

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

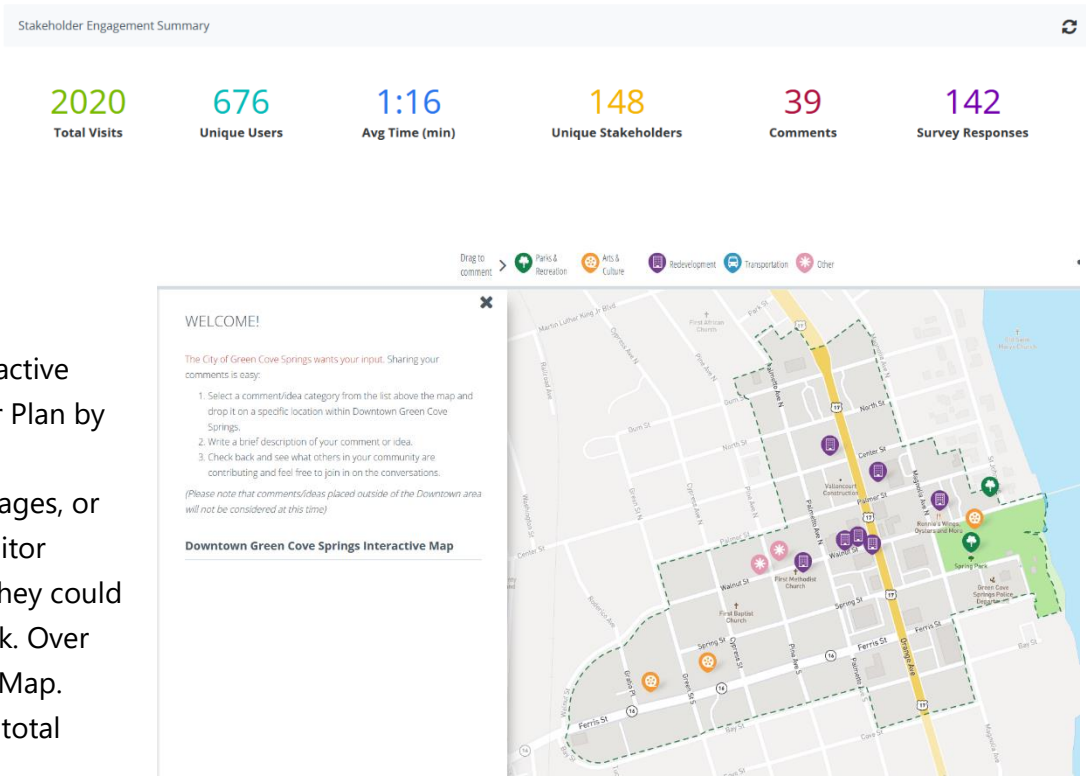
The Master Plan for Downtown Green Cove Springs was driven by the ideas, perspectives, and commentary provided by the community via an intensive, multi-platform public engagement process. During this process, the Project Team actively sought the input of area residents, business owners, employees, activists, elected and appointed officials, and civil servants using a variety of online and in-person engagement methods including a Project Website, Interactive Comment Map, Online Survey, and four community events held over the course of a five-day Charrette. This report summarizes the engagement methods utilized for the Downtown master planning effort and the community input received during the public engagement process.

PROJECT WEBSITE

One method for collecting input from the public as well as disseminating project-related information was the Project Website (https://smeinc.mysocialpinpoint.com/downtown_gcs_master_plan), which was developed using the Social Pinpoint platform. In addition to providing a brief overview of the project and links to the City’s social media pages, the Project Website also hosted two engagement opportunities for the public to provide their input on the project—an Interactive Comment Map and an Online Survey.

Interactive Comment Map

The first virtual engagement opportunity made available to the public on the Project Website was the Interactive Comment Map. This virtual engagement tool allowed users to provide their input on the Downtown Master Plan by picking from one of five pre-established topic areas (Parks & Recreation, Arts & Culture, Redevelopment, Transportation, and Other), generating a comment related to the topic area using any combination text, images, or videos, and then placing their comment spatially on an interactive map of the Study Area. Therefore, if a visitor wanted to express their belief that more events should be hosted in Spring Park along the St. Johns River, they could select the Parks & Recreation topic, type their comment, and place it near the waterfront portion of the Park. Over the course of the project, nearly 40 comments were provided by the public using the Interactive Comment Map. **Appendix A** lists all the comments received while the ten most popular comments (as determined by their total number of ‘likes’) are listed below:



