

HUB

ELLSWORTH ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS REPORT

# Portrait of Ellsworth

Franklin  
Savings Bank

Maine  
Community Foundation

HEART  
ELLSWORTH

City of  
ELLSWORTH  
Business, Leisure, Life.

# Table of Contents

## 01

### Methodology

---

Objectives	4
Approach	5
Participation Summary	6

## 02

### Finding & Summary

---

Current Attributes	10
Current Assets	11
Current Perception	17
Downtown Boundaries	20
Journey Maps	23
Additional Findings	26
Final Takeaways	27

## 03

### Workshops & Data

---

Workshop Techniques	30
• Spectrum	31
• Mental Maps	34
• Power of X	38
• Bingo	44
• Strategic Imperatives	46
• Place Preferences	54
• High School Madlibs	57
• Vision 2040 Madlibs	64
Survey Data	69

SECTION 01

# Methodology

This report summarizes the data collection and outreach efforts conducted on behalf of Heart of Ellsworth in preparation of the creation of a Downtown Asset Map and vision.



# Approach

HUB conducted this outreach to **assess community, business owner, and stakeholder perception** of Downtown Ellsworth, its biggest assets, most challenging problems, and what a long-term vision for the Downtown should be.

Data was collected through a **series of workshops and online surveys** seeking feedback from stakeholders and community members. A core stakeholder team with representatives from Heart of Ellsworth and the City of Ellsworth provided guidance and feedback at each step of the process.

The following themes synthesize the information gathered into cohesive, succinct summaries of the big ideas and main talking points brought up by participants.

# Participation Summary

In early April 2022, HUB visited Ellsworth over three days to experience the downtown and host a series of engagement workshops. These included:

**General Community Workshop**  
Grand Theatre  
36 attendees

**City Employees Workshop**  
City Hall  
22 attendees

**High School Students Workshop**  
Ellsworth High  
15 attendees

**Seniors Workshop**  
Moore Community Center  
16 attendees

**Downtown Businesses Workshop**  
The Library  
9 attendees

**Summary Presentation  
with Local Board Members**  
Artsworth  
18+ attendees

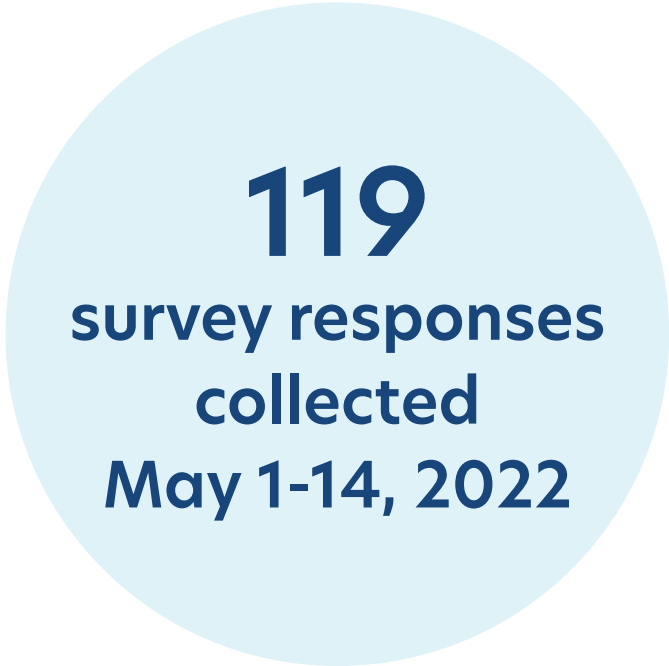
HUB also met with the Chamber of Commerce and visited downtown businesses where they asked owners or managers about their experiences.

# Participation Summary

After completing their visit, HUB reviewed the main discussion points and used them to craft a survey to allow stakeholders and residents another opportunity to provide their insights.

## Stakeholders Represented:

- Heart of Ellsworth
- City of Ellsworth
- Downtown Business Owners
- Chamber of Commerce
- Other boards & organizations



**119**  
survey responses  
collected  
May 1-14, 2022

## SECTION 02

# Findings & Summary



# Capturing Ellsworth

A major goal of our visit and engagement was documenting what the community loves about Ellsworth. Some of these assets are **physical places**, some are **characteristics**, and some are embedded in the **spirit of the place** and the people who live there.

# Ellsworth Attributes

People most commonly used these words to describe  
Downtown Ellsworth:

Cute

Unique

**Lovely**

Cozy

**Hardy**

Protective

Durable

Hard-working

Practical

**Dependable**

Useful

Supportive

Essential

**Unassuming**

Overlooked

Hard shell, soft belly

Agile

Artsy

Diverse

# What are the main assets in Downtown Ellsworth?



# Main Street

Main Street and businesses just off it already provide a strong, active core to the downtown. Ellsworth isn't starting from nothing.

## PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Currently, retail spaces cater more towards women
- Could expand offerings to reach larger audiences
- More community spaces are desired





# Union River

Our downtown waterfront is essential to Ellsworth's history and industry. The river is a habitat for fish, waterfowl, and more, with limited ways to enjoy it (Harbor Park).

## **PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS**

- Need more accessibility to waterfront
- Views obstructed by industry buildings / factories





# The Grand

An anchor for the rest of downtown, a representation of all arts in Ellsworth, unique to the city, historic, a part of growing up here.

## PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Lacks A/C, could help with summertime turnouts
- Time gap between showtimes and dining business hours



# Diverse Dining

Top mentioned places on Main Street, include:  
*(result of data collected)*

- **Provender**
- **Morton's Moo**
- **Flexit**
- **86 This!**
- **Finn's Irish Pub**
- **Serendib**

## PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Limited business hours prevent thriving nightlife
- More dining options are desired



# Additional Assets



## Historic Urban Environment

The historic buildings along Main St, the library and City Hall, Woodlawn, and other historic homes adjacent to downtown create a unique sense of place.



## Down-Home Feel

Compared to the growth of other communities along Route 1, Ellsworth has maintained a small, homey atmosphere while meeting the economic & commercial needs of the county.



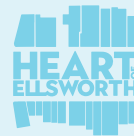
## Events

Many mentioned the variety of events held downtown as a major draw and strength. The unique and well attended events were mentioned by many. These events attract a local and regional participants, and have the potential to grow and expand.



## Position on Route 1

Though traffic is a major challenge, the captive tourist audience provides many opportunities for engagement and economic activity



## Heart of Ellsworth

Heart of Ellsworth's goals, initiatives, and uniting force provides momentum for future progress.



When people talk about  
downtown Ellsworth,  
What do they say?

# Perception

When people talk about downtown Ellsworth, what do they say?



## Traffic & Tourism

Many people agree traffic damages the experience of Downtown for visitors and residents alike, but consensus about a solution remains evasive. Some want a bypass, others see traffic control changes as the answer. No easily implementable solutions will clearly fix the issue overnight.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Truck route along Christian Ridge Road
- In-person traffic control at Main-Water Streets during the season
- Is Ellsworth too close to the final destination to encourage people to stop?



## Parking & Wayfinding

Whether true or not, the perception exists that there's not enough parking. Wayfinding and directions to parking exist, but their placement and visibility could be improved.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Wayfinding from High/Oak Streets to Downtown could be more prominent.  
A driver is more likely to completely miss downtown from this route



## Pedestrian-Friendly

The compactness of Downtown centered around Main St creates a walkable and inviting pedestrian environment even as there is room to improve the experience.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Summer parklet is a successful way to create gathering space downtown
- Restrooms downtown are hard to find
- Loud trucks on Main St make the aural environment less appealing
- Crossing the street (especially at the intersection of Water and Main) is difficult
- Beautification efforts enhance the curb appeal of Downtown

# Perception

When people talk about downtown Ellsworth, what do they say?



## Waterfront Access

The natural beauty surrounding Ellsworth is one of its biggest assets, but it's disconnected from the Downtown experience.

Ellsworth has it's back to the River, and prime real estate is being used for commercial and industrial use. "Maine Shellfish isn't going anywhere" and the city would be wise to work with that, not against it.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Everybody wants it but no consensus on what's most desirable and achievable.
- Is it more trails, retail, housing, a revived working waterfront, or some combination?



## Waterfront Use

More retail has been explored in previous waterfront plans and is desired by many.

Others don't believe more retail or Downtown development will increase tourism and community development, but that natural areas and open space will.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- Add affordable housing along Water St to create density and have more people downtown who don't need to drive



## Trails

A high priority for many is to simplify getting down to the river, connecting Downtown to other parts of Ellsworth and regional trails, and providing outdoor recreation for tourists.

### PAIN POINTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- More trails and green spaces
- Complete connections between existing trails and attractions

# Downtown Boundaries

What's perceived, what's codified, what do we want to grow into?  
Various landmarks and edges create a boundary and identity for downtown, and many agree on what those signifiers are.



## DOWNTOWN BOUNDARIES

# What provides a strong sense of place?

### LANDMARKS

The Grand Marquee  
City Hall Cupola  
First Congregational Church (Steeple)  
Camden National Bank (clock)

### PATHWAYS

Main St  
Franklin St  
Water St - State St

### NODES

Water St-Main St Intersection  
Parklet

### EDGES

Union River  
High St  
Church St  
Deane St  
Ascent of Bridge Hill

# Is it Downtown?

## Woodlawn

Mentioned as an essential asset and tourist draw, but it feels like it's in the country, and the ascent up the hill further creates a distinction between its location and downtown

## Courthouse Gallery

Its location vibrates with the energy of being close to downtown, but no pedestrian would walk beyond Rooster Brother

## Fogtown

In the residential areas, the sense of being downtown breaks down quickly

## Rooster Brother

Close and clearly visible, but crossing the bridge as a pedestrian or turning into the lot as a car can be challenging or discouraging

## Harbor Park

It feels like it's at the edge of town, let alone downtown

*"Feels like downtown stops on Water Street"*

*"The Ellsworth American parking lot is the end of Downtown"*

# Journey Maps

What does a tourist or local's day-to-day look like in Ellsworth?  
What are they feeling? By mapping out their experiences, we can better **contextualize, empathize and identify the emotional pain points** Ellsworth needs to address to improve the downtown experience.

# A Tourist's Journey Map

## COMING INTO TOWN



## IN TOWN



## LEAVING TOWN

Enroute to Acadia  
Spirits are high!

Stuck in traffic on the  
last leg of the journey

Hungry strikes.  
Grab a bite to eat nearby?  
Ellsworth has options!

Exploring Ellsworth.  
See a show at the Grand?  
The timing is kind of late...

Not much else to do in the  
evening. Continue on  
with the roadtrip



# A Local's Journey Map

## COMING INTO TOWN



## IN TOWN



## LEAVING TOWN

Running an errand or meeting up with friends. Needs to go downtown.

Weary of the traffic caused by tourism & truck routes

Limited variety of dining and shopping. Restaurants are packed with tourists?

Check out an event. Take a craft class. See a show at the Grand.

Not much nightlife to entertain the locals. Head home.



# Additional Findings

There were many things the HUB Team noticed from their own travel experience that was not reflected in the reported surveys. Sometimes what *wasn't* captured in the data is just as insightful...

---

## Noise Pollution

The traffic / truck sounds were ever present, making it less desirable to walk around Main St or dine outside. Noise pollution can also have detrimental health effects including stress and sleep disruption.

## Top Half of Main Street

Very little was mentioned about the top half of Main St north of Margarita's. The density of services like therapists, insurance, and lawyers (irrelevant to a tourist) weaken the sense that this part of Main is explorable for a visitor. Even so, most residents mentioned Downtown ending at High Street.

# Final Takeaways



## Retail, Dining & Community Spaces

Downtown already boasts a good balance and variety of dining and retail. People remain interested in even more dining, retail options geared toward men, and central gathering spaces (like the former Main Grind).

Everyone agreed that open hours needed to be extended, and that nightlife options were few and far between.



## Housing & Lodging

Participants advocated for more housing downtown to both increase housing stock, reduce the amount of people needing to drive, and to increase the activity and sense of place downtown. People also championed the merits of a hotel or lodging downtown rather than on High St. Both more housing and lodging downtown could create more demand for activities open later in the evening.



## Collaboration

Long-term success means collaboration between everyone who is invested in Downtown's flourishing. This includes groups like The Heart of Ellsworth, City of Ellsworth, downtown business owners, Chamber of Commerce, and other local boards and organizations.



SECTION 03

# Workshops & Data

# Manifesting Main Workshops

# Workshop Techniques

This section summarizes the data collection and outreach efforts conducted on behalf of Heart of Ellsworth in preparation of the creation of a Downtown Asset Map and vision.

Methods used to capture data include the hands-on and participatory activities that HUB then interpreted and synthesized:

- **Bingo**
- **Power of X**
- **High School Madlibs**
- **Strategic Imperatives**
- **Place Preference**
- **Speaking Metaphorically**
- **Vision 2040 Madlibs**
- **Spectrum**

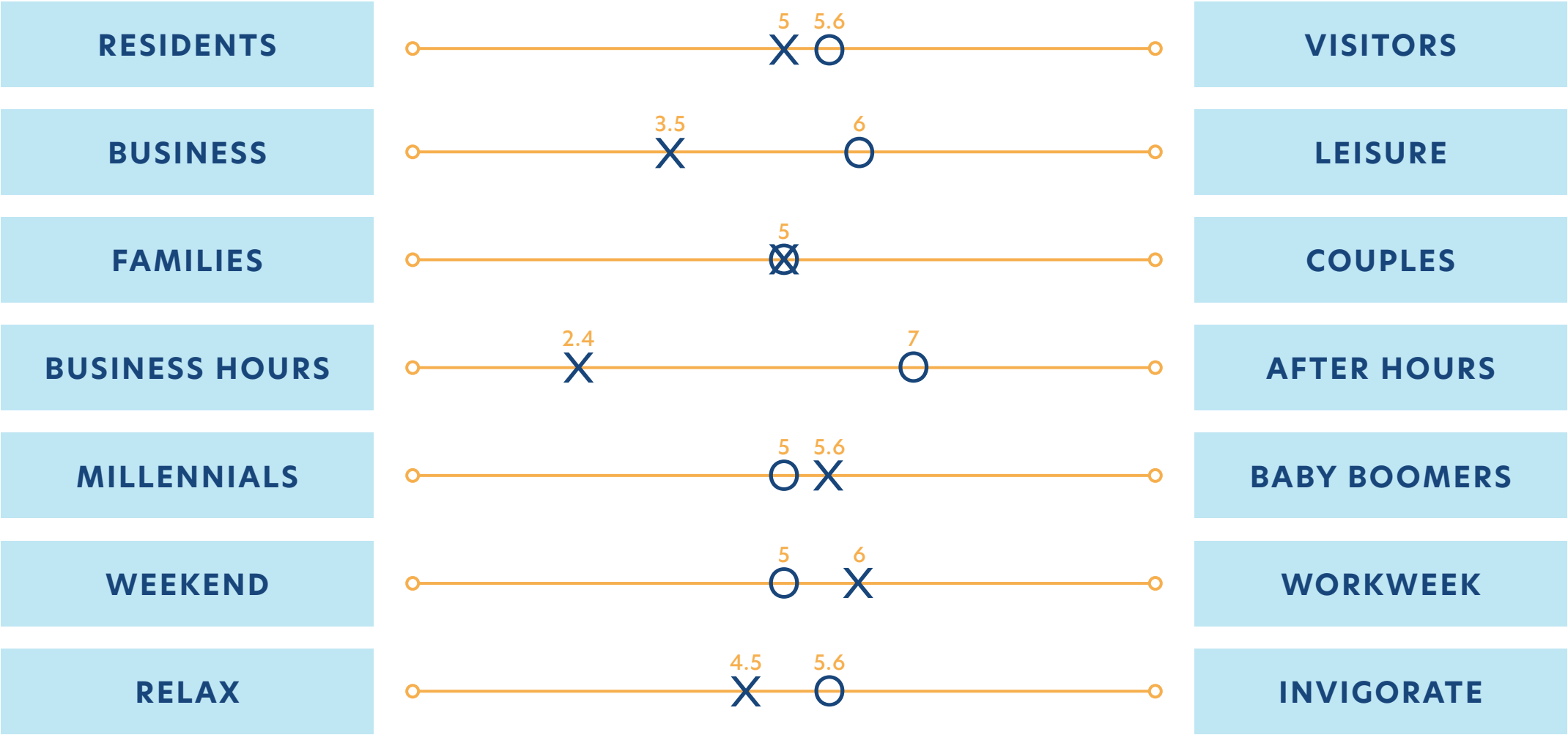
# Spectrum

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

In this activity we want to understand participant's priorities for downtown. We have placed two terms on opposite sides of the page. Participants were asked to place an "X" along the line for where downtown currently is, and an "O" for where they hope to get.

