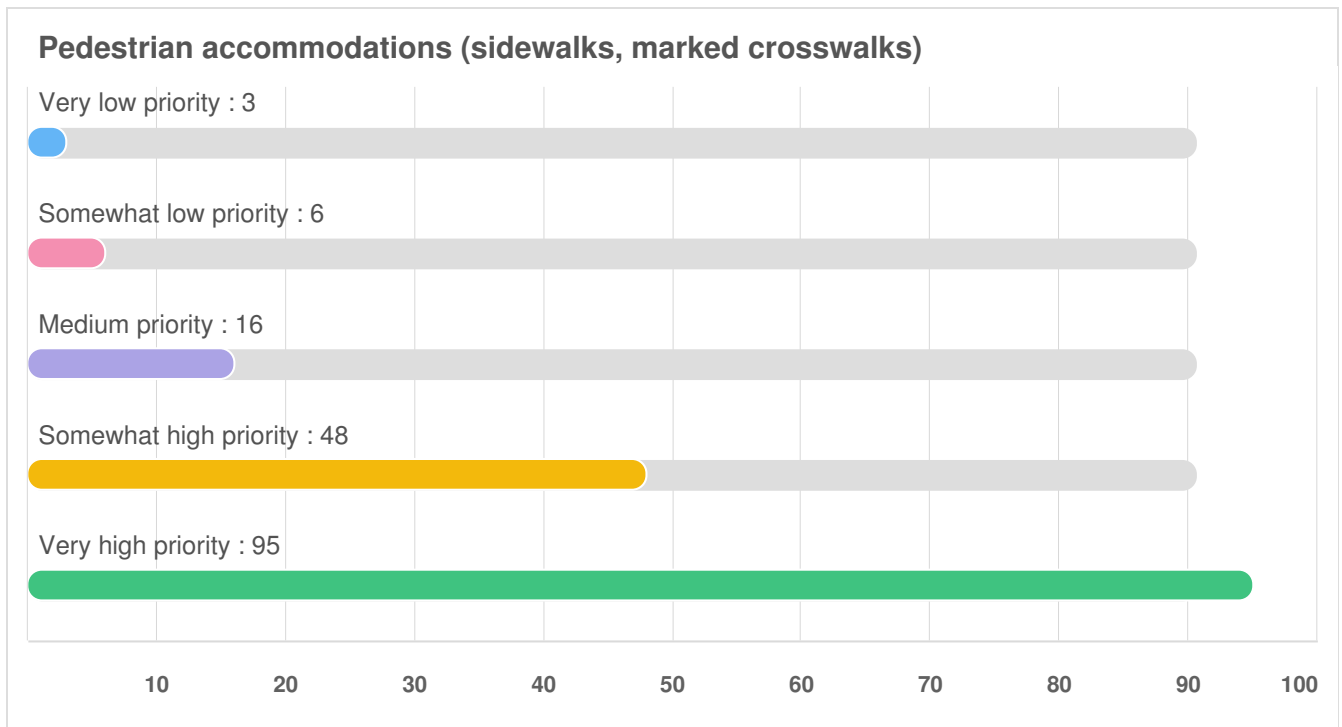
Question type: Likert Question

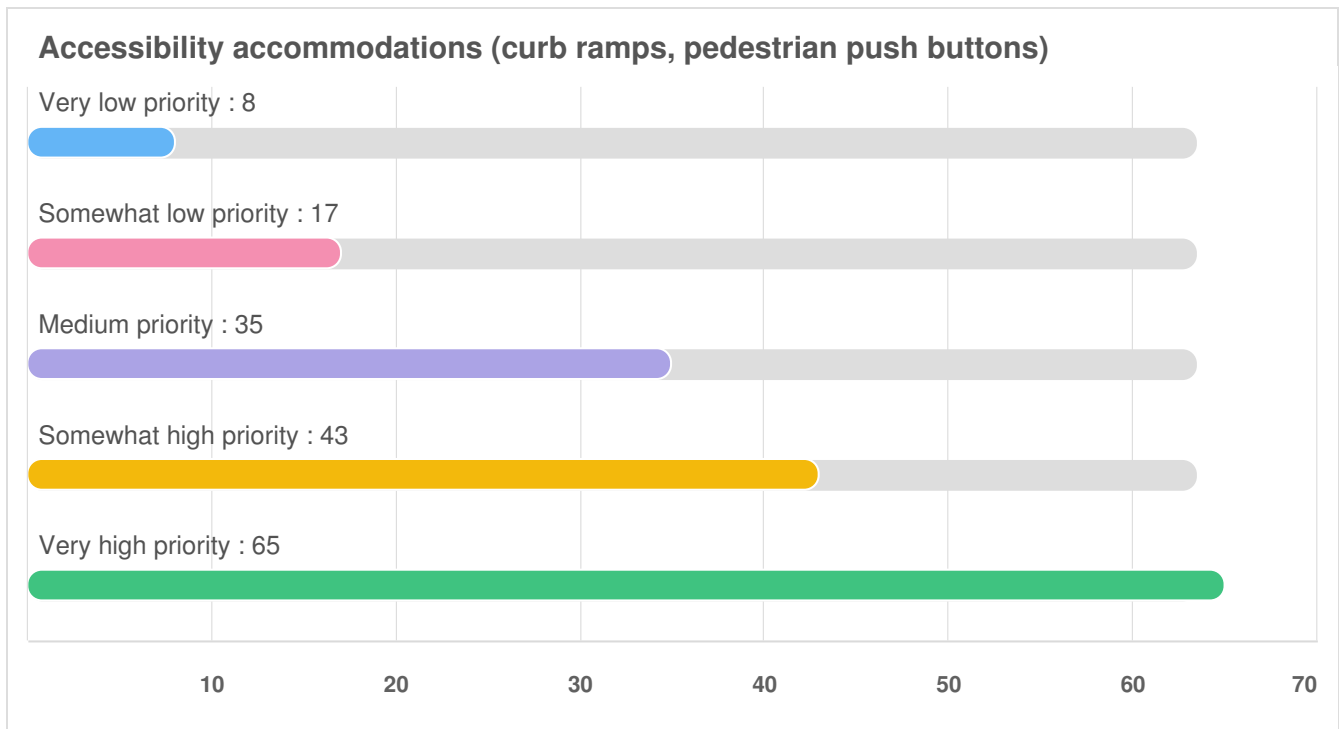
Q5 This plan will identify needs for infrastructure repair/replacement, ongoing maintenance/preservation, and/or new construct...