Topic Area	# of Likes	Comment Provided
Redevelopment	18	The look of the signage on [the] new vape shop [across the street from City Hall] does not go with the look of the town. We should have cohesive signage styles that are allowed in GCS. Even the LED sign at City Hall is not very tasteful. It's too bright and doesn't go with the nostalgic feel of the town.
Redevelopment	13	More shopping boutiques like a gift or stationery shop, plant shop or florist. It would be great to have a bakery, ice cream shop, coffee shop, or lunch cafe, sushi on Walnut Street. A nail salon, dog groomer/pet shop, or literally anything but professional services. This prime real estate should not be used for law offices, insurance services, etc. There are plenty of places for those services to go that are not in the historic district.
Redevelopment	11	Encourage more thoughtfully designed buildings, paint color schemes to add to the charm of the historic downtown area. Like Charleston, Mount Dora, Fernandina, Winter Park, FL, etc.
Redevelopment	7	Renovate [Ronnie's] so it is more appealing to visitors, boaters, etc.!
Arts & Culture	6	Would like to see more street appeal and signage to highlight the historic jail and courthouse
Arts & Culture	6	The Historical Triangle can be highlighted a bit more. It could be incorporated into the Food Truck Friday, Christmas on Walnut, and Memorial Day events. This could include other events/holidays such as Halloween time Historical Tours, Trolley rides, etc.
Parks & Recreation	4	The pavilion closest to the street [in Spring Park] could be redeveloped. It is a good size; however the benches are uncomfortable. The other pavilions are fine, this is one of the largest and oldest ones there.
Parks & Recreation	3	The [vacant lot north of Spring Park] could be a dog park; however this is also the same location that is used for handicap accessible parking for food truck Friday. Also, it's adjacent to a residence.
Redevelopment	3	We already have a coffee shop and a florist in town. A bakery or ice cream shop combination would be nice in this area. Some nice little tables to sit outside would be great also.
Redevelopment	3	The business [along Palmer Street] needs assistance, at this point it's a rundown former gas station. It would need remediation for other redevelopment other than the convenience store that it is currently operating as. It can stay a convenience store; it just needs help with its curb appeal and the canopies could be taken down.

1. Which of the following best describes your relationship with Downtown Green Cove Springs? Check all that apply.

☐ I live in Downtown

☐ I live in Green Cove Springs, but outside of Downtown

☐ I live in Clay County, but outside of Green Cove Springs

☐ I work/volunteer in Downtown

☐ I visit Downtown

☐ None of these options

2. What is your age?

☐ Under 18

☐ 18 to 24

☐ 25 to 44

☐ 45 to 64

☐ 65 or older

Online Survey

The second engagement activity available on the Project Website was the online survey. This brief, nine question survey asked about the participant’s relationship with Downtown Green Cove Springs, existing conditions within the Study Area, and how the user envisions Downtown will grow within the next 20 years. The survey had more than 140 responses over the course of the project. Some of the key insights garnered from the survey responses are summarized as follows:

- The three most popular user-generated descriptors for Downtown Green Cove Springs were: POTENTIAL (25 occurrences), QUAIN (13 occurrences), and BEAUTIFUL (12 occurrences)
- The overwhelming majority of survey takers (89%) reported that they use their personal vehicle to travel to Downtown more than any other mode of transportation
- Patronizing a restaurant, bar, and/or café was the commonly cited reason why visitors regularly visit the Study Area
- Survey takers were most satisfied with Downtown’s parks and recreation facilities and were most dissatisfied with the area’s lack of dining options
- The three most desired types of development within the Study Area were: Restaurants & Cafes (135 votes), Retail Stores (91 votes), and Bars, Taverns, Breweries (67 votes)
- The three most desired types of public realm projects and programs within Downtown were: Events & Recreational Programming (91 votes); Landscaping Improvements (64 votes), Bike & Multi-Purpose Trails (62 votes)
- The three most commonly used words to describe the Downtown in 2042 were: SMALL (10 occurrences), VIBRANT (9 occurrences), and FRIENDLY (8 occurrences)

The full list of results for the survey are presented within **Appendix B**.

CHARRETTE WEEK EVENTS

In efforts to keep the public engaged, informed, and participating in the development and design of the Downtown Master Plan, the community engagement process centered primarily around an intensive five-day charrette, hosted by the Project Team between Monday, January 24th and Friday, January 28th. During this week, the Project Team conducted a series of scheduled Interviews with local Stakeholders including residents, board members, business proprietors, and nonprofit representatives, attended a Planning and Zoning Board Meeting, and hosted three Community Events where the public shared their thoughts, perspectives, and ideas on the future of Downtown and the contents of the Master Plan document. A summary of each event (along with the input provided) are described in the following sections. Additionally, the sign-in sheets for each event can be found in **Appendix C**.

Stakeholder Interviews

From Monday morning to Tuesday afternoon, the Project Team held 12 individual/small-group interviews with Downtown stakeholders. The questions asked of each interviewee sought to understand their perspectives on the current state of Downtown, opportunities, and challenges to address within the Master Plan, and the uses, amenities, and programming they would like to see implemented within the Study Area. Over the two-day period, several themes began to emerge which helped the Project Team draft the initial vision for Downtown Green Cove Springs. The most commonly cited insights provided by stakeholders during this two-day period include:

- Although Downtown remains small, charming, and historic, activity within the Study Area continues to be limited outside of regularly scheduled events
- The City needs to encourage the development of new ‘destination’ retail, dining, and lodging establishments to attract and retain visitors Downtown
- Many Downtown buildings and properties are currently blighted, underutilized, or vacant; establishing incentives for infill development and the adaptive reuse of historic structures should be a priority of the community moving forward
- Identify opportunities to improve connections between the western and eastern side of US Highway 17 within the Study Area so that Downtown will feel more cohesive and less segmented
- Improving walkability will be critical to cultivating a more vibrant local economy Downtown
- The City’s best assets are its proximity to the St. Johns River, Spring Park, the Walnut Street business district, and City Hall. Identifying ways to leverage these assets to cultivate a vibrant economy and sense of place should be the primary objective of the Master Plan
- The perceived lack of parking Downtown will continue to be a controversial topic for any planning effort within the City until a parking structure is built within the Study Area
- Identify new ways to leverage the City’s culture and history into economic development

