

JUNE

UPTOWN

2019

ACTION PLAN



**ACTION
PLAN**

**COMMUNITY
SURVEY
RESULTS**

**BRAINSTORMING
RESULTS**

Introduction

With an eclectic mix of businesses and residential neighborhoods, the Architectural Preservation District (APD) consists of approximately 90 businesses ranging from boutiques and salons to restaurants and professional services and residents. Providing a strong sense of community, place, and quality of life, the APD is a destination point which is uniquely Centerville. Undoubtedly, these characteristics are critical to business expansion, recruitment and retention.

Visioning Process

In an effort to improve the APD, the City developed a visioning process that included three phases: feedback, stakeholder engagement, and the development of an action plan.

Feedback

To solicit feedback, the City developed a community survey and conducted a brainstorming session with several members of City staff. The survey was mailed or emailed to all APD businesses and residents. In addition, the City posted the survey on social media so the larger community could respond. Two hundred responses were received with results detailed in Appendix B. The City also conducted an internal brainstorming session. Those results are detailed in Appendix C.

Stakeholder Engagement

A 15-member stakeholder committee was assembled whose goal was to develop a vision and recommended strategies for the APD. The committee consisted of the following members:

Patrick Beckel – Business owner (Nationwide Insurance)
Vickie Bondi – Centerville Washington Township Historical Society
Paul Clark – Resident and Chair, Planning Commission
Aiden Corey – Centerville High School student
Angy Gomez – Resident
Sol Gomez – Resident
Kevin Von Handorf – Planning Commission
Tom Ovington – Board of Architectural Review
Chris Papakirk – Property owner
Joanne Rau – Centerville City Council
Rafael Santillan – Restaurant owner (Nelly's)
Natasha Scherief – Business owner, Zebra Girl Boutique
Lynn Sellers – Washington Township (Town Hall Theater)
Mark Engert – Centerville City Council (back up)
Joe Demariano – Board of Architectural Review (back up)

The stakeholder committee met four times between March and May. The first meeting was introductory in nature and included an initial brainstorming session on what members want to see in the APD. The goal of the second meeting was to develop the vision statement (see below). The third meeting was focused on identifying solutions to achieve the vision. During the final meeting, the committee prioritized the solutions.

Appendices A and B include a listing of all strategies suggested through the community survey and stakeholder committee.

Action Plan

The outcome of the feedback and engagement phases is an action plan that details the strategies that will be implemented to reach the vision of the APD. City staff listened to and considered all feedback received to develop this action plan that outlines short and long term strategies to bolster quality of life and stimulate economic development in Uptown Centerville.

Not all strategies identified through the process could be included in the action plan; the City chose to include those that were prioritized the highest by the stakeholder committee and those that most aligned with the City's strategic plan.

Vision Statement

Uptown Centerville is a vibrant district at the heart of our community. Uptown is a welcoming, walkable destination that is home to our history and a friendly gathering place where local businesses thrive.

Themes

Through the feedback stage, the following six themes were identified as to what the City should focus to meet the vision statement: walkability/traffic reduction; parking; events; business development; branding; greenspace. The following section outlines each theme and specific strategies the City and its partners will undertake.

Walkability/Traffic Reduction Strategies

The top priority for Uptown, as identified by the stakeholder committee, is to improve walkability and reduce traffic congestion. In addition, this is an opportunity to effectuate connectivity. A walkable Uptown will improve visitors' experience and create a more attractive and active area. The following strategies will be implemented in an effort to make residents and visitors feel safe and improve the convenience of visiting Uptown.

Strategy 1 - Install bollards between sidewalk and street

The City will research installation of decorative bollards or railings between the sidewalk and the street to provide for additional separation between pedestrians and vehicles. While there are already bollards in some areas of Uptown, the City will study additional areas that will benefit from this strategy.

Strategy 2 - Investigate and implement additional crosswalks on Franklin and Main streets

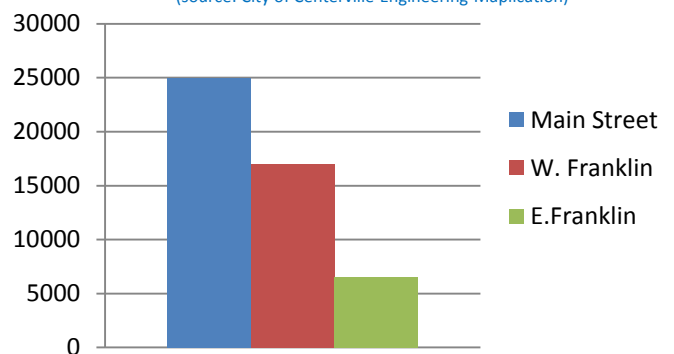
There are currently only four crosswalks in Uptown (Main and Franklin; West Franklin and Virginia; Main and Bradstreet; and Main and Irongate), making it a challenge to park and walk through Uptown. In an effort to improve convenience and safety, the City will identify the most appropriate places for additional crosswalks and implement thereafter.

Strategy 3 - Determine feasibility of connecting streets and a bypass

Table 1 outlines the daily traffic counts along Main and Franklin streets. To improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety, the City will conduct a feasibility study of connecting dead end streets to allow for alternative routes to and around Uptown. Those streets could include Normandy to Spring Valley; Lyons to Centerville-Washington Township Park District entrance road. This study will also examine a bypass around Main and Franklin (possible relocation of 725).

Table 1: Annual Average Daily Traffic

(source: City of Centerville Engineering Maplication)

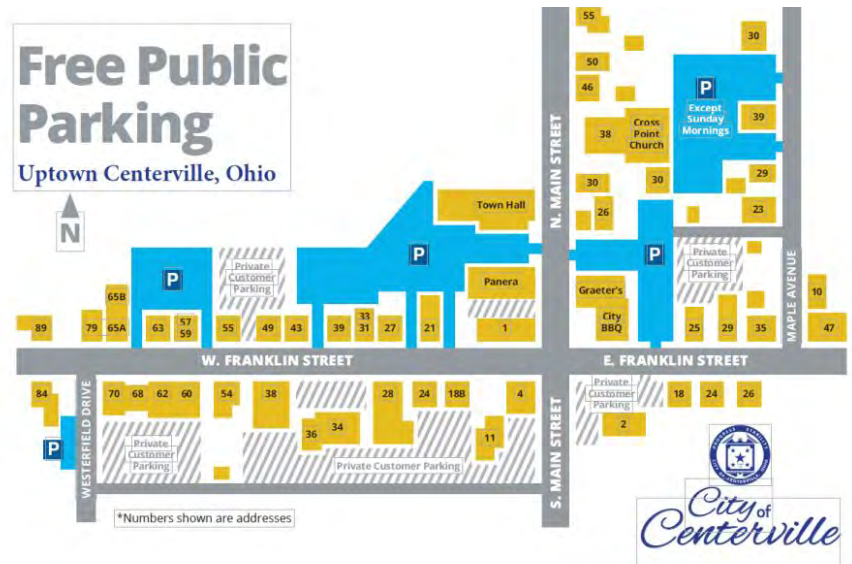


Walkability/Traffic Reduction				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Public Works		Study the best places to install bollards between sidewalk and street. Install based on study results.		
Public Works			Study/implement additional crosswalks along Franklin (E and W) and Main Streets	
City Manager	Public Works, Communications Director			Determine feasibility of connecting streets and incorporating a bypass.