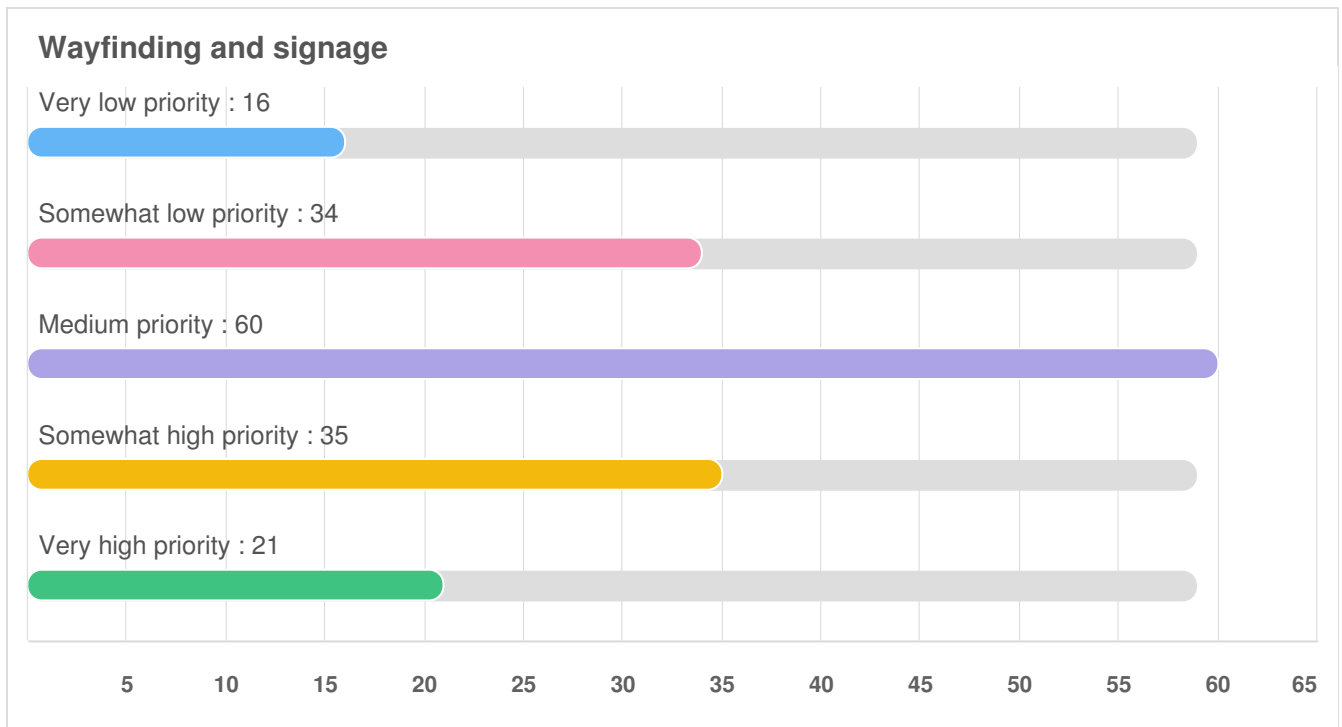
Roadways

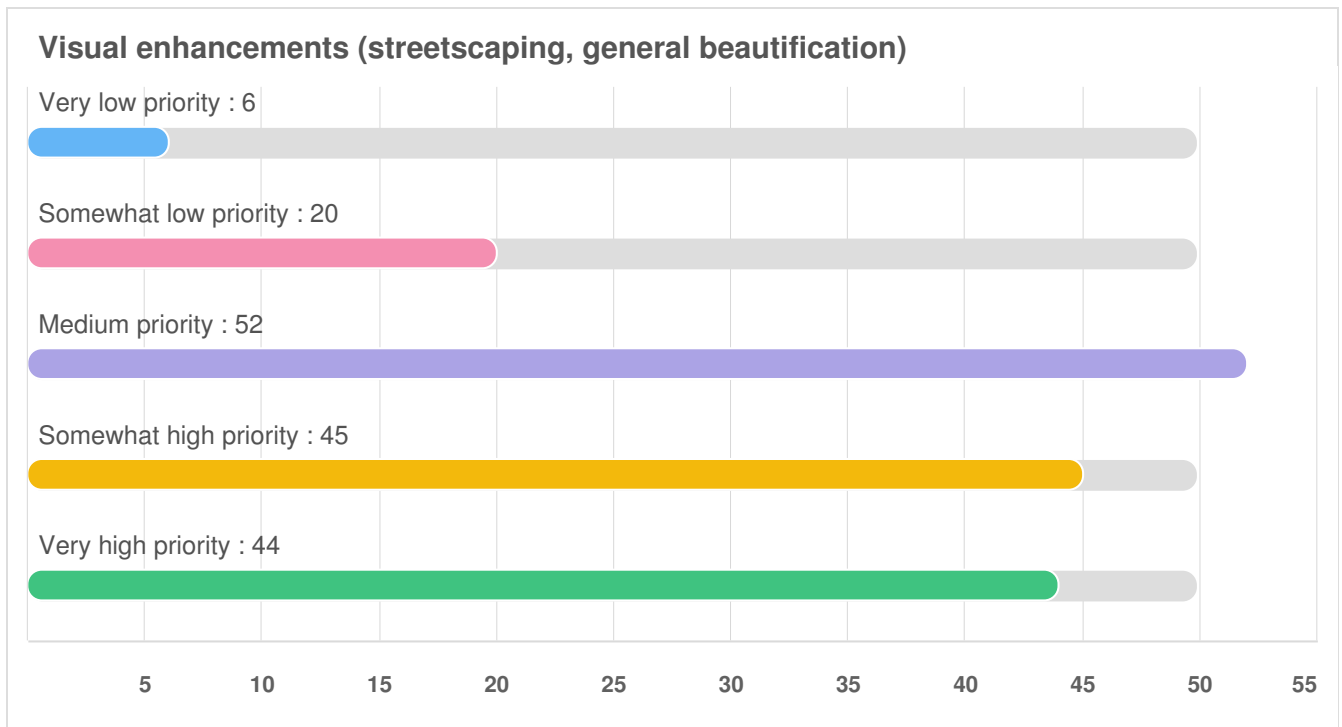


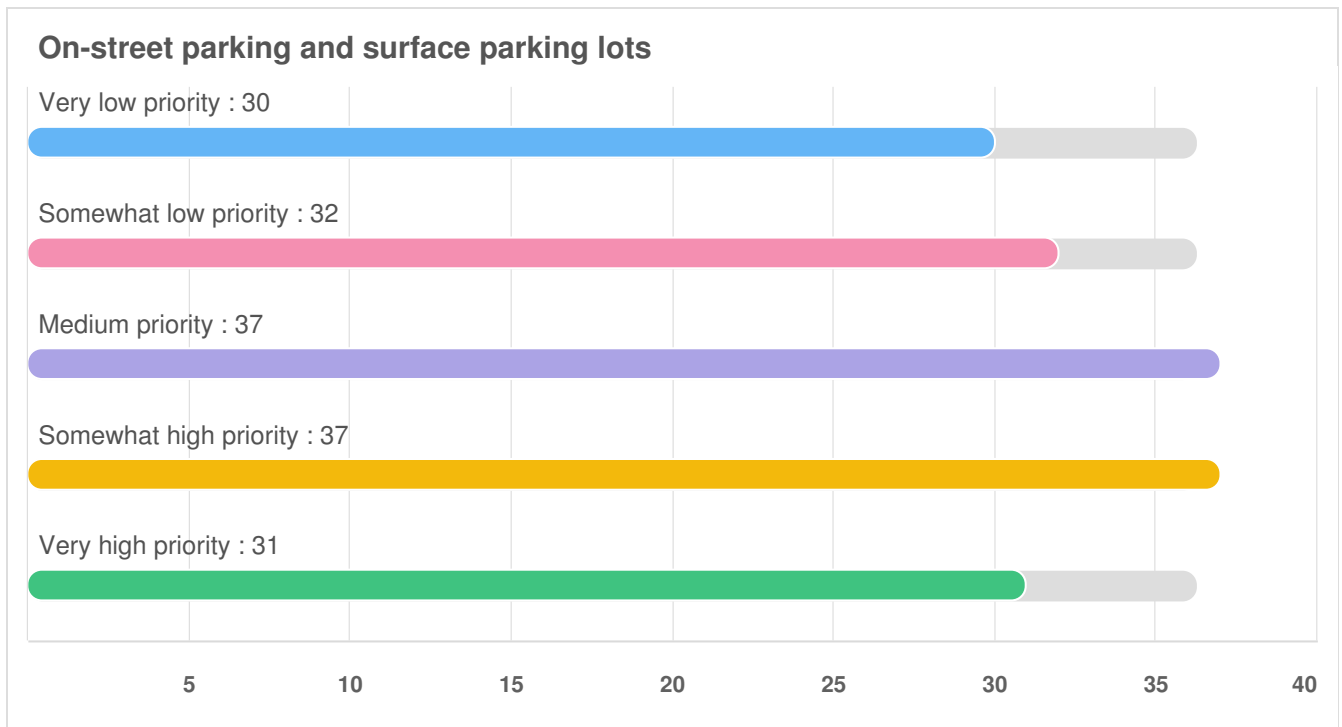


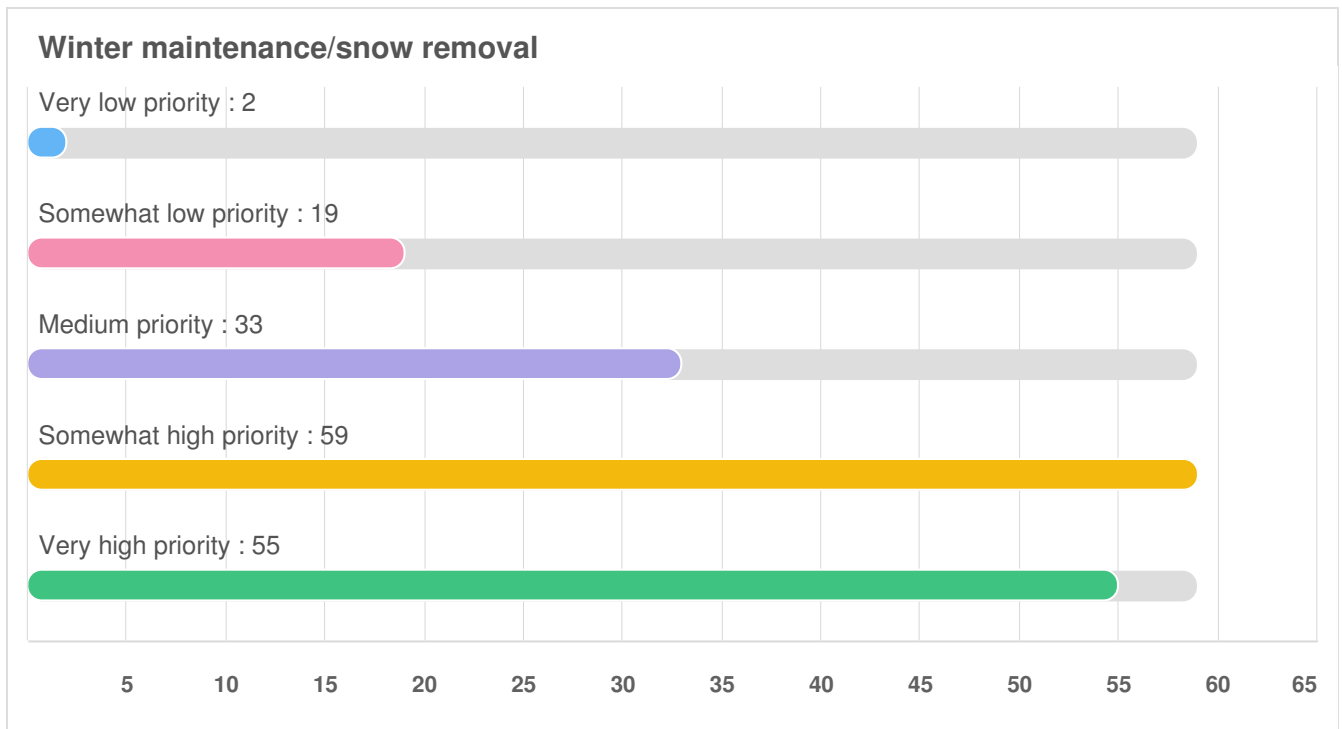


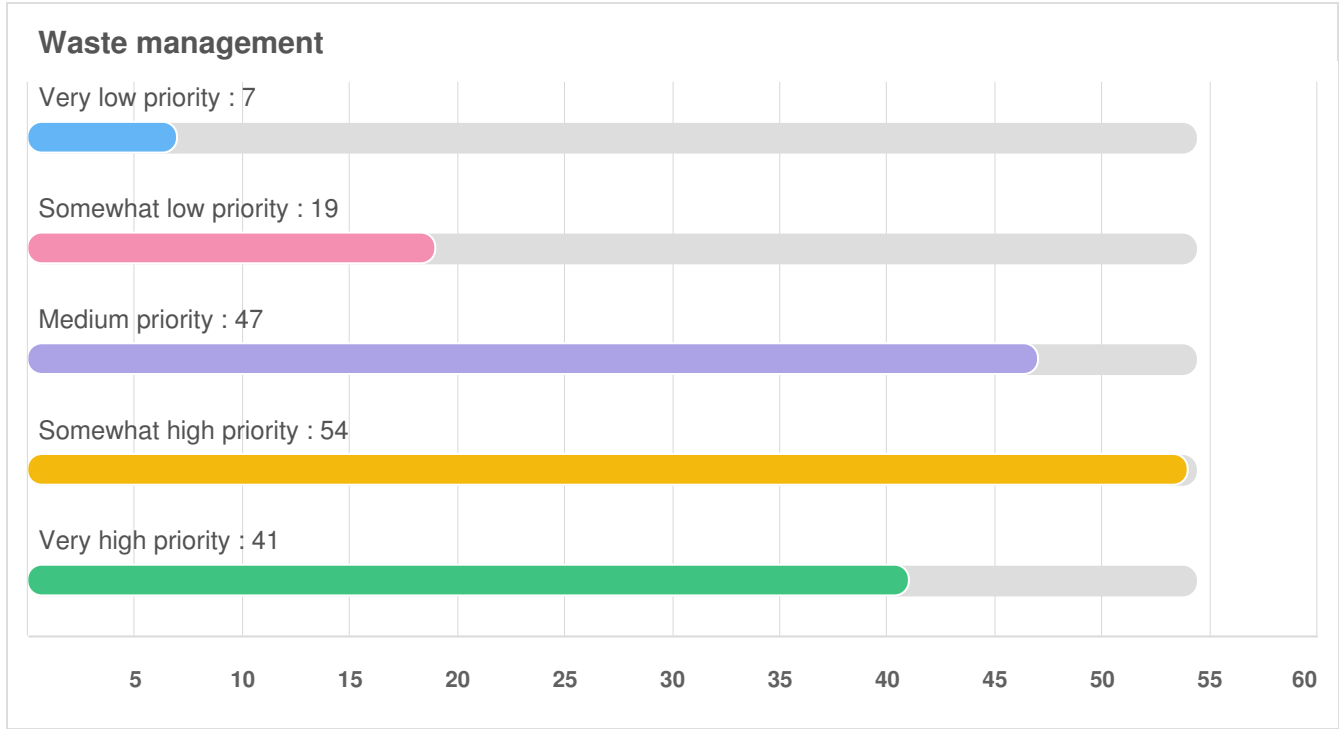