Public Kick-Off & Visioning Session

The first S&ME-led community event for the project was the Public Kick-Off & Visioning Session, which took place on Monday, January 24th between 5:30 and 7:30 PM in City Hall. For those who could not attend in person, an online option was available via Zoom Meeting software, which was able to be accessed live via the Project Website. This event included a presentation by the Project Team which provided a brief introduction to the



project, review of the preliminary schedule, references to the Downtown Master Plan website, and a promotion of future engagement opportunities. After the presentation concluded, the Project Team invited meeting attendees to share their perspectives and visions for Downtown via a series of engagement activities and interpersonal conversations. The primary themes which emerged from the public during this event included:

- Increase the vibrancy of Downtown by supporting the proliferation of new retail and dining experiences
- Expand maritime programming along the St. Johns River to promote new ecotourism opportunities within the City
- Popular projects for the Study Area would include an expanded tree canopy, outdoor dining, more conservation/natural areas, marina/pier improvements, gateway features, and a designated space for food trucks

Planning & Zoning Board Meeting

The Project Team provided a brief presentation to the Planning & Zoning Board at a regularly scheduled meeting on the evening of Tuesday, January 25th. The presentation provided a brief introduction of the project’s purpose and timeline, discussed the public engagement process implemented for the project, and promoted the Project Website. After the presentation concluded, members of Planning & Zoning Board expressed their excitement and anticipation for seeing the final vision. Furthermore, several members shared their desire to attend the Community Visioning & Design Workshop on Wednesday, January 26th, and the Vision & Design Unveiling Open House on Friday, January 28th.

Community Visioning & Design Workshop

The second community event hosted by the Project Team during the week of the charrette was the Community Visioning & Design Workshop. The event took place on Wednesday, January 26th between 5:30 and 7:30 PM in City Hall and virtually via Zoom. A presentation was provided which discussed what was learned from prior public engagement opportunities (e.g., the Project Website, Stakeholder Interviews, and Public Kick-Off & Visioning Session) and presented a series of frameworks for the forthcoming vision for Downtown using a number of precedent images. After the presentation concluded, the Project Team opened the floor for public comment. The comments provided during this period are summarized as follows:

- Identify multiple avenues to fund improvements Downtown
- Address the lack of destination restaurant(s) which overlook Springs Park and/or the St. Johns River
- Target strategic industries to locate within Downtown, such as retail, dining, nightlife, and tourism



- Consider the area’s existing and future parking needs in the final vision plan
- Explore adding a visitor’s centers within City Hall to showcase all of the amenities and businesses within Downtown
- The emphasis on further activating Spring Park is greatly appreciated

Vision & Design Unveiling Open House

The third and final community engagement event, the Vision & Design Unveiling Open House, was hosted on Friday, January 28th between 1:30 and 3:30 PM within City Hall and virtually via Zoom. The Open House began with a presentation which provided a summary of the Demographics & Market Conditions Analysis, a synopsis of the public input provided during the Community Visioning & Design Workshop, an introduction of the Guiding Principles derived from all prior public input, and a reminder of the Master Plan’s frameworks. After, the Project Team unveiled the preliminary vision and design for Downtown Green Cove Springs and detailed several potential improvements throughout the Study Area including the adoption of a form-based code, the location and potential programming for strategic infill projects, the expansion of Downtown parks and open spaces, proposed streetscaping improvements which enhance walkability, and anticipated parking improvements. The presentation concluded by reminding meeting attendees to visit the Project Website and outlining the next steps in the project. The Project Team then opened the floor to public comments, the results of which are listed below:

- Infill projects and public realm improvements to the Walnut Street business corridor should be prioritized within the Master Plan
- Address the presence of blight in Downtown by implementing façade improvement programs and encouraging infill redevelopment projects
- Consider improvements to the Historic Triangle in the long-term vision for Downtown
- Increase the volume and diversity of lodging options within the Study Area to accommodate Downtown’s growing tourism industry