# Spectrum

X = CURRENT      O = GOAL



# Spectrum

## TAKEAWAYS

Most of the spectrum data averaged around the middle, suggesting that Ellsworth is **trying to cater to everyone rather than create a specialized experience**. Would Ellsworth be spreading themselves too thin to reach such a broad audience? Or is it a strength they can lean on?

The data also shows a strong desire to push for more “after hours” culture.



# Mental Maps

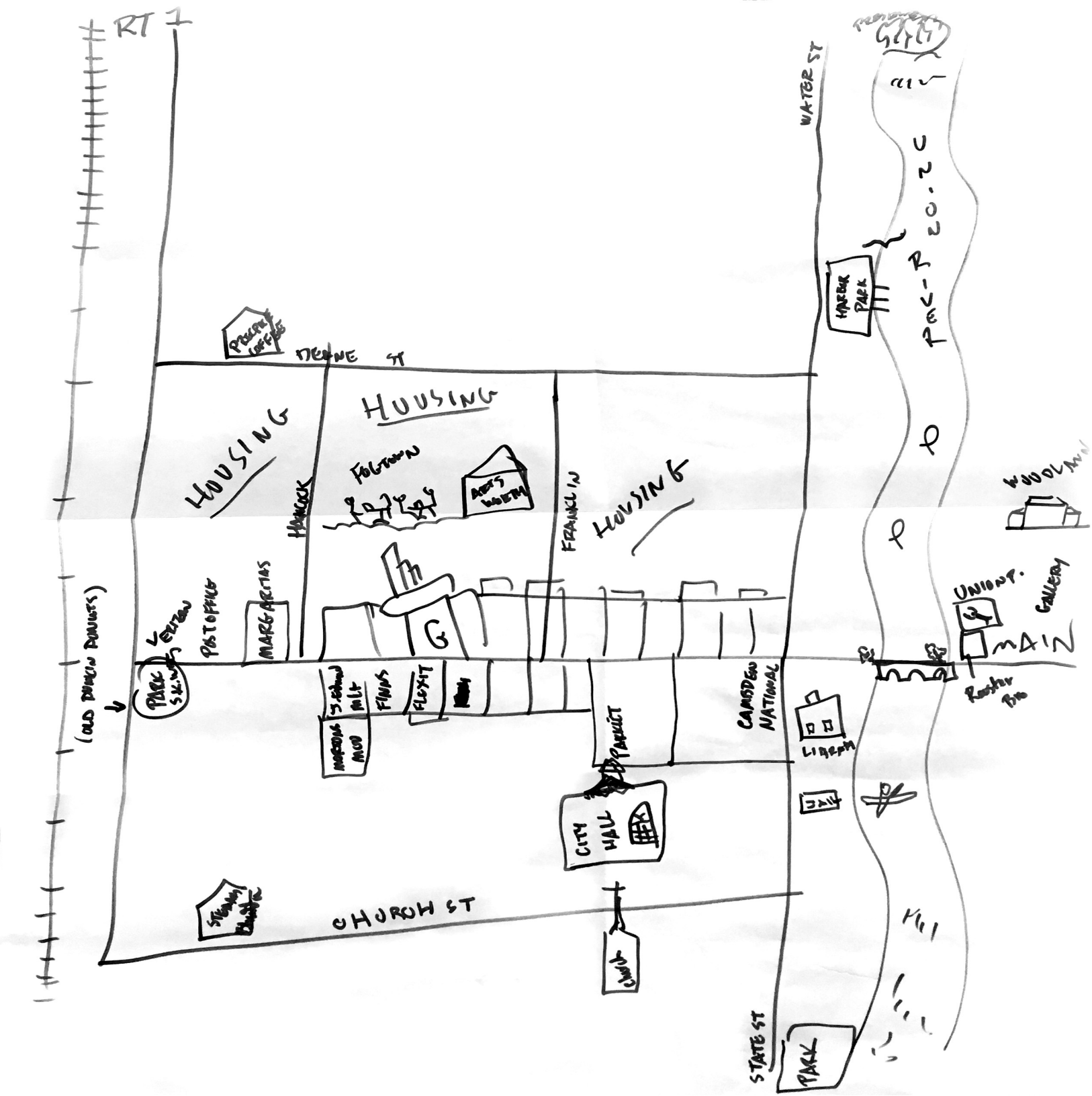
## WORKSHOP PROMPT

Draw *from memory* your idea of downtown

# HIGH SCHOOL Mental Map



# COMMUNITY Mental Map



# Mental Maps

## TAKEAWAYS

The high school mental map included great detail about dining and retail all over Ellsworth. Even as they were tasked to focus on Downtown, their natural experience of Ellsworth directed their focus to the things and places they frequented, which required a car and were clearly not in Downtown.

The community group mental map, however, did focus on Downtown along Main St, clearly defining major edges with High St and the Union River.

Both groups started their maps based on the infrastructure (roads and intersections) before moving on to landmarks and amenities. The way in which they navigated and oriented their understanding was less relational than operational.



# Power of X

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

We asked participants to use downtown businesses to fill in three blanks in a way they thought would add up to a great day for the listed audience. They could only use each business once.

### CATEGORIES INCLUDED:

Great day with the family

Great date night

Great day with a friend

Great day for a visitor

# Great day with family



A word cloud featuring various local businesses and locations. The words are arranged in a non-uniform, overlapping manner. The colors of the words include orange, purple, blue, red, green, and dark blue. The words are: morton's moo, riverside, margaritas, sugar mag, knowlton park, woodlawn, grand, rock & art, governor's, library, birdsacre, toki, finn's pub, union river toys & bookstore, flexit, 86 this, and harbor park.

morton's moo riverside margaritas  
knowlton park woodlawn sugar mag  
birdsacre grand rock & art governor's  
library toki finn's pub  
union river toys & bookstore  
flexit 86 this harbor park

# Great date night

A word cloud featuring various local businesses and landmarks. The words are arranged in a cluster, with some being significantly larger than others. The colors of the words include shades of orange, green, blue, and purple. The background is a light beige gradient.

steamy buddha  
victoria b&b  
finn's  
morton's moo  
old creamery  
serendib  
pyramid  
stroll / walk across bridge  
union river lobster pot  
pepper's pub  
bud connection  
courthouse gallery  
precipice coffee  
provennder  
grand  
rock & art  
fogtown  
flexit  
margaritas  
harbor park  
striking gold

# Great day with a friend

A word cloud featuring various local businesses and landmarks. The words are arranged in a non-uniform, overlapping manner. The colors used are shades of blue, green, orange, and red. The sizes of the words vary, with 'rooster brother' and 'fogtown' being the largest. The words are: poppy & polka dot, share studio, steamy buddha, rooster brother, in bloom spa & soul, finn's, charlie's pizza, pyramid, dream catcher, rock & art shop, shore road, pepper's pub, flexit, fogtown, precipice, toko, ghost rose tattoo, sassy nail, walking trail from library to shore road, harbor park, clothes encounters, art glass store, creamery antique, bliss, serendib, farmers market, airline brewing, 86 this, elizabeth's, and john edward.

poppy & polka dot share studio steamy buddha  
rooster brother in bloom spa & soul finn's  
charlie's pizza pyramid  
dream catcher rock & art shop shore road pepper's pub flexit fogtown  
precipice toko ghost rose tattoo  
sassy nail walking trail from library to shore road harbor park clothes encounters art glass store  
creamery antique bliss serendib  
farmers market airline brewing 86 this elizabeth's  
john edward



# Great day with a visitor

A word cloud featuring various local businesses and landmarks in Ellsworth, Maine. The words are arranged in a circular pattern around the central, largest word, 'woodlawn'. The colors of the words vary, including shades of blue, green, orange, and red. The words are of different sizes, with 'woodlawn' being the largest and many others being smaller. The words are: woodlawn, rooster brother, river lobster pot, fogtown, jordan preserve, airline brewing, elizabeth's, courthouse gallery, art glass shop, rock & art shop, precipice coffee, serendib, toko, clothes encounters, morton's moo, john edward, knowlton park, bliss, downeast scenic train, farmer's market, union river, the grand, margaritas, flexit, finn's, trio, old creamery antique, harbor park, dream catcher, freshies, airline, shopping downtown, steamy buddha, and union river lobster.

woodlawn

rooster brother

river lobster pot

fogtown

jordan preserve

airline brewing

elizabeth's

courthouse gallery

art glass shop

rock & art shop

precipice coffee

serendib

toko

clothes encounters

morton's moo

john edward

knowlton park

bliss

downeast scenic train

farmer's market

union river

the grand

margaritas

flexit

finn's

trio

old creamery antique

harbor park

dream catcher

freshies

airline

shopping downtown

steamy buddha

union river lobster

# Power of X

## TAKEAWAYS

The exercise reinforced that there are a variety of dining options to fit different needs, scenarios and tastes. All scenarios used the Grand, however, suggesting that when it comes to doing an activity that’s not eating or shopping, options are limited.

<b>The Grand</b>	<b>24</b>	Provender	12
Morton’s Moo	17	Rock & Art Shop	11
Fogtown	17	Sugar Mags	10
Serendib	16	Union River Toy	10
Flexit	15	Precipice Coffee	8
Rooster Brother	15	Harbor Park	7
Woodlawn	15	Steamy Buddha	6
Finn’s	14	Courthouse Gallery	6
86 This	13	Toko	6
Old Creamery Antiques	13	Union River Lobster Pot	5

# Bingo






## WORKSHOP PROMPT

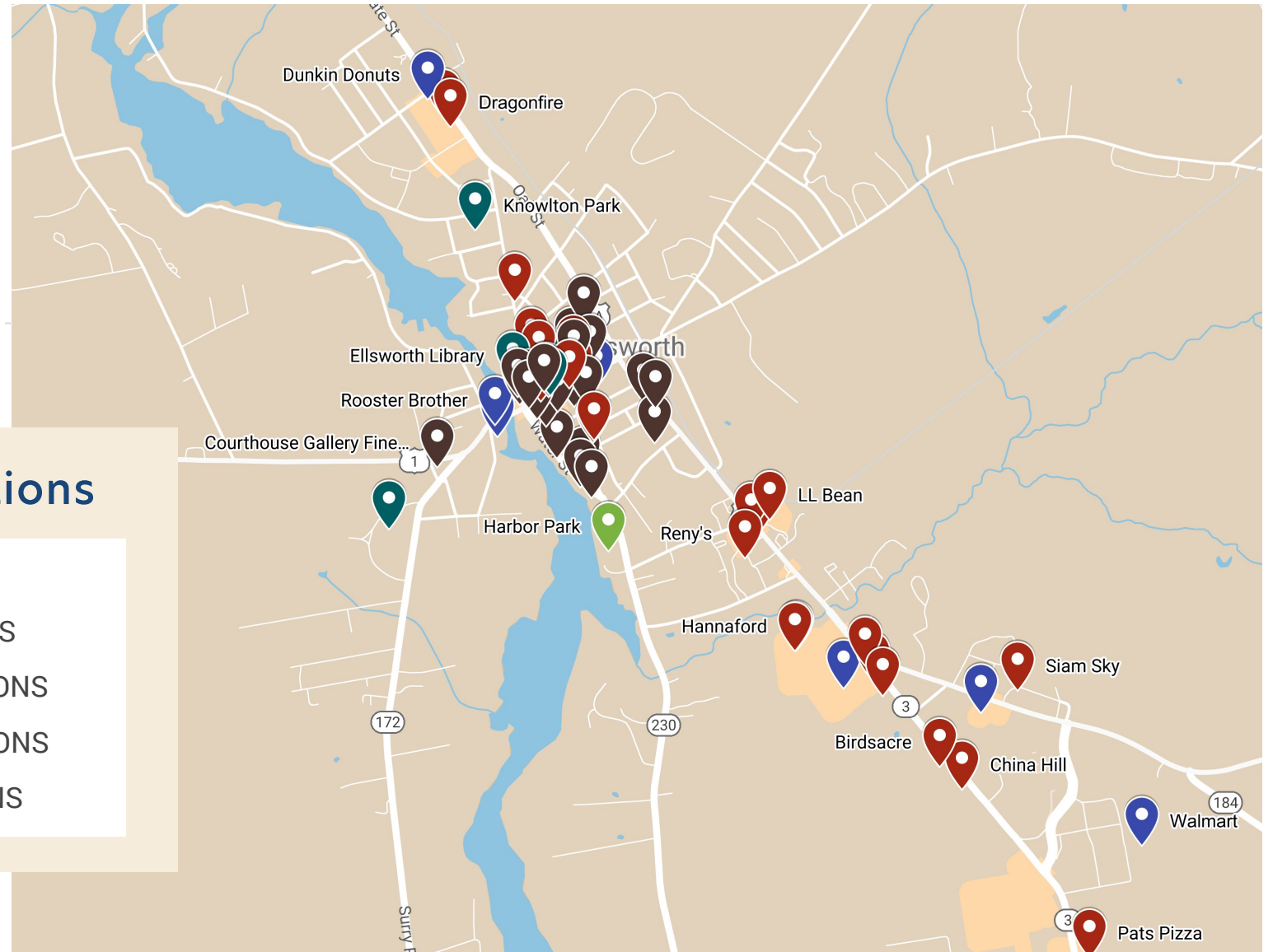
We asked participants to fill out squares of a bingo card with a business or location in Ellsworth that they believe best fits the description. Categories included things like a spot for lunch, quietest spot, hidden gem, open before 8am, iconic photo spot, and just for tourists.

# Bingo Mapped Locations

[link to google maps](#)

## Mapped Locations

-  A - NO MENTION
-  B - 1-9 MENTIONS
-  C - 10-19 MENTIONS
-  D - 20-29 MENTIONS
-  E - 30+ MENTIONS



# Strategic Imperatives

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

We asked participants at our city employee meeting:  
in each cell of the leftmost column of the grid below,  
list the following categories in order of highest to lowest priority:

**Creating Community:** Awareness & Collaboration,  
**Destination Development:** Build Awareness of Downtown as a Destination,  
**From Functional to Fun:** Plan & Expand Experiences,  
**Wayfinding & Navigation:** Ease of Exploration  
**Greetings & Gateways:** Glam Up.

Then in the remaining columns, list what Ellsworth  
Has, Needs, or Wants relevant to each category.

