

Phase 1 Engagement Findings

January 2024

CENTRAL AREA PLAN

Update

A 20-YEAR VISION FOR EQUITABLE
DOWNTOWN GROWTH



Phase 1 (2023) community engagement included two online surveys and multiple in-person events as outlined in this report. A summary for two rounds of focus groups meetings is provided in a separate report.

General Survey **Pages 4-13**

Online survey from April through September
2,741 total responses

- English and Spanish options
- Publicized at kick-off meeting, open house and pop-up events
- Advertised in multiple DPD emails and social media
- Worked with community partners to promote

Youth Survey **Pages 14-17**

Online survey from August through September
1,554 analyzed responses out of 2,724 total responses

- Worked with community partners to promote
- Advertised in multiple DPD emails and social media
- Publicized at pop-up events
- Respondents ages 14-24 had a chance to enter a sweepstakes to win a Visa gift card of up to \$250 in value
- Responses were filtered out based on age, spam and duplications

Pop-up Events **Pages 18-29**

8 regional pop-up events from June through August
Over 1,700 participants

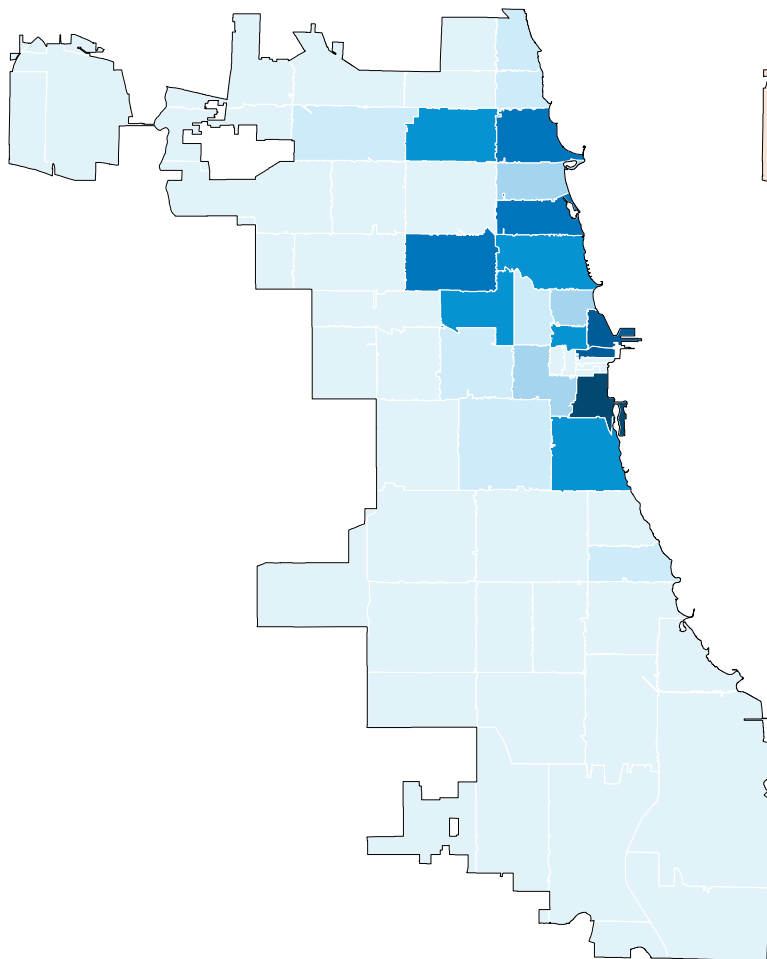
- At neighborhood festivals and farmers markets throughout the city
- Participants provided feedback using comment cards and stickers
- An interactive wheel was used to offer prizes such as candy, pens and tote bags

Open Houses **Pages 30-47**

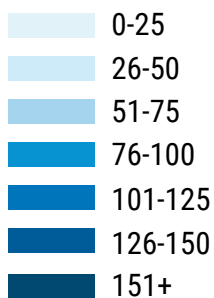
May 23, 2023, at the Harold Washington Library
December 6, 2023, at the Chicago Cultural Center
Over 200 participants attended first Open House

- English and Spanish options
- Publicized at kick-off meeting, open house and pop-up events
- Advertised in multiple DPD emails and social media
- Worked with community partners to promote

Online Survey Participation



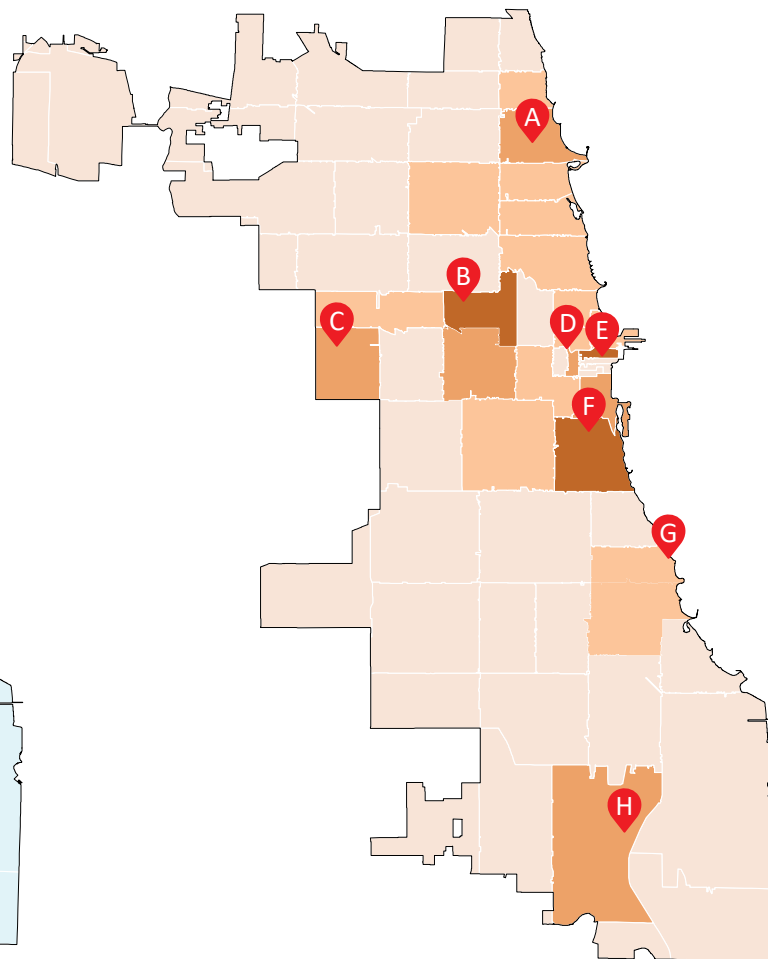
Range indicates number of responses by Zipcode



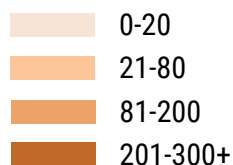
Two Online Surveys Conducted:

- ★ General Survey (2,741 total responses)
- ★ Youth Survey (1,554 analyzed responses)

Pop-up Event Participation



Range indicates number of participants by Zipcode



Regional Pop-up Event Locations:

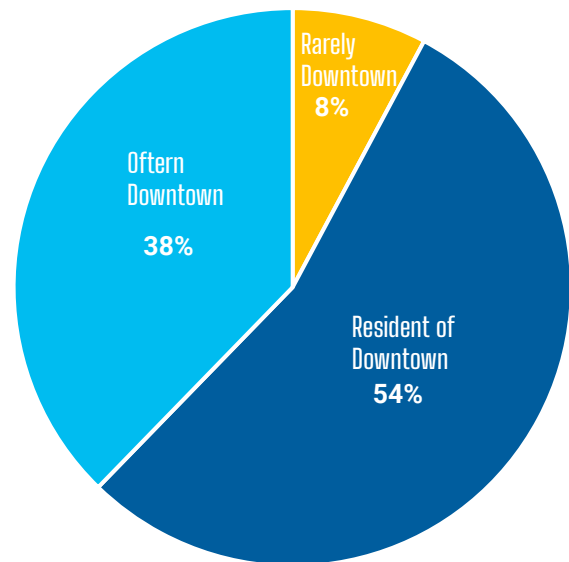
- A UPTOWN FARMERS MARKET
- B TASTE OF CHICAGO - HUMBOLDT PARK
- C AUSTIN TOWN HALL CITY MARKET
- D 27TH WARD STAY IN SCHOOL EVENT
- E SUNDAYS ON STATE
- F CHINATOWN SUMMER FAIR
- G HYDE PARK SILVER ROOM BLOCK PARTY
- H TASTE OF CHICAGO - PULLMAN

A wide-angle photograph of the Chicago skyline across a river, with a bridge on the left and a park area in the foreground. The text 'General Survey' is overlaid in white, with a red zigzag line underneath it.

General Survey

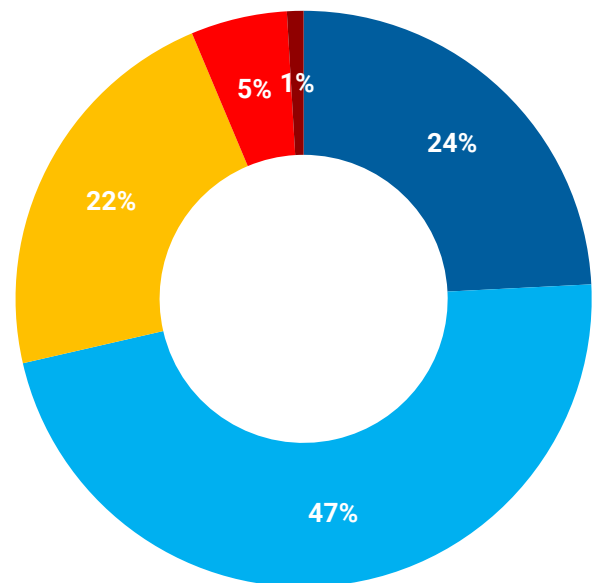
Visiting the Central Area

- Over 90% of respondents either reside in or often visit the Central Area.



Percentage of respondents who feel welcome in the Central Area

- Over 70% of respondents agree or strongly agree that they feel welcome in the Central Area.

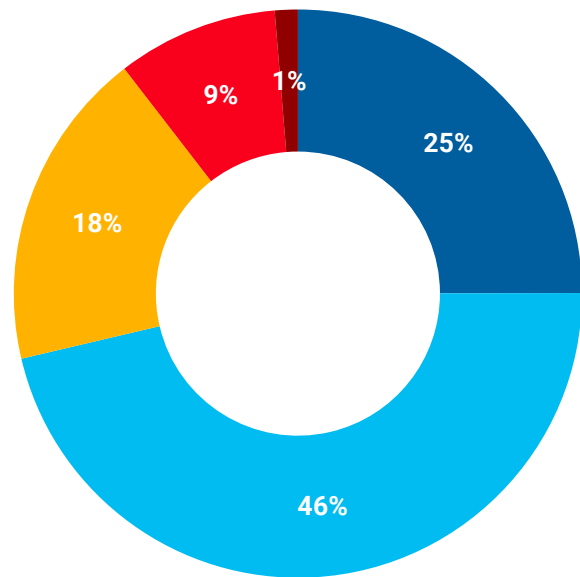


■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Percentage of respondents who enjoy spending time downtown

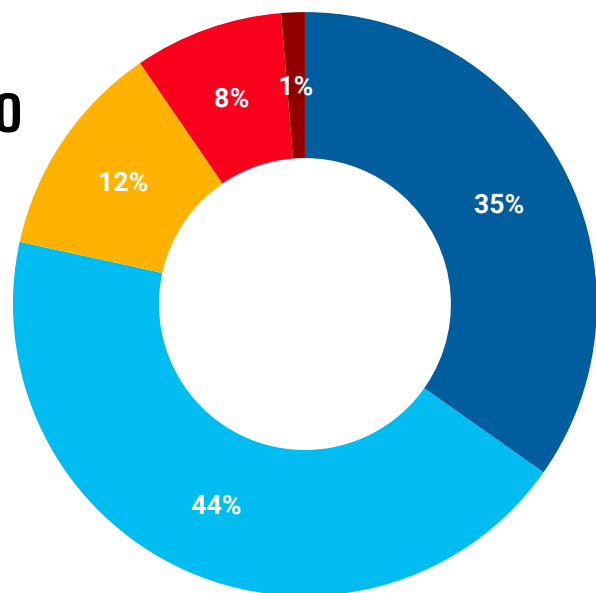
- Over 70% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy spending time in the Central Area.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Percentage of respondents who think downtown is easy to get to

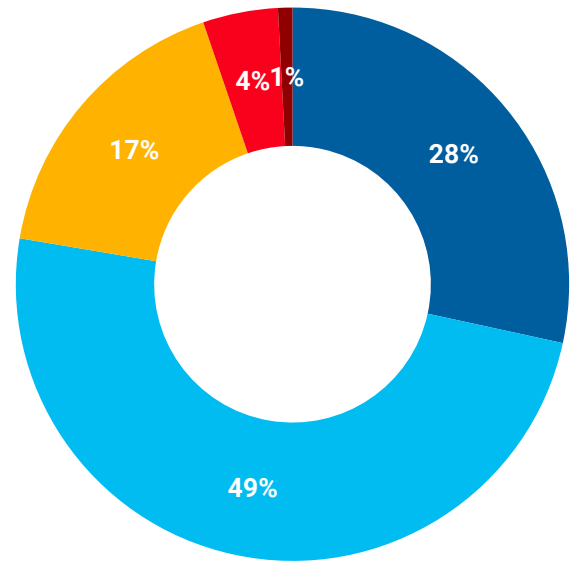
- 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area is easy to get to.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Percentage of respondents who feel that the artistic and cultural activities reflect their interests