APPENDIX

A. Interactive Comment Map Results

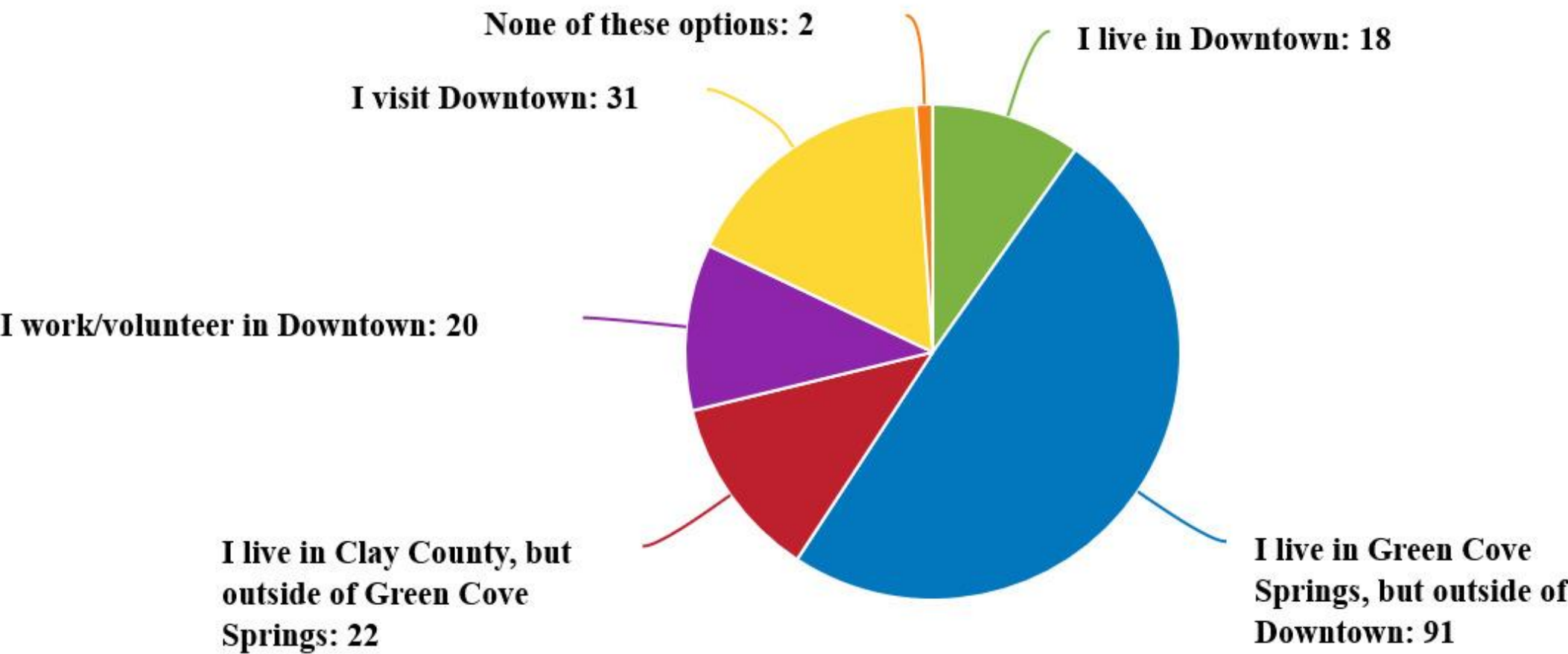
Topic Area	# of Likes	Comment Provided
Arts & Culture Comment #1	1	More arts and culture near the River next to Ronnies if we can! Art studio
Response	0	An art studio - kids events, adult events, pottery classes, a gallery from local artists, etc.
Arts & Culture Comment #2	6	Would like to see more street appeal and signage to highlight the historic jail and courthouse
Arts & Culture Comment #3	6	The Historical Triangle can be highlighted a bit more. It could be incorporated into the Food Truck Friday, Christmas on Walnut, and Memorial Day events. This could include other events/holidays such as Halloween time Historical Tours, Trolley rides, etc.
Response	0	Agree, that was the goal several years ago. Christmas on Walnut Street was from the 400 to the 900 blocks. Also, the Parade of Trees progressed to the 600 block. Back in the day we actually arranged for a Trolley from St. Augustine to come to Green Cove. That potential energy is the reason that the Parade Flags started to travel out of Spring Park and the TAPs monument is at the Historical Triangle.
Parks & Recreation Comment #1	4	The pavilion closest to the street could be redeveloped. It is a good size, however the benches are uncomfortable. The other pavilions are fine, this is one of the largest and oldest ones there.
Response	0	Gazebo closest to the river could be made into a small amphitheater or something similar for live music...
Parks & Recreation Comment #2	3	[The empty lot north of Spring Park] could be a dog park, however this is also the same location that is used for handicap accessible parking for food truck Friday. Also, it's adjacent to a residence.
Response 1	0	A dog park would be nice!
Response 2	0	A section set aside for dogs would be nice. It may need to be fenced off from the rest of the park however
Response 3	0	I would be open to see them put more parking in that grass lot right there beside the house. There isn't nearly enough parking around the park
Redevelopment Comment #1	7	Renovate [Ronnie's] so it is more appealing to visitors, boaters, etc!
Redevelopment Comment #2	11	Encourage more thoughtfully designed buildings, paint color schemes to add to the charm of the historic downtown area. Like Charleston, Mount Dora, Fernandina, Winter Park, FL etc.
Response 1	2	Agreed. There should be a plan as to what color schemes, architecture, etc. is allowed in the downtown area. Maybe see if we can get a historical designation and obtain some grants for improvements.
Response 2	1	I agree with the other comments maybe it should be designed to look more rustic downtown Fernandina is a pretty good example.... Improve sidewalks throughout the whole project would be nice I would like to see more restaurants downtown for a little night Life downtown

Topic Area	# of Likes	Comment Provided
Response 3	0	Hmmm.... to "Encourage" is one thing - It worked when Walgreens was being built. However, to regulate is a double edge sword. Please tell us more about the regulatory language.