# Strategic Imperatives

List the following categories in order of highest to lowest priority:

- 1. Creating Community** (1.5 average)
- 2. Destination Development** (2.3 average)
- 3. From Functional to Fun** (3.2 average)
- 4. Wayfinding & Navigation** (3.6 average)
- 5. Greetings & Gateways** (3.9 average)



# 1. Creating Community

HAS	NEED	WANT
dining	more / better restaurants & bars	variety of restaurants
events	event center more / bigger events	events to bring people together (low cost or free)
stable government structure high-functioning chamber	cooperation of city council with accepting new ideas	shared vision
desire to work better together engaged community members & busniesses supportive business culture	more community, business, residents engagement / teamwork volunteers better attitudes	mutual work on more projects strong communication positive relationships
a lot of available space	places for congregating social and cultural center	keep small-town sense of place
homey feel / historic quality	respect and include each as equals	keep small-town sense of place
lots of new residents a growing diverse population	housing	keep small-town sense of place

# 2. Destination Development

HAS	NEED	WANT
tourists in huge amounts pass by (3 mil/summer)	ways to capture business give reason for people to stop restrooms	need-to-stop place secondary to ANP downtown hotel
lots of individual branding old branding some marketing	better promotion cohesive branding and marketing	make it more sexy new website vibrant
daytime focus	more nightlife focus on evening and weekend	expanded hours
waterfront / Knowlton Park / river pretty walkable Main St	way to use the river more trails sidewalks	more green space
small portion of traffic location / partially defined	reroute development along roads (better) parking	more signage
shops restaurants	more retail diversity in dining sporting goods	steakhouse breakfast sporting goods
opportunities	winter activities	seasonal downtown decor

# 3. From Functional to Fun

HAS	NEED	WANT
The Grand / movies band concerts / Fogtown	entertainment carnival	AC entertainment drive-in movie
events for all ages Christmas and July parade autumn gold	more centralized events	Winter Main St party
law offices, service station a lot of static businesses	more destination businesses	community center
law offices, service station a lot of static businesses	multiuse buildings / apartments above (both affordable and upscale)	more people to live in downtown
harbor / shops waterfront concert	develop harbor as shopping center with parking	waterfront development
lots to do	more and easy walks	restroom
dining	more restaurants that stay open after 7	

# 4. Wayfinding & Navigation

HAS	NEED	WANT
some sidewalks	better sidewalks increased walkability	more sidewalks better marked crosswalks
signs (including historic) 2021 wayfinding signs maps exist + google	cohesive signage	more signage signs for downtown on High St maps
museum in the streets walking tours harbor	riverwalk historic park	digital app
Main St businesses spread out	parking open the streets	easy parking better marked crosswalks
small footprint	better traffic flow (explore options - one way, left turns) transportation (local) / reroute	a grant/funding for this

# 5. Greetings & Gateways

HAS	NEED	WANT
keep unique historic look "natural" gateways (feeling)	more facade grants	funding
flowers / lights christmas decoration flags on main	beautification flags / flowers trashcans	trees planted in the park
good pedestrian corridors	connected sidewalks walking/biking options	entrance pedestrian-friendly
limited signage	parking signage (better, not-faded) signage welcome signs	awesome signage better aesthetic
chamber center of commerce	small welcome center people need to understand how others view us	collaborative effort of businesses
summer parklet	make parklet year-round bypass / traffic calming make some investments	traffic decrease
potential	feature attraction more restaurants / more retail more recreational	downtown hotel

# Strategic Imperatives

## TAKEAWAYS

While Downtown already has a good balance and variety of dining and retail, people want even **more dining and retail** options.

Participants also advocated for more **downtown housing** to both increase housing stock, reduce the amount of people needing to drive, and to increase the activity and sense of place downtown.

**Signage and parking** are another big pain point, and need to be addressed to inform both drivers and foot traffic.

Ultimately, long-term success means **collaboration between everyone** (businesses, locals and organizations) invested in Downtown's flourishing.



# Place Preference

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

Participants were asked to select the improvement or initiative they thought was most important to prioritize across the five strategic imperative categories. This activity was available to morning coffee drinkers at Flexit and an evening group at a Brews and Boards project review.

Both groups tended to prioritize the same things.

# Place Preference

	FLEXIT	BOARDS
CREATING COMMUNITY		
Volunteer Cleanup Days	3	0
Casual Meeting Spaces	4	3
Events	4	9
Organizations & Groups	4	1
DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT		
Hotel in Downtown	3	5
Public Restrooms	7	1
Visitor Center	1	1
Waterfront Access	7	11
FUNCTIONAL TO FUN		
Nightlife	2	3
Mixed Use Buildings	4	2
Walking Paths & Parks	7	6
Family-Friendly Events	2	3
WAYFINDING & NAVIGATION		
Signs to Parking	5	5
Signs for Historic Downtown	5	5
Sidewalks	5	7
More Visible Crosswalks	2	5
GREETINGS & GATEWAYS		
Pole Banners for Seasons / Events	4	1
Flowers / Wreaths	3	3
Street Lights	4	1
Facade Upgrades	3	8

# Place Preference

## TAKEAWAYS

Overall it appears as if people want to make Ellsworth even **more pedestrian-friendly, seeking opportunities to increase walkability**. Data shows that participants want more sidewalks, walking paths & parks, facade upgrades, waterfront access and more events. Sidewalks, paths and waterfront access allows for more foot traffic, and giving storefronts and facades a “facelift” will help increase curbside appeal.

Participants show a need for a better experience, often voting for improvements over additions - making what they have better shows an appreciation of and dedication to what they have rather than a desire to change or undo what has been done to date.

# High School Madlibs

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

We asked high school students to fill out two madlibs that imagined alternate futures: one if they moved away from Ellsworth after graduation, and one if they stayed locally.

# High School Madlibs

## MY FUTURE SELF

### 2030 Staying

I've lived in Ellsworth for (number) years, and I (emotion) it here **because it's (adjective) and (adjective)**. Plus, I really enjoy (activity) or (geography). However, Ellsworth doesn't have (adjective or amenity), **and there's too much (adjective, detraction)**. Sometimes I think about moving somewhere (smaller/larger, colder/warmer) when I (am stuck in a frustrating situation).

## MY FUTURE SELF

### 2030 Away

After graduating from EHS in (year), I moved to (city/town/state) to (occupation/education). I chose to live here because of (reason) and have really grown to appreciate the (attribute), (attribute) and (attribute). I miss Ellsworth, and come back about (number) times a year to visit (person/place) and (person/place). **I would consider moving back if Ellsworth had (attribute), (attribute) or (attribute)**. I live with (person/people/pets), and in the next ten years I hope to (goal), (goal) and (goal). In thinking back on what it was like to live in Ellsworth, **my fondest memories are (activity), (activity), and of course (activity)!**

STAYING

# I love/hate it here because it's...





STAYING

# Fondest memory...



STAYING

# Ellsworth has too much...

A word cloud visualization on a light beige background. The words are arranged in a non-uniform, overlapping manner. The largest words are 'gas station' in orange, 'fast food' in yellow-orange, and 'traffic' in green. Other words include 'nothing' (light blue), 'dirt & rat' (dark blue), 'deadness' (light blue), 'dive bar' (dark blue), 'gravel' (dark blue), 'tourist' (dark blue), and 'noise' (dark blue). The words are of varying sizes and colors, creating a dynamic and somewhat chaotic visual effect.

gas station nothing  
dirt & rat  
dive bar deadness  
gravel fast food  
traffic tourist  
noise

LEAVING

Would come back if...



# High School Madlibs

## TAKEAWAYS

Most high schoolers plan on leaving for college, while others will stay/come back primarily due to friends and family. Consensus shows that high schoolers want more **dining options, things to do and opportunities**. Those staying believe there are too many gas stations and fast food joints, which reinforces that their experience of Ellsworth is one that involves a car rather than one that involves walking around Downtown.

Overwhelmingly, the students identified people and experiences as what made them stay/come back over amenities and attractions, which they felt were lacking overall.

# Vision 2040 Madlibs

## WORKSHOP PROMPT

We asked participants to fill out a madlib that outlined a vision for the future, with a focus on changes that would be needed to accomplish that vision.

# Vision 2040 Madlibs

Downtown Ellsworth is thriving! Known as a popular destination for (activity/attraction), this once (adjective) Main Street has turned into a great place to (place/thing) or even to (verb).

As visitors enter the downtown, they are greeted by (place/thing), which is as they make their way (direction) they will encounter (place/thing) and (place/thing).

People often remark on the (attribute), commenting on how (adjective) it is, and that it reminds them of (place/thing).

Residents see the downtown as (adjective/attribute), and celebrate the diversity of (blank) available. When they have guests in town they always (blank) in the downtown, as it is a (blank) way to spend a(n) (blank).

No downtown is perfect, and they still see room to add/change the (blank) and the (blank), and are committed to helping this urban core continue to thrive!





# Descriptors



# Vision 2040 Madlibs

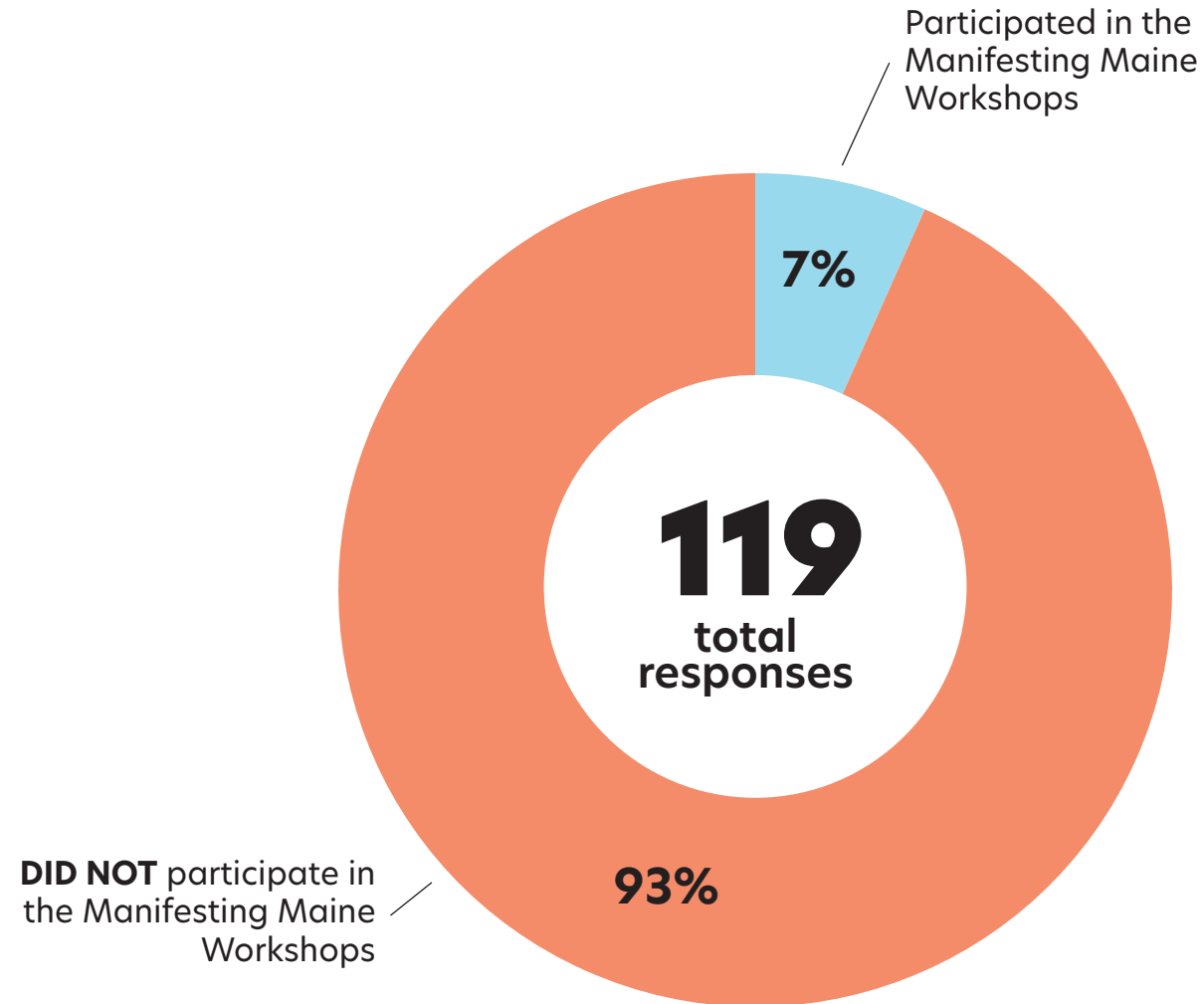
## TAKEAWAYS

Respondents have a positive outlook for the future of Ellsworth. It's a place with great dining, shopping, and green space. It's great, lovely, welcoming, and fun.

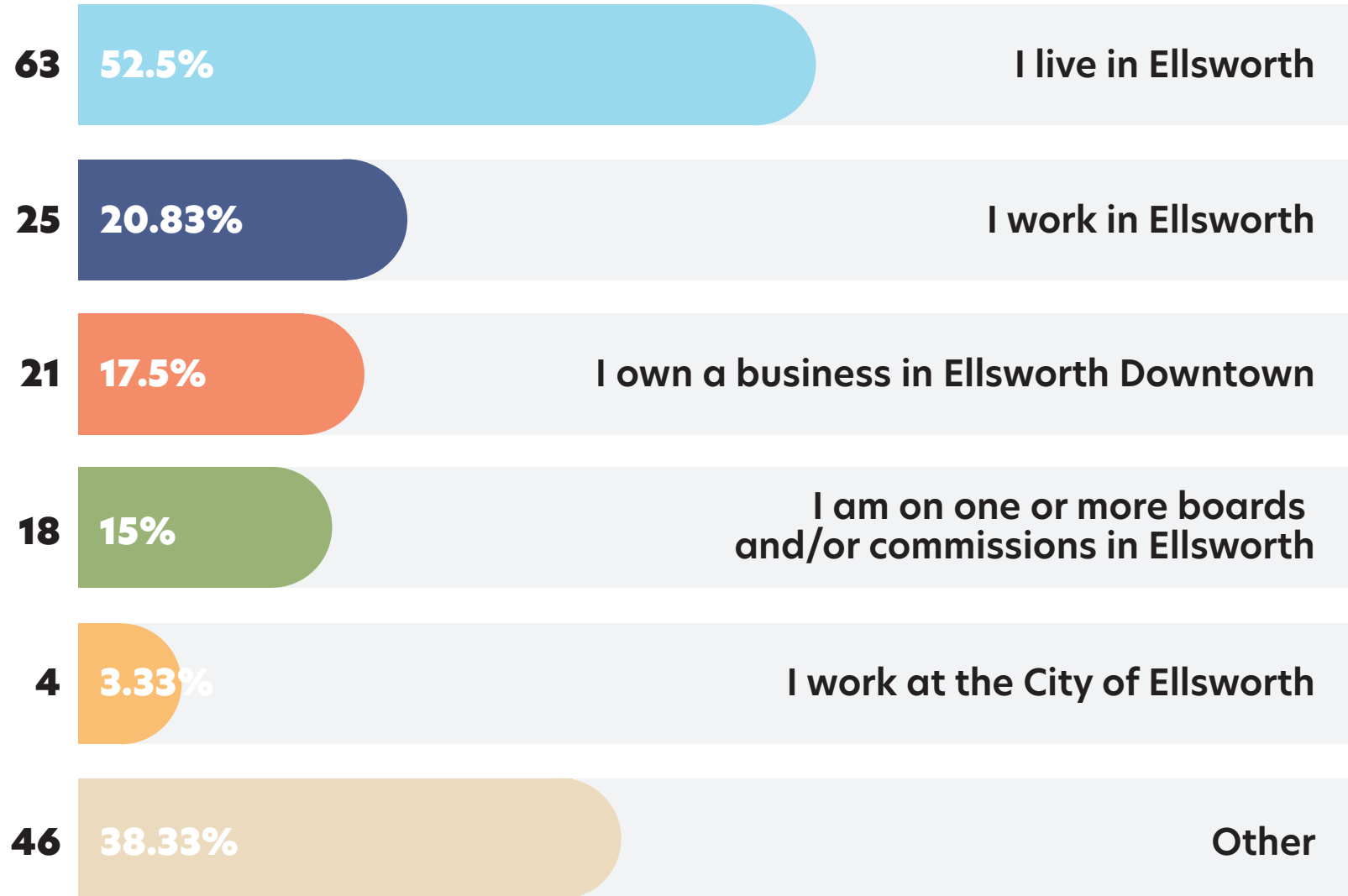
Even so, answers didn't note a whole lot that would change. Instead, Ellsworth would only reinforce what it has. Few answers articulated ways that Ellsworth would differentiate itself.