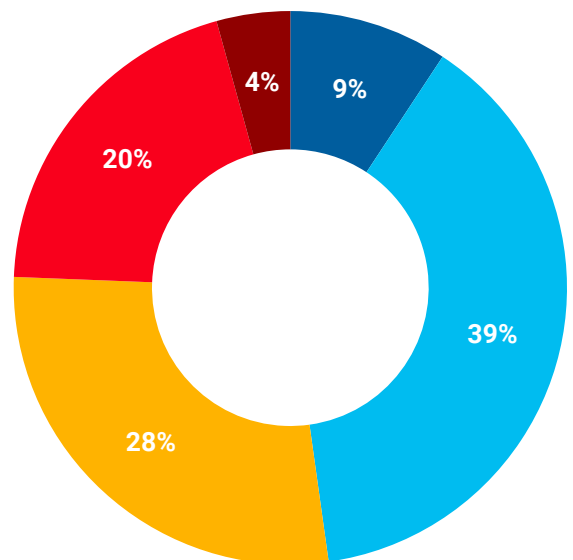
- 77% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the artistic and cultural activities in the Central Area reflect their interests.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Percentage of respondents who believe downtown is clean and comfortable

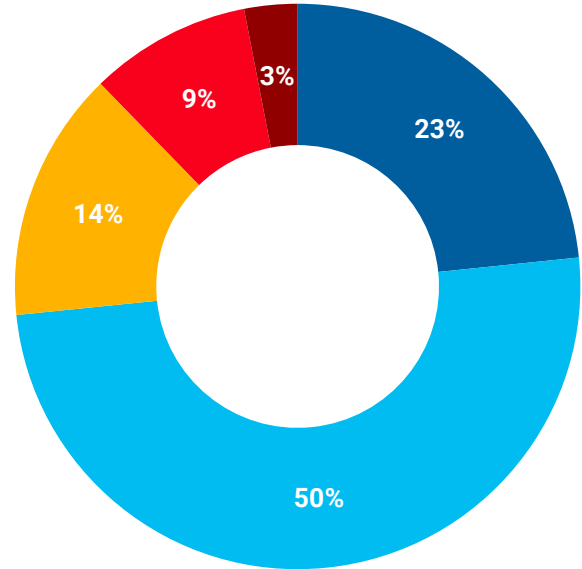
- 48% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area was clean and comfortable. Half as many disagreed or strongly disagreed.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Percentage of respondents who feel safe during the day

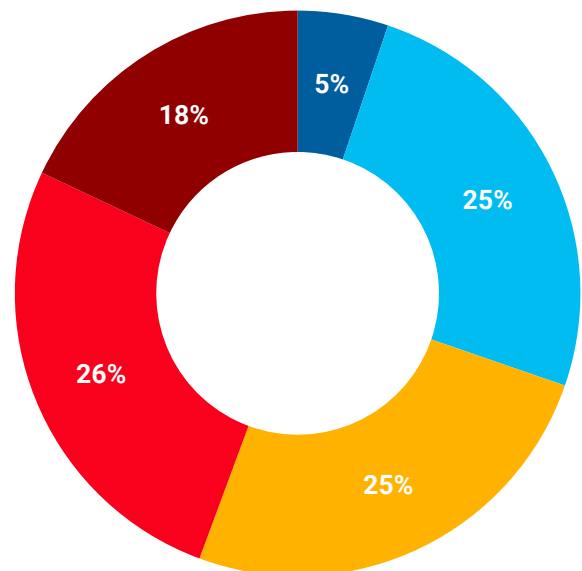
- 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe during the day in the Central Area.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Percentage of respondents who feel safe at night

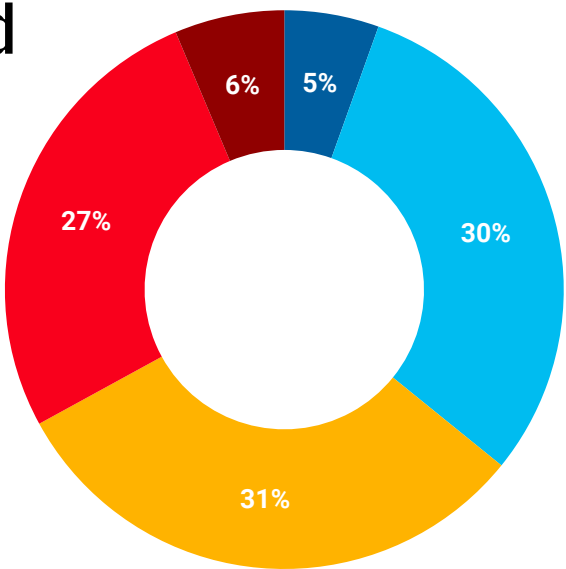
- Only 30% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they feel safe at night, with 44% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Percentage of respondents who feel that downtown shopping and dining experiences are affordable

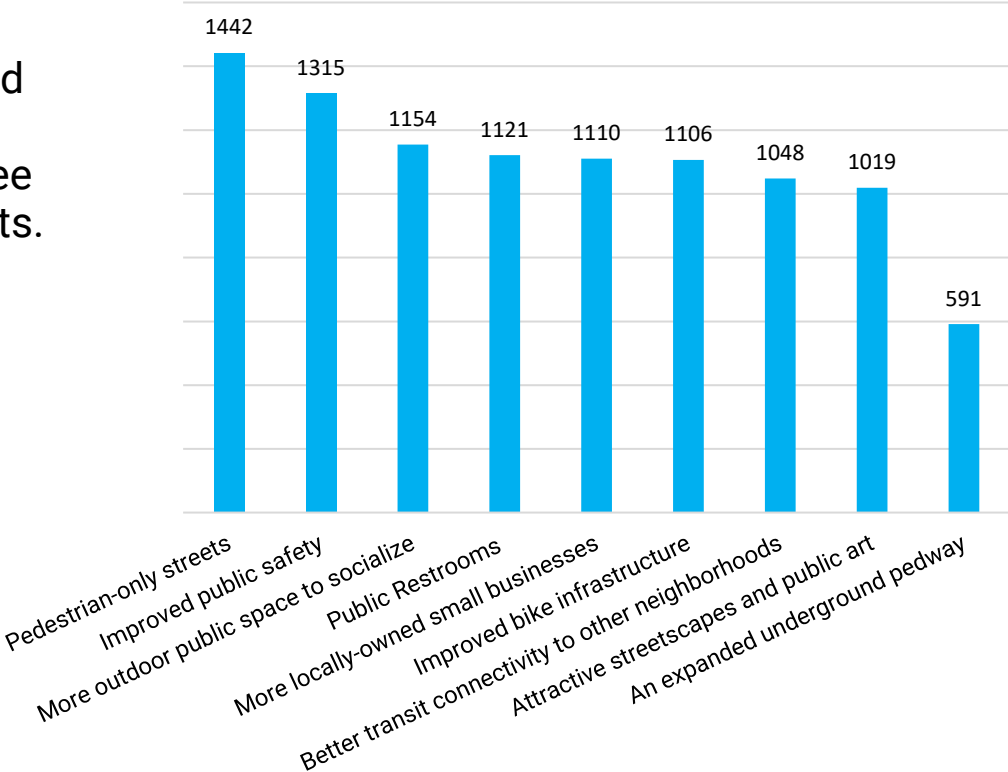
- There was generally an even response between agreed, neutral and disagreed with this statement.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree
Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

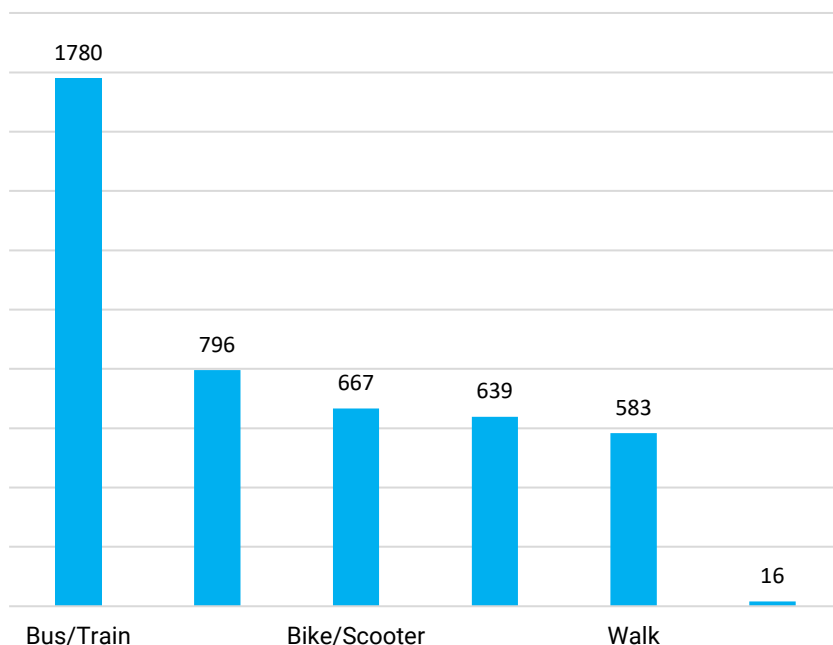
Number of respondents on what would make their time downtown more enjoyable (selected three)

- Pedestrian-only streets, improved public safety and more outdoor space to socialize were the top three picks from the respondents.



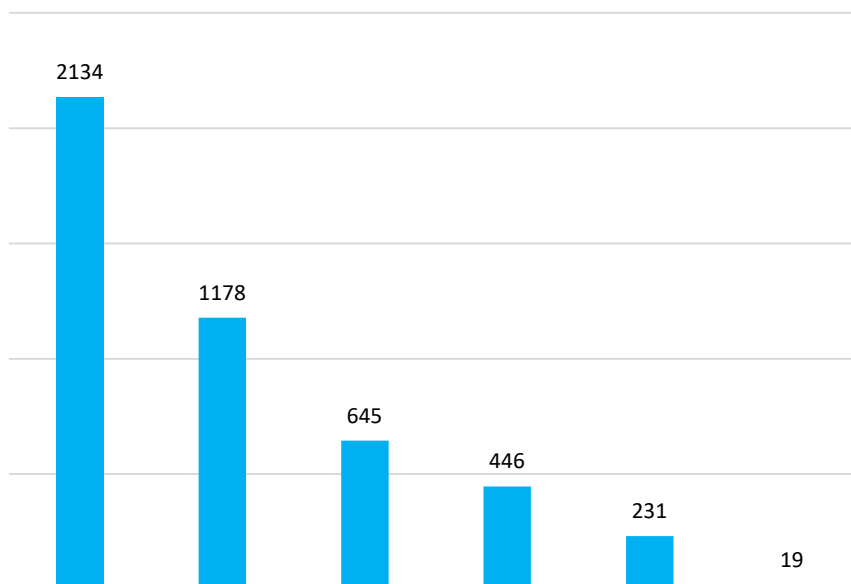
Number of respondents on transportation mode(s) used to travel from outside the Central Area to downtown (selected applicable)

- 65% of responders selected bus or train to travel from outside the Central Area to downtown. Driving, bike/scooter, ridesharing/ cab and walking were selected significantly less by respondents, though all received similar results to each other.



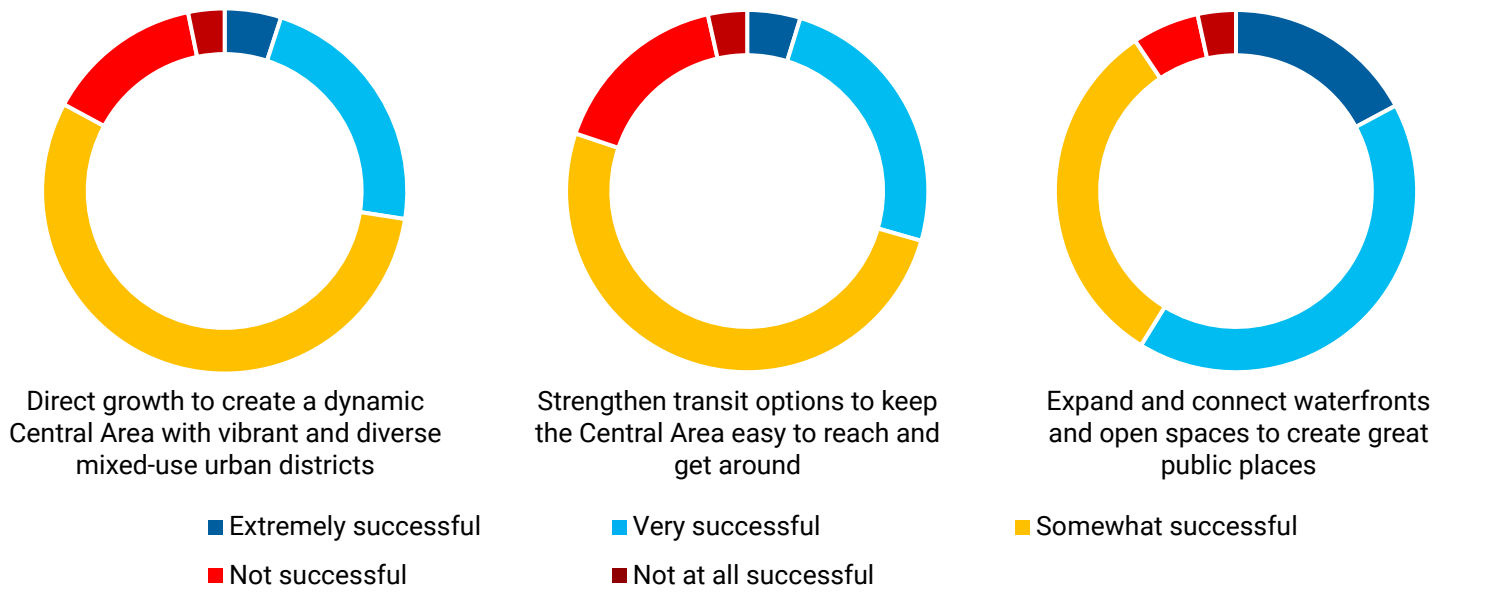
Number of respondents on transportation mode(s) used to travel within the Central Area (selected applicable)

- Once respondents were inside the Central Area, walking was the most popular selection with 78% of respondents including it in their selections, followed by bus and train.



