



# Public Input – Initial Summary

## Introduction

Public opinion surveys are important to assess public thoughts when planning for large public expenditures. The survey results show public positions or reactions to proposals, and they can also gauge preferences for, or perceptions about, certain design features. Overall, surveys are useful for obtaining better information to enhance an agency's understanding, not only of public concerns, but also of the process of public involvement. An agency can respond to survey results by providing missing or inadequate information that did not get through to the public or was misinterpreted. This layer of outreach adds to the meaningful discussion of issues deemed important by respondents or can lead to design adjustments in a project. Basic demographic data is requested so that the results can be compared with the larger demographic data of a community to understand what segments of the population participated in the survey, and what segments might still need to be reached.

## Methodology

The online survey was launched on August 25, 2017. The survey was delivered via email, word of mouth, Facebook posts and re-posts as well as link postings to the City's webpages. Information about the survey was also announced and promoted at a Main Street Redevelopment public meeting held on August 21, 2017. Flyers were also posted at the Kingsport City Hall, the Kingsport Chamber of Commerce, the Kingsport Public Library and the Downtown Kingsport Association.

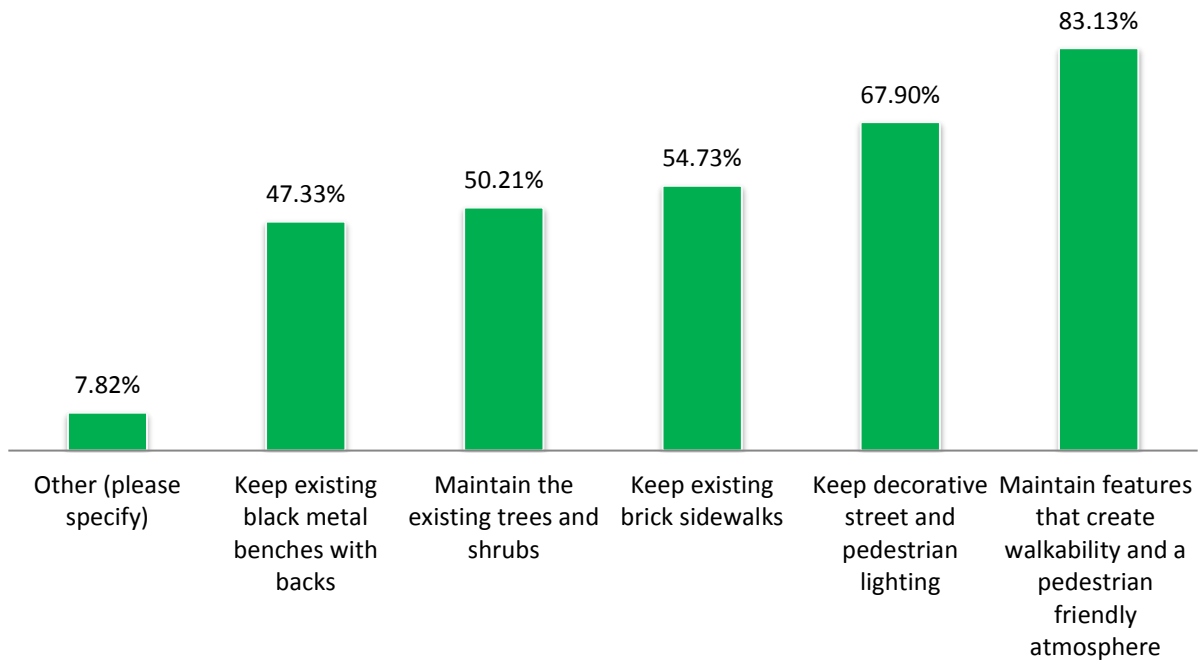
The survey closed on September 14, 2017, at midnight. A total of 245 participants responded to the online survey and approximately 98% completed all the questions. For a population the size of Kingsport, with almost 52,806 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau July 1, 2016 estimate, this sample size gives our researchers a confidence level of 95% with a confidence interval of 6.25.