# Survey Data

# Q1 Did you participate in the Manifesting Main Workshops?



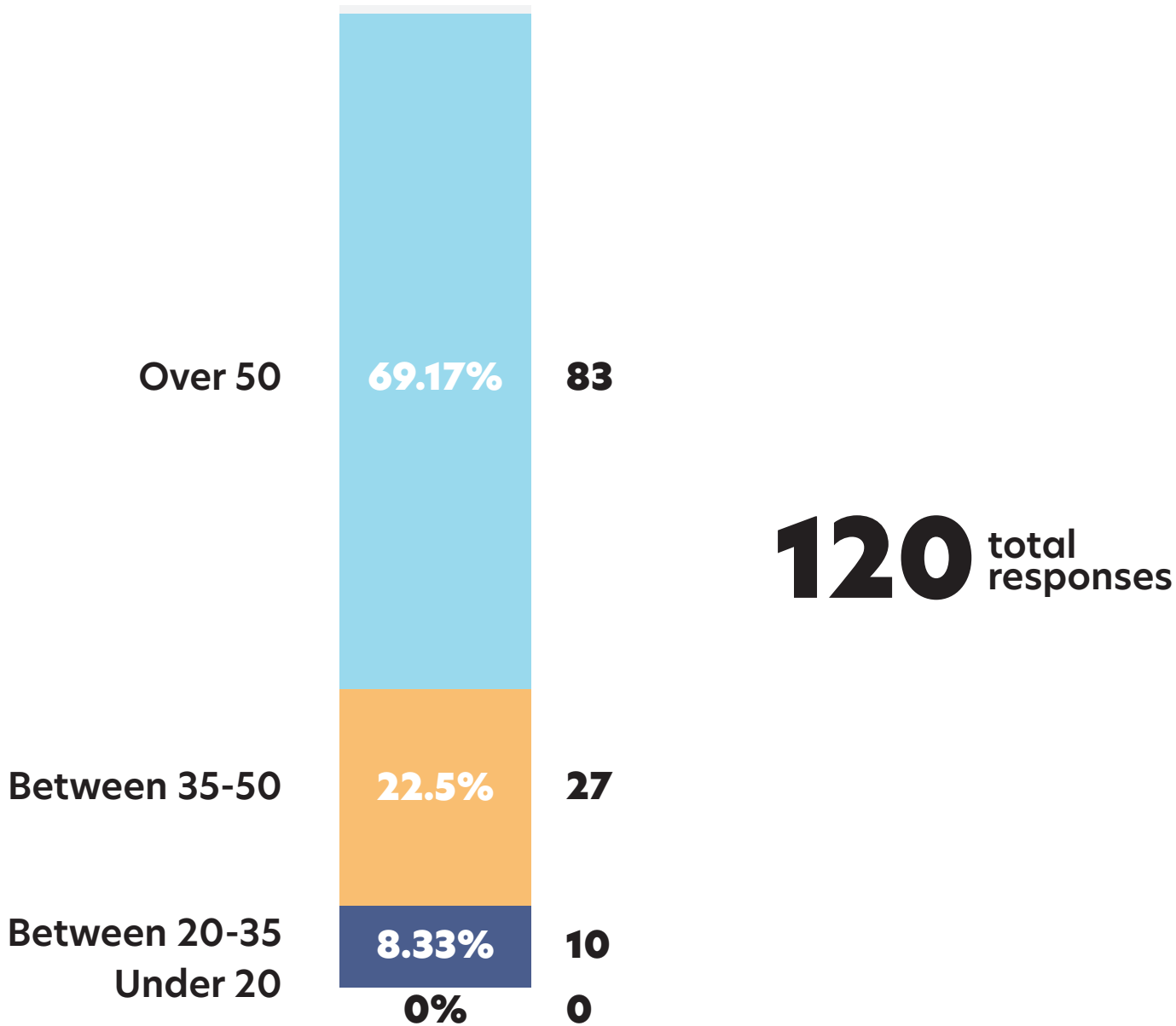
## Q2 Please choose all that apply from the list below:



**120** total responses

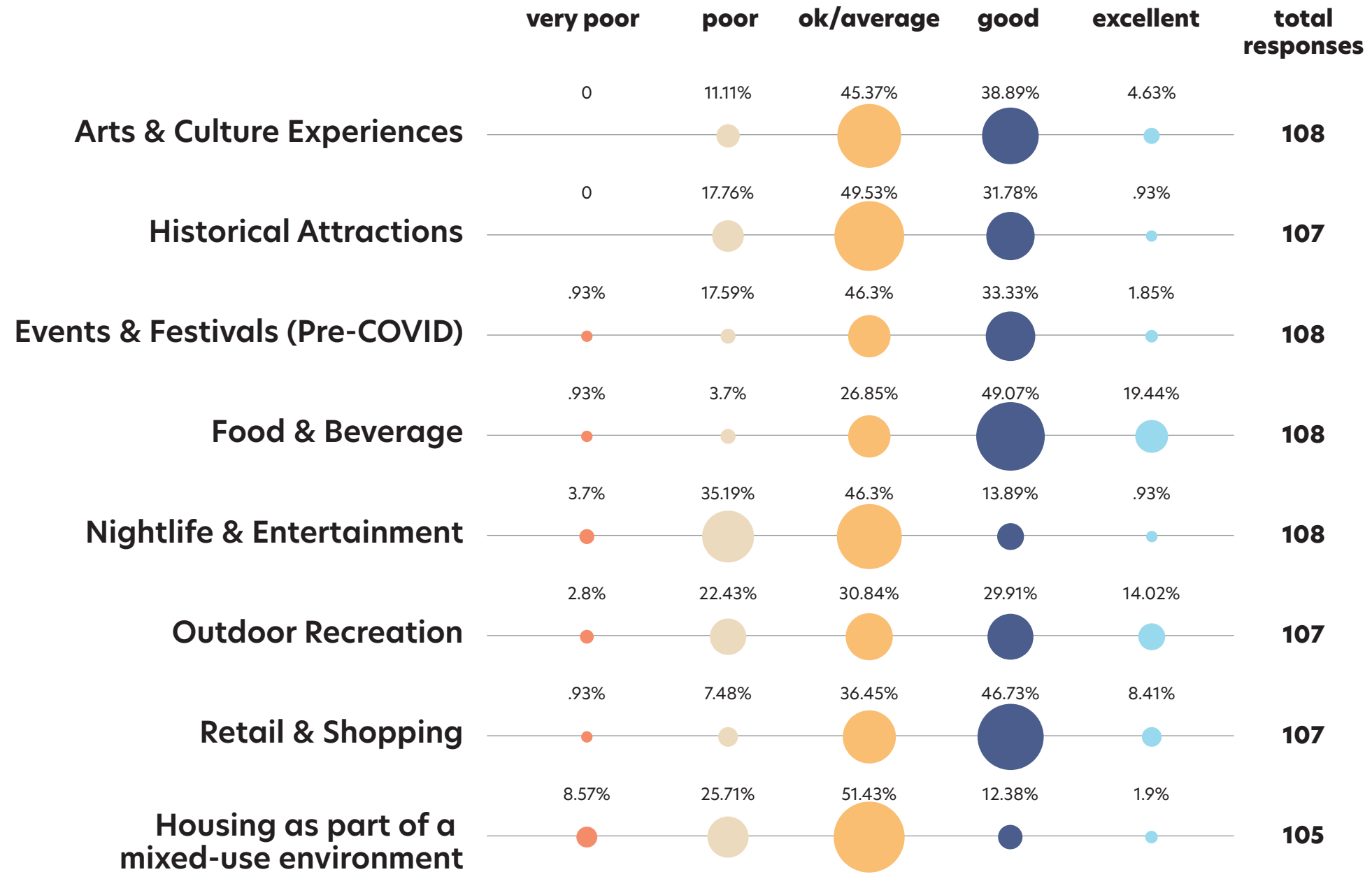
common other answers  
live or work near Ellsworth, summer/seasonal resident/visitor, used to live or grew up in Ellsworth, shop in Ellsworth, own a business in Ellsworth not downtown, own real estate in Ellsworth, retired

# Q3 Which of the following best describes you?



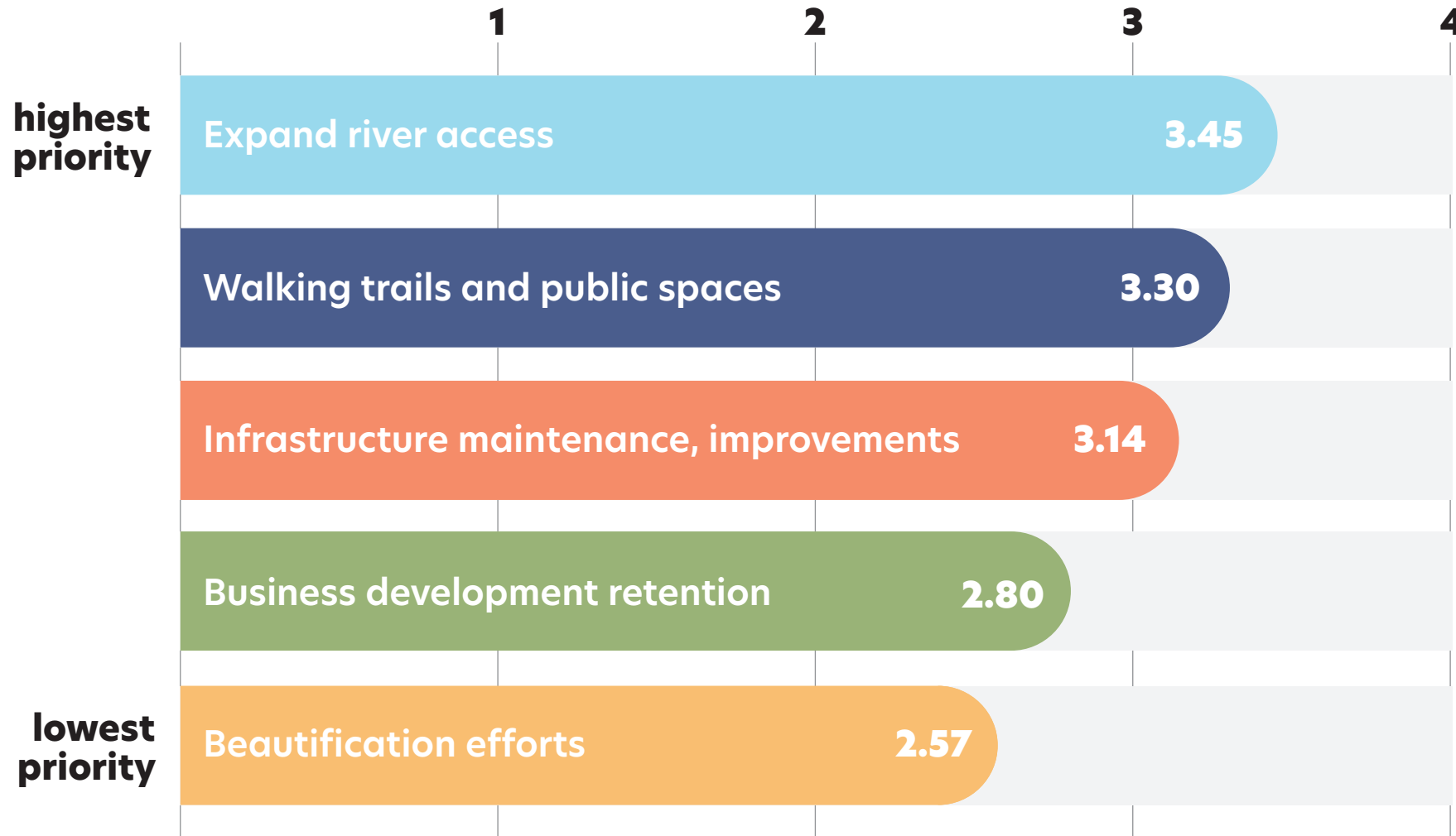


# Q4 Using the scale below, please rate your perception of the quality of each of the offerings in the downtown area



[illegible]

**Q6** Using the scale below, rank your priorities for the downtown: where would you like to see Ellsworth focus its resources during the next 5 years? 1 is highest priority and 5 is lowest priority.