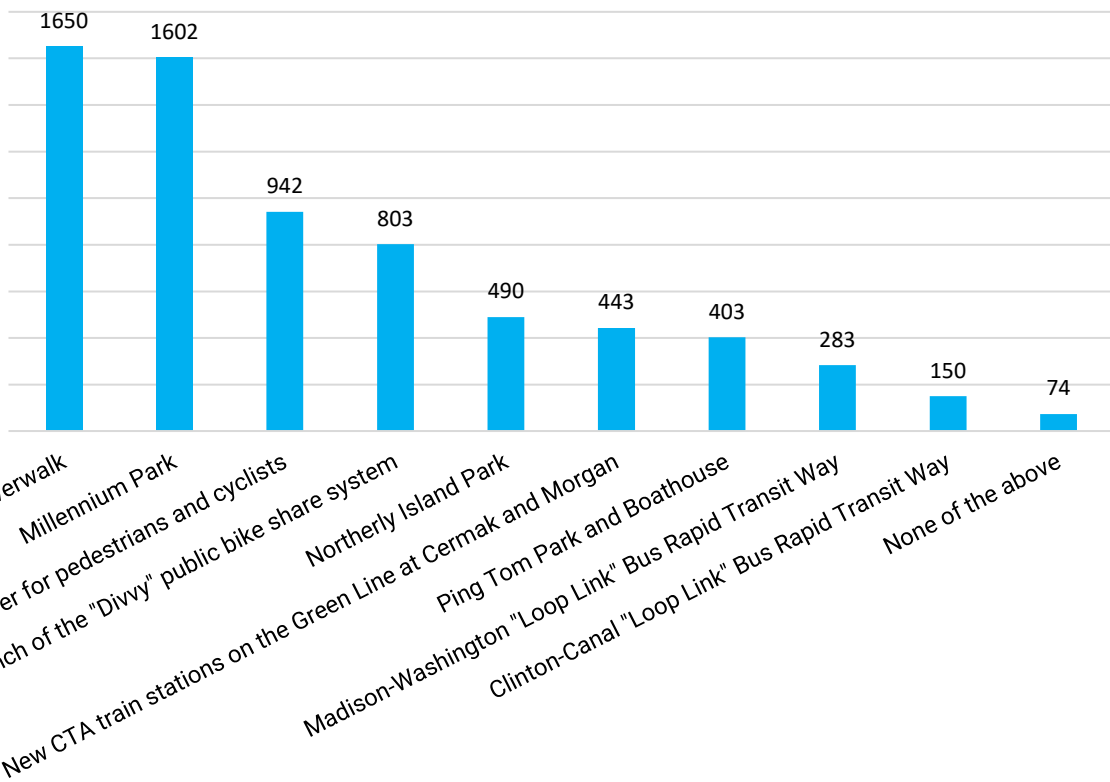
Perceptions from respondents on the implementation of the 2003 Central Area Plan themes

- 92% of respondents identified that the expansion and connectivity of open spaces was at least somewhat successfully implemented.



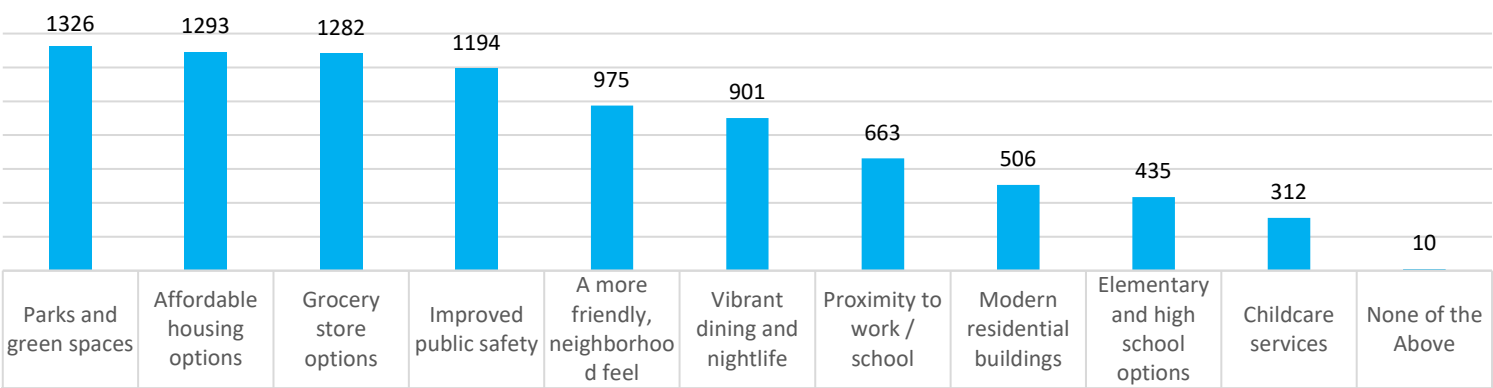
Most useful projects completed since 2003 according to respondents

- The Riverwalk and Millenium Park were selected by nearly 1 in 4 respondents.



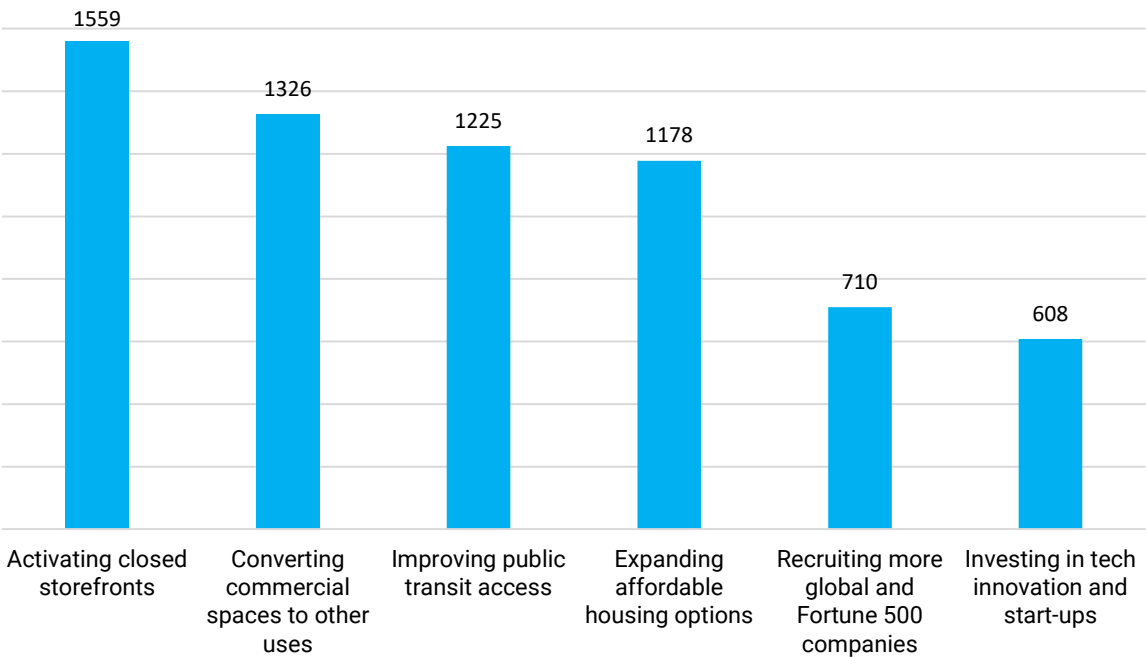
Respondents’ most important amenities for attracting more people to live in the Central Area (selected three)

- Respondents selected parks, affordable housing options, grocery store options and improved public safety as their top amenities.



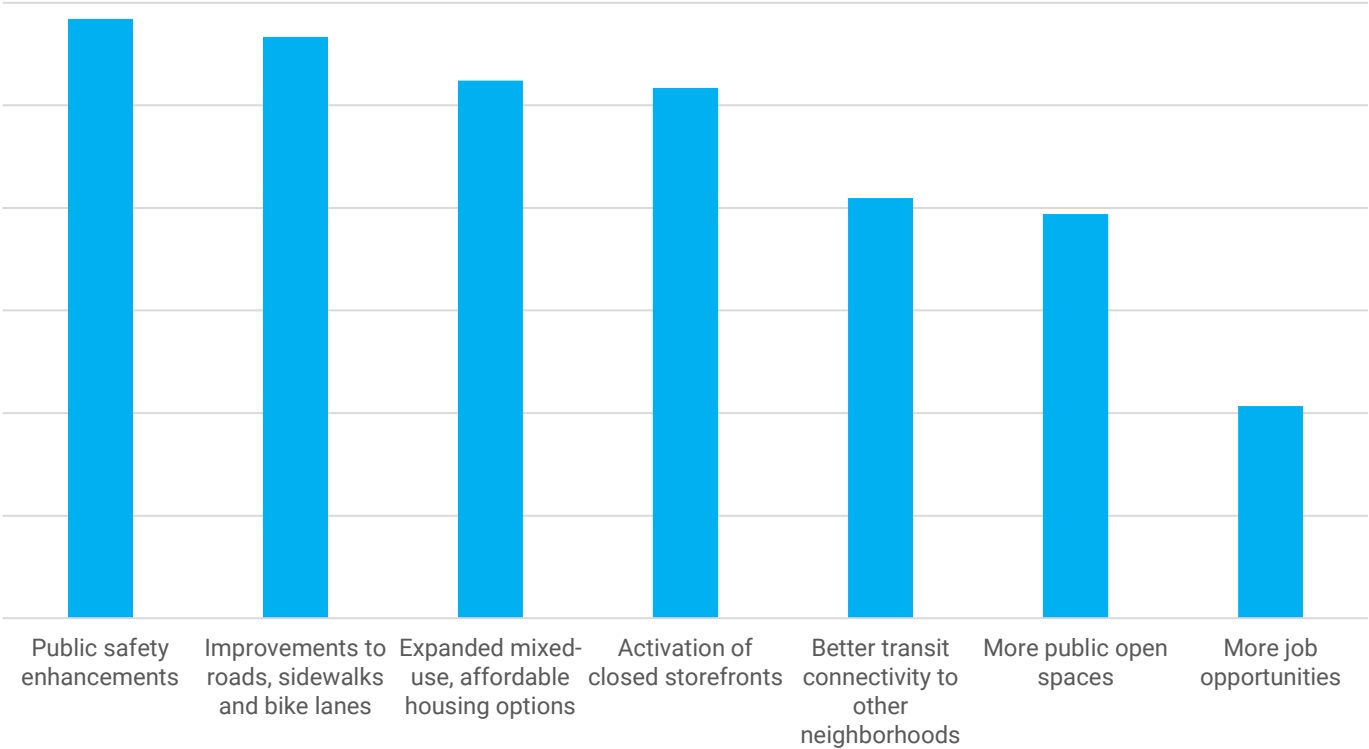
Recommendations for enhancing the area’s economy according to respondents (selected three)

- At least 1 in 2 respondents selected activating closed storefronts, connecting commercial spaces to other uses, improving public transit access or expanding affordable housing options as one of their top three picks.



Respondents’ top priorities to complete in the next five years (selected three)

- Nearly half of the respondents selected public safety and infrastructure improvements as their top priority over the next five years.
- Approximately 44% of respondents selected expanding mixed-use affordable housing options and activating close storefronts.

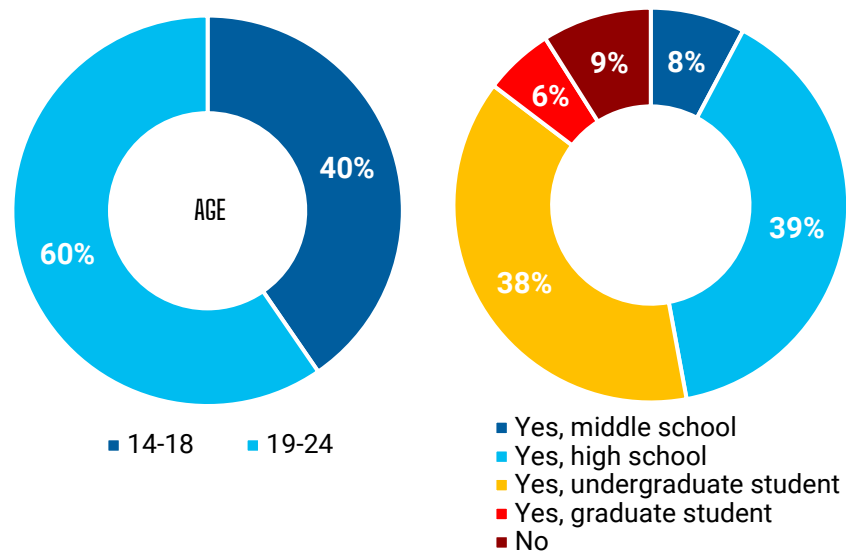


Youth Survey



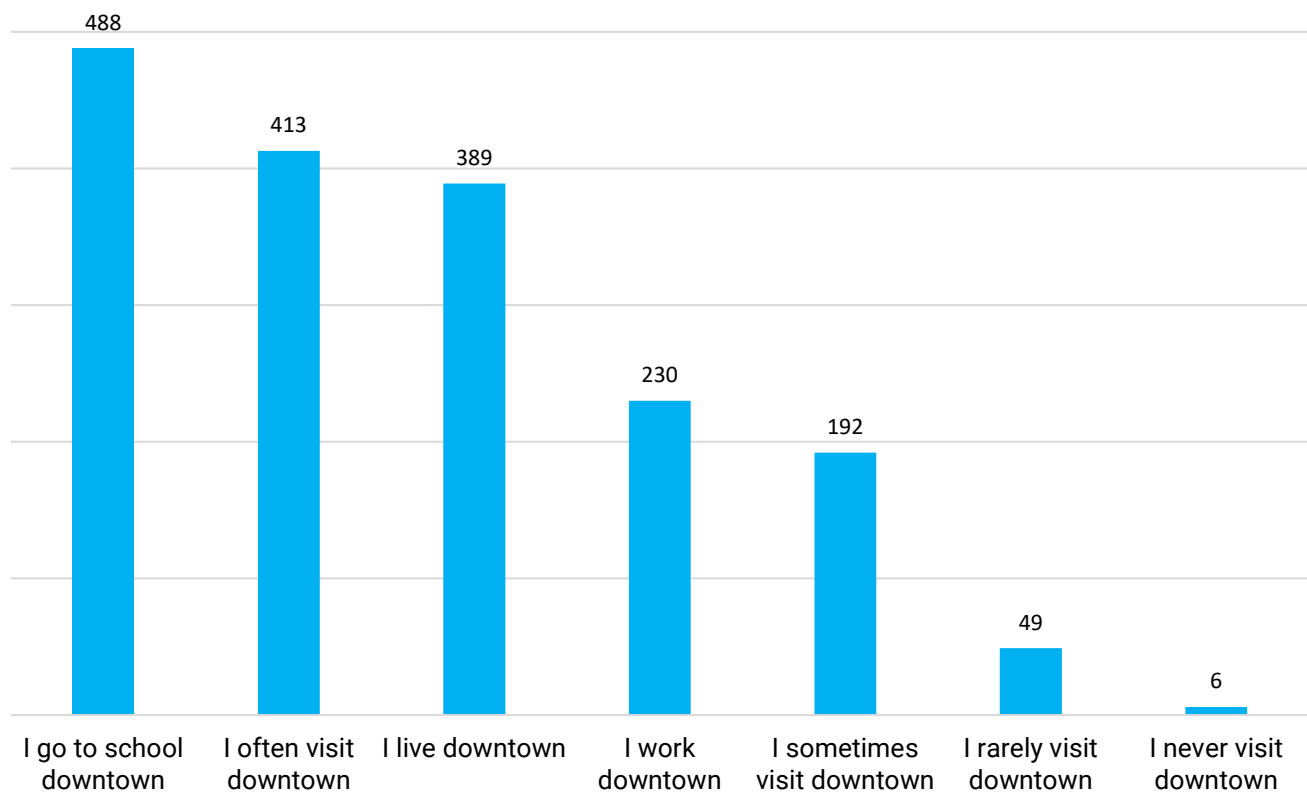
Respondents' ages and student status

- Approximately 40% of respondents were 14-18 years old and the remaining 60% were 19-24 years old.
- Of those who responded to the question, more than 75% were either high school or undergraduate students.