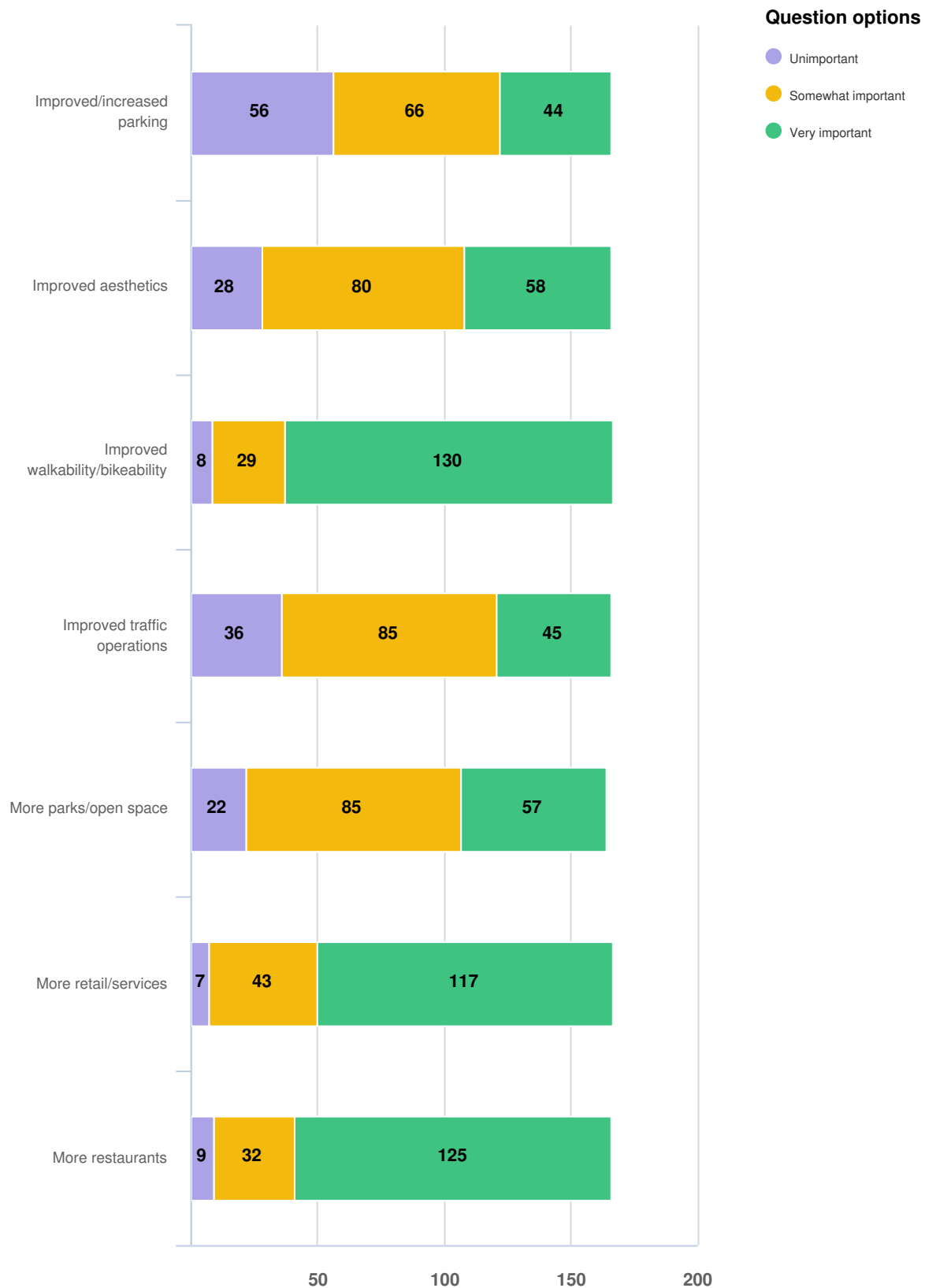








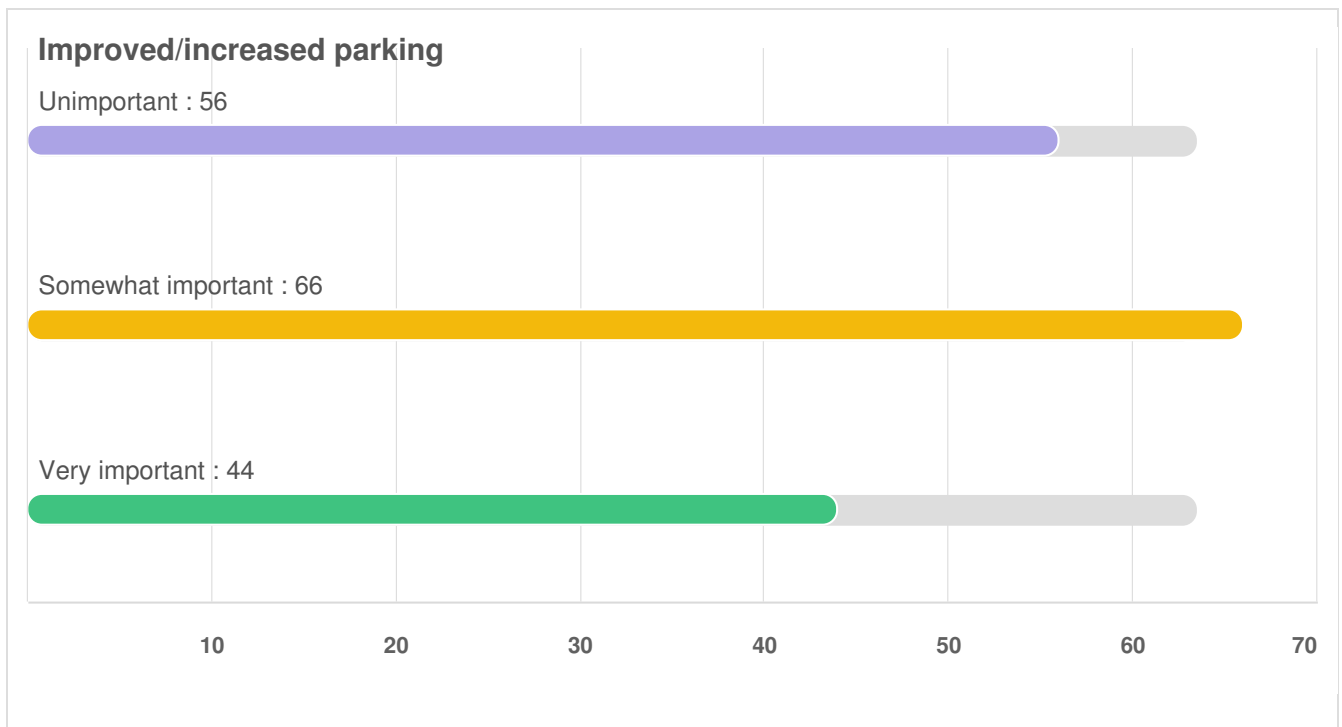
Q6 What would encourage you to visit the DOWNTOWN HELENA area more frequently?
Please indicate the importance to you.