## Survey Findings

Citizen input is critical to the successful redevelopment of Main Street. The input gathered from the residents, business owners and patrons will drive the recommendations of the final plan. The following charts and graphs illustrate some of the survey responses.

Figure 1:

**What features or amenities would you like to see preserved along the streetscape in the Downtown Core (Section 2: Cherokee Street and Clay Street)?**

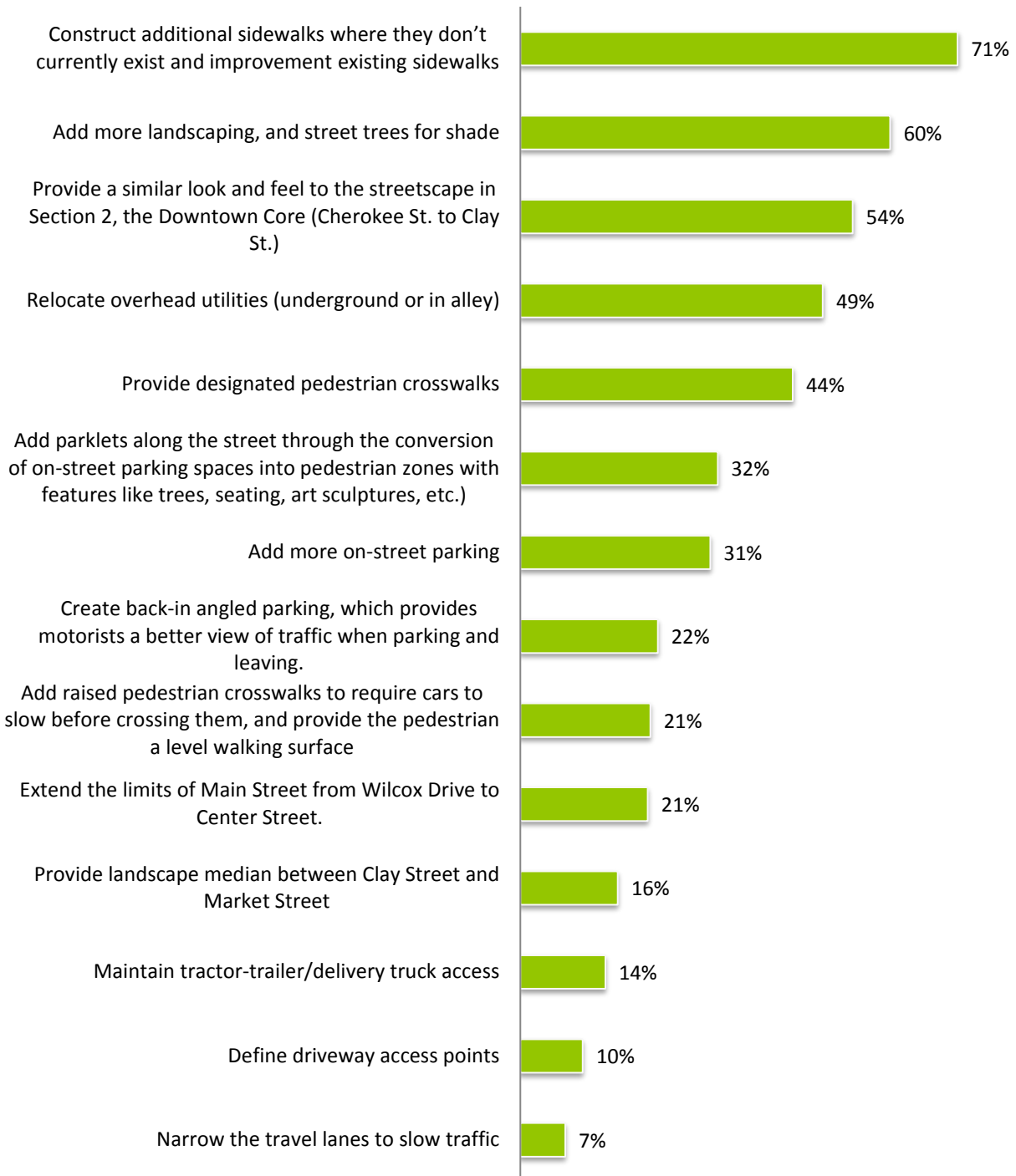


The responses to this question indicate that there is a strong desire for multiple infrastructure elements that are currently existing in the streetscape that create a walkable and pedestrian friendly atmosphere to remain, such as shade trees, bike racks, intersection bump-outs/curb extensions, with 83% percent of respondents selecting this choice. Following behind that was the desire to maintain the furnishings that enhance a pedestrian environment, such as decorative lighting (67.9%), brick sidewalks (54.7%), landscaping (50.2%) and benches (47.3%).

***Key Take-way: Maintain the existing streetscape elements that are viewed as contributing positively to the pedestrian environment along the corridor.