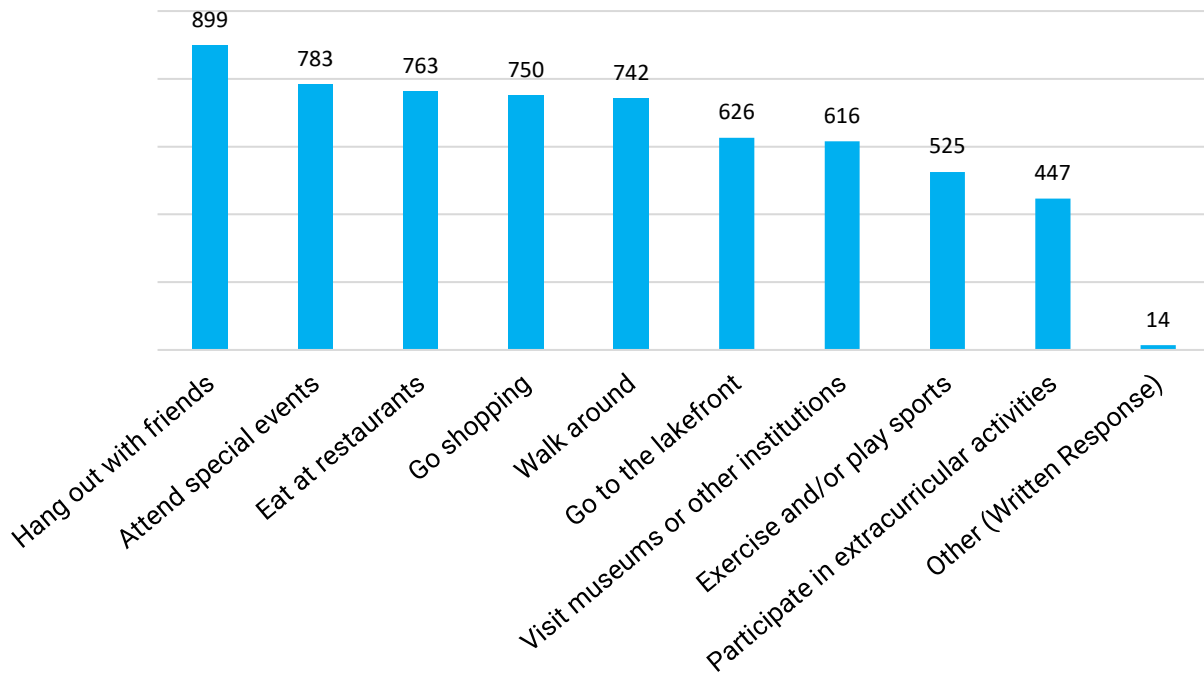
Visiting downtown

- Nearly 1/3 of respondents go to school downtown, and very few respondents indicated they never go downtown.



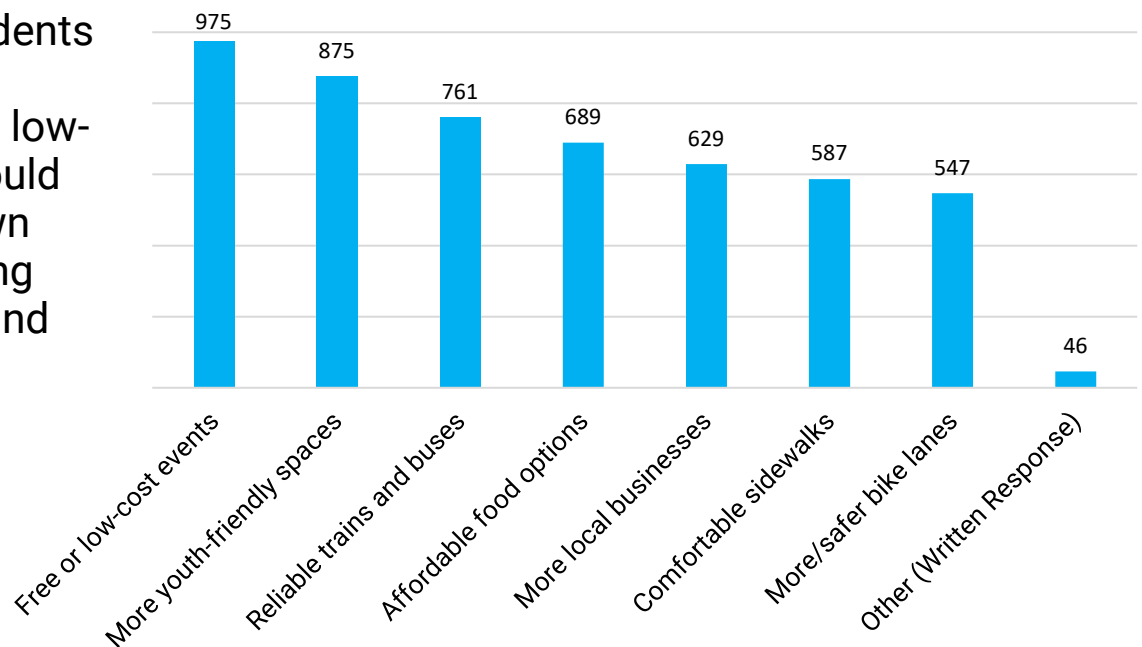
What respondents like to do downtown (selected applicable)

- Nearly 60% of respondents like to hang out with friends downtown.
- Approximately 50% of respondents like to attend special events, eat at restaurants, go shopping and walk around downtown.



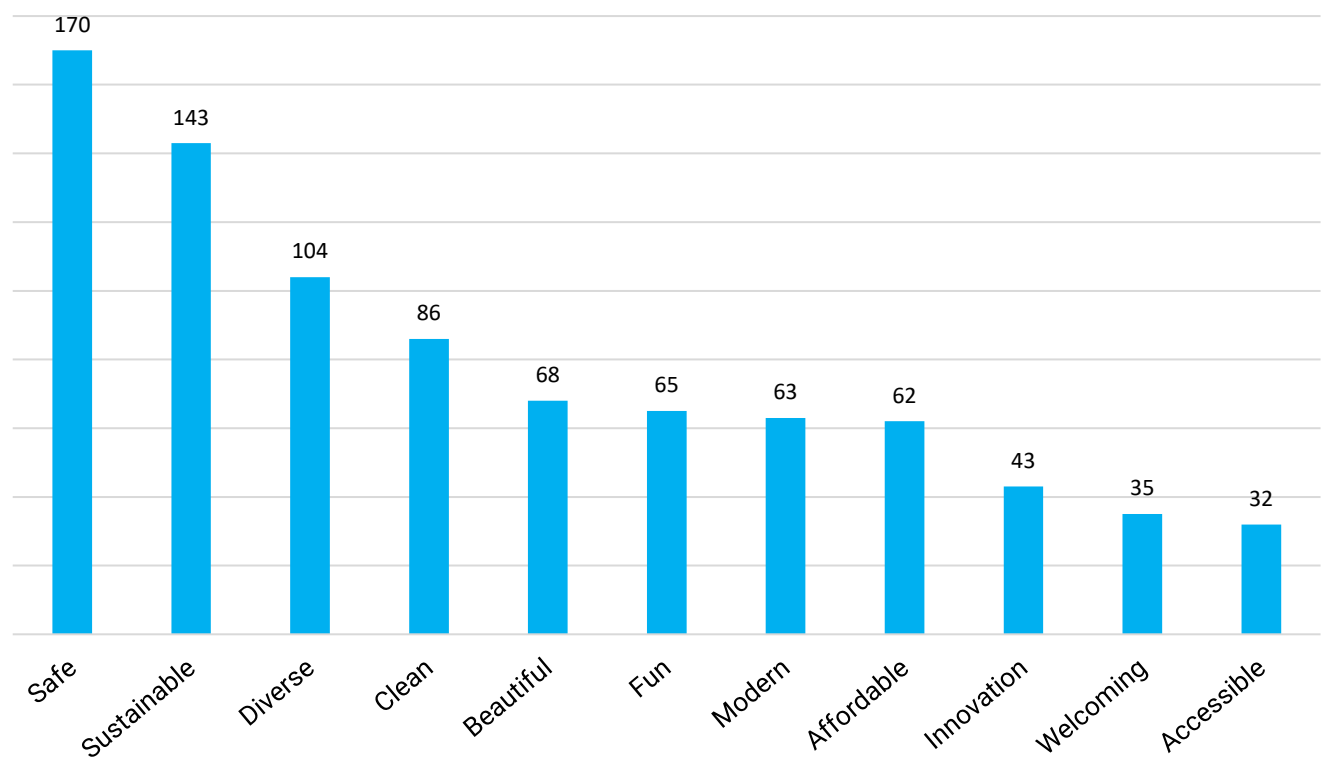
Respondents' top three priorities for downtown to be more welcoming to kids, teens and young adults

- 63% of respondents indicated that offering free or low-cost events would make downtown more welcoming to kids, teens and young adults.



Three words selected by respondents on their vision for downtown in ten years

- Safe, sustainable and diverse were the top three words selected by respondents.



A background image of a city skyline, likely Chicago, viewed from a park area. The skyline features numerous skyscrapers under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there is a body of water on the left, a bridge, and a park with green grass, trees, and a paved path. The text "Pop-up Events" is overlaid in white, with a red zigzag line underneath it.

Pop-up Events



Taste of Chicago in Humboldt Park

June 24, 2023

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

600 total stickers placed ~200 participants

Affordable Housing Options – **114 Stickers**

Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **89 Stickers**

Reliable Public Transit – **62 Stickers**

Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **57 Stickers**

Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **56 Stickers**

Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **55 Stickers**

Grocery Store Options – **45 Stickers**

Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **43 Stickers**

Continuing Education Opportunities – **31 Stickers**

Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **26 Stickers**

Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **22 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- There is a pressing need for opportunities for youth, including education and workforce development, as well as the need for cultural/social events. Mentoring programs should be explored as a way to connect with young Chicagoans.
- Improving the reliability of public transit creates equity for residents and enhances overall public safety.
- Considerable effort should be placed on increasing affordable housing to stem displacement in neighborhoods like Humboldt Park.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

“Chicago needs more reliable transit in Humboldt Park, and Hermosa, Belmont Cragin. There are no nearby trains in these densely packed, mostly Latino + Black, low-income communities.”

“More mental health resources. Homeless plan - living where there are resources. Trash pickup, more low-income housing and youth programming.”



Taste of Chicago in Pullman

June 15, 2023

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

342 total stickers placed ~114 participants

Affordable Housing Options – **71 Stickers**

Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **41 Stickers**

Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **40 Stickers**

Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **37 Stickers**

Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **29 Stickers**

Reliable Public Transit – **29 Stickers**

Grocery Store Options – **27 Stickers**

Continuing Education Opportunities – **24 Stickers**

Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **20 Stickers**

Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **12 Stickers**

Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **12 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- People felt strongly about incorporating more youth-focused programming downtown and ensuring that youth have equitable access to programs, events and jobs. There should be a conscious effort to include youth voices in projects like these.
- Continuing to invest in free cultural events (such as Taste of Chicago) and bringing them outside of downtown bridges a gap in perception that downtown isn't for everyone.
- There are opportunities to build off projects such as the Red Line Extension Project to make public transit reliable and increase accessibility to downtown and opportunities.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

“Lack of parking downtown. The parking that is available is expensive and not accessible for people that do not live downtown.”

“Surprising that more people did not highlight a need to improve bike and pedestrian infrastructure.”



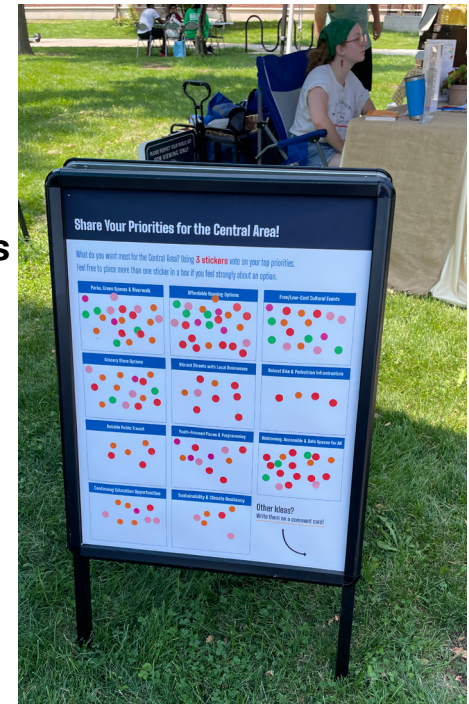
Austin Town Hall Park City Market

July 27, 2023

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

464 total stickers placed ~154 participants

Affordable Housing Options – **43 Stickers**
Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **33 Stickers**
Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **28 Stickers**
Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **26 Stickers**
Grocery Store Options – **24 Stickers**
Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **18 Stickers**
Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **17 Stickers**
Reliable Public Transit – **12 Stickers**
Continuing Education Opportunities – **12 Stickers**
Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **10 Stickers**
Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **9 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- There is a gap in the Central Area catering to older adults and those with disabilities; diversity in events throughout can help to invite those populations to visit the Central Area.
- Without affordable family housing, people are unable to live in the Central Area as most of the affordable units (and in general) are too small.
- Reducing the need for cars downtown helps clean the air from standstill traffic emissions and makes room for those that do need to use them.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

"Stop the violence, put the guns down. Help each other more."