Public Parking

Uptown has 266 public parking spaces in lots that have poor signage, are unconnected, and have limited or no walkways to draw visitors from the lots to their destination. As detailed in Figure 2, the primary public parking lots are located on the north side of West Franklin and the northeast corner of Main and Franklin. The City will undertake strategies designed to enhance these parking lots and their connectivity.

Figure 2 – Current Uptown Public Parking



Strategy 1 – Improve parking lots on north and south sides of West Franklin

The City will engage with a firm to redesign the parking lot on the north side of West Franklin and potentially a connection from West Ridgeway connecting to Town Hall Theater. Ideally, it would be one continuous parking lot. The lot would have clearly defined and limited exits and entrances to improve safety for both vehicles and pedestrians. The current access points along West Franklin could be converted to greenspace, gathering space, or outdoor seating for existing businesses (see Figure 3 for an example). Since this parking lot is the “front door” for many businesses, the City will work with a design firm to investigate the feasibility of walkways behind the businesses to allow for a walkable experience and could include decorative lighting and landscaping.

While the City has no ownership of the parking lots behind the south side of West Franklin, the City will attempt to partner with property owners and businesses in an effort to have continuity in the look and feel of the Uptown parking lots.

Strategy 2 – Improve parking lots on northeast corner of Franklin and Main streets

The City has a 10-year lease with Cross Point Church for use of its parking lot. While this provides much needed additional parking, the only entrance to this lot is via Maple Avenue. This limited access can cause confusion for customers who pull into the City BBQ/Graeters parking lot only to find it at capacity. By connecting the two parking lots, customers would have easier access to additional parking. The City already has a purchase agreement for the back building at

Figure 3 - example of converted parking lot entrance



30 North Main Street. The City plans to demolish the building and construct a connector, including a landscaped pedestrian walkway.

Another troubling access point to public parking is the alley off Maple Avenue. This is, for all practical purposes, a one-way alley, but is used as a two-way and has sight line issues due to its narrow width. To improve safety and access, the City will attempt to work with property owners and DP&L to widen the alley. The ultimate goal is to encourage vehicular traffic to enter the parking lot off of Maple at the alley or the entrance to Cross Point Church rather than behind City BBQ.

Strategy 3 - Design and install clear and consistent public parking signs

Although there are numerous public parking spaces, there are no consistent or adequate signage directing people to these spaces. To remedy this, the City will install standardized public parking signs at appropriate locations (see Figure 4 for example).

Figure 4 - Parking sign



Parking				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Parking				
Public Works	Planning, Economic Development, Business owners	Design study on north side of W. Franklin	Implement design study recommendations	
Planning	Public Works	Install consistent public parking signs		
Economic Development	Public Works	Connect Cross Point church parking lot to City-owned parking lot		
City Manager's Office	Public Works		Widen alley that connect Maple to City-owned parking lot	

Events

People are drawn to downtowns, or in this case, Uptown, where there is much to do and see. Many of the strategies identified require design and construction and as such have longer timelines. Events, on the other hand, can be organized relatively quickly and bring almost instant results. Ongoing events will draw people to Uptown on a regular basis, showcase the uniqueness of Uptown and its businesses, and bring positive attention to the area. Current Uptown events include the Hometown Holiday Walk, Ghost Walk, and Sip and Shops. The City will elevate these events and create new ones that bring people to the heart of our community. In fact, there are already conversations started with Uptown business owners about events for 2020, including a street festival on West Franklin Street.

Strategy 1 - Event organization taken on by City staff in partnership with businesses and business groups

The key to the success of Uptown events will be the City providing leadership and staff resources to facilitate event organization rather than burdening small business owners with the task. A strong partnership between the City and business owners will result in a well-attended, successful event that can be replicated in future years and meet the vision of Uptown as a destination and gathering place.

Strategy 2 - Conduct regularly scheduled events every month throughout Uptown

The City will partner with business owners in an effort to conduct regularly occurring events each month, such as Final Fridays. The goal is for residents and visitors to know that on the same day each month something is happening in Uptown.

Events will be rotated to different areas given the size of Uptown. The events could range from:

- A chocolate walk in the area around Bill's Donuts and Esther Price
- Night on the Town where the businesses stay open late and vacant buildings are turned into venues for live music or art
- Community art exhibit (potentially move one from Police Department to a vacant building)
- Concert at Benham's Grove
- Street festival on West Franklin

As with any event, the City will develop a communications and marketing plan to draw the maximum number of people to Uptown. In addition, the City will investigate a special improvement district as an option to financially sustain the events.

Strategy 3 - Partner with Town Hall Theater to run movies/concerts/lectures when idle

Town Hall Theater is a young adult performing arts center in the heart of Uptown. Town Hall is a community asset that, based on community feedback, should be used more often for different types of events. The City will work with Washington Township to identify opportunities to use the theater for movies, concerts, or lectures when not in use for youth performances. Through a thoughtful, collaborative effort, Town Hall Theater can become an Uptown anchor that will bring culture and a higher quality of life and help support surrounding businesses for pre or post performance dinner or shopping.

Events				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Parking				
Events Coordinator	Heart of Centerville, Shops of Uptown, business owners	Develop and implement plan to conduct monthly events		
Events Coordinator/Communications Director	Heart of Centerville, Shops of Uptown, business owners, Public Works, Police	Oversee all events, including organization, partnerships, and communications		
City Manager	Washington Township, Events Coordinator, Town Hall Theater	Partner with Town Hall Theater to have music/movies when idle		

Business Development

To be a thriving destination, Uptown needs a strong, supported business community. While Uptown is home to a diverse group of businesses, opportunities remain to welcome new businesses that will help achieve the vision. While there has been a recent uptick of interest in Uptown, there continues to be barriers to opening a business. The following strategies are focused on reducing such barriers.

Strategy 1 - Attract businesses that align with the vision, such as: higher end bar with music, brewpub, art gallery, unique restaurants, and coffee shop

The City will research and develop the following programs to attract businesses.