***

**Figure 2:**

**What top 5 roadway and sidewalk features are important to include along the streetscape beyond the Downtown Core? (Section 1: Sullivan Street to Cherokee Street and Section 3: Clay Street to Market Street)**





Similar to the responses on what elements of the existing streetscape to preserve, responses to desired roadway and sidewalk features in Sections 1 and Section 3 of the study area focused on the core infrastructure needed to create a pedestrian friendly environment. The category most selected was to construct new sidewalks where they don't currently exist or to improve existing sidewalks (71%) and adding landscaping and shade trees (60%). The desire for a cohesive look to the entire corridor was also high ranking (54%) though the desire to extend the limits of Main Street beyond its current designation did not rank high (21%).

Almost half of the responses (49%) indicated a desire to relocate overhead utilities to the alley or to place them underground. Designated areas for pedestrian crossing ranked high (44%) though the desire for raised pedestrian crosswalks was not ranked as high (21%).

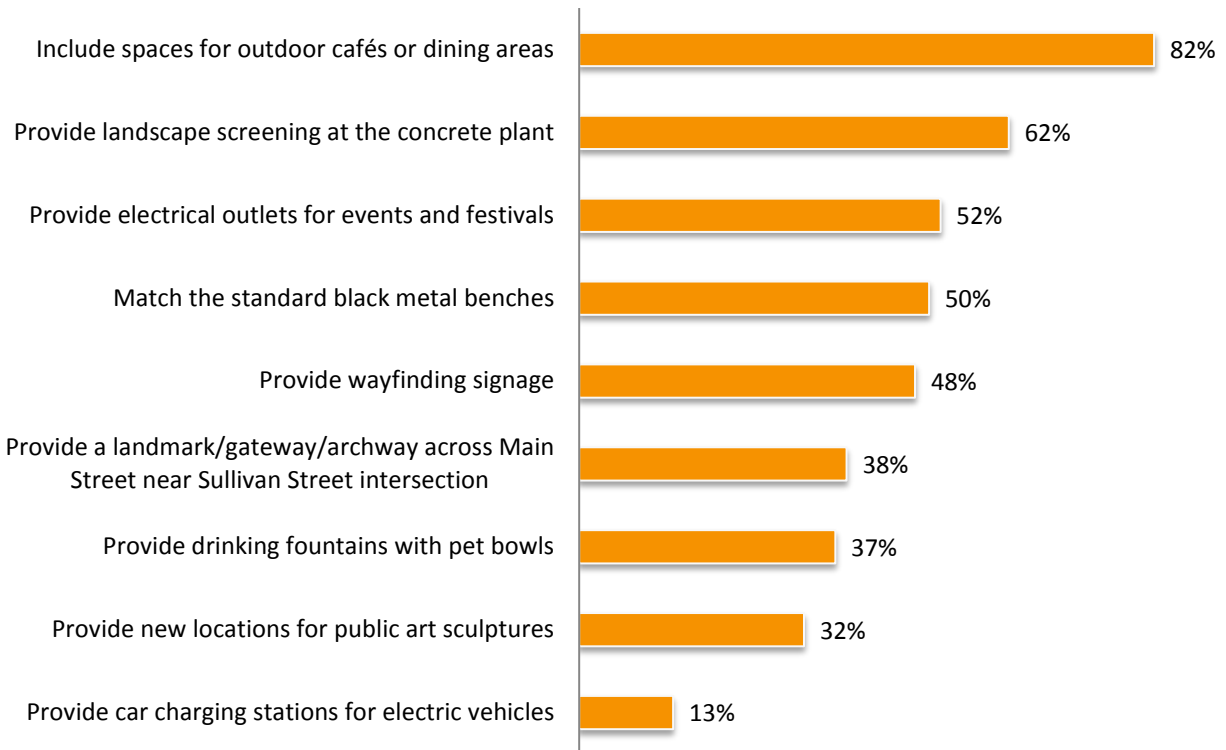
The desire to either add more on-street parking (32%) or to convert some of the existing on-street parking spaces to "parklets" (31%) was not as important to respondents, nor was the idea to add a landscaped median between Clay Street and Market Street (16%). The idea to create back-in angled parking was not ranked as important either (21%).