"Affordable multi-family units, not just studios or 1 bedrooms."

"More for adults to do downtown. More inviting for older adults. Increase variety of events."

"More auditory accessibility downtown for crossing intersections."

"More local lunch spots, reducing standstill traffic to reduce pollution."

"More public parking."

"Animal preserve (not a pound but a place where dogs and cats can roam free)."

"More soul food restaurants. More sweets shops."

Summer Fair in Chinatown

July 29, 2023, pop-up led by CBCAC

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

682 total stickers placed ~227 participants

Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **125 Stickers**

Affordable Housing Options – **88 Stickers**

Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **81 Stickers**

Reliable Public Transit – **80 Stickers**

Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **61 Stickers**

Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **55 Stickers**

Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **52 Stickers**

Grocery Store Options – **38 Stickers**

Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **35 Stickers**

Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **34 Stickers**

Continuing Education Opportunities – **33 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- There was consensus among visitors that it is a priority to improve public transportation for accessibility and better connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods outside of Chinatown.
- Many people mentioned a need to increase affordable housing options that include more opportunities for older adults to be able to age in place.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

“More outdoor public space to socialize, public restrooms.”

“New CTA train stations on the Green Line at Cermak and Morgan.”

“Expanding affordable housing options. Improving public transit access.”

“More public open spaces, more job opportunities, more frequent cultural events and festivals.”

“Expanded mixed-use, affordable housing options, better transit connectivity to other neighborhoods, more job opportunities.”

“More outdoor public space to socialize, attractive streetscapes and public art, improved public safety.”

“Better transit connectivity to other neighborhoods.”

“Pedestrian-only streets.”

Silver Room Block Party in Hyde Park

July 30, 2023

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

150 total stickers placed ~50 participants

Affordable Housing Options – **26 Stickers**

Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **20 Stickers**

Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **18 Stickers**

Continuing Education Opportunities – **17 Stickers**

Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **12 Stickers**

Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **12 Stickers**

Grocery Store Options – **11 Stickers**

Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **11 Stickers**

Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **9 Stickers**

Reliable Public Transit – **7 Stickers**

Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **7 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Increasing economic development incubators can help local small businesses start in and expand to beyond the Central Area.
- Support ambassadors who serve as holistic guides (providing mental health services, directional guides and promoters of visiting other Chicago neighborhoods).
- Increasing diversity for all to feel welcomed and safe in the Central Area with a focus on youth is needed.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

“Affordable rent prices for businesses.”

“Make Mag Mile and other main streets pedestrian only, improve public transit movement, and build concentrated boat tours.”

“People to help navigate transit and point things out as ambassadors for those traveling to other neighborhoods.”



Silver Room Block Party in Hyde Park

July 30, 2023



COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

- “Promote tourism of other neighborhoods outside of the downtown.”
- “Consider impact of street and road closures, specifically construction.”
- “Improve safety to work to keep the businesses on the Mag Mile and to attract new businesses.”
- “More and better bike infrastructure because bikers can be aggressive on sidewalks
- “More police presence near the lakefront.”
- “Work to continue to improve amenities and cost for local businesses to want to open in the Central Area.”
- “More safe spaces so people can connect with downtown instead of going home after work.”
- “Millenium Park is more for tourism; we need a place where people can relate with local communities.”
- “Focus more on accessibility for downtown.”
- “More elevators and signage.”
- “Getting ramps for sidewalks.”
- “Accessible, free youth events that are educational and fun opportunities.”
- “Increase diversity of people, businesses and experiences.”
- “Continuing education opportunities as a method to work with youth that need work experience, housing and mentorship to move forward. Look into how we can create more stable, independent housing for youth.”

Uptown Farmers Market

August 9, 2023



OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

250 total stickers placed ~83 participants

- Affordable Housing Options – **43 Stickers**
- Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **34 Stickers**
- Reliable Public Transit – **34 Stickers**
- Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **34 Stickers**
- Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **22 Stickers**
- Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **22 Stickers**
- Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **19 Stickers**
- Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **14 Stickers**
- Continuing Education Opportunities – **11 Stickers**
- Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **10 Stickers**
- Grocery Store Options – **7 Stickers**

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Increase sustainability by utilizing renewable energy for new developments and also having more markets that provide equitable food resources to Chicagoans within walking distance.
- Plan for more shared streets that can be multi-use for non-car activities. This makes it safer and easier for neighbors to want to walk and bike to the Central Area.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

- “More affordable grocery store options.”
- “Better streets for bicycles that includes paved, clean, free of debris, and protected.”
- “Mental health resources.”
- “More activities and programs for teenagers.”
- “Low-income housing for workforce.”
- “Affordable housing focused on helping homeless and people in unstable housing.”

Sundays on State

August 13, 2023



OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

2,678 total stickers placed ~892 participants

English Boards:

- Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **331 Stickers**
- Affordable Housing Options – **313 Stickers**
- Reliable Public Transit – **267 Stickers**
- Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **254 Stickers**
- Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **184 Stickers**
- Grocery Store Options – **182 Stickers**
- Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **162 Stickers**
- Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **144 Stickers**
- Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **139 Stickers**
- Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **127 Stickers**
- Continuing Education Opportunities – **110 Stickers**

Spanish Boards:

- Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **9 Stickers**
- Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **6 Stickers**
- Grocery Store Options – **6 Stickers**
- Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **6 Stickers**
- Youth-Focused Places & Programming – **5 Stickers**
- Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **4 Stickers**
- Affordable Housing Options – **3 Stickers**
- Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **2 Stickers**
- Continuing Education Opportunities – **2 Stickers**
- Sustainability & Climate Resiliency – **2 Stickers**
- Reliable Public Transit – **1 Stickers**

Sundays on State Continued



Mandarin Boards:

Reliable Public Transit – **2 Stickers**

Welcoming, Accessible & Safe Spaces for All – **2 Stickers**

Parks, Green Spaces & Riverwalk – **1 Stickers**

Affordable Housing Options – **1 Stickers**

Free/Low-Cost Cultural Events – **1 Stickers**

Vibrant Streets with Local Businesses – **1 Stickers**

Robust Bike & Pedestrian Infrastructure – **1 Stickers**

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Building better public transit coverage throughout the Central Area to and from the South and West sides creates greater equity for all Chicagoans to experience downtown.
- Safety concerns have grown since the pandemic and there is a pressing need to consider the safety of everyone; CTA employees, homeless Chicagoans, refugees, residents, and visitors all need to be included in public safety considerations.
- Fun cultural activities at low-cost can be effective ways to highlight neighborhoods outside the Central Area while still serving as economic drivers for local downtown businesses and organizations.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

- “Public transportation could have better coverage.”
- “Temporary safe housing for refugees.”
- “More well-lit open spaces to move around at night. More public safety.”
- “More dog-friendly areas and amenities and more green space.”
- “Please reinstate a streetcar or surface rail network planning process. Please do more pedestrian-oriented street festivals. Incorporate a bike grid.”
- “Follow NY and London congestion pricing for cars.”
- “I would like to see less anti-homeless architecture and more resources for housing and needs for those struggling with homelessness.”

Sundays on State Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED

- “We need more fun and free activities. Good ambiance and vibes. Just missing more activities.”
- “We need a grocery store downtown. More places for kids outside and year-round, Halloween fest, juke jam, middle school supervised, etc. We need a youth sports league.”
- “In other dense city centers, there isn’t public parking. It’s ridiculous that we give so much land to parking. Implement congestion pricing for drivers downtown.”
- “More cultural events encompassing a wider range of ethnicities. More educational opportunities for young adults through visual/media/photography.”
- “Signage for public transit. More food options. Better wayfinding, especially on riverwalk, no “you are here” dot.”
- “More safety for everyone, civilians and CTA workers etc. The buses feel safer, make trains safer.”
- “Increase high-tech industry to bring innovative companies to Chicago.”
- Garbage/trash pickup should be a priority.”
- “West to North transit connections.”
- “Perceived barriers to exploring neighborhoods outside of downtown.”
- “Secure bike parking and affordable housing are needed.”
- “Dedicated, car-excluded bus lane. Bicycle lanes with no cars crossing to park.”



27th Ward Stay in School Event

August 26, 2023

OVERALL RESULTS – SHARE YOUR PRIORITIES

561 total stickers placed ~187 participants

13 and Under Boards:

- Parks and Playgrounds – **42 Stickers**
- Eating and Shopping – **35 Stickers**
- Free Fun Events – **30 Stickers**
- More Bike Lanes – **21 Stickers**
- Activities to Learn and Explore – **19 Stickers**
- Bird and Bee-friendly Plants – **14 Stickers**
- More Buses and Trains – **10 Stickers**
- Comfortable Sidewalks – **8 Stickers**



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Public green spaces, cyclists
- Affordable housing and amenities, mental health
- More activities for youth

COMMENTS RECEIVED

- “Impact of development on wildlife and the subsequent planning to have nature trails/ areas for people and wildlife to coexist.”
- “Homelessness has increased in Chicago. There needs to be more affordable and low-income housing that has wrap-around services such as mental health, addiction, workforce development, etc.”
- “More affordable grocery store options.”
- “Better streets for cyclists and non-vehicular methods of transportation.”
- “Mental Health resources, affordable and accessible.”
- “More activities and programs after school and on the weekends for teenagers.”
- “Increase and improve the parks in the Central Area.”
- “For the most part, Grant Park is occupied year round.”
- “Shared bikes and scooter programs should have a docking system that does not allow them to be left lying around.”
- “Wayfinding signage, knowing how to get places based on street signage for example closest train station, how far you need to east to get to Millenium Park.”
- “More affordable grocery store options and in general shopping options such as TJ Maxx, Marshalls, Ross, Nordstrom Rack.”

A scenic view of the Chicago skyline across a river, with a bridge on the left and a park area in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

Open Houses

May 23, 2023

&

December 6, 2023

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023



Housing & Neighborhoods

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Prioritize improving access points to lakeshore trails and transit from high-traffic areas, promoting a seamless urban experience for residents, workers, and visitors.
- Advocate for diverse housing options, emphasizing condos for families and opportunities for low- and middle-class wealth building.
- Encourage the development of missing middle housing, increased density, and the transformation of outdated retail spaces into smaller, more community-oriented services.
- Address the need for more parks with trees, seating, and spaces for people to linger without a purchase obligation.
- Promote pedestrian-friendly spaces by reducing car lanes, investing in reliable transit, and implementing traffic calming measures.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Riverfront
- The riverfront and lakefront walking paths are wonderful, and I use them year-round.
- World-Class City
- The city should recognize and encourage the revitalization of N. Michigan Ave. as a world-class destination for visitors, workers, and residents.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Housing & Neighborhoods Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

Opportunities:

- Access
- More accessible access points to the lakeshore trail.
- Improve access to transit from high traffic areas (Millennium Park, Art Institute, Museum Campus, Soldier Field, etc...).
- Housing diversity
- More opportunities for low- and middle-classes to build wealth as opposed to concentrating wealth in mega-developments. More family-sized residential condo developments and less studio, 1-bed, 2-bed residential apartment developments
- Increase affordable housing. Increase access to high quality healthy affordable groceries. Increase affordable childcare/public schools. Why is there no affordable parking?
- It would be better to have a greater diversity of housing options. Not just microunits for young singles. We need condos for families and housing for older people
- Not more expensive studios for young professionals. Need more 3+ bedroom units to encourage families
- Density
- Missing middle housing. Increase density by right. Make it easier to build small
- Trails, parks, and services to support high density housing like in NYC. Need to demolish outdated large-scale retail and make spaces for smaller scale retail/services

Gaps:

- Green space
- There needs to be more parks with trees and seating.
- We need more spaces for people to linger and enjoy without needing to make a purchase.
- Cleanliness
- More trashcans - sealed not overflowing. Especially on Wabash south of Roosevelt. A don't litter pride campaign to give clean streets a value
- Services
- There needs to be more grocery stores around the Central Area beyond Target, which is expensive.
- Increase the diversity of retail and local businesses.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Housing & Neighborhoods Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

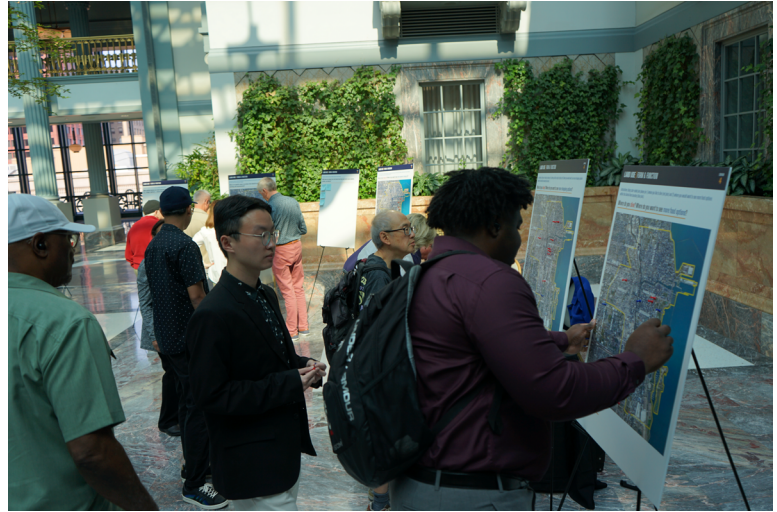
Challenges:

- Car dependency
- Fewer car lanes and more pedestrian-oriented spaces. More reliable transit access - the Loop is the center of the city; I should be able to get to places easily without a vehicle. Lower speeds, esp. on major roads like Ida B Wells.
- Traffic calming, effective bus rapid transit, convert surface parking lots to parks
- Affordability
- I can afford to live in the Central Area because I bought a house 12 years ago. It would be hard for me to afford it now. We need more affordable and flexible housing here.
- Safety
- Feeling safer when out walking. Improved safety at intersection there were no stop signs or traffic lights
- Better overall walkability is needed to help people and bikers feel safe on the streets.