Response 4	0	You say " Maybe see if we can get a historical designation and obtain some grants for improvements." OK, I'll bite - improvements such as....
Response 5	0	Perhaps a living green wall and paver paths to allow rainwater to permeate. Even bat-friendly amber lighting that aims down on walkways to reduce light pollution. https://www.lighting.philips.com/main/cases/cases/parks-and-plazas/public-lighting-nieuwkoop
Response 6	0	The area would definitely benefit from a cohesive look that ties well to the town hall and park areas. Business and city facilities signage; lighting and landscaping. I would love to see greenscaping & ecologically friendly designs a pillar of the downtown redevelopment. Check out this resource from the United States Environmental Protection Agency. https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2014-04/documents/greenscaping_-_the_easy_way_to_a_greener_healthier_yard.pdf
Redevelopment Comment #3	13	More shopping boutiques like a gift or stationary shop, plant shop or florist. It would be great to have a bakery, ice cream shop, coffee shop, or lunch cafe, sushi on Walnut Street. A nail salon, dog groomer/pet shop, or literally anything but professional services. This prime real estate should not be used for law offices, insurance services, etc. There are plenty of places for those services to go that are not in the historic district.
Response 1	3	We already have a coffee shop and a florist in town. A bakery or ice cream shop combination would be nice in this area. Some nice little tables to sit outside would be great also.
Response 2	2	An ice cream shop, bakery, bistro type restaurants that are open at night too, a breakfast place like Grumpy's or similar, boutique and/or consignment shop, etc. would be great for prime real estate on Walnut St.
Response 3	0	Maybe a shop with booths to display Florida artisan crafts and products.
Response 4	0	I agree. We already have an excellent coffee shop. Competition is nice, but too much would hurt everyone involved I think. Would love to see a Sweet Sensations expand to evening hours.
Response 5	0	Yes, bakery, lunch Café outdoor seating, brewery small boutique shops and a few restaurants. Improve sidewalks and seating areas. This whole area that they proposed to do it should have the same flow throughout not like the way it is right now all chopped up different sidewalks curbs each area looks different it should be uniform throughout the whole project
Redevelopment Comment #4	18	The look of the signage on this new vape shop does not go with the look of the town. We should have cohesive signage styles that are allowed in GCS. Even the LED sign at city hall is not very tasteful. It's too bright and doesn't go with the nostalgic feel of the town.
Response 1	2	For sure, signage and building codes should be enforced to keep with the nostalgic feel of the town
Response 2	1	I completely agree with that statement. I drove by the other day and thought this to myself. Then wondering how long it would take to get addressed.
Response 3	0	What building codes address "the nostalgic feel?"