Features to slow or control traffic flow and operations did not score high in this question either, with only 14% considering it important to maintain truck delivery access, 10% desiring to define driveway access points and only 7% expressing a desire to narrow the travel lanes to slow traffic.

***Key Take-way: Focus on the core pedestrian oriented infrastructure elements, such as filling in sidewalk gaps and adding shade trees, to create a cohesive look along all segments of the corridor.***

**Figure 3:**

**What top 5 streetscape amenities are important to include that will enhance the mixed use development of retail, offices, dining and residential? (Section 1: Sullivan Street to Cherokee Street and Section 3: Clay Street to Market Street)**



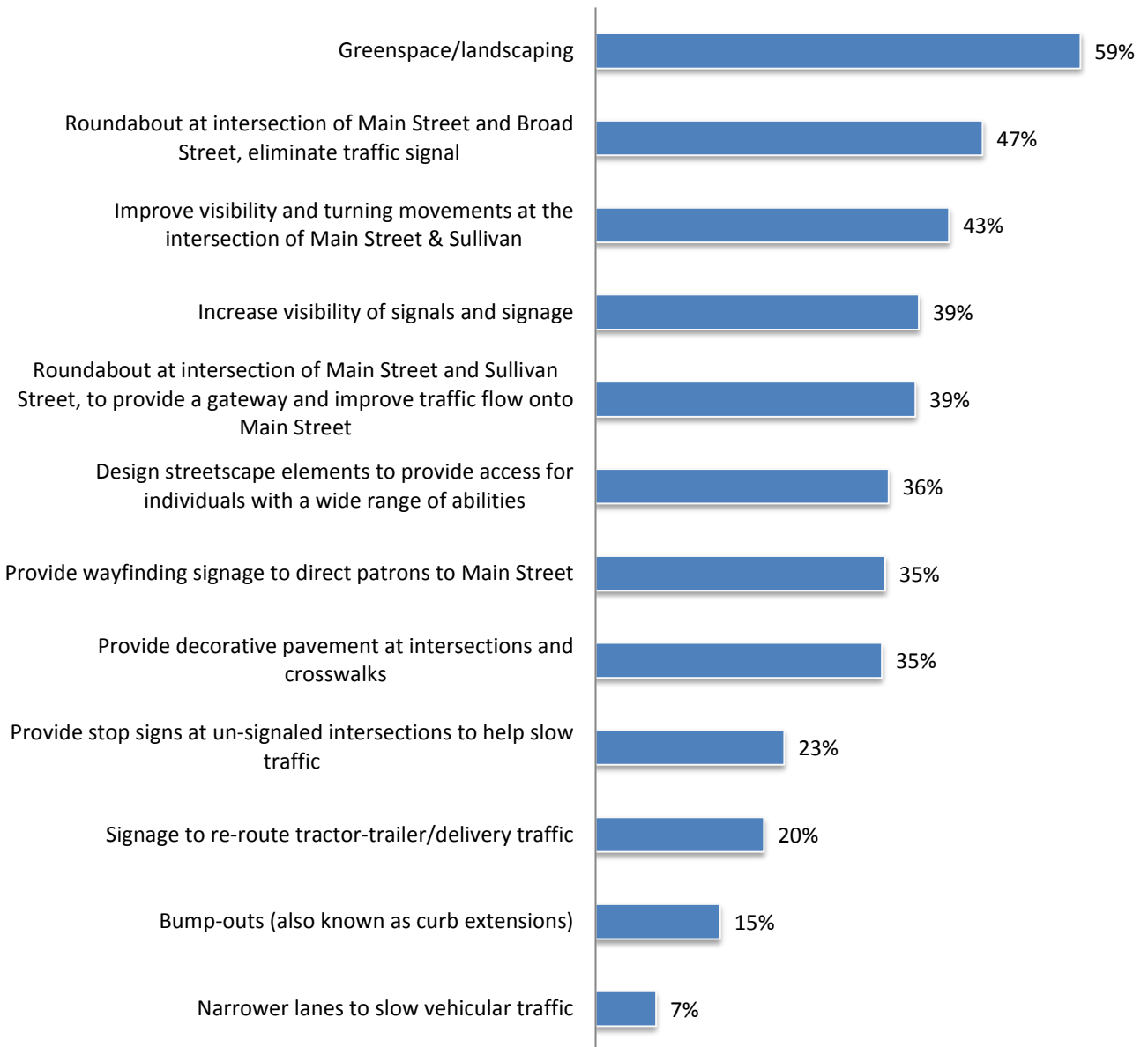
When asked about the top 5 streetscape amenities that will enhance a mixed use environment, respondents most often chose including spaces for outdoor cafes and dining areas (82%). This element is most useful in creating a lively, activity generator into the streetscape. Another high-ranking priority was to provide landscaping to screen the concrete plant (62%). A little over half (52%) consider it important to provide electrical outlets to support events and festivals along the corridor. Half of respondents consider it important to provide new benches and amenities that will match the existing black metal benches. A desire to provide wayfinding signage along the corridor also ranked relatively high (48%). These priorities are consistent with supporting activities that will drive additional pedestrian activity along the corridor.