Economic Development

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Focus on expanding outdoor dining, closing streets, and creating open spaces like public plazas to foster community engagement and activities.
- Encourage economic growth through small business incubators, affordable co-working spaces, and attracting larger businesses with a focus on providing valuable services.
- Promote the establishment of more grocery stores, local shopping opportunities, and diverse retail options, particularly concentrating on smaller stores instead of large chains.
- Prioritize safety in the pedway, install brighter streetlights to enhance both safety and the overall aesthetic appeal of the urban environment.



Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Economic Development Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- People-first infrastructure
- Expand outside dining in summer and closed streets
- Create more open space like public plazas for lunch and activities which are used a lot.

Opportunities:

- Safety
- Build safer bike lanes to get to and from work
- Create a nicer space under the trains that people can enjoy and feel safe around
- Business attraction
- More small business incubators.
- Affordable community co-working spaces
- Attract big business but charge them for worthwhile services
- Extended hours, especially in the winter

Gaps:

- Safety
- Build safer bike lanes to get to and from work
- Create a nicer space under the trains that people can enjoy and feel safe around
- Business attraction
- More small business incubators.
- Affordable community co-working spaces
- Attract big business but charge them for worthwhile services
- Extended hours, especially in the winter

Challenges:

- Safety
- Ensure safety in pedway and noise control of the street bands amplification
- Put in brighter streetlights



Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Land Use

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Prioritize pedestrian safety and movement by reducing street parking and traffic lanes and replacing car infrastructure with pedestrian, bike, and transit-friendly alternatives.
- Enhance connectivity by developing parkland and providing more access to the lakefront, especially during events.
- Emphasize the importance of cultural hubs like Chinatown and older buildings to incorporate elements of city history.
- Revitalize streets in the Loop with improved streetscapes, reduced parking, more trees, and renovated facades.
- Move away from costly car infrastructure, freeing up space for housing. Add more mixed housing, including affordable options, and hotels.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Walkability
- Most people moving around the Loop are on foot so we should prioritize their movement by increasing pedestrian safety infrastructure and reducing street parking and traffic lanes.
- Replace car infrastructure with pedestrian, bike, and transit infrastructure.
- Event space
- Use existing park space for programming (including riverwalk)
- Keep State Street alive, especially the south end. Sundays on State are great.

Opportunities:

- Variety
- Would be nice to have interesting small local businesses not just box chains
- Preservation
- Preservation of Chinatown is important
- Cultivate community/green space and protect older buildings to incorporate elements of city history.
- Gathering space
- Seating/gathering around Buckingham Fountain
- Make Solider Field into a festival venue to free up Grant Park.
- Audit
- Revenue analysis on a by-lot basis to see which are costing the City money. Opportunity cost. Immediately tax vacant lots more.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023



Land Use Continued

EXISTING CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Gaps:

- Green space
- Parks/nature/green spaces. More access to lakefront/public parks (often closed to residents due to events). Community-focused spaces
- More active uses in Grant Park. I spend a lot of time in Millennium Park. Grant Park, in contrast, feels closed off a lot of the year and there isn't much reason to go there.
- Develop park land (especially Northerly Island). Reimagine Loop. Printers Row – Pedestrianize streets. Better lakefront access, Maximize riverwalk possibilities
- Connection
- Connect 606 to lakefront path to make downtown more accessible by bike
- State Street from Grand to the river needs love. Streetscape, less parking, trees, renovated facades

Challenges:

- Pedestrian infrastructure
- It feels very unsafe to cross the highway as a pedestrian and cyclist
- I want to walk more in winter but it's cold. Skyways? Expand pedway system?
- Roosevelt Corridor. Less car oriented, better bike and ped development
- Move away from costly car infrastructure to transport that creates revenue for the city and frees up space for housing
- Add more mixed housing, including affordable, and hotels to LaSalle corridor

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Transportation & Infrastructure

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Focus on creating Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and protected bike lanes.
- Prioritize rush hour reliability for trains, dedicated bus lanes, and more frequent public transit options to make public transportation a faster and more attractive alternative to driving.
- Reimagine key roadways as pedestrian-friendly spaces and enhance infrastructure for safer highway crossings for bikes.
- Encourage new developments to contribute to the greenness of the streetscape.
- Establish a connected, protected bike network linking the loop and lakeshore.
- Establish CTA staff or trained ambassador services to assist passengers and enforce rules, ensuring a positive and safe transit experience for all.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Water Taxi
- Can the water taxi run year-round?

Opportunities:

- Reliability of transit
- Make BRT and protected bike lanes. Eliminate parking, especially on Halsted
- Rush hour reliability for trains and dedicated bus lanes
- If public transit gets people where they need to go faster than driving, they'll take it. More frequent trains and buses, dedicated bus lanes/streets
- Improve experience of buses. The bus routes, including express buses, slow to a crawl during rush hour. It's really an impediment to the Central Area.
- More modern up-to-date trains and buses that work in tune with modern sustainability practices to compete with international transportation systems like Japan/Europe.
- Consistent shelter and real time info on apps
- Safety
- Protected bike lanes
- CTA staff or trained ambassador service on trains to help people who need it and enforce rules, not cops

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Transportation & Infrastructure Continued

EXISTING CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Opportunities Continued:

- More heat lamps in train stations in the winter
- Green spaces
- Similar to how developments along the river are required to include public green space, all new developments should be required to improve the greenness of the streetscape. Too many buildings do not have any trees or greenery in front of them.
- Tactical urbanism
- Prototype early and often. Try things temporarily to get feedback on people's lived experiences rather than on their fears of change.

Gaps:

- Pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Convert all plastic bollards to concrete planters
- Reimagine parts of S. Columbus Drive and S. Lakeshore Drive that cut through Millennium, Maggie Daley and Grant Parks as pedestrian-friendly spaces and not thoroughfares.
- Needs safer ways to cross highway (90/94) for bikes, there is no westbound bike lane between Randolph and Van Buren
- Better lighting in underpasses
- Fix broken sidewalks
- Connectivity
- Protected bike network, connect the loop and lakeshore
- Outer edge parking and then walk or bike or transit the rest of the way in

Challenges:

- Car volume
- Along Michigan Avenue, take delivery vehicles off during the day. Too much illegal parking.
- Safety
- Feeling safe on the trains, I don't take the red line after dark.



Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Public Health & Safety

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Expand existing programs like the Chicago Loop Alliance's Street Ambassador Program and promote unarmed ambassador programs.
- Create city-wide options for young residents, focusing on safety, recreation, and learning without heavy reliance on law enforcement.
- Promote pedestrianized areas, increased density of amenities, and convenient access to daily necessities.
- Introduce transit ambassadors to assist individuals in need of social services and enforce basic rules, fostering a safe and comfortable transit experience.
- Focus on improving cleanliness, especially around transit stations, to create a more welcoming environment.
- Address the perception of safety disparities among different groups, ensuring a safe and welcoming environment for all ages and disability levels.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Uplift existing organizations
- Expand programs like Chicago Loop Alliance's Street Ambassador Program.
- Unarmed ambassador programs like Corridor Ambassador Program and Chicago Loop Alliance Ambassadors.

Opportunities:

- Resources for all
- Finding safe housing for our unhoused neighbors
- House the houseless
- Provide public health (including mental health) and housing resources to get more people off the streets without resorting to disciplining them, without giving them a safe, stable place to go.
- We need much more investment in social services, non-profits, and publicly funded options.
- Programming
- Offering city-wide options for our young residents where their needs for safety, recreation, and learning are met every day
- Less reliance on CPD and more social services outreach from organizations that don't use the police.
- Long-term partnerships that educate and facilitate a positive, safe, and inclusive environment for all.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023



Public Health & Safety Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

Opportunities Continued:

- Bring more people downtown
- Encouraging office occupancy is necessary to re-animate downtown which is 70% office by square footage. Planning for residential conversions will not solve the problem of downtown vitality by itself.

Gaps:

- Public health for all
- Benches/seating - oftentimes they are limited in parks and shopping areas.
- Water fountains
- Mental health mobiles (like food trucks)
- Safe and dignified housing for our unhoused neighbors.
- Reduce focus on automobiles, which is one of our biggest health hazards (accidents, pollution, global warming, economic impact of loss of green and blue space, reduced pedestrian space)
- Public bathrooms and water fountains
- Pedestrian safety
- Sidewalks are narrow in some places; you notice it when it gets crowded.
- Bollards along sidewalks on Michigan Ave. and State St. - like around federal courts
- More stores and active places for “eyes on the streets”
- Cap the highways and congestions pricing.
- Remove the lakefront highway.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Public Health & Safety Continued



COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

Gaps Continued:

- Elevator to riverwalk from Wacker
- More pedestrianized areas and an increase in density of amenities like grocery stores, medical facilities, and anything folks need to live their lives. Anything someone needs should be within a 10-minute walk and that walk should be safe and convenient. Anything that reduces vehicle pollution and incentivizes physical activity.
- Public transit safety
- Safe, clean, no smoking transit
- Good lighting and sidewalks
- Texting hotline to discreetly report issues on CTA trains and buses.
- Train/bus mental health ambassadors to help without involving cops. City of Denver has something like that.
- Transit ambassadors (unarmed) to help people in need of social services and enforce basic rules (smoking, laying down across seats, defecating etc.).

Challenges:

- Cleanliness, especially near L stations
- Perception of safety
- If a neighborhood, like the Loop, or a street like State Street, feels unsafe to visitors and residents, they'll start avoiding it which creates a cycle - the "broken window" effect.
- An identity that is based on the residents and not the needs/desires of tourists.
- Feeling of safety for all ages/disability levels
- Recognizing that downtown visitors and workers often have different perceptions of the city's safety from those of residents and that police presence and the optical signals of safety often speak to them and impact their perceptions of safety disproportionately.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Arts & Entertainment

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Encourage diverse programming, including sports facilities, playgrounds, and public art installations west of Millennium/Grant Park.
- Foster cultural events showcasing diversity, including movies in different languages and performances from various countries.
- Improve communication through electronic street-level billboards for public notices.
- Address affordability concerns by introducing more deals geared towards locals, making cultural and recreational events more accessible to a broader audience.
- Promote smaller-scale events, such as lunchtime concerts and weeknight activities, catering to a variety of interests and talents.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Utilize existing places
- Shuttles to Northerly Island for events or more buses to that area.
- Utilize Grant Park as an event holding space and less of an empty green space.
- Flea market at Grant Park, farmers market at Grant Park
- Let's cover Grant Park pavement with fields, courts, and playgrounds.
- More programming and activations west of Millennium/Grant Park. Always could use more public art.

Opportunities:

- More amenities for downtown
- Provide equipment/spaces for different sports like soccer or badminton.
- Bike repair equipment
- More interactive street art, smaller/more prevalent art attractions (pop-ups)
- Spray painting/graffiti events
- More street festivals and more events
- Free live music
- Events on State Street
- Cultural-focused events, showing movies in Spanish, singers from different countries.
- No easy access to sports areas from the Loop
- Events celebrating the diversity of the City don't often take place centrally.
- Smaller concert venues, small scale festivals over lunch to bring workers out of their offices
- More weeknight events through the summer
- Events showcasing and catering to talent from the south and west sides.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023



Arts & Entertainment Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

Gaps:

- Food
- Cheaper food that isn't fast food. Street food, food trucks, neighborhood food halls.
- Public market that is open every day like in Baltimore and Seattle
- Communications
- Public notice on the electronic street level billboards
- Accessibility
- Some events are not accessible (ADA). Create more accessible pathways for people to use and have more rapid transit available

Challenges:

- Affordability
- Can be prohibitively expensive. More deals geared toward locals would always be welcome.
- Safety
- Feel unsafe locking up my bike/riding in unprotected bike lanes
- Expensive Ubers and problems with ghost buses/trains
- Better and more reliable late night CTA options.
- Protected bike lanes to safely get to/from venues late at night

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Lifelong Learning

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Focus on diversifying class options, particularly during nights and weekends to provide options for working adults, youth, and seniors.
- Prioritize community-based youth programming to provide accessible and inclusive educational options.
- Explore opportunities to showcase and blend neighborhood cultures in the central area through learning programs.
- Improve access to information about available programs to make educational opportunities more transparent.
- Highlight the need for long-term investments in community access and resources, particularly for at-risk youth.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Existing programs
- Need more free- or low-cost educational programs for retired persons/seniors; Oakton Community College and Northwestern have programs.

Opportunities:

- Expand programs
- More opportunities for continuing education, such as providing a diversity of night and weekend classes at Howard Washington Library.
- Community based youth programming (not privatized)
- You Media for seniors and grownups
- Cultural exchange
- Opportunities to showcase and blend neighborhood cultures in the Central Area through learning opportunities.
- Programs that bridge non-traditional (after K-12th) options to good quality, paid jobs

Gaps:

- Access
- Hard to enroll in community college courses as a working adult. Unclear process.
- Lack of transit access to South and West side communities, and from underserved neighborhoods
- Better access to information on available programs
- Later weekend hours - 6pm or 7pm

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023

Lifelong Learning Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED CONTINUED

Challenges:

- Investment
- Long term investments in real Chicago community access and resources to at-risk youth
- More access to music education/tools. Harold Washington Library has the only free practice rooms with pianos
- Free admission/outreach for neighborhoods



Environment, Climate, & Energy

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Add more green energy infrastructure and help existing developments incorporate them.
- Promote the creation of pocket parks and encourage the development of native habitats to support local wildlife, like the riverfront
- Embrace electronic micro-mobility options like e-bikes and scooters to reduce reliance on traditional vehicles.
- Implement protected bike lanes to encourage alternative transit methods and connect the Central Area to other trails.