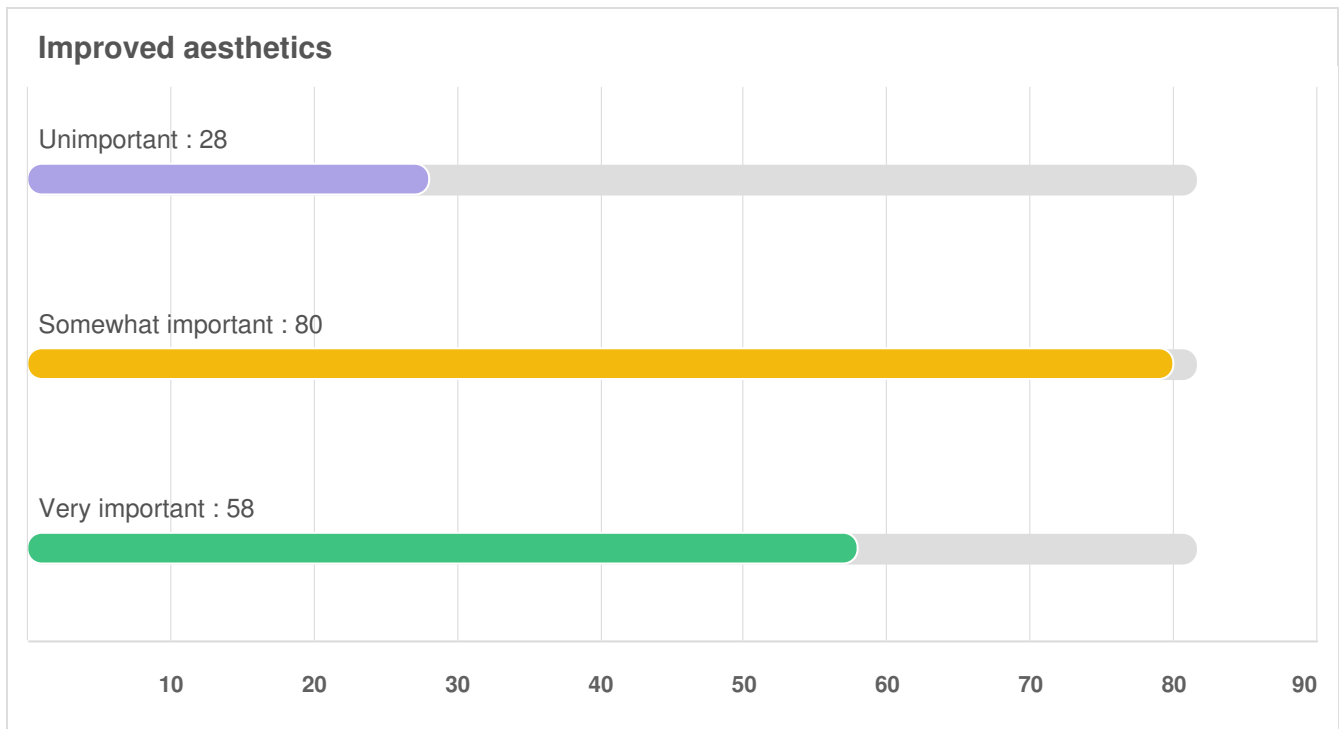


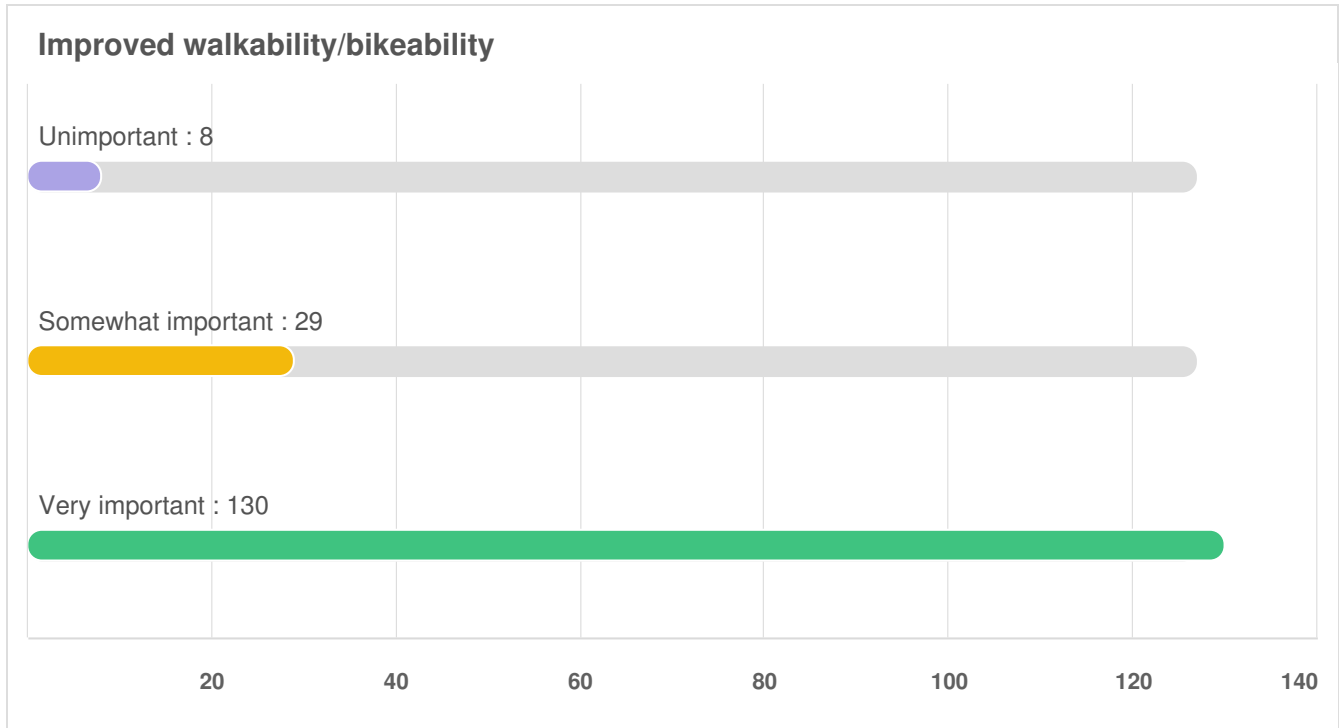
Optional question (167 response(s), 1 skipped)

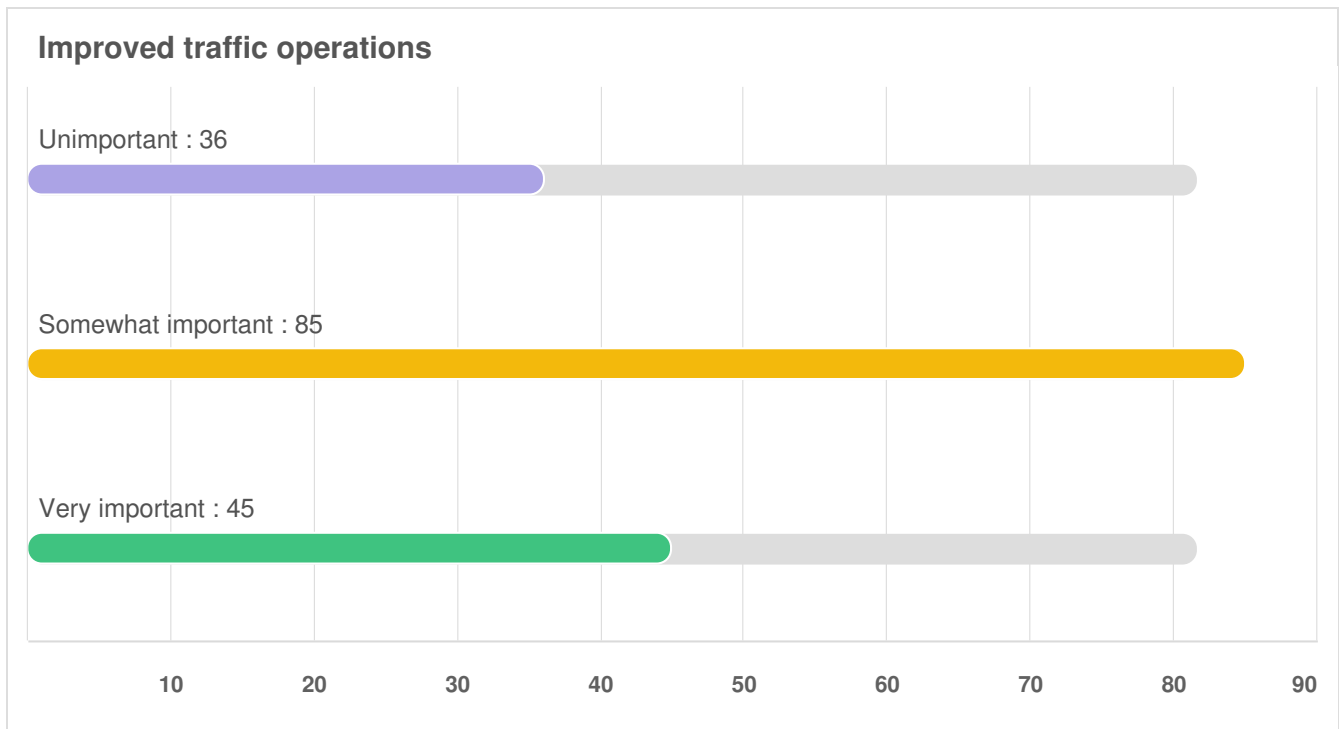
Question type: Likert Question

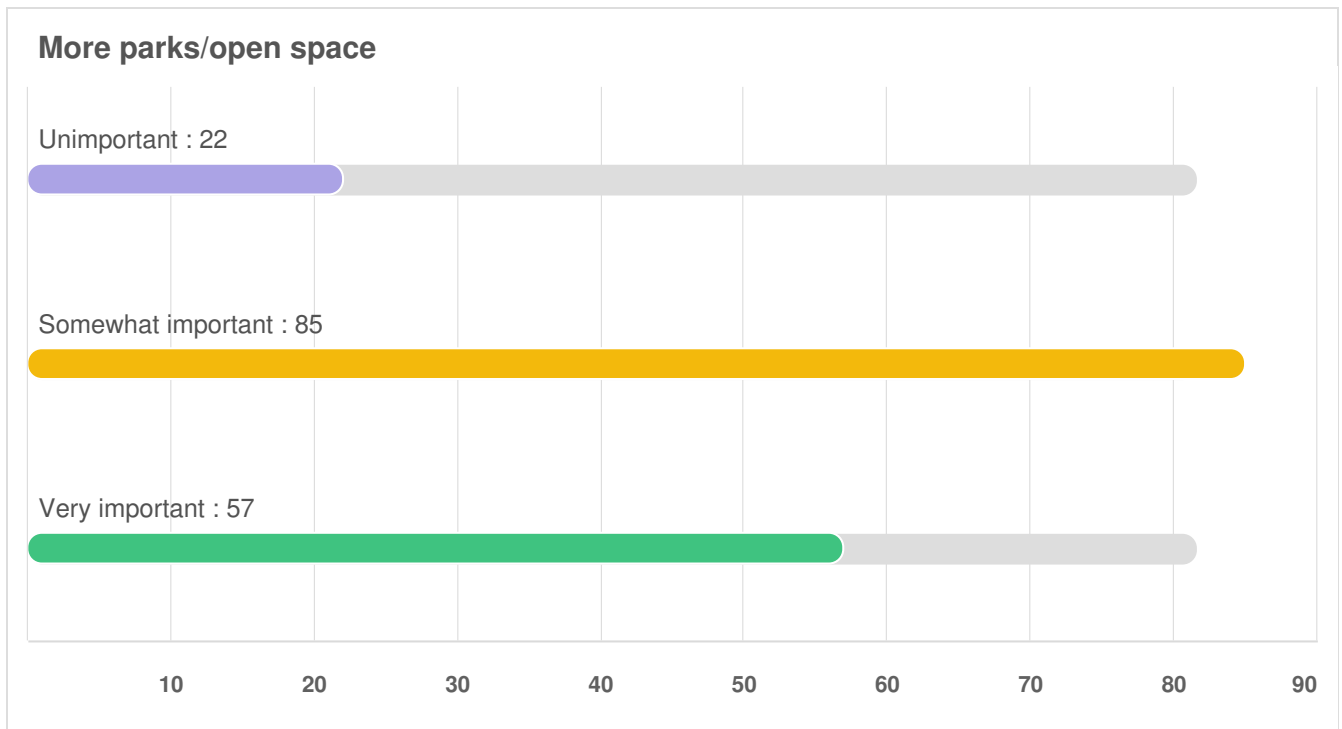
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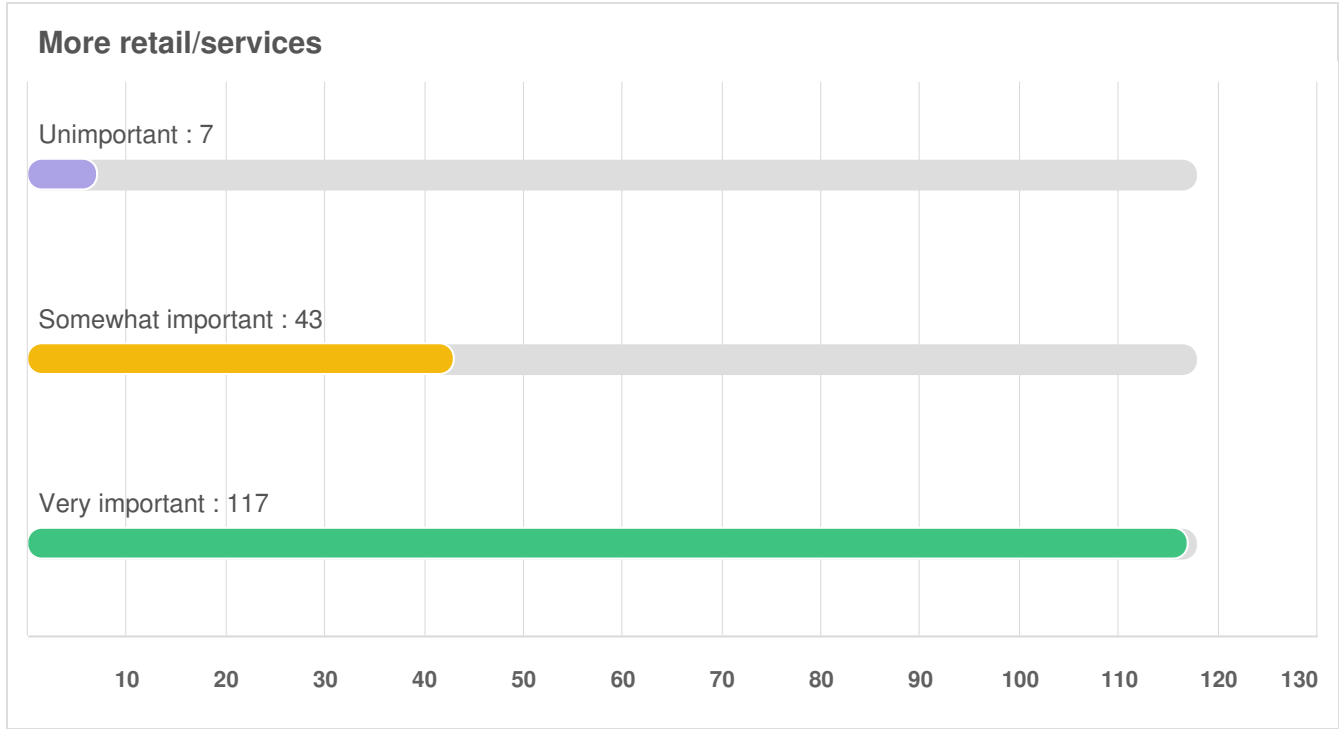