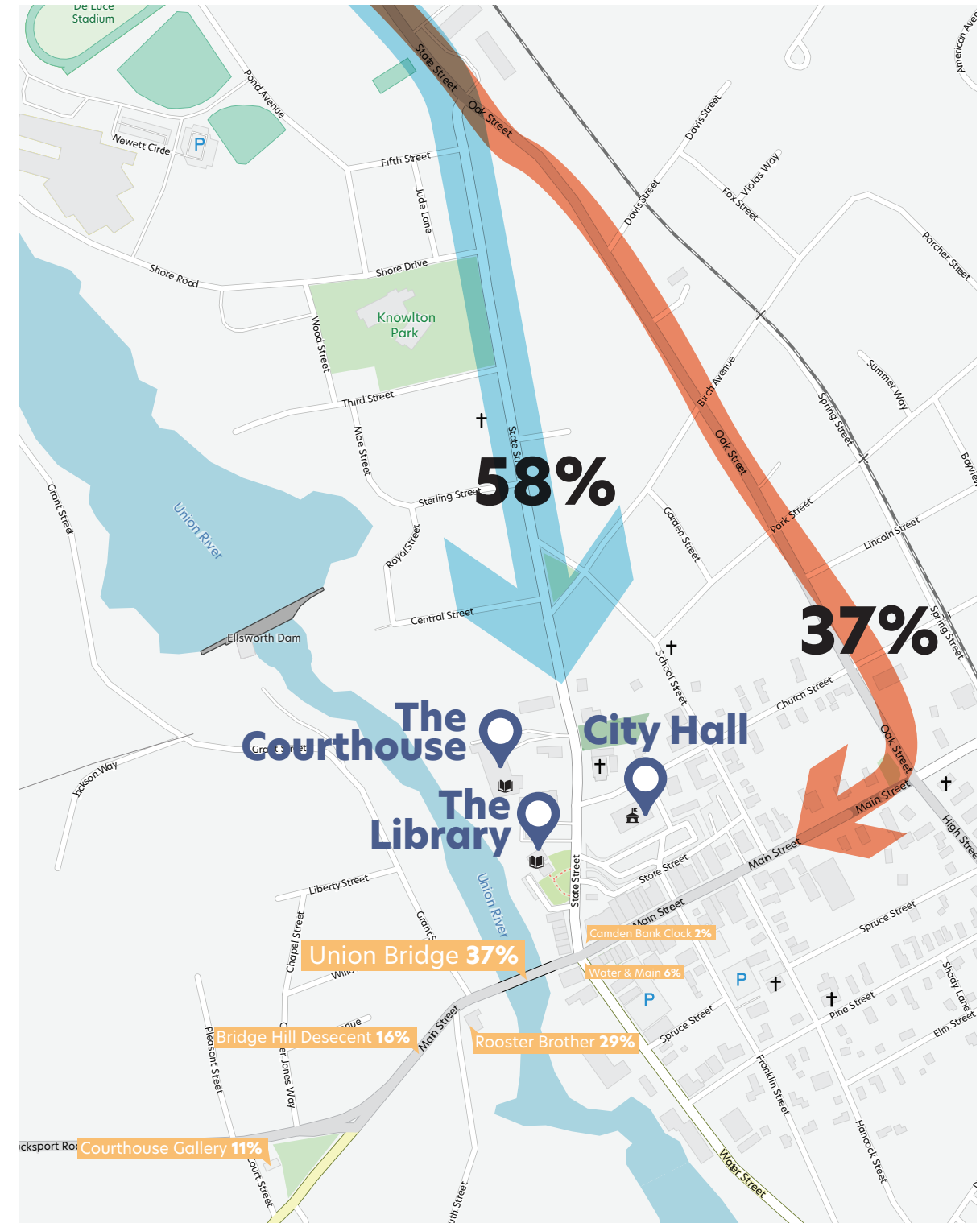


**110** total responses

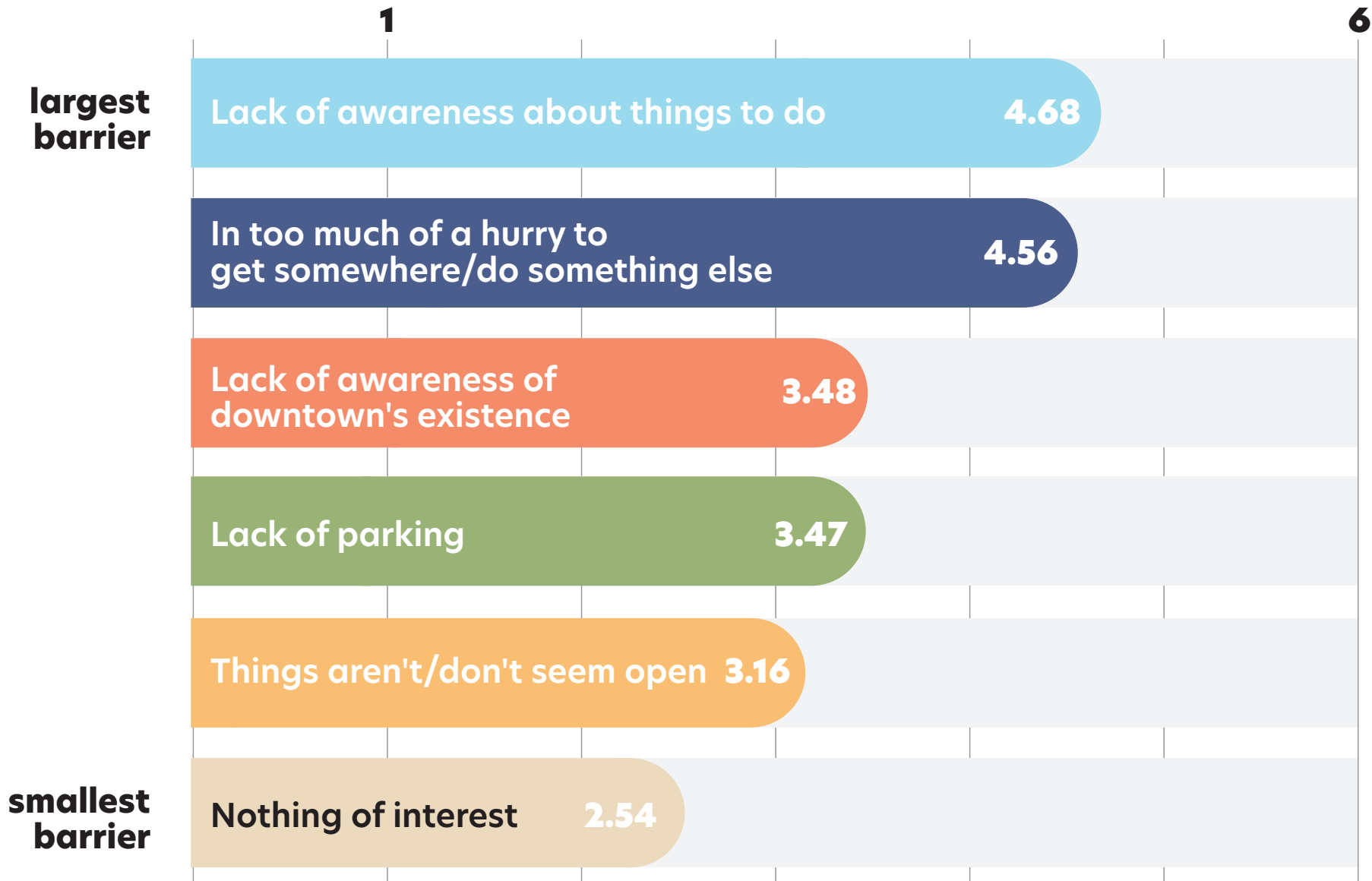
**Q7** When approaching on Route 1 / Bucksport Road, what **MOST STRONGLY** denotes the start of downtown?

**Q8** When traveling into Ellsworth from Bangor on Route 1A, how do you reach the downtown?

**Q9** Based on your answer to question 8, what visually signifies (landmark, intersection, etc.) that you have arrived in the downtown?

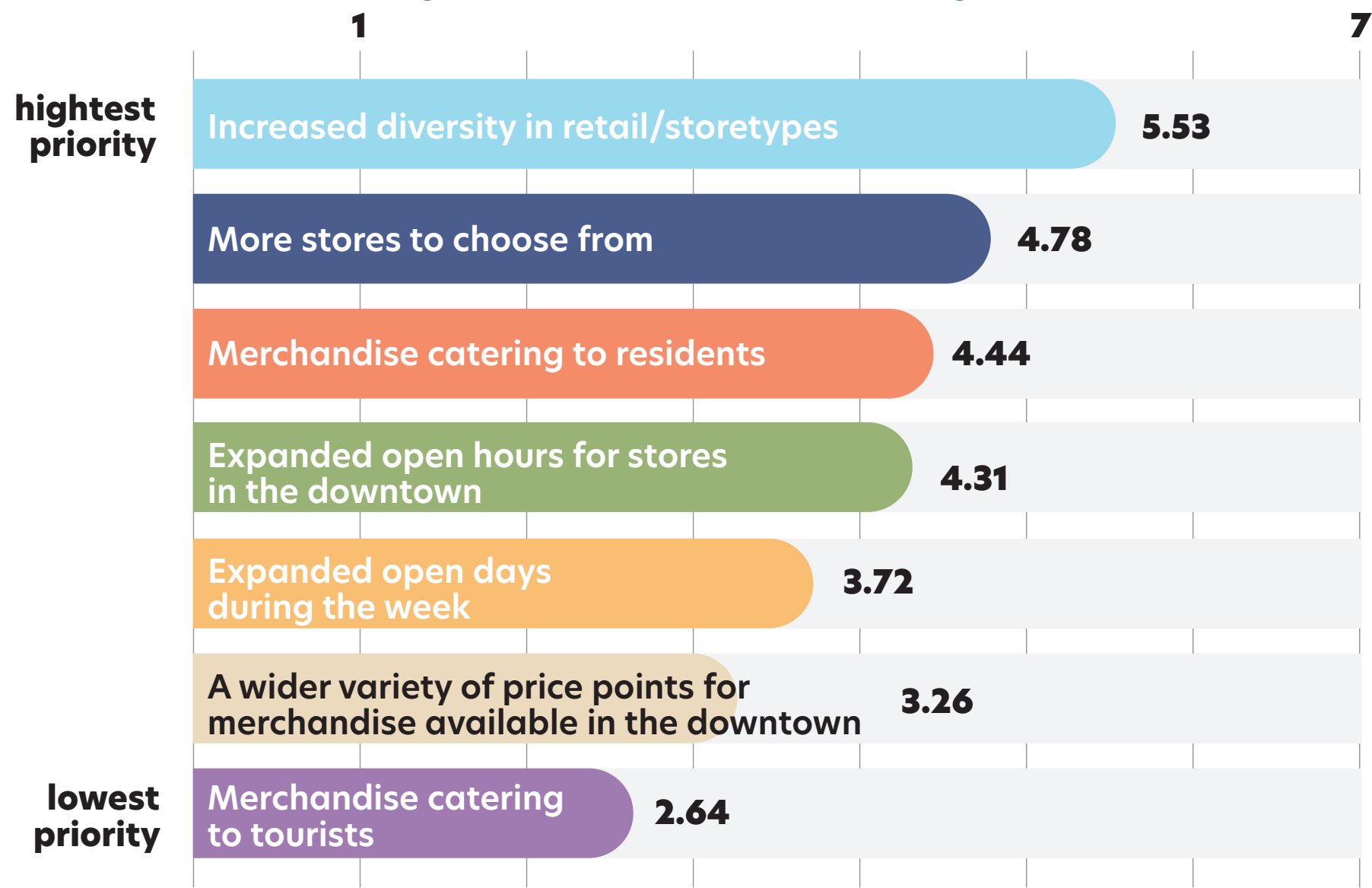


# Q10 What barriers prevent people from stopping in the downtown?



**108** total responses

Q11 We heard a lot of requests for more retail options in Downtown Ellsworth. To gain additional insight into this request, please rank the following options, with 1 being your top priority.



103 total responses

# Q12 Do you have specific ideas or concerns about retail in the downtown that you would like to share?

## RECURRING THEMES

more shops  
variety of shopping  
no chain stores  
better shop hours

Retail is limited in downtown, and because it is less convenient to shop downtown because of parking and expense, I typically shop elsewhere.

More attractive store fronts, more diverse offerings

It would be nice if it were open later in the evenings, especially on weekends.

Prices too high. Cannot get what I want at a good price. Sometimes not open when I stop by.

More historic facade restorations and better signage—nice custom metal/neon sides would help make downtown look more successful and inviting.

Would love for Ellsworth to be known as the \_\_\_\_\_ City - not just in Hancock Co. but also in Maine and beyond. Suggestions (in NO specific order): Chocolate. Boat-Building History. Shiretown (no "City") (English village theme.) River-Walk. (Open from UR bridge to Harbor Park with fabulous dining along the way.) Etc.

Inconsistency of hours of operation of stores. Need a place to have a drink, talk about the show and socialize after Grand shows. There could be some coordination and the Grand could let people know what is open after a show. Need to slow down the speed of traffic in the off season.

Signage is often not indicative of what it's beyond the front doors. No central directory with shop names and descriptions

Need at least one or two more upscale clothing shops and a shoe store! Having a communal building housing our Farmer's mkt, local crafts x artist's studios, and Ofcourse a cool, fun restaurant!

A communal bldg highlighting /housing Farmer's market , local crafts, art, studios for artists, and a restaurant showcasing local foods and local products. A great example is the Belfast indoors Farmer's mkt!!!!

Please don't forget about the other businesses that make Ellsworth a thriving community. Don't consider "downtown" an island.

Store rents are really high, lowering rents or subsidizing would help

I loved the Franklin street parklet and it would be awesome to see that put in permanently. More outdoor seating for local restaurants. A bulk foods store like the natural living center in Bangor would shift my shopping to be nearly 100% downtown.

We could use a children's clothing store that is affordable for MOST.

a good bookstore!

longer shopping hours in summer and holiday season would make a difference in where locals shop

There is a lot for women and great antiques, but not much else. The Rock & Art Shop and book store are two of the biggest assets for diversity, but there isn't much for boys/men (I noticed this shopping with my aunt for her sons).

I would like to be able to walk or drive to an average priced grocery store like a small scale Hannaford but on Main St.

If a large space opens, let's recruit Reny's - Reny's brings in tons of traffic into downtown Bath and Damariscotta. I think the Reny's family would understand the positives of investing in a downtown space.

Better cross walks

Please keep the focus on independent retailers- chain stores would ruin the charming, small town feel of the main street.

It would be delightful to have a 5 & dime type store in downtown. With arts a crafts supplies. The antique place in the former furniture store is unattractive....

Everyone is having difficulty hiring so store hours and days open are naturally going to be effected.

I'd like a cafe open all afternoon and a store like Reny's.

Besides the rock and art shop most of the stores are stocked and curated very poorly. Not much of interest and some VERY grumpy store owners (looking at you flower shop and bookstore). Needs more diversity, fun and interesting! Also BETTER FOOD (besides 86 this)! Flexit has terrible coffee and ok food. More options and a better coffee shop.

Parking. Signs at all crosswalks

I would like a few more food options and clothing stores. Maybe a great book store.

It's kinda boring. No really cool signs, murals, public art, etc.

I often think the key to downtown thriving is housing density (resident and tourist) within walking distance of the Main Street shops. Imagine the effect of a couple boutique hotels on Water Street! More niche stores that sell online so their storefront is not the only (or even primary) source of income. Maybe, healthy/sustainable living themed? Mixed in with the professional services that exist now. Any call for more parking is red herring...focus on foot traffic. The influx of cars does more to hurt downtown than help it.



# Q12 Continued

It's hard to know when things are open. Some businesses do not post their hours on their door or website or facebook page, so it's really hard to plan a shopping trip to them, and I live on Hancock Street. We miss that Mike's General Store moved. It would great to have a nice convenience store that wasn't specialty good like John Edwards or Rooster Brothers. Who can pay \$5 for a cookie? And we loved that Mike's had live bait so we could go grab some worms and fish by the library or Rooster Bros, or the harbor. It would be super fun to have a game shop where you could buy board and video games, but have an area where shoppers could test the games for 30 min to 1 hour. I visited a shop like that in Portland, Oregon called Guardian Games. Many game testers end up buying a product because they are grateful for the fun time that the game shop offered. It combines a community experience with retail.

I don't think retail is the biggest concern downtown. Food, lodging and entertainment are higher need IMO.

Probably too many antique shops. But that's just, like, my opinion, man.

I would love to be able to run errands in town rather than driving somewhere from my office. Between John Edward and Rooster Brother I can do pretty well. It would be nice if there was more of a "general store" but I understand that might not be economically viable.

Its all about availability of staff

There is no place to buy men's clothing, woman's undergarments. Or shoes. But the biggest deterrent is access to parking and summer traffic.

Downtown rolls up its sidewalks in the evening. Stores should be open later, especially when there are events going on.

Seems to be a grossly underdeveloped visual arts river walk area considering the population, traffic and high potential of Ellsworth.

Lack of parking and restroom facilities.

There's a nice diversity of options. What's missing is a mom/pop drug store/convenience store (not national chain) to get essentials. That would draw people down for their quick needs vs going to High Street

Wish you could get a drugstore with a lunch counter. You have a nice variety of stores. Sadly people just order stuff from the

Internet.

During summer hours have out side seating that means flex it too

I'd like to see more shops open cohesively. I know it's been tough with Covid-19.

It would serve the downtown if instead of lawyer offices those street floor store fronts would be used for restaurants and retail

Keep in mind that downtown is a center of service industries, not just retail.

Some of the store front displays are chaotic and unappealing

If shops that open are too heavily aimed at tourist, then the year round resident population will suffer. There needs to be a balance. And those businesses at the outer edge of town need to have more business between them and downtown to tie it all together.

If I know local purchase is available, I tend to use them such as Crystal Pets but I know I could find potentially cheaper on line.

Having a few places that are open past 4 pm would make it easier for those of us that are at work everyday.

Keeping stores independent and not chains, to differentiate from High St offerings, and to keep this area resilient. More variety - so access to the river for kayakers, and then they can walk up to snack/drink etc after their kayak or boating. I think there is adequate parking - but "perceived inadequate parking". Having crosswalks better outlined and marked on Rte a by the Courthouse and by the Ellsworth Public Library also help make this an expanded, safely walkable space. A riverside walk by Library would be helpful - beautiful space. Could partner with a local kayak outfitter and Historical society or something to have guided tours of rivers with historical commentary.

It seems to be progressing well on its own. A Green Sustainable product Hardware type Store would be great!

More restaurants - more things to do

I like the small retail, specialty, artsy stores that have recently opened in Ellsworth (past 2-3 years).