Details considered less important were gateway treatments (38%), drinking fountains (37%), locations for public art (32%) and electric vehicle charging stations (13%).

*Key Take-away: Create an environment and the support for activity generators along the corridor.*

**Figure 4:**

**Overall, what improvements should be incorporated at intersections?**



When respondents were asked what improvements should be incorporated at intersections, greenspace/landscaping (59%) was the highest ranked improvement. The next highest ranking priorities were related to improving the vehicular experience – creating a roundabout at the intersection of Main Street and Broad Street and improving visibility and turning movements at the intersection of Main Street and Sullivan Street.

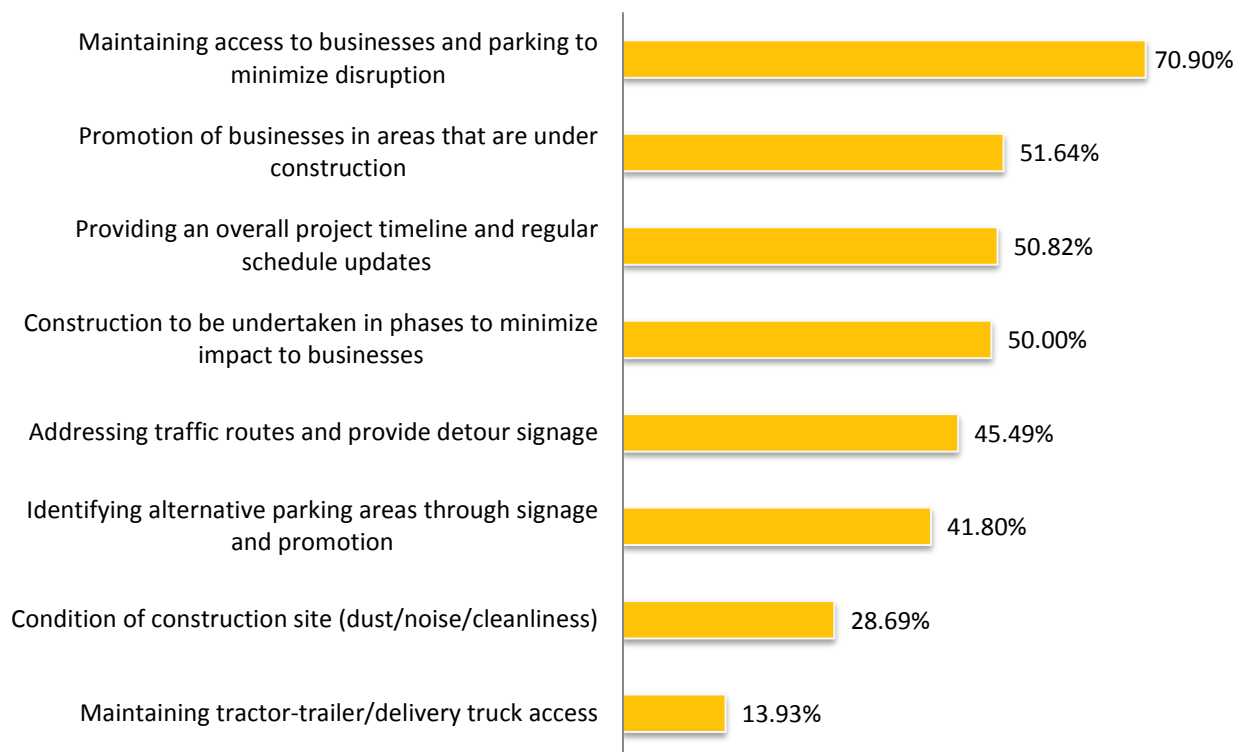
There were 6 items receiving similar rankings by respondents and were split among vehicular improvements and improvements to the pedestrian realm, such as way finding, safety for a variety of users and decorative pavements to differentiate pavement at cross walks and intersections.

Consistent with the results from other questions, items related to delivery traffic and regulating traffic speed were not chosen as the most important items to tackle with this project.

*Key take-away: The comments were focused on improving visibility, safety and aesthetics at intersections for visitors in vehicles and on foot.*