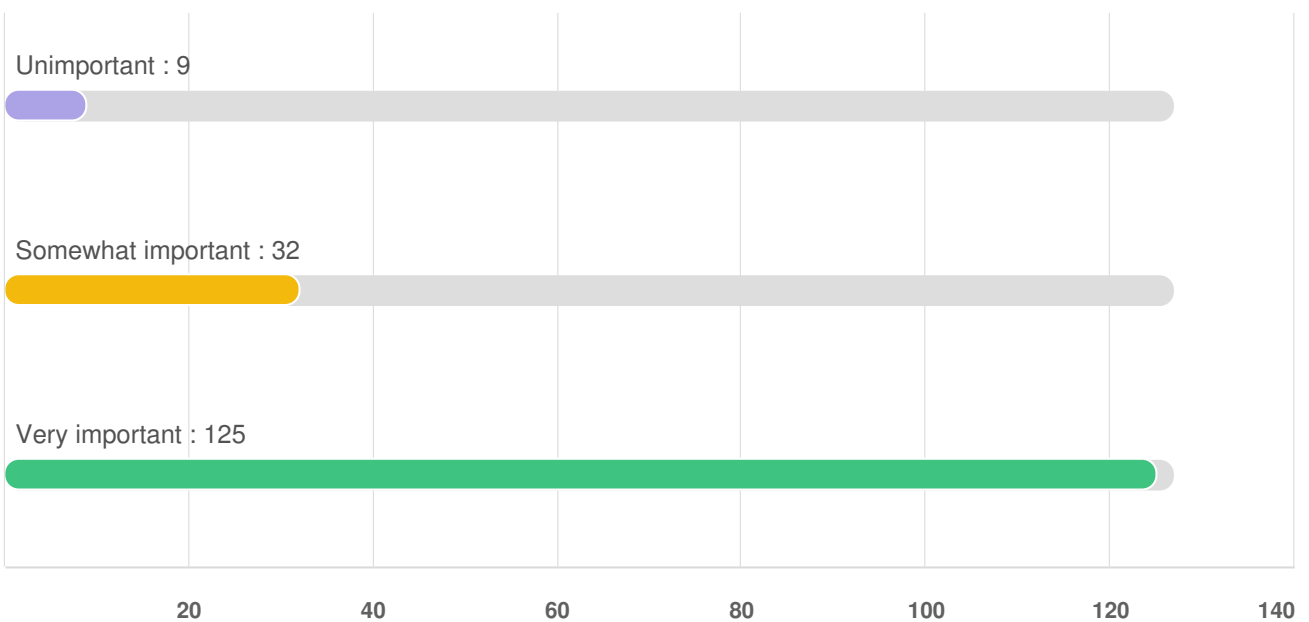




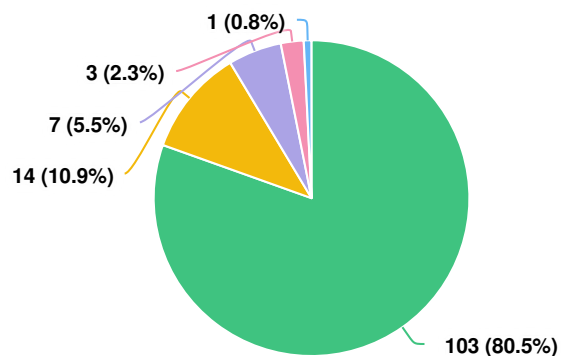




More restaurants



Q7 What is your zip code?



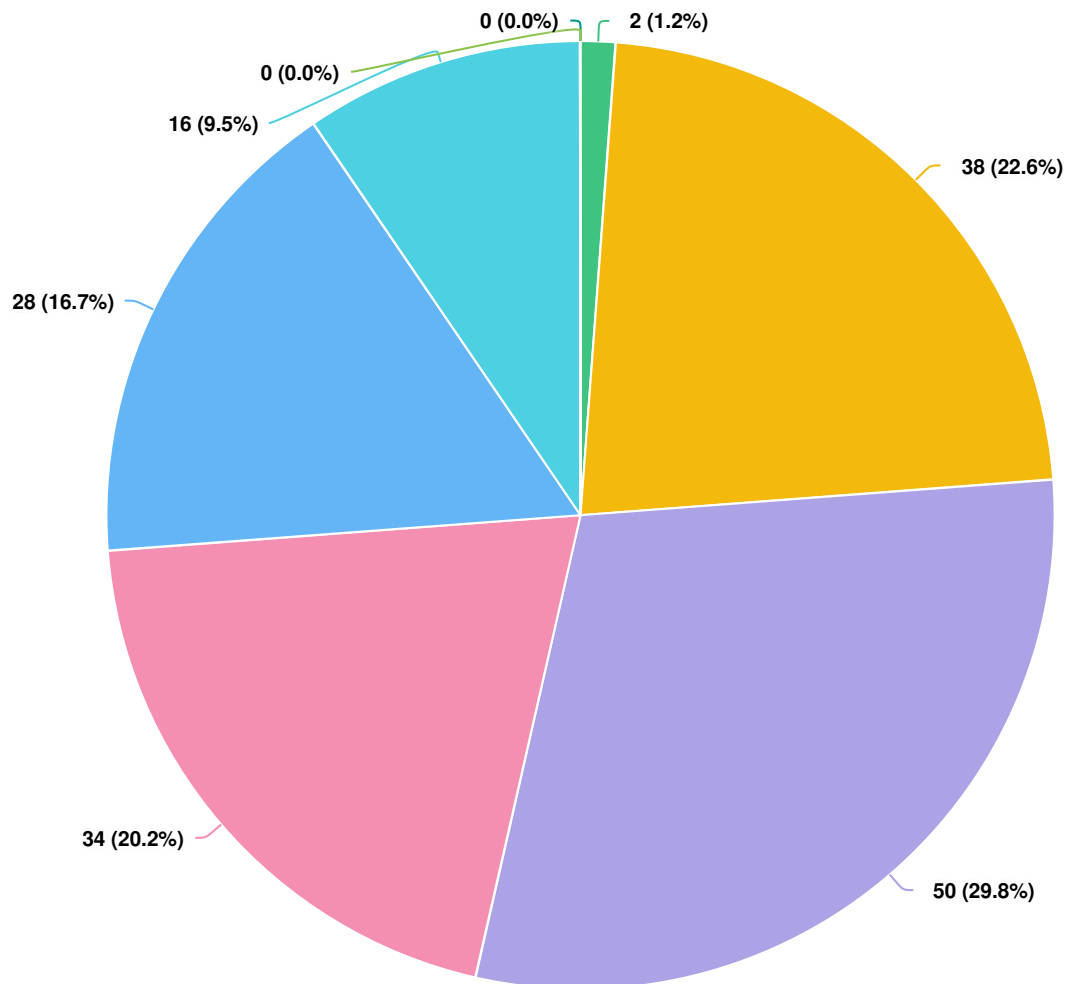
Question options

- Fort Harrison, MT 59636
- Clancy, MT 59634
- East Helena, MT 59635
- Helena, MT 59602
- Helena, MT 59601

Optional question (128 response(s), 40 skipped)

Question type: Region Question

Q8 What is your age?



Question options

☐ Prefer not to specify ☐ Under 18 ☐ 65 or older ☐ 55-64 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 18-24

Optional question (168 response(s), 0 skipped)

Question type: Radio Button Question

Q9 | Please provide any additional information or suggestions that may be helpful for development of the Downtown Helena Multimodal Plan.

broadwellk

3/08/2022 12:43 PM

Less meth heads/ homelessness

Phil Gonzalz

3/08/2022 01:38 PM

I think Helena could benefit from adding bike lanes along N Park and N Benton, parking is likely sufficient, bike parking is not readily available everywhere.