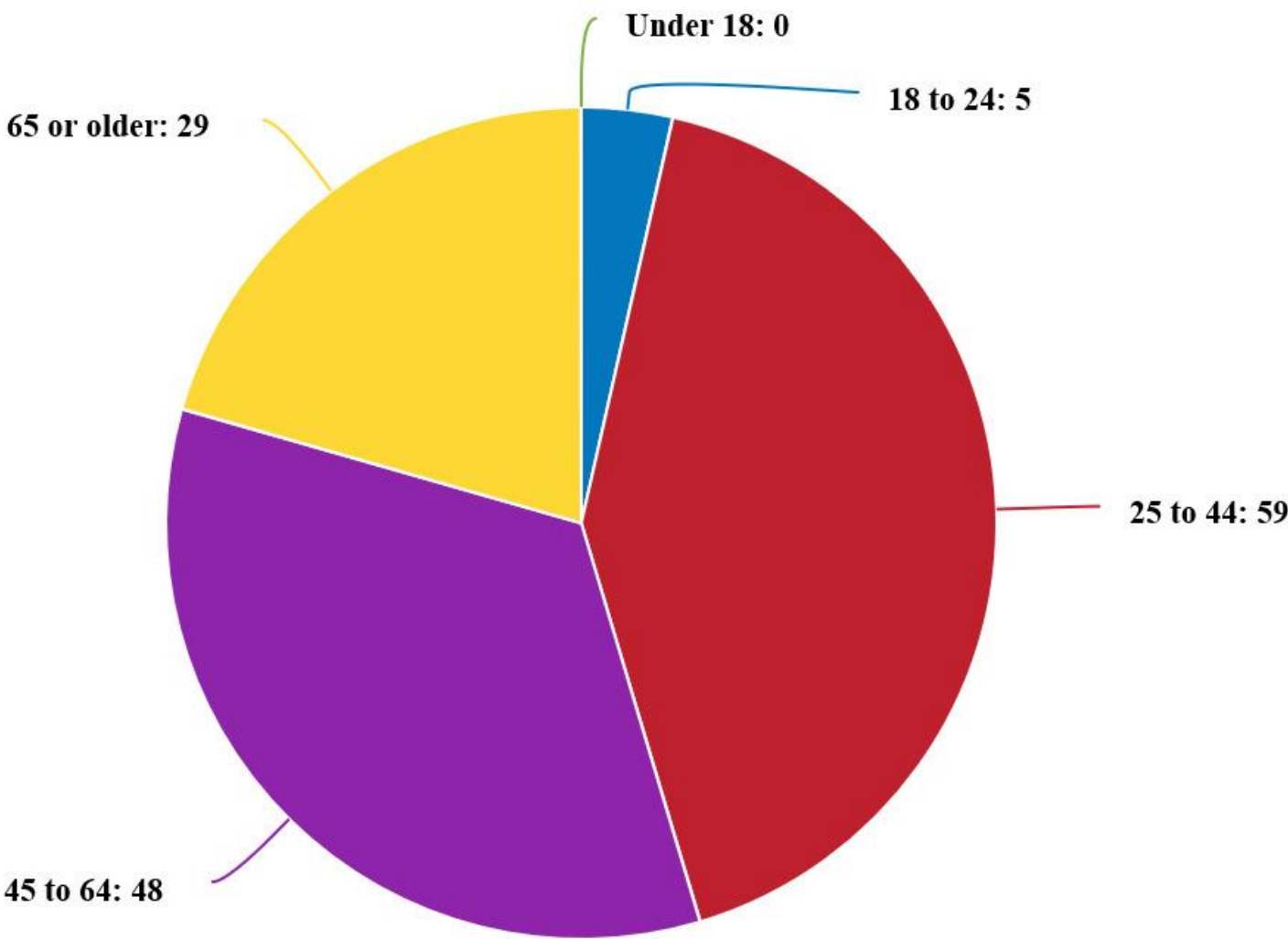
Topic Area	# of Likes	Comment Provided
Redevelopment Comment #5	3	[The business along Palmer Street] needs assistance, at this point it's a rundown former gas station. It would need remediation for other redevelopment other than the convenience store that is currently operating as. It can stay a convenience store, it just needs help with it's curb appeal and the canopies could be taken down.
Response 1	0	For non-residents, an indoor kid-friendly store or play space to get out of the afternoon rain showers would be beneficial so they don't have to leave the downtown area. They could wait out the rain and return to shopping or the beautiful park, extending their stay!
Response 2	0	What is the best small business the downtown needs?
Redevelopment Comment 6	2	This business needs assistance, it's been a few weeks if not more that the part of the canopy has collapsed. It's an eyesore sitting the way it is currently. This store also needs help with it's curb appeal. It's has neither an updated/modern feel or a historic feel.
Redevelopment Comment #7	2	Would love to extend Walnut Street Retail Options
Response	0	For local small business, it is difficult to establish storefronts. Maybe offering short term rental options and networking with financial planners to help establish goals for realistic gains that will help a small business be successful.
Other Comment #1	1	Sidewalk surfaces are different all the way down the street.
Response	1	Since Magnolia Point is a golf cart community maybe be more cart friendly. We have a nice shoreline with the river but hard to access.
Other Comment #2	1	The parking lot here is unlevel and is in a good proximity to the park. Some signage (if this is GCS City property) would be nice to indicate this space.
Response	0	To my knowledge that is private property