Open House at Harold Washington Library

May 23, 2023



Environment, Climate, & Energy continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED

Assets:

- Existing development improvements
- Support existing buildings to find capital to decarbonize and ensure any requirements to do so are spread across all energy users
- Solar panels or windmills on roofs and green roofs
- Develop a cost-effective way for multi-unit residences to compost food waste.

Opportunities:

- Infrastructure
- Add more green energy infrastructure.
- Electric charging stations for EVs.
- More free water fountains (the ones with bottle fillers)
- Make all pavement porous to allow rainwater to flow into soil

Gaps:

- Greenery
- More trees to reduce heat island effect
- More dedicated green space with purposes like lunch for workers or athletic recreation
- Add more parks, green spaces, and pocket parks along/near streets. More native habitat for our animal/bird friends. Promote “no mow” spaces.
- Rethink boulevards, move beyond the bland grass only concept. Add native plants, add walking paths, create pocket parks and plazas.

Challenges:

- Car pollution
- Protected bike lanes to encourage transit that isn't cars.
- Encourage and embrace electronic micro mobility, E-bikes, scooters, etc.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023



CENTRAL AREA VISION STATEMENT

Chicago's Central Area is a **global destination** that has the fastest-growing residential population of any downtown in the country. It is the **economic, transit and cultural hub** of the region, sustained by Lake Michigan and the Chicago River. Chicago's downtown neighborhoods will strive to be a unified **model for resiliency, innovation and accessibility** that is welcoming to all.

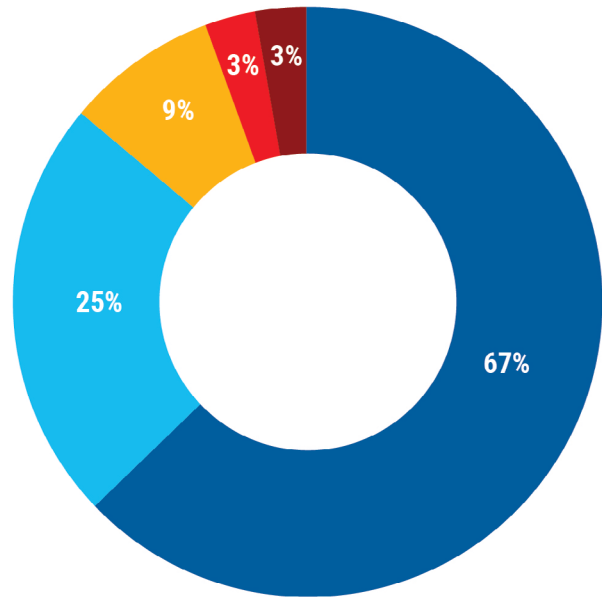


Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Art + Entertainment

86% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Chicago's downtown is home to world-class cultural experiences and organizations that provide connectivity to other neighborhoods. Improving access to and support for arts and entertainment is critical for creatives to live, work and grow in the Central Area.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Reuse vacant spaces creatively for arts and cultural programming (selected by 86 participants)
- Provide support and affordable spaces for artists and the creative industry (selected by 69 participants)
- Expand the availability of free and low-cost events that are welcoming for people of all ages and backgrounds (selected by 60 participants)
- Strengthen partnerships between diverse cultural organizations within the Central Area and across the city to further enrich world-class offerings (selected by 39 participants)
- Amplify the promotion of downtown's events and offerings to ensure that they reach a more diverse audience across Chicago and beyond (selected by 33 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Promote local businesses and makers to showcase and participate in frequent events in the Central Area.
- Encourage creative, diverse artistry to showcase their work in different spaces that are not held to museums and art institutions.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Art + Entertainment Continued

COMMENTS RECEIVED



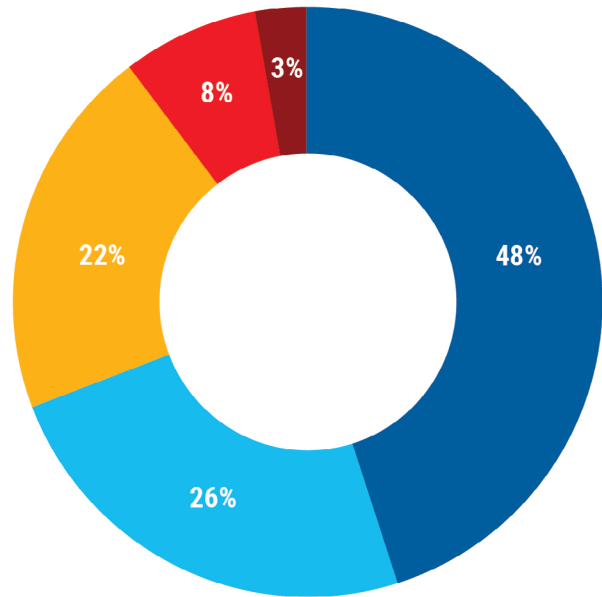
- Address the amplification of partnerships with different cultural organizations outside of Chicago to provide global perspectives in different languages.
- Expand the marketing of free events like movies in the park.
- Increase Chicago Park District funding period.
- Convert unused office to art incubators.
- Offer more camps and programs to youth.
- Create a portal for artists to find available spaces to showcase their art.
- Create physical artistic markers through the City to enhance art and user experience.
- Public murals on every large open wall with QR codes to learn history about that location: makes downtown a walking tour destination.
- Use Chicago sister cities to connect with resident artists to establish a global arts city.
- Give all city residents access to one free program at any downtown institution every year, encourage people to try art and entertainment.
- Improvements of safety and security at events.
- Turn vacant spaces into theme parks and museums.
- More large-scale theatre spaces open to support small theatres and groups.
- Attract back more local and regional cultural tourists through unique arts and entertainment programming.
- Invite artists and performers to a pedestrianized mag mile: more public plazas, less cars, and affordable housing.
- Pop up arts programs on vacant lots like shipping container makers markets, craft fairs, etc. perhaps collaborate with local restaurants to have food and to encourage people to be in these spaces.
- Representation is key if you involve all of Chicago in arts and cultural experiences from a young age, there will be a positive shift in Chicago.
- Simplify and lower costs for permitting art and community events.
- Plan a public makers market downtown during holidays and frequently during the year.
- A system of placemaking aids to give local businesses and theatres.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Lifelong Learning

69% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area has a high concentration of students and numerous opportunities to learn and explore. Its future invites Chicagoans of all ages and backgrounds to meaningfully connect with downtown and a diverse range of learning options.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Expand workforce development opportunities to ensure access to high-quality education and training programs (selected by 71 participants)
- Increase coordination among major Central Area institutions to engage more Chicagoans and build awareness of existing learning opportunities (selected by 68 participants)
- Promote diverse professional development experiences for youth, such as mentorship and apprenticeship programs (selected by 66 participants)
- Support opportunities for informal and experiential education, including intergenerational and peer-to-peer opportunities (selected by 43 participants)
- Improve digital literacy programs and resources to enhance access to educational opportunities (selected by 21 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Establish community programming for investments in education and work force opportunities particularly for youth and residents who live outside of the Central Area.
- Explore diversifying class options through different locations and different times to provide options for older adults and working families.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023



Lifelong Learning Continued

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Improve connections between our neighborhoods and the Central Area to build awareness of existing learning and work opportunities.
- Support available educational programs to provide equity for Chicago diverse population and considering inclusivity.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

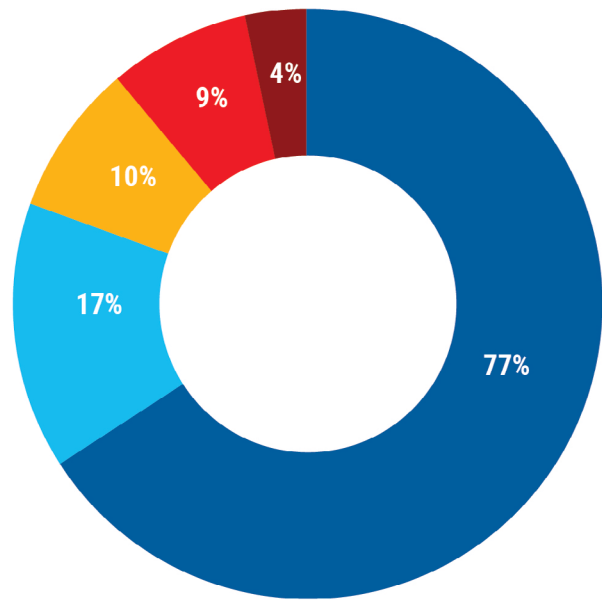
- Making intergenerational activities a priority, partnering with schools.
- Increase awareness of continuing education opportunities for older and retired adults.
- Use vacant storefronts as teen centers in the summer.
- Build a robust workforce training program that includes ESL programs.
- More programs in the cultural center and public libraries engaging higher education talent.
- Youth education programs that promote creativity and self-expression.
- Increase financial learning opportunities and access to mentorship programs.
- Use libraries for activities and shift them from book repository for learning places (arts, sciences, and other).
- Increase internships for youth engagement.
- Lifelong opportunities for people who are deaf, low-vision, or blind.
- Create more apprenticeship programs.
- Create professional programs between city colleges and local employers to better align training with available jobs.
- Open colleges for non-credit courses for seniors and Chicago residents.
- Engage youth in exploring and understanding the Loop as an economic engine for Chicago.
- Provide access to micro-mobility options for workforce and learning opportunities.
- Improve access to affordable education and technical training.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Transportation + Infrastructure

80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area is shaped by the convergence of rail lines, highways, waterways and a network of streets, sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Providing reliable, safe and welcoming transportation options that link people to, from and within the downtown area is critical to its continued growth.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Improve the reliability and safety of transit through operations and infrastructure improvements (selected by 79 participants)
- Invest in the safety and improved experience of pedestrians and bicyclists moving through downtown (selected by 72 participants)
- Connect the transportation grid to improve mobility to and within the Central Area (selected by 67 participants)
- Improve transit linkages across all modes of public transportation with a focus on the user experience (selected by 54 participants)
- Prioritize and support sustainable modes of transportation (selected by 46 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Improve the existing train stations and bus stops while considering enhancements at stations with local businesses.
- Prioritize accessibility for our multi-modal community considering working elevators and ADA compliance throughout the Central Area.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Transportation + Infrastructure Continued



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Establish designated bus lanes, separated bike lanes, and curb enhancements to prioritize pedestrian-friendly spaces.
- Use the concept of safety in numbers to establish safety ambassadors that assist with transit directions and safety concerns.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

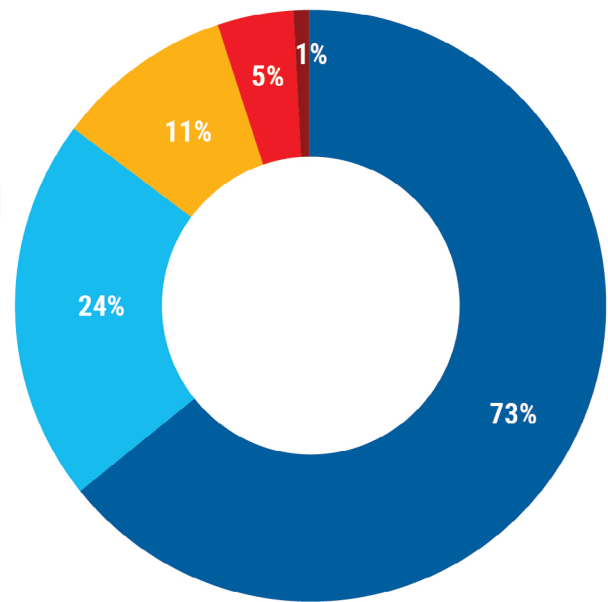
- Make sure more train stops have accessible elevators and have working elevators that are modified for accessibility.
- Pedestrianize streets with the Central Area and try a pilot program that can be a data-point for future additions.
- Improve cleanliness and safety on CTA trains and stations.
- Curb enhancements- bump outs, visual cues and planters to protect pedestrians.
- Fewer car lanes, narrower car lanes, wider sidewalks, fully separated and connected bike grid, more bus and CTA frequency, bus lanes.
- Prioritize pedestrian safety crossing, especially at Du Sable Lake Shore Drive.
- Create incentives for more water taxis, implement congestion pricing, build a park on top of the expressway part that runs through downtown.
- Train and utilize safety ambassadors to monitor transit facilities.
- A light rail network that assist the existing CTA bus and rail network.
- Street specialization, make Michigan Ave for buses and pedestrians.
- Expand the pedway.
- Improve connections to the South Side and West Side from downtown.
- Better connection between Union/OTC and the Loop.
- A loop walk: Chicago pedways should be modernized and expanded as well as a pedestrian walkway about the L similar to the High Line in NYC this could connect underground and to other buildings.
- Complete the Chicago River Trail system to reinforce the river as an amenity for downtown.
- Create audio descriptions for visions and hearing impaired to access.
- Implement braille menus at all intersections throughout the Central Area.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Environment, Climate + Energy

85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Chicago's most important natural resources – Lake Michigan and the Chicago River – converge downtown and provide fresh water and recreation for the entire region. The Central Area's growth should increase access to these natural resources and provide more public open spaces and ecological habitats that prioritize sustainability and stewardship.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Reduce the impacts of cars and emissions in the downtown area and facilitate a walk- and transit-focused environment (selected by 97 participants)
- Build additional green infrastructure and support more ecological habitats and sustainable landscaping (selected by 79 participants)
- Enhance the energy performance of downtown buildings as part of renovation and new construction projects and encourage the incorporation of publicly accessible open spaces (selected by 49 participants)
- Ensure equitable access to waterways, public spaces and programming (selected by 38 participants)
- Improve downtown's climate resiliency by reducing the heat island effect, mitigating the impacts of severe storms and protecting the shorelines (selected by 35 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Build additional green infrastructure and hold new development accountable to incorporate this into their projects.
- Embrace innovative ideas to work towards environmental improvements for the Central Area through permeable pavement, pocket parks, CAP the Kennedy, expanding sidewalks, etc.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Environment, Climate + Energy Continued