Uptown Incentive Program – The City will focus its efforts on reducing barriers through this new incentive program. Since barriers vary depending on the property and type of business, the City will set general criteria for the program that will be flexible to address a wide range of barriers. Miamisburg has a retail incentive program and has funded projects such as a \$20,000 forgivable loan to Star City Brewing and \$7,000 for Grandpa Joe's Candy Shop. A similar program in Centerville could add to the excitement and energy of Uptown. The City is already working with a potential business on ways to overcome barriers and will use the experience to develop guidelines for this program.

Façade Improvement Program – The buildings in Uptown are some of the oldest in the City and it is important they be preserved. As outlined in the Strategic Plan, a façade improvement program will be developed to encourage reinvestment in property throughout the City.

Community Entertainment District - Another barrier to new restaurants or bars is limited or no availability of liquor permits. To eliminate this barrier, the City will investigate if and how Uptown can be designated a community entertainment district to allow for additional liquor permits.

Business Development				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Parking				
Economic Development		Implement incentive program to reduce barriers to opening a businesses		
Economic Development	Centerville Police, business owner	Community Entertainment District		
Economic Development	Planning		Develop façade improvement program for commercial properties	

Marketing/Branding

According to CEO for Cities, “A brand — clear, compelling and unique — is the foundation that helps to make a place desirable as a business location, visitor destination or a place to call home. Development of a brand strategy for a city or downtown [Uptown] leverages the features of that place to provide a relevant and compelling promise to a target audience. It is not an ad campaign or a tagline. Rather, the branding strategy is a deeper, more emotionally shared vision that influences actions.”¹

Strategy 1 – Define Uptown boundaries

When asked the boundaries of Uptown, the standard answer is “look for the brick sidewalks.” In other words, the sidewalks are the only way to know you are in Uptown. This strategy lets people know they are in a special area. To accomplish this, the City could work with a firm to design gateways, decorative lighting, signage, banners, and streetscaping, all with the goal of creating a sense of place and gathering.

Figure 5 - Sample gateway



Strategy 2 - Develop marketing and communications plan

A component to any branding strategy is the development of a marketing and communications plan. Through in-house expertise or a contract with an outside firm, the City will develop a plan that will include a logo, key messages, creative for all digital platforms and marketing materials, and an app with a map, parking, businesses, schedule and description of events, etc.

Strategy 3 - Incorporate Uptown on City’s website

Most cities have at least a page of their website devoted to their downtown area. The City’s website has virtually no mention of Uptown. This strategy will change that. The webpage will, at a minimum, initially include events, photos/videos, and parking.

Marketing/Branding				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Planner	Economic Development, Public Works, Community Resources Manager, Business owners	Issues RFQ for design services to define Uptown boundaries	Implement recommendations	
Communications Director	City Manager, Economic Development, Business owners, Heart of Centerville	Develop communications plan		
Communications Director	Economic Development	Update City’s website		

¹ <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/downtown-market-analysis/putting-your-research-to-work/image-branding-marketing/>

Greenspace

Greenspaces provide areas with a community gathering space and introduce a natural element and balance to roads, parking lots and buildings. There are currently no public greenspaces in Uptown. The strategies listed below will attempt to fill this gap.

Strategy 1 - Convert empty lots to greenspace

While vacant lots are uncommon in Uptown, any that become available should be studied to determine whether they can be converted to public greenspace or a pocket park. Adding this type of amenity to Uptown will encourage community gatherings and could be used as space for outdoor music events, art shows, etc.

Figure 6 - Downtown greenspace example



Strategy 2 - Add greenspace to parking lots and their connections

As the City invests in its public parking lots, attractive walkways will be designed and installed to ensure a pleasant walking experience for Uptown visitors. This could include, but will not be limited to, landscaping and decorative lighting.

Greenspace/Gathering Spaces				
Project Lead	Partners	Short Term (1-2 years)	Mid Term (3-4 years)	Long Term (5-8 years)
Economic Development	Public Works, City Manager, Planner, Business owners	Identify properties ripe for greenspace and identify partners	Convert properties to community gathering spaces	
Public Works		Implement attractive pedestrian connection between City owned parking lots on NW corner of Main and Franklin	As other parking lots are improved, construct experiential pedestrian walkways	

Appendix A – List of Strategies Identified by Committee

Potential Strategies to meet vision
Parking
Connect Cross Point church parking lot to the Graeters/City BBQ parking lot
Widen the alley that connects Maple to parking lot behind Graeters and City BBQ
Connect parking on the north and south sides of W. Franklin with clearly defined exits/entrances. Reduce number of access points to allow for more greenspace/gathering space/outdoor seating.
Construct a parking lot and connection from W. Ridgeway to Town Hall Theater (include beautification, landscaping, and ensure water is retained on site)
Design and install clear and consistent public parking signs
Walkability/Traffic
Conduct a study to determine feasibility of a reduction in the number of lanes on W. Franklin
Conduct a study on semi-truck bypass around Main and Franklin (possible relocation of 725)
Conduct a feasibility study for a tunnel under Main Street
Determine feasibility of opening and connecting streets (i.e., Virginia to Spring Valley; Normandy to Spring Valley; Lyons to Centerville-Washington Township Park District)
Research opportunities for smart sensor technologies
Investigate and implement additional crosswalks on Franklin and Main streets
Enhance walkways behind buildings on W. Franklin (pathways, lighting, landscaping)
Install decorative lighting along sidewalks and walkways to parking lots
Conduct a feasibility study of building a pedestrian bridge over Main Street
Install bollards/decorative railing between sidewalk and street
Install public Wi-Fi throughout Uptown
Business Development
Attract businesses that align with the vision, such as: higher end bar with music, brewpub, art gallery, unique restaurants, and bakery/coffee shop
Encourage outdoor patios
Improve marketing of the property next to Town Hall Theater
Develop and/or identify grants or incentives to attract businesses to Uptown
Events
Conduct regularly scheduled events every month throughout Uptown (i.e., Final Friday)
Host musicians in outdoor areas
Conduct an annual juried art festival
Conduct smaller events that rotate to each section of Uptown (music, art exhibit, food, etc.)
Conduct more public events at Benham’s Grove
Build upon Sip and Shops (additional business participation, more promotion)
Event organization taken on by City staff in partnership with businesses/business groups
Develop a communications/promotions plan for events (social media, banner over Franklin)
Partner with Town Hall Theater to run movies/concerts/lectures when not in use as children’s theater
Work with businesses to extend hours, especially during special events

Branding

Define Uptown boundaries through the installation of: 'Welcome to Historic Uptown Centerville' gateways; decorative lighting; landscaping; streetscaping; branded banners, etc.

Develop plan to incorporate art, such as murals, rotating art installations, etc.