DG

3/08/2022 02:32 PM

No more casinos! Please bring in quality ethnic restaurants like Indian, Chinese or a good Irish bar! Businesses putting political statements at the entrance to their businesses is a real turnoff to visitors. Stop businesses from flying flags or putting sandwich boards over/on sidewalks that interfere with right of way and create safety hazards. Make the first floors of all buildings on the walking mall retail shops! Move all the banks, government services, real estate, medical and lawyers to 2nd floor and above! Those businesses are killing our walking mall. There is nothing there anymore! Scrape off all the old and worn out pride logos on the sidewalks. Start utilizing the Performance Square for events....ie invite local schools to put on small concerts there.

cr

3/08/2022 02:39 PM

Need more retail businesses downtown to draw people downtown and increase city revenue. Limit non-retail businesses. Downtown needs more affordable rent for retail businesses. There needs to be free parking for your first 15-30 min. If it is already then it needs to be made easier to use/know.

Lindsay

3/08/2022 06:01 PM

My biggest concern regarding Helena's downtown is keeping it accessible and welcoming to visitors. To me, this includes promoting family-friendly options like retail and restaurants vs. casinos and professional offices. Along that vein, prioritizing walking and biking over driving and parking. I've never visited a town and been excited about its drivability - that's frustrating no matter what. I certainly remember enjoying walking among shops and pubs, and interacting with the local culture.

Linda G

3/08/2022 06:09 PM

The stoplights that do not respond to a bicycle in the intersection should be changed. I either run the light, park the bike to push the pedestrian button, or wait for a car to show up. The city has moved

forward on getting sidewalks cleared of snow. What is left are the piles of snow at the end of the sidewalk that pedestrians must negotiate. Those should be cleared also so people could walk from block to block without climbing over a mountain of ice. I appreciate how the city did a great job clearing bike/ped paths of snow last winter. Thank you! Snowplows should stop throwing snow back on the paths. Motorists do not generally understand that pedestrians have the right of way at every intersection. I would like to see a PSA campaign similar to "Missoula's Is a Walking Town," demonstrating that drivers should scan for pedestrian traffic ½ block before intersections, pedestrians should signal their intentions by stepping off the curb, and motorists should come to a complete stop, not rolling slowly forward, until the pedestrian is across the street. More locations for bike parking would be helpful.

A.nonny.mouse

3/08/2022 07:13 PM

It's impossible to cross mini malfunction junction on foot. I hate the non retail businesses taking over retail spaces. Need a dog bag station in the little park on 6th and last chance. I hate the parking garage that cars drive onto the walking mall for. The homeless problem downtown is bad, especially the campers on cruse. Need flashing lights in front of central, the only ones are over a block away. Severe ice problems on sidewalks. City or school doesn't shovel along cruse. Non shoveled curb cuts are awful.knoxious weeds on private, school and city properties. I walk downtown every day. I love it but it needs work.

Nick

3/08/2022 07:30 PM

I would like this developed while keeping in mind the potential for more multi family housing towards downtown. We have an apparent supply shortage on housing compared to the demand and density is obviously one solution to this that has the added benefit of better tax revenue to infrastructure cost and maintenance ratios. And transportation and housing are of course connected. Appreciate all the hard work!

twcrowl

3/08/2022 08:44 PM

We need to invest in infrastructure that prioritizes walking/biking/spending time downtown, not cars.

Sara

3/09/2022 06:37 AM

Clean up the homeless junk that litters the park across from the Library and the areas at the back side of the Mercantile. Move the homeless shelters away from the walking malls. Provide cost breaks for small business starting up on the walking malls to encourage more businesses to open. Connect the Great Northern Town Center and the Last Chance Gulch walking mall. Remove Government services from the first floors of the walking mall and relocate to upper floors.

All first floors should be open to small business enterprises, not tied up with lawyer offices, dentists and ad companies. Helena has such charm, which is why we chose to live in this city, but I am concerned that the charm is oozing away with each small business that closes on the walking mall. The city suffers long-term consequences from lost business and less draw to the downtown area.

NFW

3/09/2022 08:19 AM

Please prioritize foot traffic, bike traffic, and aesthetics in your visioning sessions.

AMT

3/09/2022 08:23 AM

Please focus on sidewalks, not street work. So many are crumbling, tripping hazards, or slanted and icy in winter. Then promote retail downtown so more people will visit. No more offices on the ground floor!

Kal Poole

3/09/2022 09:42 AM

SIGNAGE SIGNAGE SIGNAGE!!! Specifically tourist centric signage that points toward downtown and provides bright, highly visible and aesthetically pleasing wayfinding for those who don't know how to find the library or Reeder's Alley or the Cathedral or Firetower or the Holter or Grandstreet or Myrna Loy or Cinemark or the breweries or Mt. Helena trails or hotels or the capitol or shopping... Some cities do this well but we do not. Our signage for way finding is helpful if you are on foot and good at spotting camouflaged signs made to blend in. Also bike lanes, funded holiday decorations, better shopping and more flowers and greenery downtown:)

ssandau

3/09/2022 09:44 AM

Walk audits are a great way to view the space to come up with meaningful changes.

D

3/09/2022 12:57 PM

when you look down each street, you see SO Many metal posts for signs, why can't we post multiples signs on one post to eliminate some of them, for cleaner look, less driving destructions, save money and give more appeal! it's a win-win in more opinion.

Margaret Strachan

3/09/2022 02:43 PM

Streets and sidewalks are low priority compared to the rest of the city; trees and vegetation needed; surface repairs/replacement needed on walking mall; if multi-modal, what can be done to connect Great Northern with the older part to downtown - no mention of transit or other modes; need to improve pedestrian connections between surrounding neighborhoods and downtown; and more housing in or near downtown.

Andrea

3/09/2022 03:25 PM

Bringing in more restaurants and retail would make a huge impact of downtown enjoyment

Diana Hammer

3/09/2022 06:13 PM

I'd like to see the City 'lead by example' in xeriscaping (native and drought-tolerant plants) and other water conservation best practices, more 'green infrastructure' to slow down and soak in stormwater, waste management (recycling, composting, refillable bottle stations, waste reduction policies, etc.), and by encouraging 'pop up' events. Thank you for asking!

Jk

3/09/2022 07:13 PM

More accessible Crossfox with truncated domes. Dedicated pedestrian crossing times that are not shared with turn lane. Better designed pedestrian crossing from great northern area to downtown walking mall area.

Jim

3/09/2022 10:37 PM

If you build the safe cycling and walking infrastructure, it will be used.

JSullivan

3/09/2022 11:32 PM

Better biking; free parking ; currently paying to park to grab coffee with a friend is a deterrent to downtown when there are other places to go with better parking and no parking fees. Being able to walk and/or ride without fearing for my health and well-being would be nice.

J

3/10/2022 05:06 AM

Try no fee parking. Provide a cost accounting of the current pay parking model.

dillonkey

3/10/2022 06:52 AM

Biking is growing as a form of commuting and tourism in Helena. Making that more accessible will only benefit Helena in the future.

Sam Anderson

3/10/2022 07:01 AM

Extend the walking mall. Get the lawyers and banks to move out of downtown so more walking tourist business come in. Bike paths to the mountain bike trailheads would be great

Kettu

3/10/2022 07:05 AM

I manage a business downtown. The parking and pay for parking has directly affected my business. The kiosks are not user friendly and since there is very little free short term parking we have seen less desire to come to downtown businesses.

Jeanne

Beautification adds to the charm of our downtown. We are known as a

3/10/2022 07:07 AM

bike and hike community let's make it more so!

Wrench

3/10/2022 07:12 AM

More pedestrian friendly, navy signs, parking

Cari K

3/10/2022 07:47 AM

Maybe some publicly accessible bathrooms for when the library is closed (especially for those of us with kiddos).

Bobbi

3/10/2022 08:36 AM

More events, amenities (stuff for kids to do, restaurants, outside dining in summer)

Brandon Madden

3/10/2022 09:04 AM

Stop being anti business, or at least the perception of being anti business. Stop denying access to mountain bikers. We've had alot of increased tourism money due to our trail system, and mountain bikers traveling here from out of town. Support that and stop being anti bike! This user group locally does alot to support these trails and downtown.

jgunther

3/10/2022 09:14 AM

Extend the two-way bike path that currently ends at the Great Northern all the way to Park Ave

Lowell Chandler

3/10/2022 10:11 AM

Downtown must be a space for all transportation modes. It is currently set up mainly for vehicle travel. Given the abundance of parking garages throughout downtown (as compared to Missoula, Helena has a ton of parking space downtown), I believe that we should remove some on street parking in favor of dedicated bike/walk shared-use lanes (see the Missoula Higgins Avenue improvement north of Broadway where a separated bike lane was added). A vibrant downtown starts with creating an inviting space, where pedestrian and bike travel is prioritized. Likewise, an accessible downtown is only extending the walking mall down to Fuller Avenue where the Farmers Market is located.

Lowell Chandler

3/10/2022 10:25 AM

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aspect of creating a vibrant multi-modal downtown is ensuring that access to the downtown area is safe for pedestrians and bikers. One critical area that needs to be fixed is Benton Avenue south of Euclid and north of Neill. It is currently a four lane highway without any crosswalks or bike lanes. This is the main entrance to our downtown from the west side of Helena, Benton Ave needs to be inviting, not a four-lane speedway. Additionally, on Fuller Avenue, the intersections of Lawrence and Placer are both dangerous for cars, bikers, and pedestrians. Lawrence has a 2 way stop sign on Fuller, then Placer has a two-way stop sign on Placer. Both of these intersections should either be a four-way stop or have a round-a-bout. Lawrence in particular with vehicles barreling down hill from the west is a dangerous intersection the way it is currently set up. Long-term, I would also support extending the walking mall down Fuller Avenue to Lawrence Ave (and potentially all the way to the Neill where the Farmers Market is located). Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments, and I look forward to engaging in the process as it moves forward.

Greg Wirth

3/10/2022 11:21 AM

Cruse Avenue is too wide and problematic for pedestrian crossings. Neill Avenue is too wide and prohibits connectivity to the Great Northern Town Center. Transients frequent the tunnel under Cruse Avenue at the Library and deposit litter. The playground on the walking mall has become an ashtray for the Sapphire Bar. Connectivity to Rodney Street to created linkage.

Erin Woodrow

3/10/2022 11:33 AM

Overall, I find traveling downtown to be fairly easy via bike, foot, or car. I would like to see more bike racks in the GNTC and downtown in general that are easier to use and in better shape. Sometimes the bike racks have installed in a way that they can't be easily used or are in disrepair. I support the Walking Mall being open to bikes. Perhaps adding a bike lane could visually separate pedestrians and cyclists and prevent conflict.