Restaurant scene is already good. Have to work on traffic flow though. Don't need 18-wheelers rumbling down main street,

rattling windows when people are trying to eat/ shop. Again, BYPASS.

Lower rent would retain more business

Put in stores w/ merchandise (priced well) so I don't have to shop at Walmart.

Parking is tough. More signage needs to be perpendicular to the Street so you can read it and know what's available. FoggTown and cool business developments west of Main Street are invisible to a visitor

Better lighting for pedestrians Main Street at night.

More different stores not just all clothing and restaurants, perhaps a hardware store, something like the old Grasshopper shop

stores in Bar Harbor should expand to Ellsworth to capture overflow of tourists when BH is too busy.

More signs for public parking on Franklin Street

I think offerings and hours are just right

Storefront maintenance/appearance is low

It's good and getting better

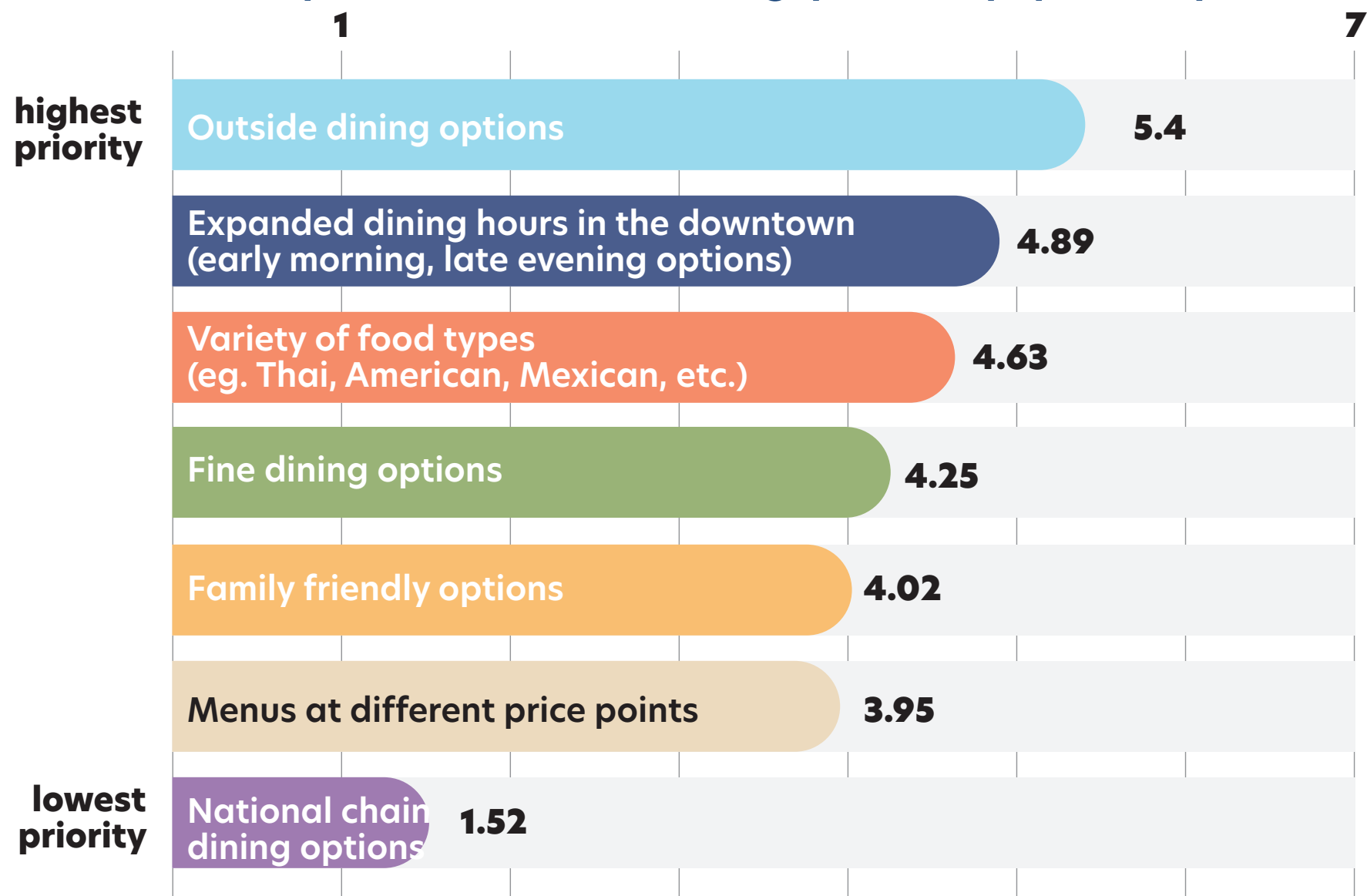
I'm a store owner so I would like to see a downtown association that actually focuses on promoting the downtown including activities that do not compete with the existing businesses, joint advertising with consistent messaging. I hear over and over from customers "I didn't know Ellsworth had such a great downtown".

I love rooster brother coffee, but getting over the bridge and in and out of the parking lot can be a challenge. Sometimes it's just easier to add Dunkin to my Hannaford order

More variety, higher quality, more expansive hours of operating.

Most are only open when anyone working in this city is at work, making it often feel that they are catering to retired folks or tourists only. An organized night a week that they all stayed open. And often organized events on the same night.

**Q13** We heard a lot of requests to expand dining options in the Downtown. To gain additional insight, please rank the following options, with 1 being your top priority.



**102** total responses

# Q14 Do you have specific ideas or concerns around dining in the downtown that you would like to share?

## RECURRING THEMES

no chain restaurants  
more outdoor dining  
more variety  
waterfront dining

It would be nice to eat on the riverfront but we only have one restaurant to chose from or we can eat at the park which has limited seating.

Expanded outdoor dining would be a wonderful asset to downtown!

I actually think the downtown eating establishments are really good.

Hours and price

Avoid chains. Restaurants need to be open more than 4-8pm a few days a week.

Establish waterfront first. Outdoor-indoor (consider winters) fine dining there. Later hours at night. Yes to one national chain - Olive Garden?

No national chains.

Riverfront dining options!! Live music with dining. Places to meet up and have an app are lacking

More upscale restaurants and way less Governor's and the like.

We definately would appreciate another fine dining experience besides Provender. Another ethnic restaurant would also be welcome- Greek, Vietnamese, Italian homemade cuisine, mediterranean, French

I think there is an excellent mix of the food offerings downtown. American, Irish, British, Mexican, Sri Lanka, Jamaican, seafood, coffee, cafe, sandwiches, soups, pizza (soon), bakery. How can you ask for more!

I don't want to see more chains creeping in from high street into

downtown. We love the locally run businesses like Flexit and 86 this! Something else in the variety and price point of Serendib would be great. Provender is too expensive for going frequently.

More dinner options would be great.

We need a true Italian restaurant - pizza doesn't count! A true steakhouse would be great, too.

Please stay away from National or big food and store chains. Don't let Ellsworth become like so many other towns.

Many seniors like to go out and visit over lunch in the downtown at Flexit as well as at Sylvia's and at Martha's. The staff knows us and are welcoming and friendly. That hometown feel. A couple more choices for added variety would be a pleasant addition. Residents support them all year round, not just in tourist season.

The space next to Elizabeth's and Sugar Mags needs some plants, furniture, shade etc that creates more of an intimate space

More of it!

Keep the chain restaurants limited to the section of Route 1 where they already are. Encourage more small business restaurants to come into the area.

I think we already have a good mix of dining options downtown. Perhaps we just need to publicize them more.

A cafe open all afternoon. Good Mexican or Thai food.

I am shocked that flexit is such a mainstay- their coffee is some of the most inconsistent and worst I've had. Their food is fine, but not necessarily worth the expense. Ellsworth really just needs more options other than fast food and subpar dining. We do love fogtown pizza and 86 this burritos though!

Union River redevelopment should include dining options

Vegan/vegetarian, Thai, maybe a salad place. And more and better Mexican.

It's OK for a city our size. Outside of Provender, not much to recommend it.

I think it's pretty darn good right now. I think the lack of things to do other than eat is holding downtown back. That, and the hours or operation....

I would like to see more outdoor dining options. With COVID cases again high, it is clear that the pandemic is not over by a longshot, and many people (myself included) are not comfortable eating indoors. Increased outdoor dining makes Ellsworth more inviting in general.

IDK There is an amazing variety of restaurants on Main Street for the size of our town. And the quality of Serendib, 86 This!, Provender's, Finn's, Margarita's, and such are all excellent. I think a larger brewery would be a good addition that offered pub food and was open till 10pm, because Finn's and Fogtown have been closing early, and folks looking for an after theater or dinner drink are coming up short. We see long lines at Airline Brewery at 8 or 9 pm b/c everything else is closed. Also, it would be great to have a pizza slice place on Main Street. I highly recommend recruiting Otto's from Portland.

I think there is a lack of lunch options for downtown employees, and a lack of diversity in the downtown food space generally.

Outdoor seating was nice during the pandemic and I would love to see it continue.

Again - it is all about availability of staff

Every restaurant downtown is worthy of being there. Good variety. Restaurants need to be open later in summer. Friends who come in the summer continually complain we "roll the sidewalks up too early."

Keep chains out of downtown. That's what High Street is for.

Ellsworth should avoid national chains in its downtown as it damages the "brand" of an historic downtown.

Lots of options. Not all open for lunch AND dinner.

Outdoor dining is a great option in the warmer months.

lunch counter or quick lunch

Put specials outside so people know what there is to eat

I would prefer NOT to have chain restaurants and stores. Small business!

More breakfast options.

The downtown is doing quite well with dining.

American type steak house.

Most places close too early.

I think we have a burgeoning eatery in downtown...outside dining options are great in milder weather. No chains in downtown! Ugh!!

This too seems to be heading in a great direction...Would love to see Water street - river oriented improvements and dining possibilities

A vegan/vegetarian restaurant could draw people from far away.

See above comment about 18-wheelers coming through and rattling restaurant windows. We really need a new bypass route around main street and high street. It's too congested. Having the best shops and restaurants in the world won't make any difference if traffic is idling up and down main street and high street, water street too (where there should be a park by the river...) every day from 3:30-5.

steakhouse. italian. or breakfast place.

## Q14 Continued

would like to see Korean, German, Italian, and French offerings. The options currently available are great for a Town the size of Ellsworth

It would be great to have more outdoors eating options on side streets (Franklin & Hancock streets), Main Street being too noisy.

it would be great to have more dining options along the water. also, it seems like there are too many retail spaces on Main Street that could be dining options

Expanded evening hours

It doesn't really matter what the public wants. Restaurants hands are tied by ongoing Covid issues, inflation and other economic problems. They are doing the best they can with what they have to work with

Healthy options are limited

Options are good. Other issues will resolve as pandemic/inflation/economic issues resolve

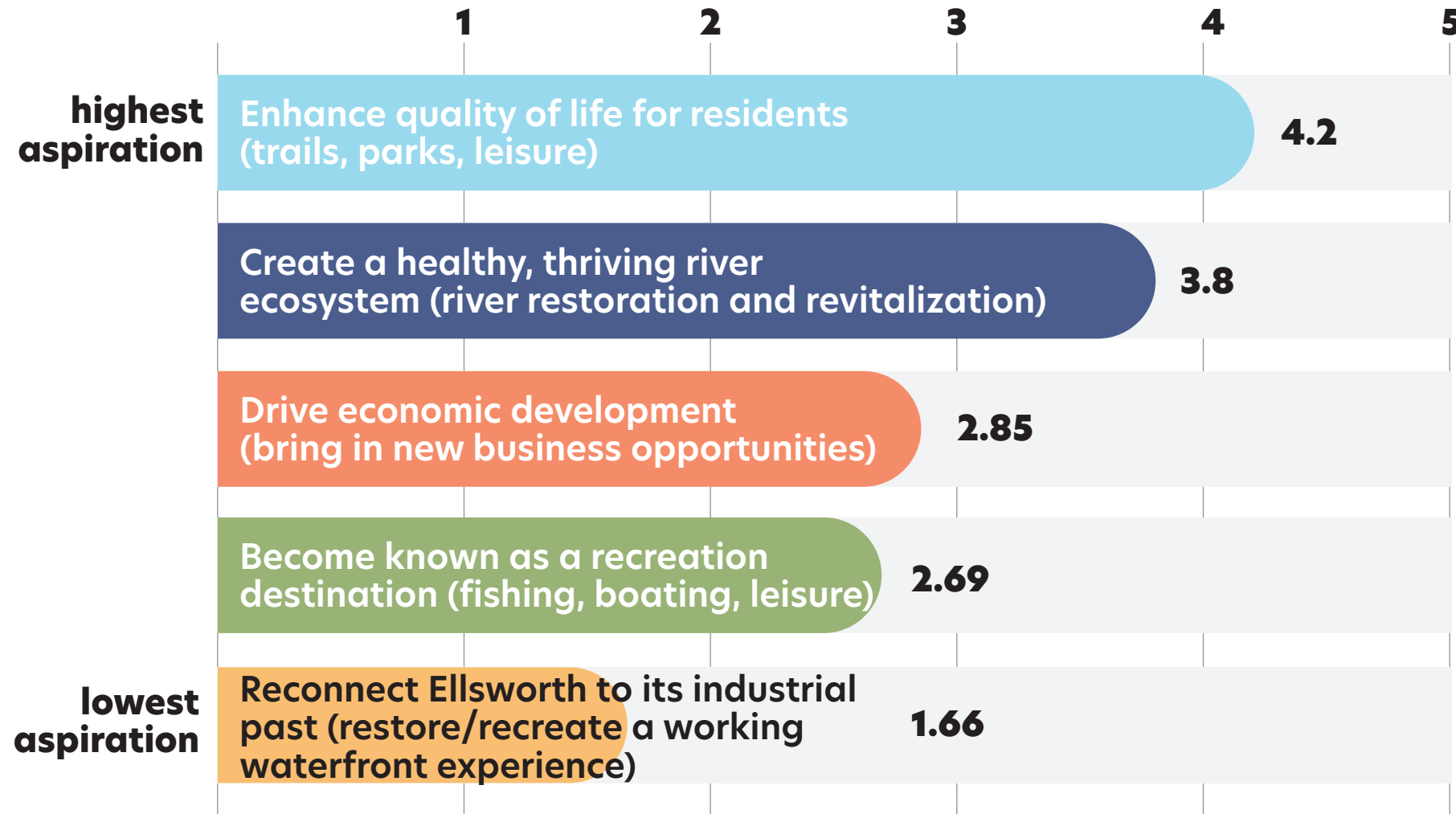
We have great restaurants they just need staff to stay open.

Keeping it more local and not having chain restaurants allows for a more quaint and personalized experience

One way to expand would be food trucks, but there are no public bathrooms (except in the parks on the outskirts). This fact I think also impacts people wanting to shop after dinner (if stores were open), be willing to attend outdoor events, etc. I REALLY don't think that any large chain is a good fit, Margarita's was a stretch, but at least state owned chain.

## Q15 RIVER ACCESS

Many identified the Union River as one of Ellsworth's greatest assets. Using the scale below, rate your aspirations for river development:



**103** total responses

# Q16 What do you feel is the best first step in enhancing access and enjoyment of the Union River?

## RECURRING THEMES

relocate industrial businesses  
develop riverfront/riverwalk  
walking access  
more retail and dining

Relocating current businesses, starting with Jordan's

More available river access.

Increasing greenspace. The harbor park and gazebo are really nice, but are not easily accessible on foot from downtown. A greenspace between downtown and the park would be nice.

Somehow find an avenue to allow for more restaurants, shops rather than what looks like an industrial area along most of water street.

Open up views of the river wherever possible

Building sense of connection between Ellsworth residents and the river.

Obtain funds to purchase/relocate existing businesses. Are there any shore businesses that actively use the Union River in their day-to-day trade? No? Then each can move to another location. Perhaps up past Brown's or on Beechland Rd.