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Develop meaningful, scaled up policies through the City of Chicago to establish guidelines for any zoning related development.
- Prioritize the enhancements of existing nature amenities such as the Riverwalk, Lakefront, Grant Park, and other local parks to promote pedestrian-friendly streets.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

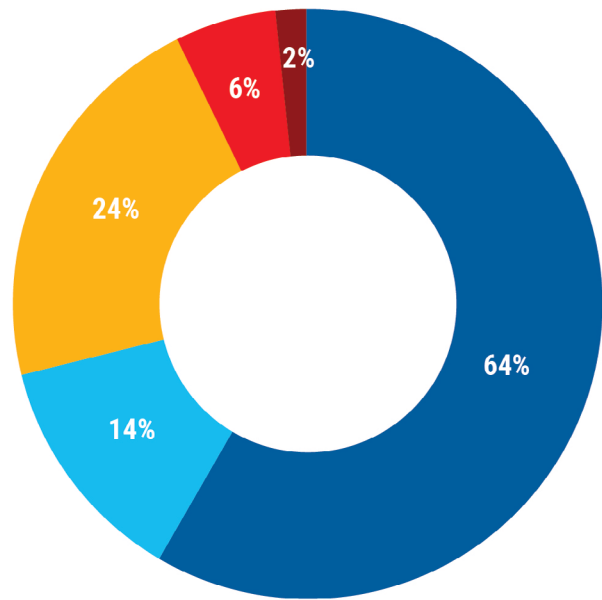
- We need to prioritize creating more green space to allow for more environmental benefits.
- Less car lanes and more modern pedestrian-friendly streets to increase beaches and green space.
- CAP the Kennedy that would build a deck over the Kennedy Expressway to create a public park.
- Make more accessibility to green infrastructure by providing incentives for those that would like to have this as a part of their development.
- Prioritize using infrastructure creatively such as permeable pavement parking lots.
- Create a new city department to manage Chicago's riverfronts and promote the usage of the riverfront for those who visit the Central Area.
- Reduce emissions from cars by temporarily closing streets to automobile traffic and providing days where there are only non-automotive methods of traffic that can go downtown.
- Implement grants and low interest loans to reduce emissions and energy use for older buildings.
- Require minimum LEED certification form for new buildings and renovations.
- Prioritize green infrastructure to reduce excessive heat and flooding. (Examples include bioswales, implement passive cooling, etc.)
- Dedicating more space to green corridors, more street trees, less cars and car-free streets.
- Access to the Chicago River for people has improved so much in the last 20 years but the river seems inhospitable still for wildlife in the central business district. Improving wildlife refuges for fish and birds would help.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Public Health + Safety

71% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area is home to world-renowned health-care institutions and recreational opportunities. Looking ahead, a focus on safety, a sense of community and expanding access to healthy foods will be critical to downtown's continued growth.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Provide clean and well-maintained public restrooms, particularly in transit facilities and along the lakefront and river (selected by 76 participants)
- Address safety concerns through lighting and streetscaping, especially in and around transit facilities, tunnels and underpasses (selected by 72 participants)
- Ensure public safety teams, such as violence intervention specialists, social workers and law enforcement officers, are in place for incidents that occur downtown (selected by 61 participants)
- Elevate existing partnerships to expand the reach of integrated services throughout the Central Area (selected by 20 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Address the issues of public amenities such as public restrooms, safe spaces and free social services to foster a safe and more welcoming environment.
- Focus on the installation of more lighting, improved streetscaping for people to have convenient access to daily necessities.
- Increase the size of the Chicago Loop Alliance's Street Ambassador Program, violence interventions programs and number of social workers who handle non-violent incidents.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023



Public Health + Safety Continued

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Work with health agencies downtown to ensure there are city-wide options to help health disparities among different groups.
- We need to ensure that the Central Area is welcoming and safe destination for all ages and disability levels.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

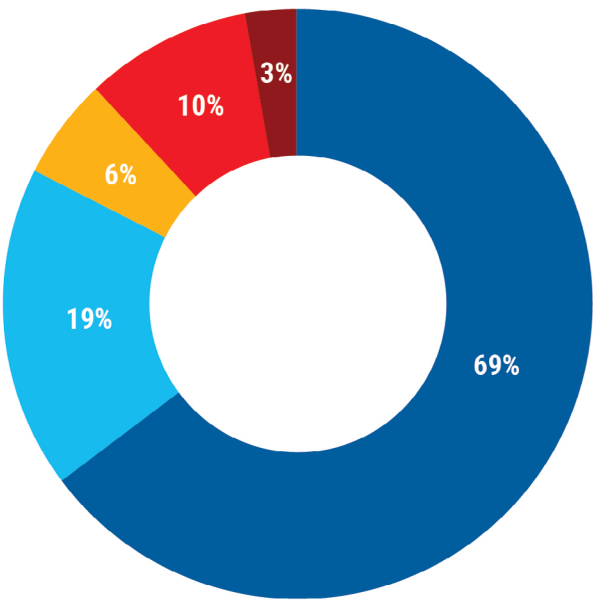
- Set up paid restrooms (\$.50 - \$1.00 per use) like in European cities and other parts of the world.
- Prioritize mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- Consider city-run inpatient mental health facilities.
- Lessen the responsibility of our police. Allow social workers and other professionals to handle the non-violent responses in our city.
- Adding more free portable water stations.
- Provide de-escalation training for police including non-armed safety agents and ambassadors. Also, allow for more social worker intervention teams to work with the police.
- Collaborate with MOPD on opportunities and programs.
- Additional safety technology support includes installing more cameras and license plate readers.
- Create community policing within the downtown area, have beat officers walk the area.
- Additionally safer, quieter streets with calming traffic infrastructure with raised crosswalks, bollards, etc.
- Improve safety + cleanliness on CTA trains and stations alike.
- Improve access to grocery stores.
- Consider how the city works after sunset and incorporate those considerations into plans.
- Improving the feel of safety is important to attract people downtown.
- Create an anonymous CTA hotline.
- Encourage more reuse/recycling through water refill stations (expand access to clean water).

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Economic Development

82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area is the region’s economic engine with more than half of all Chicago’s private-sector jobs. Looking to the future, downtown should support retail and business innovation, connectivity and growth from an inclusive workforce.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Support the growth of emerging, green and innovative industries to enhance the city’s economic prominence and resilience (selected by 50 participants)
- Elevate the downtown experience by offering unique attractions and experiences that encourage visitors, residents and employers to explore and invest in the area year-round (selected by 49 participants)
- Strengthen the Central Area as the region’s economic hub and its connectivity to Chicago’s neighborhoods (selected by 47 participants)
- Encourage local entrepreneurship through collaboration, youth incubator hubs and unique retail opportunities (selected by 33 participants)
- Establish more opportunities to support an inclusive workforce and to retain and attract downtown employees (selected by 25 participants)
- Support the growth of emerging, green and innovative industries to enhance the city’s economic prominence and resilience (selected by 50 participants)

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Economic Development Continued



TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Establish opportunities for more local businesses in Chicago's neighborhoods to have access to affordable spaces and small business incubators in the Central Area.
- Encourage the establishment of new, innovative industries that enhance the overall aesthetic of the city and enhance the urban environment.
- Prioritize community engagement events and activities by exploring and investing in unique attractions that happen year-round.
- Focus on collaboration through immersive entrepreneurship programming, closing streets, and more outdoor dining.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

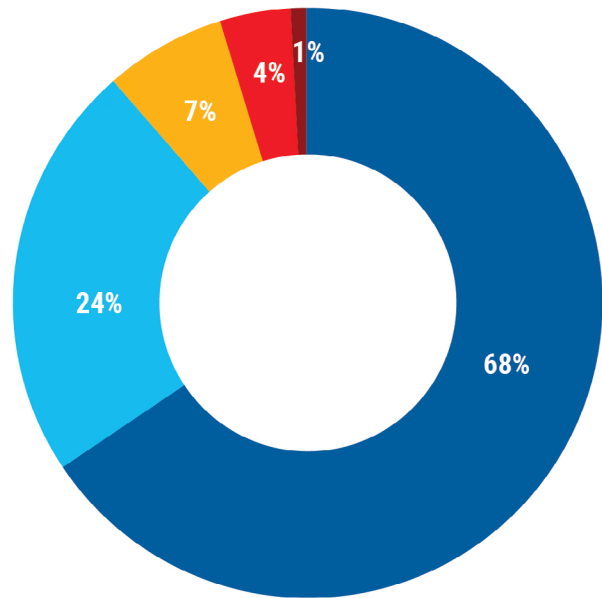
- Safety is critical for business to flourish.
- Make great environment and green space pedestrian priority spaces.
- Simplify zoning and small business regulations.
- Actively recruit tech startups to set their headquarters in downtown Chicago through incentives (e.g. free rent, per in-office worker incentive).
- Additional street ambassadors as a complement to the Chicago Police Department.
- Allow more vertical density.
- Fill abandoned space with mix of art, attractions, food and retail by local neighborhood businesses.
- Open more co-working cafes and outdoor spaces with good free internet to attract a working audience.
- Have better job training programs for the blind.
- Streamline business permits, DCAP, etc. scares away entrepreneurs. Have a short form business permit process for non-hot food and non-alcoholic establishments to speed approvals.
- Make Sundays on State permanent.
- Limit excessive/redundant establishments of the same type - ie. dispensaries, installment loans, etc.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Land Use

88% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Downtown is evolving, expanding its office core and residential options, which are complemented by restaurants, cafes and open spaces. Its public services and amenities should support the needs of all residents, workers and visitors along vibrant, mixed-use corridors that cater to an active, live-work-play environment.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Prioritize walkable and mixed-use developments that build toward a collective sense of belonging (selected by 67 participants)
- Activate and design public and private spaces to encourage people to safely enjoy the Central Area at night and outside of work hours (selected by 61 participants)
- Transform underutilized areas into vibrant spaces to connect key parks and cultural institutions and to help distribute public green spaces and art throughout downtown (selected by 60 participants)
- Facilitate residential growth near transit, jobs and neighborhood amenities (selected by 51 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Create more non-automotive infrastructure to improve public transportation, install more bike lanes, and promote pedestrian-friendly amenities.
- Increase parkland and riverwalk development by creating modern green spaces for community events and activities

Open House at Cultural Center

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Land Use Continued

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Enhance housing usage by moving away from office spaces and adding more mixed-use housing including affordable options and artist residencies.
- Establish a reduction of street parking and traffic lanes while considering the impact of connecting with neighborhoods outside of the Central Area.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

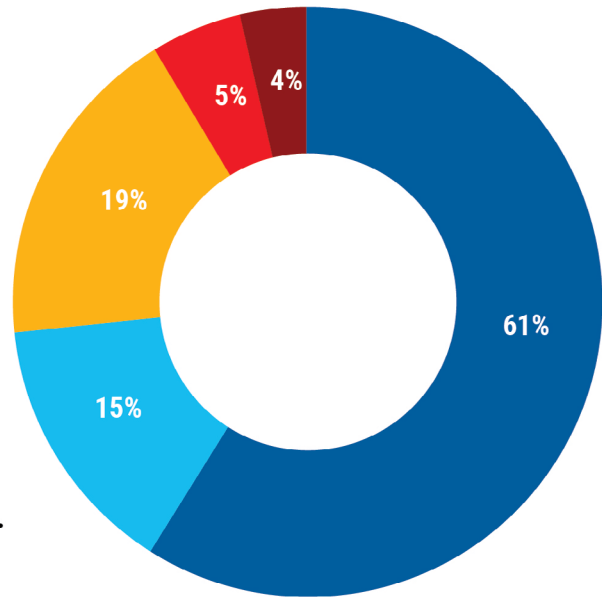
- Reassess the densities of approved mega-planned developments (ie. the 78) and allow them to encourage more density.
- Provide incentives for zero-parking buildings downtown. Many residential and office buildings enable car ownership.
- More use of vacant land/space for free to public events.
- Go forward with plans to redevelop LaSalle Street office buildings as mixed use, including residential with affordable housing
- Utilize train stops and restaurants outside of regular business hours. This would make the loop a lively 24-hour neighborhood with more housing, art and entertainment options.
- Improve transportation by reducing parking requirements, adding more bike lanes and creating more reliable public transportation.
- Possible narrowing of the driving lanes to broaden sidewalks for business development.
- Tactile wayfinding to identify major attractions and to assist tourists to find local attractions.
- Cover the Metra and Amtrak lines with green space, forested areas and wildlife to encourage more benefits for Central Area residents.
- Extend downtown zoning to North Ave to increase density on the near North Side.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023

Housing + Neighborhoods

73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the Central Area is growing steadily and attracts new residents due to its walkability and proximity to transit, jobs and many cultural, recreational and dining experiences. More affordable housing options are needed to ensure all Chicagoans have equitable access to these opportunities.



■ Strongly Agree ■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■ Strongly Disagree

Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding

PRIORITIES

- Provide live-work-play neighborhoods that provide comprehensive amenities and retail services for residents of all ages and incomes (selected by 79 participants)
- Build additional affordable units to ensure living downtown will be accessible to all Chicagoans (selected by 74 participants)
- Collaborate with organizational partners and City agencies to provide holistic support and permanent supportive housing options in the Central Area for migrants, returning citizens, and people experiencing homelessness (selected by 58 participants)
- Provide more housing options that will be attractive to families and seniors (selected by 42 participants)

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Prioritize affordable units to allow families and low- and middle-class individuals to have access to living opportunities downtown.
- Implement policies and incentives that encourage an increase in density and development for mixed-use housing.

Open House at Cultural Center

December 6, 2023



Housing + Neighborhoods Continued

TAKEAWAYS + THEMES

- Establish neighborhood-esque hubs that provide public transit and access to local businesses for a more welcoming experience for those who live and visit downtown.
- Address the need for more pet-friendly spaces, more green space, public transit access and walkable spaces.

COMMENTS RECEIVED

- Work with CLA to improve condo access as well as already listed.
- SROs are disappearing and low-income people need a room with a bathroom but a kitchen could be shared to cut costs.
- Establish more housing for the middle class including mixed-use housing.
- Apartment sizes are too small, and housing should increase in size to accommodate family usage.
- Livability: reduce noise pollution such as construction and sirens.
- More pet-friendly housing.