Develop Uptown communications/marketing plan (logo, social media, marketing materials, decals, app, etc.)

Improve Uptown presence on City's website

Design an Uptown app with map, parking, businesses, events, etc.

Greenspace/public gathering spaces

Convert empty lot next to Town Theater to a public greenspace with outdoor seating/gazebo

Add greenspace to parking lot connections to provide for a pleasant walking experience

Reduce number of access points to allow for more greenspace/gathering space/outdoor seating (if parking lots on West Franklin are connected)

Appendix B – Community Survey Results

APD Visioning Survey
City of Centerville

February 2019

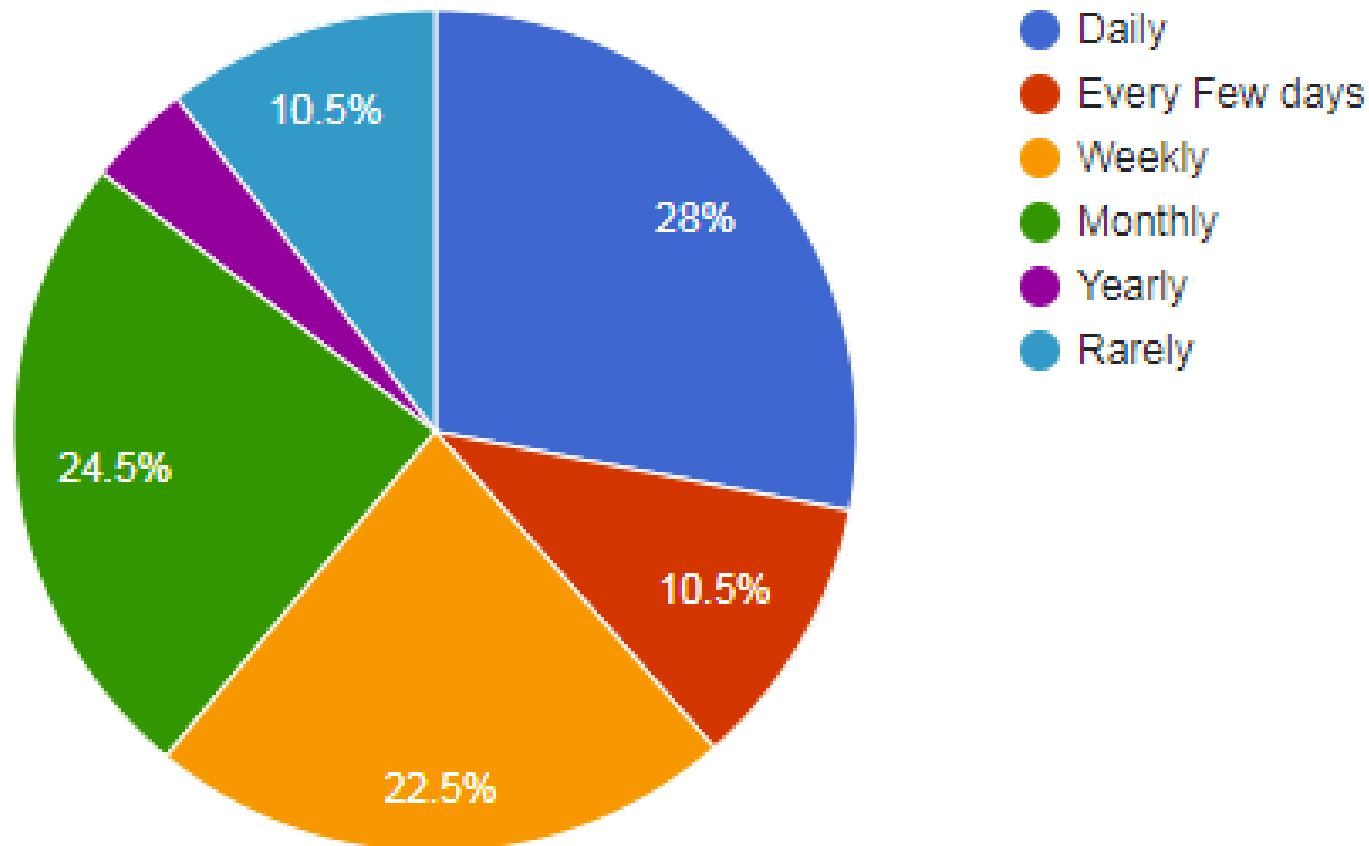
200 Survey Responses

Feb 1-15, 2019

- Emailed to Approx. 60 APD Business Owners
- Mailed to remaining APD Businesses & APD Residents (~ 350)
- Posted on Website & Social Media, open to the public

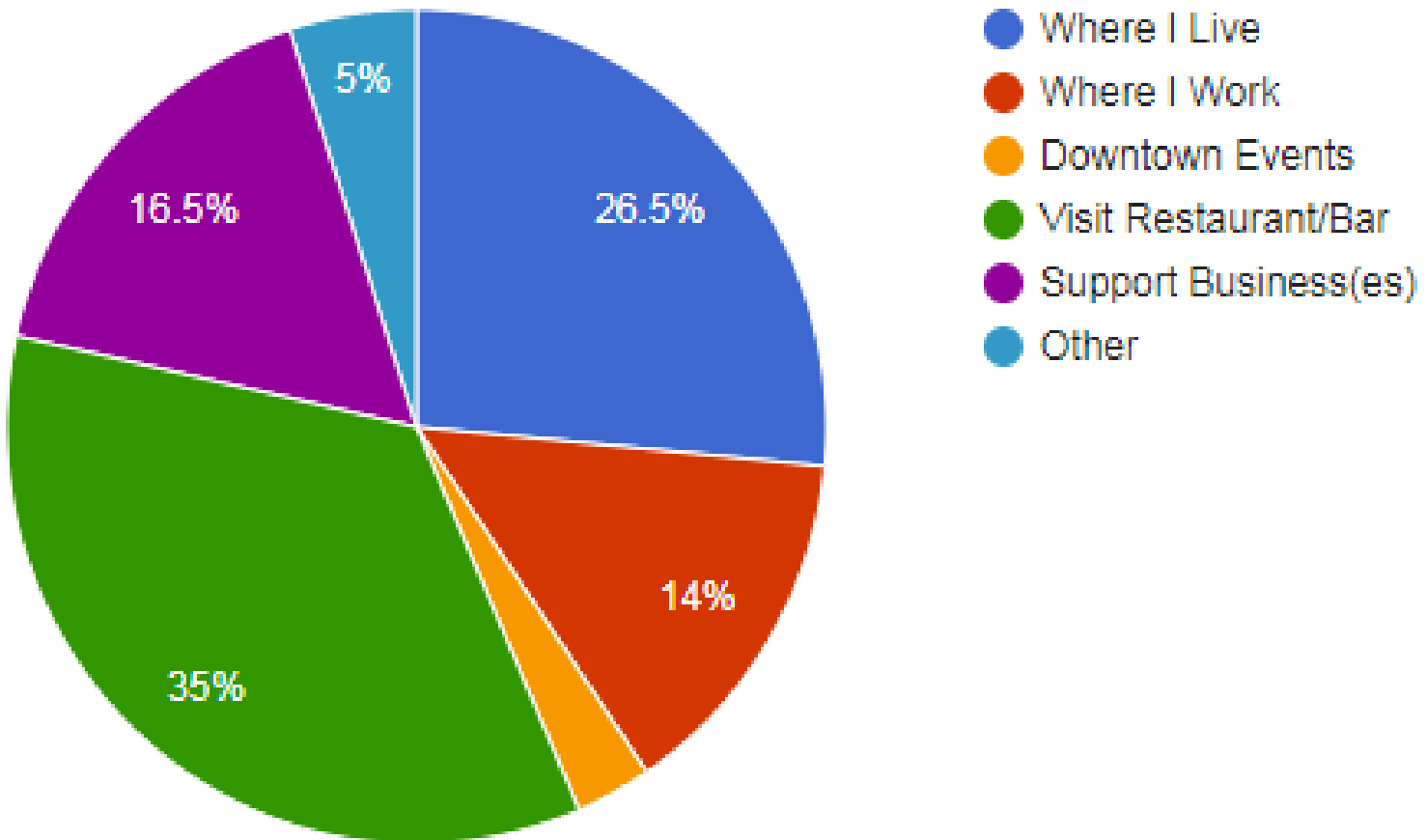
1. 1. How often do you visit the Centerville APD/Downtown?