B. Online Survey Results

Question 1 – Which of the following best describes your relationship with Downtown Green Cove Springs? Check all that apply.



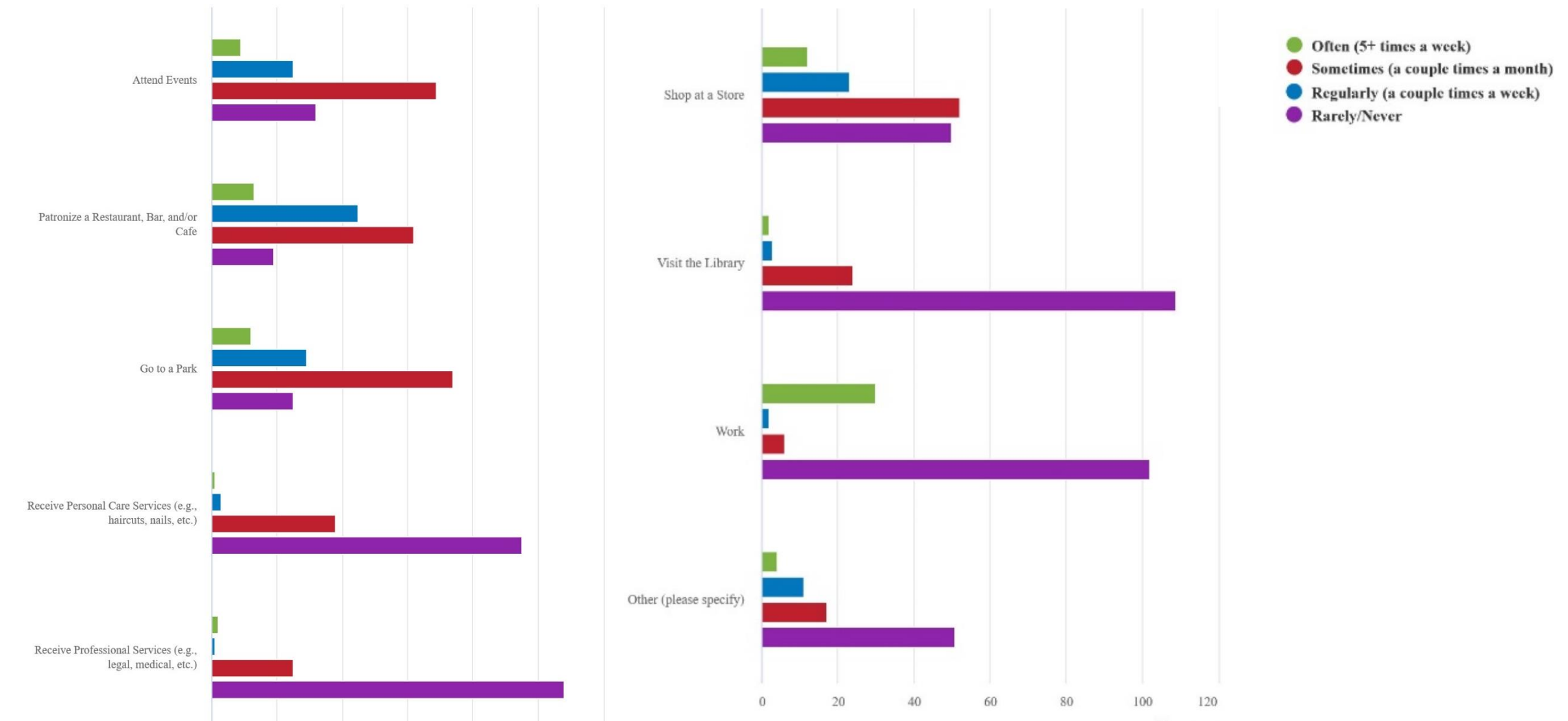
Question 2 – *What is your age?*



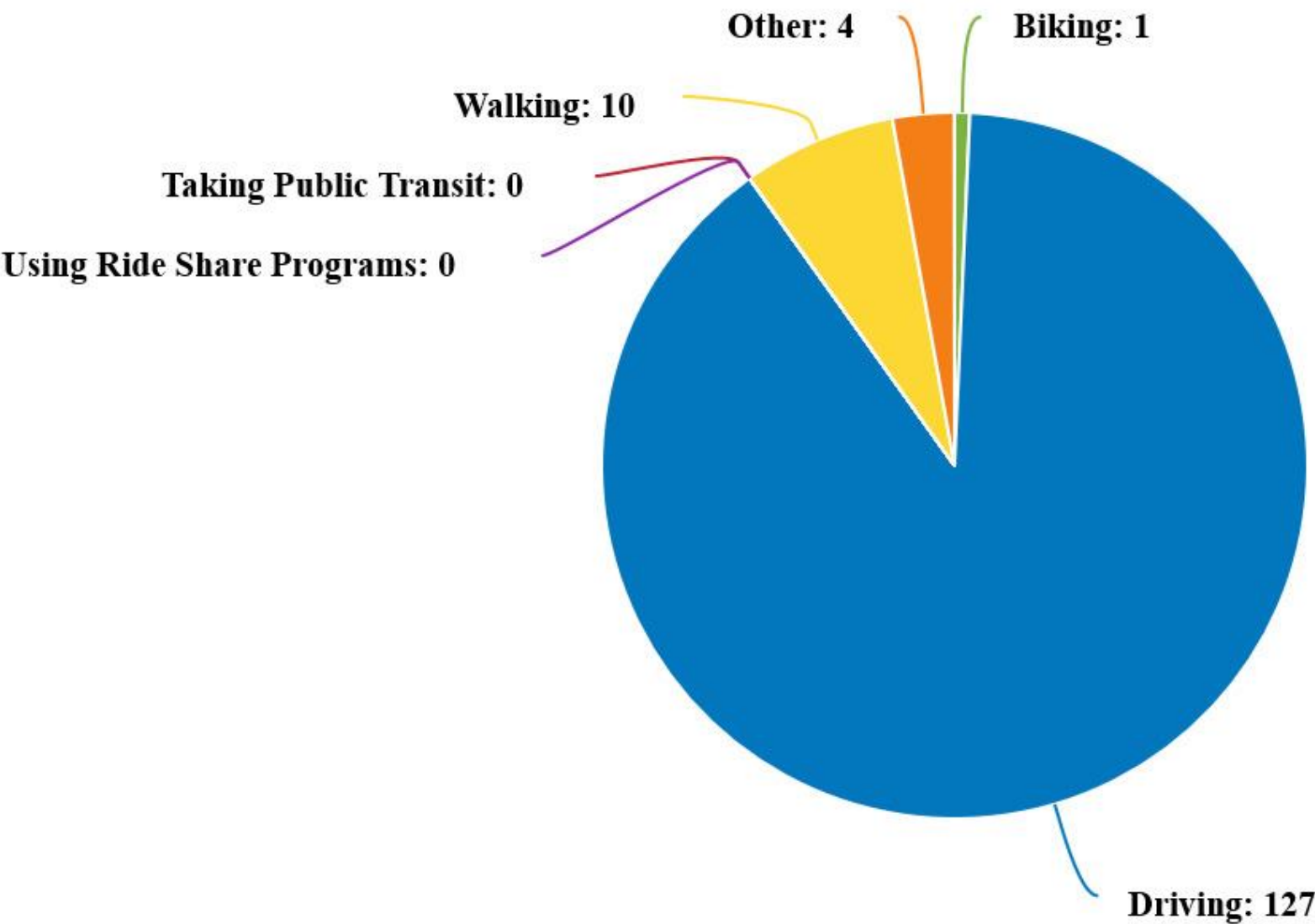
Question 3 – *In one to three words, how would you describe Downtown Green Cove Springs today? Be creative!*