Make the whole thing walkable and connect it to Downtown. I love what Brewer has done. Have a place or two to dine. Maybe some galleries and shops. Trees and benches.

Remove ellsworth dam

Walkability to and from the downtown

Get rid of all the ugly buildings!!!!!!!

publicizing

Dredging and improving the banking of the river to help prevent erosion. Cleaning up the river bed. Close monitoring of the dam. Without first doing these things, you can't even begin to increase river access for residents and guests.

Riverwalk

Connecting the Union river bridge to the waterfront park via a river walkway

Use the area close to the banks near Rooster Brothers and The Lobster Pot.

Make the river park more appealing

a plan for growth, type of businesses, how to make Water Street more attractive and part of Main Street experience

Cleaning up businesses on river front.

Taking care of the ecosystem. You could engage volunteers in this.

Would it be possible to put a park between RFJordan and the mural wall?

Assess health of river and ecosystems. Create a plan to ensure river and ecosystem health that integrates into beautifying the city and providing people access.

Negotiating to acquire rights of way for a paved walking/ jogging/biking pathway on the Water Street river bank as far out as possible (beyond Harbor Park and connecting to Infian Point and Jordan Homestead trailheads.

View of river

Remove the dam.

Look at what other towns have done that have a thriving waterfront

It must be clean. Regardless of access, no-one will enjoy a dirty river with trash on the shores.

Make the waterfront park more inviting. If economic development leaders could entice R.F.Jordan and Maine Shellfish to relocate to the industrial park, that would be a huge first step.

Reclaim riverfront properties between the harbor park and the bridge.

Right of ways for a walking trail along the river from Harbor Park to the library

Clean up and access!

awareness- if people don't realize what is already in place they certainly won't be using it

Trail from Union River Bridge to dam

Municipal leadership and investment coupled with private capital and conservation partners.

Plan and execute a riverside connection between Main Street and the Harbor Park/

A connecting path from Main Street to Harbor Park.

I'm not sure. I'm more focused on the horror show that is our sewage treatment and the dam's environmental problems.

More well designed and advertised (signage) access points.

If I had a magic wand...I'd move every Water Street business between Coastal Interiors and Harbor Park out to one of the Industrial parks and turn the west side of Water Street into a big grassy park that can handle periodic flooding - because there will be flooding in the future. Allow maybe one structure - public restrooms. Install curb and gutter, a sidewalk, maybe a path close to the river. Imagine the view looking downriver! Then, develop the east side of Water street with apartments and/or a boutique hotels. Get more people living/staying within walking distance of the existing retail/restaurant spaces. Oh for the magic wand!

Create more accessible walking access.

We GOTTA clear out the industrial businesses between the Union River bridge and the Harbor Park. It use to be a working water



front for businesses that needed to be on the water. RF Jordan is not river-based, the Shellfish Company is not river-based, the car and print shop is not river based. (Not sure about Dead River Co.) None of those need to be there. They can move out to the industrial parks on Route 3 or 1A, the print shop can move to Main street area, etc. Clear it out, and put in an amazing open access park. It would also be great to have riverfront restaurant, but have it be 3 stories high with the first story open with free seating/play area so that is still public space and will not ruin the building in the event of flooding. Check out “The Gathering Place” in Tulsa, Oklahoma for one of the most highly award winning river-side developments in the country. <https://www.gatheringplace.org/> We could do a small version of that between Union River bridge and the Harbor Park that is friendly to families, recreation, and some economic development. But I would caution against privatizing it with business, because if you have an amazing waterfront, then it will send folks to existing businesses on Main Street. (That being said, if everything is closed on Sundays, then visitors to the park might be frustrated.) Also, the Kaiser Family Foundation funded The Gathering Place, so I think Ellsworth could also work with a foundation to fund the majority of the project.

Creating a park like space behind the library, if possible.

Removing industrial businesses (and restricting construction vehicles) and allowing for intentional community spaces & community-based biz

There is a beautiful facility there now. I just don’t think people know about it. A walking path like Brewer has would be amazing.

Music venue on the river

Revive and connect the waterfront to walking access.

Emphasize picnic and walking trails

RF Jordan while a good business takes up too much valuable space on the riverfront. The opportunity to have that space for retail and leisure cannot be overstated.

Clean up the banks and put a trail in.

The City needs to rezone Water Street to gradually move current shorefront businesses, lay the ground work for a river walk and a redeveloped waterfront focused on recreation and businesses that support that kind of activity

Protecting the river bank and watershed.

Remove R.F. Jordan from the PRIME Union River location.

# Q16 Continued

Signage and parking for access to pathways.

Assure water quality

move RF Jordans to a business park and develop a park or brew pub or some eating establishment along the river

Clean Overgrowth. What do you want to eat it

Walking access. Restaurants along the river with views. Festivals in the park.

More parking by the river. Sometimes it’s just nice to park by the river a look around.

city buy up any waterfront property that is available

Build, parking, signage, advertising

Little places to stop and eat lunch.

Water Street buildings need renovations-keep the historic aspect but improve the ones that look dilapidated

Work towards acquiring waterfront property for family friendly activities instead of non-river related businesses. Put a hotel or park on the river bank (either side of the river!).

Recognized high quality individual for leadership with support of city council and all other stakeholders. Also have to have \$ in support.

Having an accessible river walk available to everyone.

Creating or publicizing a public boat launch area(s) above and below the dam...having some guided tours/partner with an MDI store for some events, eg. paddle boarding day on Leonard lake, or paddle from Graham Lake Dam to where the Union empties into the Gulf with assisted portage around dams... do it a few times and people will know what to do and how to do this...

City to purchase land and or easements and start protecting the resource.....Confused on the ranking for question 10- is was the highest priority?

Access and fun

More accessible, walking paths, parks act. More recreation.

Down with the dam

Getting RF Jordan to move, obviously.

Information

Persuade Jordan Trucking to move out. The city should have acquired that property. Those big trucks are not only unsightly but also beat up our roads.Develop a river walk by accessing rights-of-ways.

Acquire Jordan property

Develop a river walk along the river from at least the dam to the marina. Go further down river if at all possible. Put a park in instead of a private business.

Signage to direct people to existing access to the river and promotion of the use of these spaces.

How about a kayak/canoe rental business at the marina. The more leisure options we offer, the more people will come, spend money, and make for a thriving, lively downtown.

Dredging

Clean up water street river front.

finish the river trail

Move eyesore businesses out and create a river walk with nearby park and food trucks

Encourage/incentivize Eyesore businesses to relocate

Relocate industrial businesses.

Expand and improve the waterfront park.

Rid Water Street of eyesore businesses and redevelop with parks/boutique lodging/walking paths

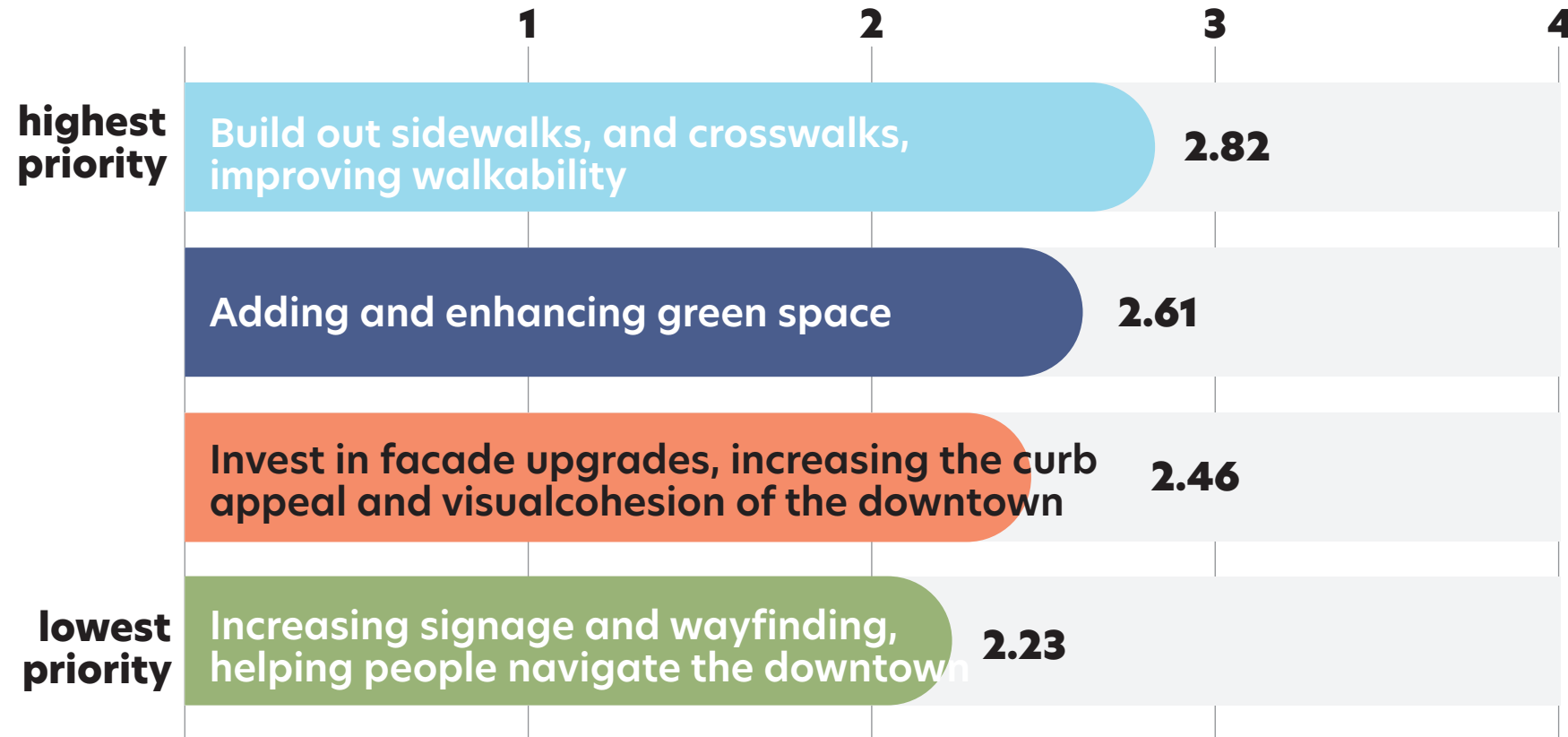
Moving RF Jordan to another location.

It’s a potential asset...totally underutilized...not much of an asset in its current form.

Connect down town to Harbor Park by foot path. Connect the trail behind the library up to Knowlton Park. Get rid of industry that does not need to be in town or on the river, is not a driver for visitors or locals to come to town, and adds to big noisy trucks in down town.

## Q17 IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE

As with any historical downtown, there is a need to improve and enhance the built environment. Please rank the following infrastructure improvements by priority (with 1 being the highest priority).



**103** total responses



# Q18 Would you like to share specific ideas for improvements?

## RECURRING THEMES

increase greenspaces and trees  
upgrade crosswalks and walkways  
relieve traffic  
more parking

Bring back trees to downtown.

Making downtown Ellsworth walkable, approachable, Shoppable, eatable. Creating an environment that reflects the individuality of Ellsworth!

The little parklet in front of city hall last year was lovely. It would be nice to add live music on weekends or even be able to order food from downtown restaurants and have it delivered there.

Facade improvement programs with emphasis on historic restoration and vintage store signs are big impact items for the money.

Signage is key to locations. City Hall is lovely building. More green around it? Benches? Riverwalk will draw people in. Extend/improve challenging walk beside beautiful Library. Huge source of improvement overall. Need a brand for the City. Quaint. Elegant. Picturesque. Open spaces. Love Harbor Park. Would be great to connect to Union River Bridge.

This one was hard as they are all so important. Trees in particular are needed.

The crosswalks at the bottom of main by the union river bridge are terrifying. That light is really scary to cross at as a pedestrian and sometimes I drive from downtown just to Rooster Brother to avoid crossing the street. Too many people making right on reds to and from the bridge to feel confident they're actually looking for pedestrians.

More pedestrian friendly please.

Minimize impact of empty premises (i.e. use them in the interim for charitable purposes or at least decorate the shop windows).

We need a community garden!

There are a lot of little pocket parks, but most people don't know

about them - like the one behind the Creamery or at the Marina.

Add bicycle lane. Add crosswalk flexible posts in roadway for pedestrian crossing safety and visibility. Shorten time for traffic light button waiting time at corner of Main and State St.

Crosswalks need to have process to get them repainted earlier in the Spring. Can we get equipment that can be used by the city staff, different than what is needed for other road painting.

The current path along the river, from the library to the dam, is a good place to start. Maybe expand it? Add small signage about the local fish and wildlife, or the native plants? Something for the history of the dam?

Crossing from the southwest side of Main Street to the northwest side is scary. Left turn traffic from Water Street is rushing to make the light and doesn't look for pedestrians.

Have Jordan's construction move out of downtown. Replace with greenspace, retail, restaurants.

Greenspaces should be connected throughout Ellsworth by bike/walking paths.

I believe build outs will help slow traffic, making walking more appealing.

Please don't install those high stone curbs that kill cyclists! I'd love to see it more bicycle friendly and safer for bikes and kids. At the same time we have to be realistic. A lot of traffic is moving through Main St. Much of it very focused on getting somewhere else.

More attractive and inviting sidewalks and green spaces.

The first impression (attractive with an appearance of vitality or energy) is the key to getting me to stop and get out of my car.

People on the sidewalks, open businesses. Does it look pleasant? IMO... the only signage that is important is public parking and public restrooms. Everything else detracts from the businesses themselves and creates too much for the eye to handle while driving through. Banners on the light posts are cool and help to delineate the neighborhood. Downtown is what, 10-12 square blocks total? People will find there way around. Put signage \$ into online content - search engine optimization - reviews - Trip Advisor - Google - Atlas Obscura.... Create the impression of vitality.

More crosswalks and build-outs to slow traffic. Main Street in Kennebunk, Maine did a great job of this. I would also recommend a scramble crosswalk at the intersection of Main and Water streets. It's VERY dangerous to cross there because so many folks do not obey the traffic signals. And you should not be allowed to turn left from the bridge onto State Street. It's an absolute mess to drive through and to walk through. I would also add "Village Connector Trail" between Washington Street and Hancock Street. This would connect apartments to Main Street. I would add a flashing crosswalk on Birch Avenue crossing Oak Street to connect neighborhoods to the Rail Trail. There is no where to safely cross as a pedestrian between the neighborhoods. I don't take my kids to the large intersections because of the volume of traffic, so I wait forever to run/bike across Oak street safely. Also it would be great to have a flashing crosswalk between the Machias Savings Bank and the Downeast Sunrise Trail behind Comfort Inn. Again, you're connecting neighborhoods to the trail that can't safely cross. Right now, I drive 2 blocks to go walk/run on the trail because I don't want to play frogger... My last recommendation is dumpsters. Why are there dumpsters everywhere in downtown? Hancock Street, Main Street, Church Street? What...why? Please work with businesses to consolidate them, hide them behind some nice partitions, and empty them 2x a week instead of 1 to reduce the smell. Folks coming to the city have to park and then walk past 2-3 dumpsters on their way to dinner or a show. It is not a good impression of the city.

I think Heart of Ellsworth has done a great job already of adding

signage and maps, and the downtown business look better than ever. Keep doing what you're doing.

signs & sidewalks

Walkability should be a number one priority. The intersections are dangerous. The walk signals rarely work correctly and drivers seem to have no idea that pedestrians have any right to be there. I cross the intersection at Main and Water several times a day and have had many close calls. It would be great to see law enforcement pay attention and to have the City see how the walk signals send the wrong message to drivers (when they don't change to walk, the drivers seem to think we need to just die on that corner)

Re-route heavy traffic

The outdoor dining space that was created during Covid-19 was a tremendous idea. It should be, at the least, a seasonal option. The "map" on the wall in the space is another fine addition to downtown. Downtown is NOT walker friendly, and is outright dangerous during tourist season. There must be a way to make it safer to navigate on foot and more inviting to stop and visit when driving thru.