Answered: 200 Skipped: 0 Left Blank: 0



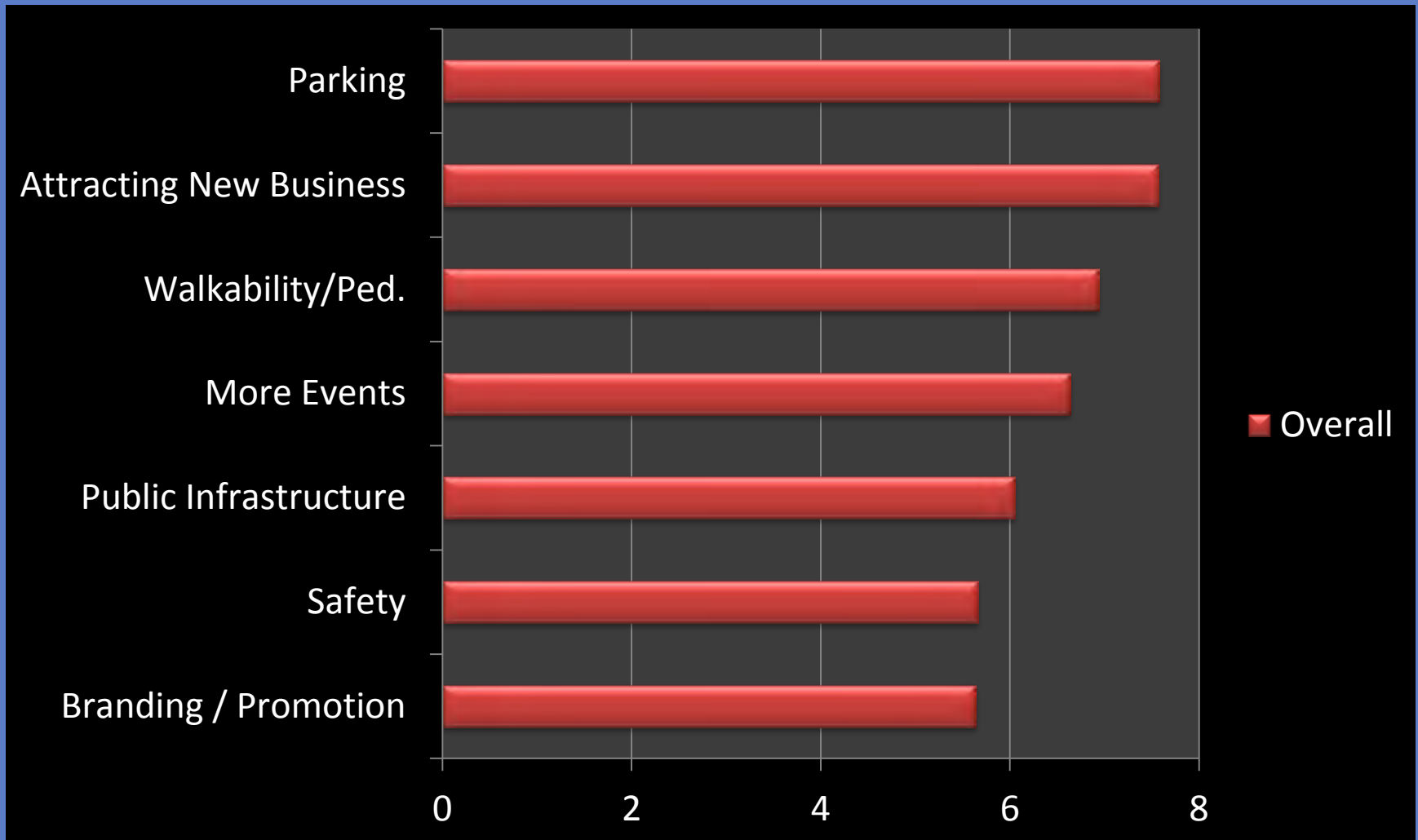
2. 2. Most Common Reason for Visit?