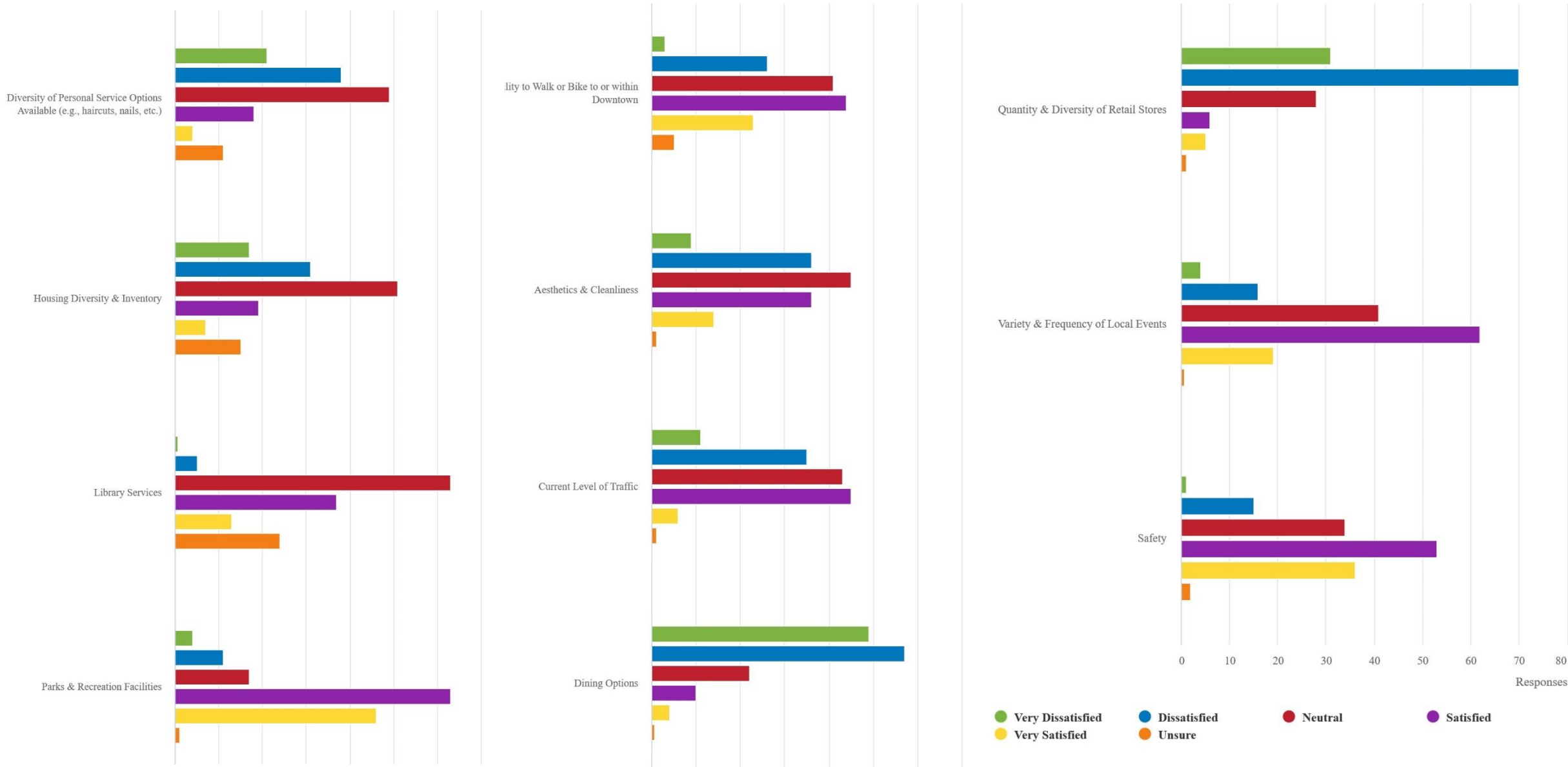
Question 4 – How often do you visit Downtown to do the following activities?



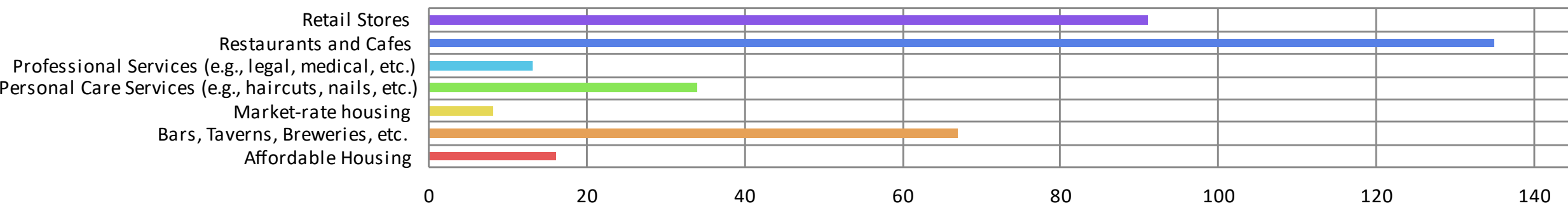
Question 5 – *What method of transportation do you use most often to travel to the Downtown area?*



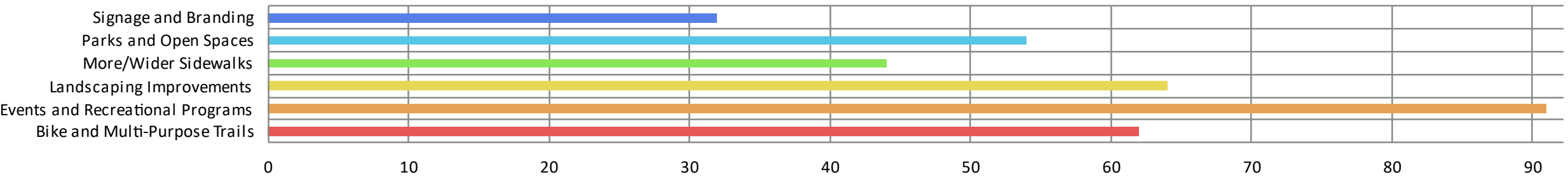
Question 6 – Please indicate your level of satisfaction with the following in Downtown Green Cove Springs?



Question 7 – What types of development should the City promote within the Downtown area? Select up to three choices.



Question 8 – What types of public realm projects or programs should the City prioritize Downtown? Select up to three choices.



GREEN COVE SPRINGS DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN


C. Sign-In Sheets for S&ME-Led Community Events during Charrette Week

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WORKSHOP #1


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WORKSHOP #2



Green Cove Springs - Downtown Master Plan
Sign In Sheet for:

11/3/22



NAME	ZIP CODE	EMAIL
MICHAEL BARTON	32043	EMAIL ADDRESSES REMOVED FOR PRIVACY
Chris Nelson	32043	
Mike Null	32177	
Steve Kennedy	32043	
MIKE FLYNN	32043	
Curt Towne	32043	
Robert Powell	32042	
CAY FORBES	32043	
Steve Graudet	32043	
L Lyano Hurling	32043	
Vanessa E. Gentry	32045	
Charles Sohn	32043	
JUSTIN HALL	32043	
Jane Shaw	32043	
Pat Sheridan	32043	
Marrhacia Francois	32043	
Mary Francois	32043	
Jennifer Knight	32043	
Pelcie Warren	32043	

WORKSHOP #3

[illegible]

Workshop #3