**Figure 5:**

**What are the most important concerns or issues regarding construction?**

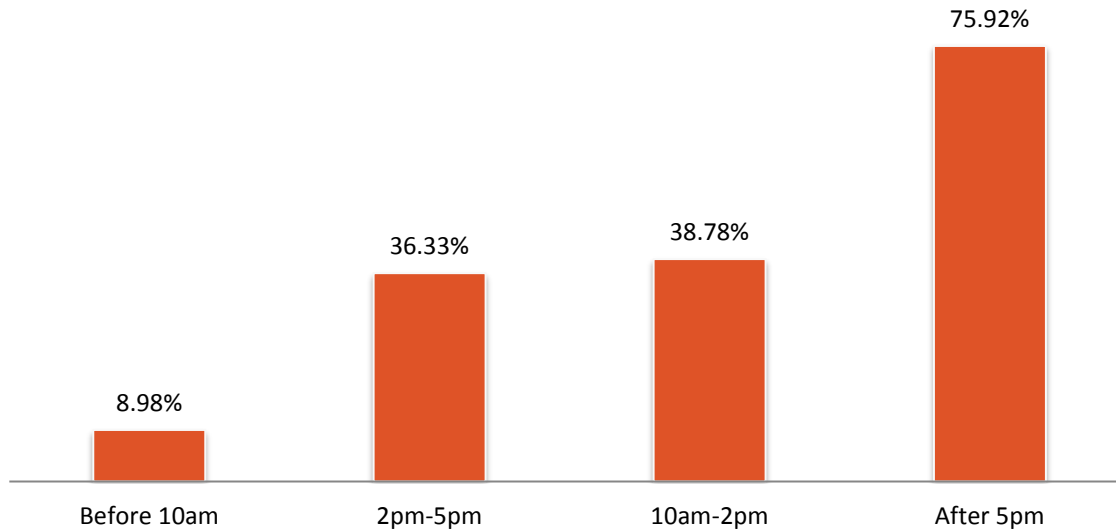


Those taking the survey responded that it was most important to maintain access to businesses and parking during construction to minimize disruptions (70.9%). The next three highest ranked options support the top choice, with half of respondents indicating that it is important to promote the businesses in the areas impacted by construction, provide project timelines and regular updates, and undertake construction in phases to minimize impacts to businesses. Just under half thought it was important to add signage to address alternative routes and alternative parking areas. Of less concern were the condition of the construction site and access for delivery trucks.

*Key Take-away: Support activity generators along the corridor by taking steps to prepare them for construction activity, and promote alternative traffic routes or parking locations to the public, to allow normal business activity to continue during construction.*

**Figure 6:**

**What hours are most convenient for you to shop, dine or visit Main Street? (check all that apply)**



The majority of survey respondents report that they visit Main Street in the evenings, after 5 pm. The period around lunch time (10 am - 2 pm) was the second most frequently reported (38.8%) but the afternoon was almost as popular. Few reported visiting the area before 10 am.