Answered: 200 Skipped: 0 Left Blank: 0



6

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being least and 10 being most), please rate where the Downtown focus should be within the City's investment and priorities:



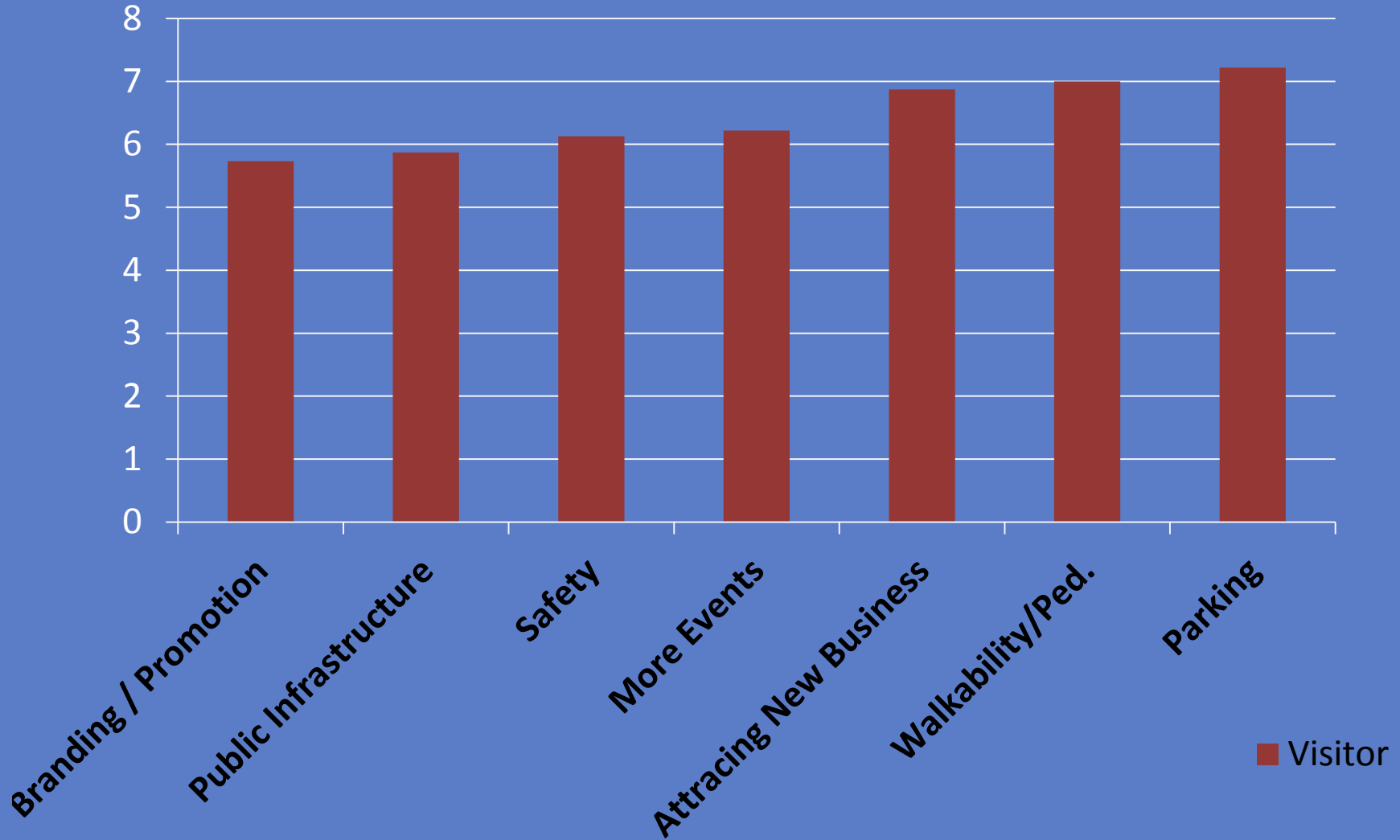
Avg. Survey Score

for priority should City put into different elements

- Where I Work: 7.43
- Where I Live: 7.00
- Visitor: 6.43

Survey

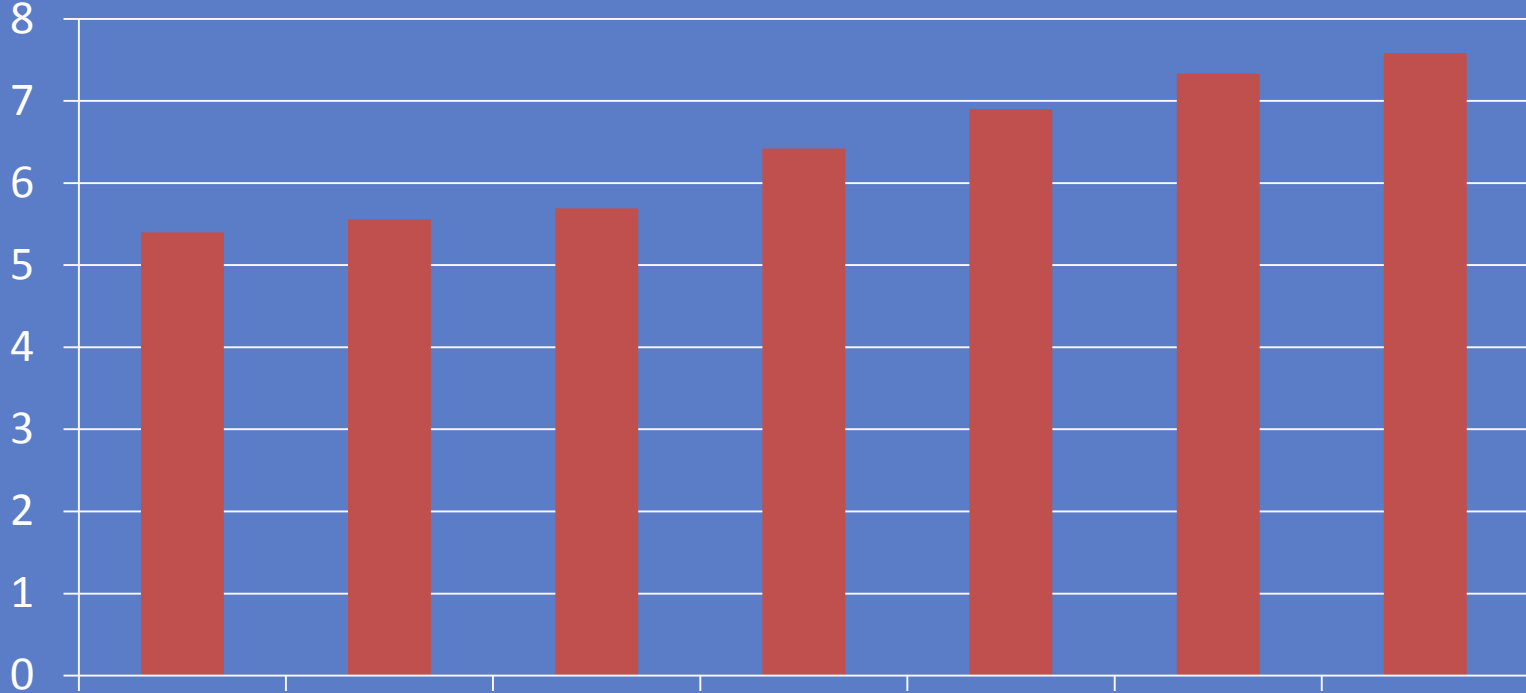
(filtered by Visitors to APD)



9

Survey

(filtered by APD Residents)



Where I Live

Safety

Branding / Promotion

Public Infrastructure

Walkability/Ped.