Mary Vandebosch

3/10/2022 11:47 AM

The area that needs the most improvement with respect to landscaping, parks, and improving pedestrian and disabled access is the area between Lyndale and Neill (Front Street and Last Chance Gulch). It would also help to have a clear bike link (path, lane, etc.) . If the connection between downtown south of Neill and north of Neill were more appealing and easier to navigate, people would naturally travel back and forth. Not sure what to do about this, but pedestrians have to wait a long time to cross at Neill and Last Chance Gulch.

Sarah

Homelessness and the waste (trash, feces on the sidewalk, etc) from

3/10/2022 12:31 PM

said gatherings need to also be addressed.

emypiecake

3/10/2022 12:36 PM

As gas prices continue to rise, I feel there's a need to focus on improving alternative methods of transportation. Including better and safer access to biking would be HUGE for many, including my family of four who use biking as our primary transportation when weather permits.

BoyMom

3/10/2022 12:46 PM

The parking situation is ONEROUS and ridiculous - First hour should be free. The system is always malfunctioning -the pittance you charge is not nearly outweighed by the terrible system. Please fix the broken sidewalks - it's like a 3rd world country on the Gulch - cracks everywhere- its dangerous. Please sweep more and keep downtown cleaner.

Andrew Cupino

3/10/2022 01:12 PM

I live within a mile of downtown, so typically do not drive to access it. Navigating within the downtown area is fairly easy as a pedestrian. My biggest concern is accessing the area via bike or foot--Broadway, Last Chance Gulch, Lyndale, 6th, and Park are all dangerous on a bicycle due to road debris, crowded on street parking, and narrow sidewalks with no separate bicycle path. Drivers have very little respect for the pedestrian right-of-way when crossing streets at an intersection and the existing curb ramps often angle directly into traffic with no boulevard to create space between drivers & pedestrians.

Eric

3/10/2022 03:54 PM

Helena needs more options for biking. This could be a great investment with the current increases in gas prices and a step towards carbon neutrality.

Pamela Melton

3/11/2022 04:48 AM

Bike lane from Park Ave to St Peter's Health, Bus route from downtown to a grocery store/pharmacy with regular intervals of pick up/drop off, Designated smoking areas or smoke free areas so kids don't have to walk through smoke clouds, Less marijuana shops and breweries near schools and parks (not everyone wants to see them on every corner)

Micahvitoff

3/11/2022 05:25 AM

More retail and entertainment. no casinos ,

KB9LOV

3/11/2022 08:29 AM

Please let this city become more bicycle and walking friendly, the current pedestrian and biking provisions are an abomination for. city

of this stature in hiking and biking prominence. Also, the play parking kiosk system is a disaster, please fix this and make it more business friendly. Customers avoid the downtown area purely for inconvenience of the parking system. A time limited free parking system would bring many more people to the downtown area and let Helena businesses prosper.

JLo

3/11/2022 01:07 PM

As someone who lives downtown on the walking mall, this survey doesn't really address my interests. I am curious why you specifically didn't seek information on what people are wanting to do downtown. Also, your survey map has the library located in the wrong place. It is located on the map where the Federal Office Building should be. I am curious why you did not show the Rocky Mountain Development Building -- home to the senior citizen center and Head Start, both vital to the health and well-being of our community. Would you consider a focus group for an opportunity to talk about what it means to live in the area under consideration?

Savanna Barrett

3/11/2022 01:36 PM

We need to designate ground floor for retail or high traffic businesses only. We need to use empty storefronts for pop up shops. Businesses need a way to recycle plastics. We need more free parking.

Mary

3/11/2022 03:09 PM

I think there needs to be a four way stop on Lawrence and Fuller. There should be more 15 minute parking spaces. There should be a designated bike/scooter/skateboard path on the walking mall. Only restaurants should be allowed to have parklets, not retail spaces. The parking is hard enough downtown. I am sure I have more thoughts but am drawing a blank.

TheseBoots

3/12/2022 07:11 AM

On-street parking seems to unnecessarily clog the streets of downtown and it's an eyesore. We should prioritize walking, biking, benches/leisure, outdoor shops, and ADA accessibility with that space. We should also make the entire area more connected for pedestrians. Our downtown has the potential to be a dense walkable space from Park Ave all the way to the Great Northern Town Center. Drivers in that entire area should be made aware through traffic calming measures that they are entering pedestrian space, not the other way around.

vmdsmj

3/12/2022 07:34 AM

I'm richly from here but lived in Seattle for 26 years. I really don't understand why people complain about our parking options and pricing it's actually amazingly inexpensive and accessible. I have always wanted to see more restaurants and retail downtown. And a

variety, not just burgers and beer. I have seen some improvement which is wonderful! We need clusters of restaurants that's how restaurants thrive and survive. More restaurants near the windag, for instance. I'm sure the reason is because space is expensive and not available. Downtown should make an incentive for new restaurants, Eateries, Gastropubs, Coffee shops, Retail to come in to line the gulch. For instance the corner of 6th and last last chance gulch Should be occupied by decent restaurants or really good shopping.. Like flagship ones. Those spaces right now are so strange, uninviting, and Unappealing. 2 of the spaces are historic buildings and we should be showing those off because they're so beautiful and unique.

Jackie

3/12/2022 08:54 PM

I enjoy biking downtown and would appreciate more places to lock up my bike downtown.

TRieger

3/13/2022 04:11 PM

Would like to see connectivity to centennial path from downtown and more bike lanes.

Bigskymom

3/14/2022 08:41 AM

In-fill for housing is good but only in currently existing buildings within our downtown area. Bozeman has allowed horrible high-rise apartment buildings in their downtown that don't fit the history or character of the current neighborhoods. They look like every other city in America. More residential apartments in current buildings on walking mall would be such a stabilizing factor. More retail in that stretch rather than just bars.

pmarron

3/14/2022 02:21 PM

It can be confusing when trying to figure out which Department/group to contact when an issue arises. Even trying to schedule an event seems more complicated than it should be. Need to contact Police, Fire, Streets, Parks, Parking, BID and DHI; fill out multiple forms and make multiple calls. I also think the businesses downtown should take some more ownership in the downtown, if they want to see more people they could help improve sidewalks and snow removal.

David Abrams

3/14/2022 03:01 PM

I've always thought the downtown district could use a grocery store on or very near the Walking Mall. It doesn't have to be a large chain, but even a medium-sized locally-owned grocery store would really help out those who live downtown. Pedestrians in particular need someplace closer than Van's.

Amy

3/15/2022 10:56 AM

The Walking Mall (which was created specifically to be a retail mall) is in DESPERATE need of more retail! There are way too many

vacant or non-retail ground floor spaces on both blocks. We are forfeiting much tourist (as well as local) revenue by not maximizing the Walking Mall's potential! There should also be an ordinance requiring facade aesthetics that match with our historical district. People who want to put their retail business downtown should be able to easily find information on contacting the building's owner, etc.

Holly

3/16/2022 04:45 PM

Clearly designated parking for the library that is not used by the Park Avenue store/bar people. Affordable businesses/food/coffee places. Zoning for unified feel to match architecture to the old buildings. Most new construction is discordant, really ugly, cheap looking, and resembles California at its worst. More good play areas for children like the one south of the library. More public benches. The back out parking on Park Avenue near the bakery is not safe. The Park Avenue businesses near the library are nice, as is most of the walking mall. God's Love is centrally located and good. Parking at the post office is good. Signs that describe local history are wonderful and build a sense of community.

Casey

3/16/2022 05:46 PM

Mandatory parking garages for the new construction high rise buildings that are going in. Free parking everywhere, local small business pays enough property, equipment, and income tax to supplement costs.

Helena resident

3/16/2022 05:57 PM

My family resides near downtown and 2 of us work downtown. The sidewalks need huge improvements. Particularly on last chance gulch. With all the conversations regarding bicyclists, as a means of transportation will they be contributing to the road improvements? I find the bicyclists far more of a hazard. A round about in the Neil ave intersection would be ridiculous, PLEASE do NOT do that. Heated sidewalks on downhill slopes for us that work downtown and walk the slippery slopes during winter would be a great improvement.

Local voice

3/16/2022 06:17 PM

I work in downtown Helena and I would love to see a wider variety of events happen in the downtown area that would invite locals and out of town guests to our city. Possibly more aggressive advertising of the events the community is sponsoring as well. I also feel that effort is put forth to enhance the downtown area, like flowers, banners and Christmas decorations, but for some reason they just seem to fall short. Possibly this is due to some of the sidewalks that could use repair, and cleaning. All of these things would help our downtown retail spots to get more business.

Kim

3/16/2022 07:50 PM

Possibly add another multi-level parking garage besides the one at 6th/Park.

Rena Grimes

3/16/2022 08:53 PM

Access is great but the streets are falling apart! As someone who has worked in the same general location since 1990, I have witnessed a lot of change downtown. Snow removal, street repair, homeless camping & business enhancements are needed to revive downtown. If those aren't addressed our downtown area will stay stagnant.

Ryan Sanders

3/16/2022 08:55 PM

It's great that the City is soliciting public comment :). I do think that the Northern Town Center and Last Chance Gulch are both nice areas, but I don't find myself walking much between them. It would be nice for the dense cluster of bars/restaurants to extend all of the way between them, but there are a handful of empty storefronts and blocks that are mostly professional services (not retail or bars/restaurants) that it would be great to see become a bit more interactive.

Palouseprairie

3/16/2022 10:08 PM

In order to have a flourishing downtown, we need to prioritize foot traffic and bike connectivity beyond our trail systems. The more that infrastructure caters to car-centric users, the less businesses get patronized and the more dangerous it is for everyone. I would travel to downtown on foot or by bike year-round if there was a safe route to get there. The snow removal on sidewalks (whenever you can find one of those) is spotty and the roads are unpredictable in the winter especially.

I'd rather not provide

3/16/2022 10:16 PM

Bring back 2 hour free parking. The new paid parking hinders quick or spontaneous visits.

Palouseprairie

3/16/2022 10:18 PM

We need to prioritize foot traffic and bicycle connectivity in order to revitalize our downtown. The more that we cater to car-centric users, the more we choke out business and the more dangerous we make the roads for everyone. If snow was removed from sidewalks and the roads were plowed with bikes in mind, I would visit downtown on foot year-round.

hmkyna

3/17/2022 07:00 AM

Downtown accessibility is ok. The access to the biking and hiking trails is great. Parking is good if you use the garages and the street parking. It would be nice to have more accessibility, more bike parking downtown, near the movie theater and the library. More restaurants would be wonderful. There are plenty of bars and breweries, but food

options are limited.