You don't mention the serious need to improve the storm water system. If you had placed it in the ranking options above it would have been my second priority. You also fail to mention infrastructure to redirect traffic AWAY from the downtown as has been done in Belfast and Rockland (with good results in redirecting people back into those downtown areas.

Make the R.F. Jordan location a park

Increase signage for attractions downtown. Use banners across Main Street for events. Hold a street fair in Franklin Street parklet.

benches

fix our roads - When directing visitors to Ellsworth, I tell them to look the city with badly maintained roads

A walk along the river with a walking bridge over the river. More benches and picnic tables.

Don't go crazy with too much signage. I used to live in Mystic CT and it was lovely. Not you can't look anywhere with looking at a sign. Ruined its charm.

# Q18 Continued

If the downtown is going to grow, give serious consideration to parking.

All of the options are important. Helping people find parking and green spaces and making it easy/safe to get to them will all help.

Build out: currently take your life in your hands walking up Bridge Hill especially if stuck on right hand side of road on way up. Left side not much better.

Green spaces , picnic tables, a walking trail along the river

Ellsworth's business community needs to get more education on the benefits of protecting their old buildings. A historic district could provide incentives and funds to have a real historic downtown...they can easily lose their beautiful downtown.

Closing off the space near Elizabeth's for traffic was nice. Better sidewalk access and signage would help.

fewer giant parking lots, better local bus service, making pedestrian crossings safer ( cars turning at corner of Maine and water nearly run you down)

Upgrade sidewalks

Improve walkability, increasing curb appeal

Can't walk and enjoy downtown if there is gridlock traffic every afternoon on main street and high street. Start bypass at cheese house on rt3, roads are already there. Connect with 1a by intersection with river. Start now so this can be completed in our lifetimes.

There's not much room for greenspace near Maine St. but every very flower box helps.

Bring back the original facades of the historic buildings downtown. Get the downtown area as a historic district to allow for Historic Preservation grants

sidewalks through all of downtown would help residents enjoy Main Street more easily. there needs to be better signage directing people passing through to Main Street

Move Walmart out! Use Belfast as a downtown model.

Remove commercial trucks from Main Street

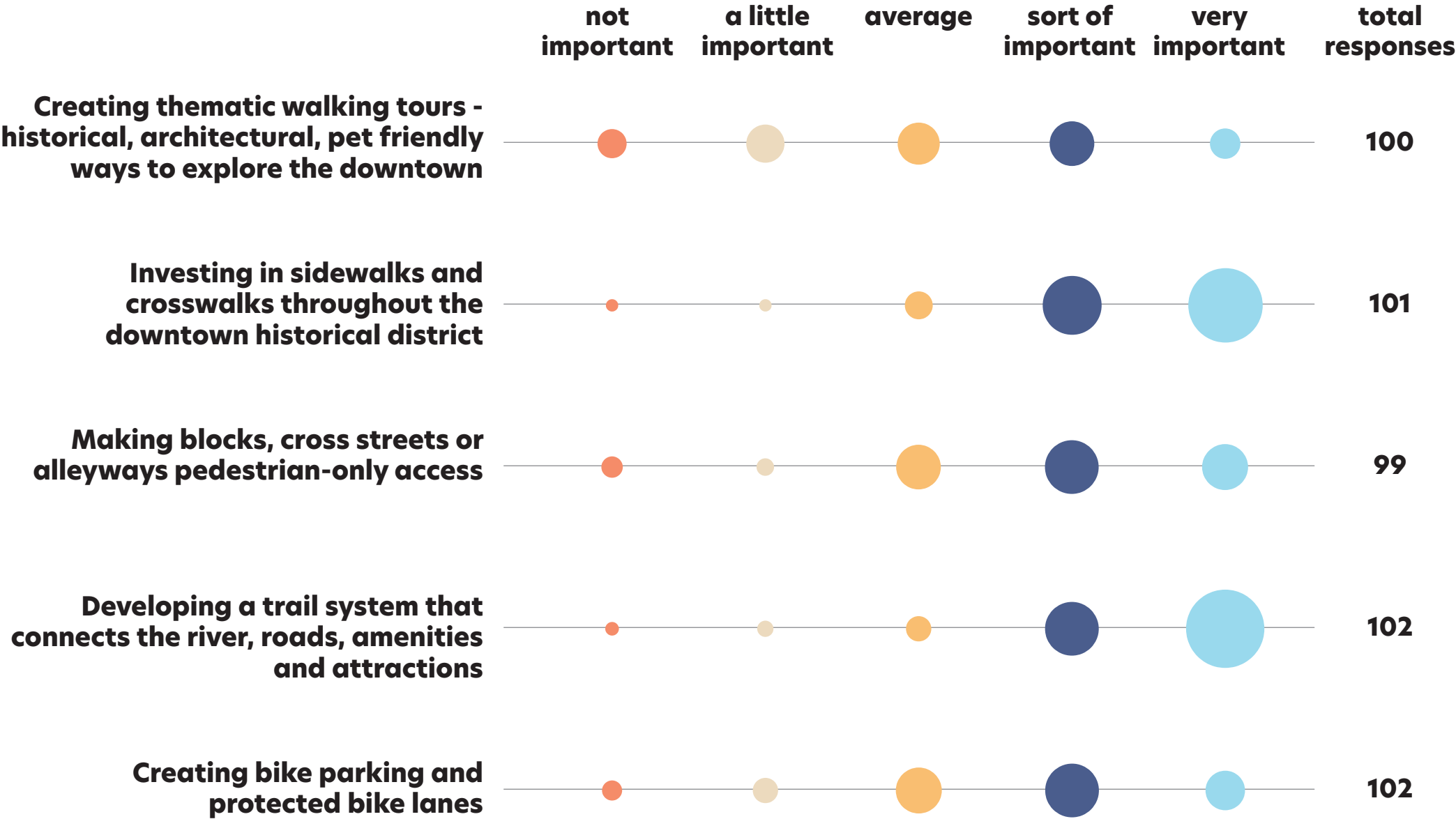
Make the "parklet " permanent Facade grants.

Improved green space, outdoor dining wall ability. The area behind new berry's and grasshopper etc could be so much more

The idea that ped stuff downtown needs some vast improvement is bogus...it's already pretty good and much better than many places...people really do stop for pets! Spruce it up but the basic design downtown is okay.

A truckers buy pass would be ideal, by default making it a more walk-able city. Again, the lack of public bathroom access is a huge issue in town. When I think of most of the successful small historical downtown's, this is an issue that is resolved. Not putting a burden on stores and restaurants.

# Q19 Creating a walkable downtown invites people to explore and enjoy all that downtown has to offer. Where do your interests fall on the following:



# Q20 Is there anything else you want us to consider or think about as we develop the best plan for Downtown Ellsworth?

## RECURRING THEMES

keep historical values  
expand downtown  
promote the arts  
better traffic control

I think the concept of downtown has to be expanded to include much more than the short section of Main Street. Downtown is not cohesive and feels unfinished and unplanned.

It would be great for Ellsworth to be walkable with outdoor dining options and excellent river access. Creating parks with food/truck access, shops selling local makers goods, more open air markets.

I think if we make the downtown a destination where people feel comfortable and relaxed, business will thrive.

Wishing everyone the best in managing a beautiful city.

Build on existing assets and cherish historic buildings. Find ways for more people to live downtown—more apartments/condos above stores? Are there any now?

Main street has excellent sidewalks/crosswalks. Focus on walks and trails. Traffic patterns are good, but need to facilitate flow patterns to accommodate closed streets. Signage must precede any traffic alterations months in advance, clearly indicating when changes will begin.

As much as I love and support the Emmaus Center I wish they could relocate. It is such a prime spot and of good size though parking is terrible and would be no matter what is there. I'd like to see the downtown extend more down Water St. Therefore RF Jordan needs to go. The PO is another issue. It needs to be relocated. Parking is terrible and it takes up a lot of prime real estate and messes up traffic. Consolidated Comm being on Main St. is a waste too. Acadia Realty did a great job improving the appearance of that building and Margarita's did a nice job improving that building and making the most of the footprint with outside dining.

Bringing shops and restaurants more up towards the Main/High intersection. As the main thoroughfare to the island most tourists

drive right by. A sign pointing to downtown is not as appealing as a vibrant storefront or dining option

Think of creating an indoor marketplace like the one Belfast offers cause it is the best model ever!!!!

Improve and maintain health of river and the wildlife who live there.

Buses, public transportation

Im thinking about Belfast and what makes it so appealing and wondering if there are ideas and lessons learned to steal from them. The big attractions for me there are Fiddleheads artisan supply, the yarn shop, the game store, and the earth store. Diversity in retail offerings such a those could make Ellsworth a much more attractive shopping destination. You can also access the waterfront and there is a pedestrian-only bridge. That's a huge investment and May not make sense for Ellsworth, but that accessibility and diversity of options is why I'll make the trip to Belfast. Would love to see Ellsworth continue to develop AND be a place locals can continue to live- are there ways to create or preserve housing downtown that is still affordable ?

At least one bicycle shop. A bicycle rental. Trolley.

Bicycles, community gardens, and more outdoor dining options. Thank you!

A lot of us don't want to lose the hometown feel of Ellsworth. Making sure to accommodate locals, not just tourists, is going to be really important.

An Ellsworth van type bus to circulate regularly from downtown to Harbor Park to Black Mansion, food pantry new location, State St. at Mill Mall, hospital, shopping mall at Reny's and Hannaford, High Street, Resort Way medical offices, Etc. The Ellsworth city van! Another is a City Recreation Commission to offer staffed

playground areas eith assorted sports and activities. Growing up in the City of Quincy, Mass. had such for school age kids from baseball, softball, tennis lessons, arts and crafts, playground, all staffed with junior and senior high school kids at the playground locations from like 9am-2pm just for the summer.. It gave us alla place to go, play, team up, learn, play board games on hot summer afternoons in the shade. We played against other playground trams with baseball and softball. The one arts and crafts adult circulated among the playgrounds during the week on a schefule, as did the adult tennis instructor. I learned tennis basics, practices and at season end a city wide tournament and it was my sport for decades thereafter.Kids around here seem to have a lot time thst could be much more constructively spent and maybe help alleviate some unstructured free time.

Don't lose the historic value, don't over modernize. Part of Ellsworth's charm is it's ties to it's history.

Businesses like a cement plant should on the Bucksport Road will create truck traffic through downtown. Economic Development Leadership missed an opportunity to locate this business in the industrial park, rather than near a residential neighborhood and 1000s of acres of conservation land.

Percent for art, public art

I appreciate that you are doing this. I'm thrilled that our little city is looking toward the future! Speaking of the future: expanding electric car charging stations will eventually be necessary.

Make it easier to cross from the east sides of High Street and Oak Street to the west sides.

Are you thinking about removing the dam to bring back the fish? I can see both sides of that issue. I would love to see some food trucks, maybe in the park by Rooster Brother. Personally I would really like to see a right hand turn lane on Water St as you are heading north to State St... eliminate those 3 parking spaces. The traffic is just so horrendous at the light. It seems like there's quite



a bit of unused real estate on Main St. Is there a way to give businesses subsidies? Losing Grasshopper Shop was a big loss I think. Fantasy plan: build a parking garage behind the bank (to handle the parking) and use the rest of that big parking area to create a downtown green space with more room for farmers market and food truck scene.

Do something Bold, eye-catching and unique to create some buzz.

I've lived in Ellsworth since 2002. In that time there have been a number of improvements made. We are trending in the right direction. After several decades of prioritizing cars, its time to make people the focus. Walk-able, bike-able, trees, green spaces and vibrant businesses are what make other downtown attractive. Keep up the good work!

While I was sharing ideas for improvements, which can also be critical, I want to say thank you so much for doing this work! It's amazing and it will benefit Ellsworth for so many years to come.

Downtown lodging options. A place to stay that is walkable from bars and restaurants.

Staff accommodation

Ellsworth has opportunities to improve downtown before. None of the suggestions here are new. This time, make something happen. Start with the river - have you seen Hallowell??

There needs to be attention to animating the downtown area year round and can't and shouldn't be the responsibility of one organization. There needs to be a collective effort to do this. An outcome of this asset mapping could be to identify key elements in downtown Ellsworth's "brand" along with key organizations/businesses/city departments that can/should take the leadership for profiling those assets through key initiatives and activities.

Promote visual arts in conjunction with the river and green-spaces for economic stability and youth heritage.

Continue to close the street in front of City Hall during the summer/fall months

Create a cohesive look with flags that indicate downtown. Encourage outdoor dining.

Maybe try to clean up Water Street a bit, although I know that's tricky as it's private property. It's pretty dumpsy in places by the

## Q20 Continued

water where it could be a huge asset to Ellsworth.

Keep it looking quaint. I love all the flower containers. Community garden containers would be really great!

The traffic at the Water Street Main Street intersection needs to flow better.

Keep the historical assets as a theme to improve the existing presence.

Traffic control (where lights are, how traffic is encouraged to flow) was not really mentioned in the survey. Improving the flow of traffic to suit the next phases of development must be an integral part of the plan.

Cooperation, coordination and involvement should be watchwords of all interested political and economic entities.

Make things more family friendly

Figuring out a way to divert some of the tourist traffic away from the downtown would enhance the Seasonal experience for locals and those who wish to stop. Bypass options! Also, the Water St/State/Main St intersection is a major problem. Not my original idea - but make the left lane on bridge a left turn only lane, and the right lane a straight/right turn lane would help - would need to take out a few parking spaces on lower right corner or Main... but those are a danger to park in during busy times anyway. I know this next point interferes with private business...but having Jordan's trucking in a major river lot is a poor use of space. Is there a way the City could swap some land with that company and add an economic incentive of some sort to get trucking off Water Street, and convert that lot into some green space/river access/food truck/biking hub experience??? I'd really endorse City Council to look into this one.

We already have nice alley ways and cross streets , We have a museum in the streets signage....need to keep going! Street trees would be a nice improvement, the downtown can get hot in the summer.

Expand the downtown. Increase housing downtown. Make downtown a destination.

Unfortunately we are "on the way" to everywhere and not a real destination. Truck traffic delivering inventory clogs up roads is noisy. Parking giant trucks to deliver goods to stores like rooster brother makes living on or visiting nearby small roads unpleasant.

Suggestion (farfetched) restore freight rail, and a depot, encourage small delivery trucks

Continue to seek involvement from interested people and experts in city improvements

Need a ring road. Then, the center of town would "belong" to the people who truly wish to be there!

Control how and what business comes to Ellsworth and beautification of the buildings. Too bad car wash going in on High street.

Increase the number of floors for buildings in mixed use buildings so we can have affordable housing within walking distance.

Diverting traffic by building a bypass would help a lot. It would be a big project, would be awesome if there were an initiative to have Maine DOT look into this. It would improve things immensely.

Create a left turning lane on the Union River Bridge at the lower Main St traffic light.

Better route signage to aid the flow of traffic prior to intersections. Make no left turn off the bridge on to State street, as traffic backups just aid visitors frustrations with the city as a whole.

more development of walkability and connection to the Union River will create a better downtown for local residents and more for tourists to enjoy as well

Tell the city manager to favor small local shops over national chains.

Create a bypass for trucking/trailer/ camper traffic

Less talk, more action. How many times do we need to go through this exercise? Visioning, green plan, this current activity...

we need a downtown community space. For events, winter farmers market, holiday pop up shops, maker events, craft markets, area businesses to host a Holiday party or event, etc.