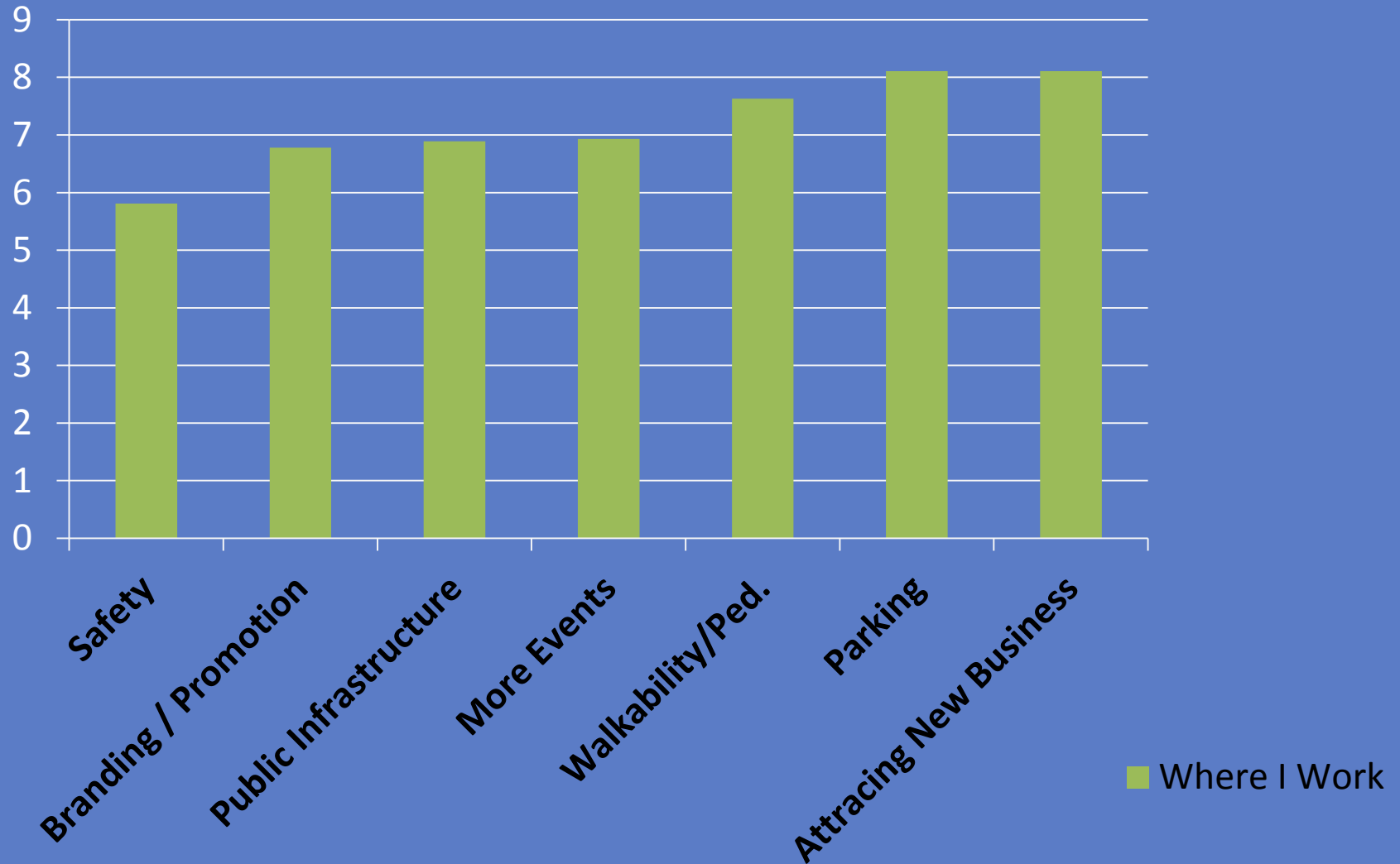
More Events

Parking

Attracting New Business

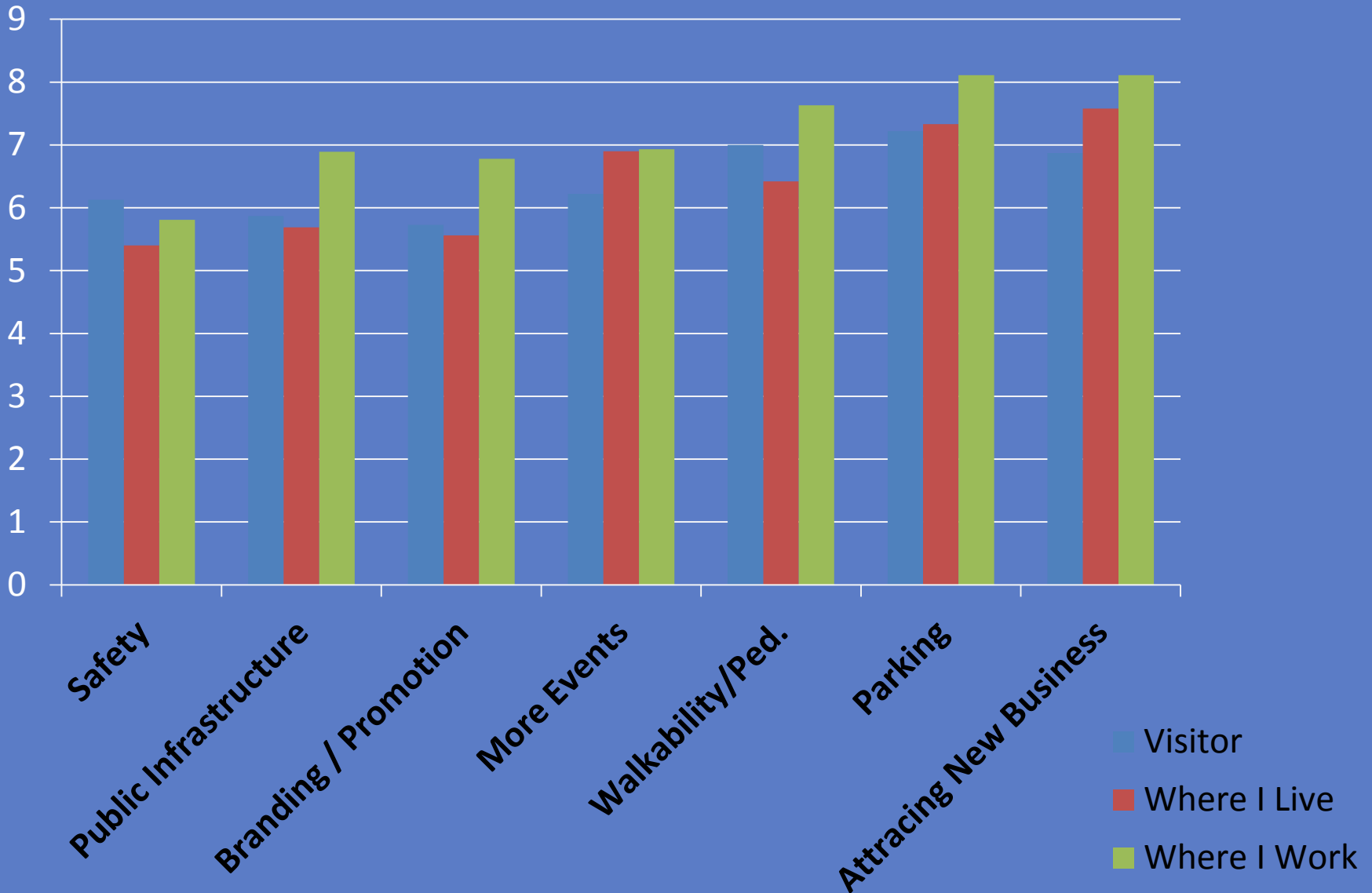
Survey

(filtered by APD Businesses / Work in APD)



Survey

(filtered by relationship to APD)



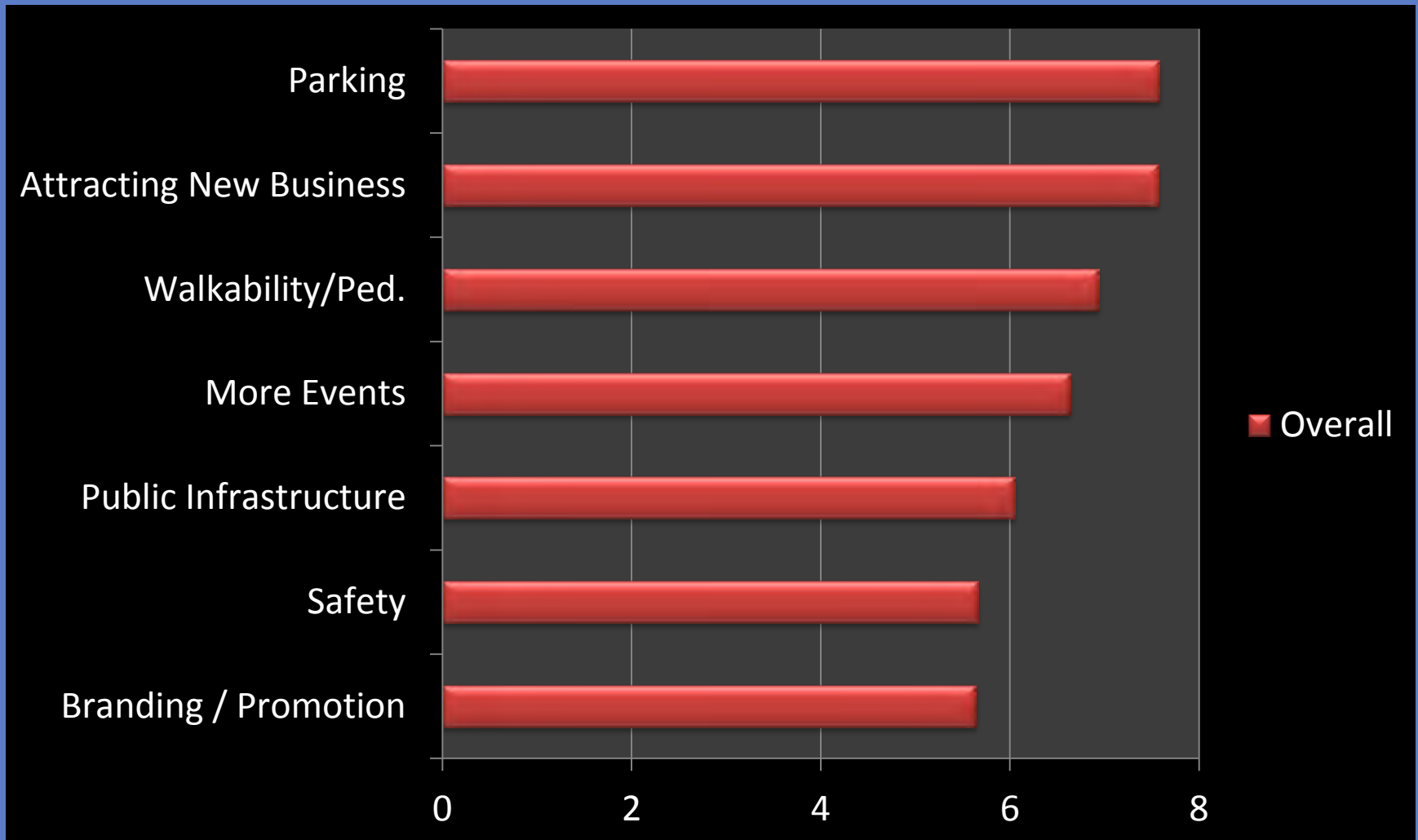
12

Survey

(filtered by frequency within APD)



On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being least and 10 being most), please rate where the Downtown focus should be within the City's investment and priorities:



Ideas

Summary

1. Restaurants/Bars (29)
2. Traffic (24)
3. Parking (23)
4. Businesses (21)
5. Events (18)
6. Walkability (10)
7. Property Maintenance and Green Space/Art (9)
9. Historical Structures (5)

Appendix C – Internal Brainstorming Results

Parking

- Connection from church lot to Graeters
- Widen alley behind McDiggers
- Connection to W. Ridgeway
- Parking behind Centerville Carryout
- Connect parking on the north and south sides of W. Franklin with clearly defined exits/entrances. Reduce number of access points which will allow for more greenspace/gathering space/outdoor seating.

Street and Sidewalk Improvements

- Reduce number of lanes on W. Franklin to increase walkability
- Semi-truck bypass around Main and Franklin
- More crosswalks
- More landscaping/streetscaping
- City plows sidewalks in winter
- Decorative lighting year round
- Enhance walkability behind buildings

Business Development

- Higher end entertainment/bar
- More nightlife
- Allow outdoor drinking
- Attract a brewery
- Colorful awnings at businesses
- Work with businesses to extend hours, especially during special events

Events

- Music – set up outdoor areas to have outdoor events (Resurrection Church)
- Smaller events in each section of the APD (music, art exhibit, food, etc.). Maybe use a building that's for sale to show people "what could be."
- Street festival

Branding

- 'Welcome to Historic Centerville' gateways
- Murals

Appendix D – Photos for Consideration and Inspiration