Mr NM

3/17/2022 07:24 AM

It's needs parking and better crosswalks. The pedestrians and bike riders think the own the place. I try to avoid it as much as possible once the bikers come out.

Kurt

3/17/2022 10:16 AM

I think public transportation into the city from a central parking lot would help alleviate parking problems and make it safer for bikes and pedestrians. The cross walks on Broadway need safety better delineation. End the use of power leaf blowers in downtown areas, the noise and dust in an environmental health hazard.

Matt Maze

3/17/2022 10:41 AM

The public space in front of Ten Mile/Hawthorne has been working well with the "open container" zone. Possibly additional consideration to how the success of this is structured and scaled throughout the study area.

Chad

3/17/2022 01:30 PM

I prefer to walk around the downtown area. I used to live in the Placer Center and loved being able to walk around to most of what I needed. Now, living in the northern area, I still visit downtown regularly and wish for it to become more pedestrian-friendly. That means more outdoor retail(restaurants, pop-up shops, etc) and much more landscaping. Plus, just overall make it more pleasant for pedestrians with improved sidewalks and slower vehicle traffic.

Hank Meshorer

3/17/2022 01:36 PM

Helena is unique. Love the inner city. Every other city has their outlying malls, which do serve a purpose,, but our inner city deserves protection and encouragement.

Matt Elsaesser

3/17/2022 01:53 PM

The main reason for rating sidewalks and roadways poor is winter driving with snow is plowed into parking lanes and ADA ramps and rarely removed. Ice and water from this situation is a hazard around the post office and other interesting. Cruse Avenue from Broadway to the south should be made into a greenway by dedicating one of the lanes from under the unrealized overpass to accessible bike/stroller/walking use with protection from the remaining road and an accessible dog park. The loss of fixed routes in the Helena transit system is a big loss for helping persons afford to not have one or two cars and to be able to use alternative transportation.

montanatom1950

Cruse street is wide enough to have designated bicycle lanes. Please

3/17/2022 05:14 PM

add them. Please add bicycle lanes on Last Chance Gulch. Please add more marked, signed and striped Pedestrian Crossings on Last Chance Gulch. Some of the summer plantings get pretty overgrown and weedy. These need more regular attention. I like the idea of a Roundabout Intersection at Neil/Last Chance Gulch/Helena Avenue. I would like to see a Mural on that big ugly Concrete Retaining Wall at Cruse and 11th Avenue intersection. (East side of Cruse Avenue). Thanks so much.

Roger Nolte

3/17/2022 07:47 PM

Too much trouble to find a parking spot and pay for parking on street at the location I want to shop at, so I go to businesses elsewhere or shop online to avoid the hassle.

Willybuckbunnynuts

3/17/2022 08:52 PM

Get out of the planning/information gathering stage and start implementing some changes. Clean up all of the corridors leading to downtown. If I were a tourist going through Helena, I'd keep going as all of the entry points look like dumps. Find someone decent to replace Cathy Burwell. Get the city commission to stop running off city managers. Inact policies that mandate new building or renovations have some curb appeal. Water the trees in the boulevard. Take down all the billboards and trashy lighted signs coming into town from every direction. Bury the telephone/power lines. Get the homeless off the streets downtown. Put in a roundabout at that silly 5-way intersection. Figure out parking finally... there are several garages that are seldom used. Get more people from outside of downtown engaged other than the block and a half down there that makes all the noise. Coordinate efforts between DHI, the city, the chamber, invest in helena, the BID, downtown Helena Multimobile Planning committee, etc.

Susan

3/18/2022 08:10 AM

The new meters are prohibitive and often the app doesn't work well! It is a continued source of frustration that makes me AVOID the downtown businesses I used to love and frequent regularly! The homeless and vagrant population makes Helena look and feel unsafe and dirty! Get them OUT!

Deana

3/18/2022 08:40 AM

Thank you for taking on this important issue. Multi-modal transportation is critical for the future of Helena

Leandra

3/18/2022 10:31 AM

Wheelchair and stroller accessibility is a must.

Eric Walliman

I would like to see a restaurant that isn't a burger or steak or pasta

3/18/2022 12:01 PM

establishment. We already have at least 2 of those places within walking distance. More diverse options and no more gambling in the downtown area.

JemmaZ

3/18/2022 12:16 PM

Rather than street parking or lots it would be better to have parking decks. They take up less space and are higher density. I'd prefer more landscaping that is designed to use less water. I don't like that Cruse is sort of unused, pass through space. Because of where I live I do sometimes have to drive down it to get to Reeder's Alley or the library but it seems like there could be more businesses or public assembly places there, right now it seems like mostly parking lots. It would also be nice to have proper bike lanes on last chance/walking mall to get from trails to shops.

CLipetzky

3/18/2022 04:30 PM

Downtown Helena is great! We just have some improvements needed. The pedestrian options are disjointed and come across as an after-thought. The whole downtown feels disjointed. There's so much vehicle traffic, some of which is a result of the poor traffic infrastructure that hasn't kept up with growth. Parking is such a frustration. It's great the pay options are easier to use but not having more free parking when someone wants to pop in a restaurant to grab a meal to go is frustrating. Is it possible to require cars to enter their license plate number and give them 30 minutes free before they have to pay? Or allow us to have tickets validated for certain categories? The parking is a discouragement to quick trips downtown. If I'm going for long shopping trips, I have no problem paying, but you're discouraging people that only need 30 minutes in a parking spot. Would love to see more green space whenever possible.

Brett C.

3/19/2022 02:49 PM

A roundabout at the 5-way intersection should be a top priority.

Samson

3/19/2022 04:18 PM

Elevators in the buildings downtown

SF

3/19/2022 08:56 PM

Better holiday decorations and celebrations

Allison

3/20/2022 07:20 PM

Thank you for putting this survey together. The questions seem unlikely to create the kinds of answers that are desired. One set of questions ask the frequency that destinations are visited on certain streets- Cruse, Fuller, etc. I was confused by these questions- so I set the survey aside and went to drive these streets. The drive confirmed that, in brief, most of these streets do not have "destinations". Cruse

street does not have a single operating business on it, or potential for businesses. The Independent Record renovation when it's finished will make 1. Do I drive on the street? Yes. The questions are badly worded. Fuller Ave destinations? It has drive up banks(all closed) and the police station. Is the carpet store a destination? Front Street? 90% of which is government buildings? Also not a destination area. Park ave? There is one block of retail on the entire street, and the theatre. So, is the question really about how much the streets are travelled? In short- Downtown Helena is an open-air office park with food and beverage support for the office workers. Street level businesses are almost entirely professional and government offices with food and beverage establishments. There is no retail support beyond this for nearby residents. There are probably less than 20 non food and bev. retail stores in the core.(I'm not counting places between Neil and Lyndale, but there's only 3 or so there). Some streets have ZERO ground floor retail(not food and bev)- Cruse, Fuller, Park, and most of Jackson. Subtract hair salons- and even less retail. For example, on the walking mall between 6th and Broadway- only one business is not professional, food, beverage, or a hair salon. That is the coin shop. 6th ave has 2-the cabinet store, jewelry store. The two most retail centric blocks are between the gold bar and the antique store, and between the bird supply and the toy store. Downtown is a well camouflaged retail desert. Just try to purchase a candy bar, aspirin, a fan, groceries, shoelaces, paint or any hardware, you can't even buy small tools or supplies to hang a picture. The transit routes are designed to take residents out of downtown to shopping centers. However, if you take transit to those centers after work- you'll be walking back -as the busses stop at 6p. Take the bus the Vanns or Walmart- you are hiking back. Not very encouraging. Plus, no transit on weekends. The most useful business attracting all ages to downtown is the Big Dipper ice cream store. The next most useful are the two coffee shops - Firetower and Merchantile. Next- Amenities- Parking- Helena needs buildings with underground parking. There is sooooo much excess street and lot parking. The only street that should have parking meters is the last chance gulch core and the lots. Why are there parking meters on Cruse? It's discouraging parking by visitors and a walk to the few businesses one block away. Bozeman does not have 6 parking garages downtown and does not have meters, and while they are beginning to have parking issues- they have a working downtown - Helena is a shadow of their downtown. Helena does not need more parking. It's already been destroyed once to make parking. The trolley bus that ran around the downtown in 2019 was so useful to get from one end to another without driving. I was able to shop on the far ends and also ride halfway and then walk back to work. Please continue that service. Recommend reading up on parking and property tax utilization that the group Strongtowns.Org has done. Parks- lots of park options with non-usage issues. No benches, and the ones there

are in full sun, plus- some have no seating at all- either integrated natural or created. Accessibility and way finding would be very useful. For someone not from here- just try giving them walking directions from the icream store to the movie theatres. Please go and walk, not drive, every street. It's very illuminating, and shows all of the uncomfortable places where it's strange to be a pedestrian- as it seems pedestrian friendly, and really isn't, There are decisions that have encouraged this dysfunctional and skewed approach to the downtown core, and until these are addressed everything else is a band-aid of window dressing. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mike

3/21/2022 12:32 PM

Quit kicking the can down the road and put a roundabout in at min malfunction junction! Regrade the west side of the "traffic calming" device at the south end of Front Street, east of the Civic Center

birdsandbeasleys

3/22/2022 05:03 PM

-central information place for selling, buying, renting downtown space
-educating property owners about balance of retail, office and residential. -a easier way to repurpose/remodel buildings with permits and guidelines

mv

3/23/2022 10:49 AM

Encourage busniness to be open at a conveint hours--after 5pm and open on the weekends.

Rebecca mBaumann

4/01/2022 01:29 PM

Please do not install another around-about. These things cannot accommodate foot traffic and are not handicapped accessible. The 5-way intersection works quite well as. I use the round-about near Edgewood and I have noticed that the speed in which drivers fly through that thing has dramatically increased. Drivers barely slow down as they enter or exit the round-about. I really believe that if one is installed in a busy downtown area, folks will never look for or consider that pedestrians or bikes will need to cross through that maze. It's a potential major accident that the city will be liable fore.

SuperRaider

4/03/2022 07:13 PM

Please do not build any more roundabouts. I spoke with an exchange student from Germany, and he told me that they are realizing their deficiencies and are removing them. That approach is not good for pedestrians (especially disabled ones), emergency vehicles, regular traffic, and they are an enormous waste of real estate.

Optional question (90 response(s), 78 skipped)

Question type: Essay Question