*Key take-away- The area is most frequently visited in the evening. The results indicate that effort should be put into making Main Street a mixed-use environment with more visitors throughout the earlier part of the day, however, the results may also indicate that there could be more opportunity for businesses and activities that appeal to evening crowds.*

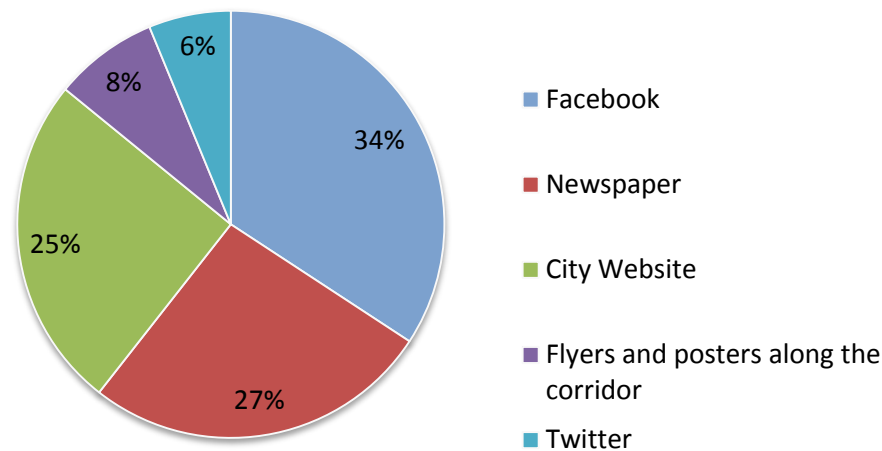


## Public Outreach

Keeping the public informed through the design and construction process is critical to a successful project. No single method is sure to reach the entire target audience, so several methods should be employed to have successful coverage.

**Figure 8:**

### How would you like to receive information about the project and the construction process?



*Key take-away: It is important to provide information concerning phasing and schedules regularly to help businesses prepare for the disruption caused by construction. This information should be shared in a variety of locations and formats and could highlight detours and alternative parking areas in use during certain phases of construction.*

## Demographics

The participants' demographics were primarily female (70%) with a good range of age groups, predominately 35 to 64. Approximately 85% of all respondents identified themselves as living in Kingsport and another 83% identified themselves as patrons of Main Street.

Figure 9:

### What is your gender?

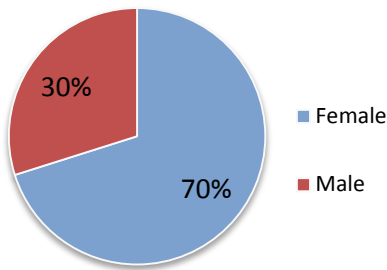


Figure 10:

### Please mark all that apply to you.

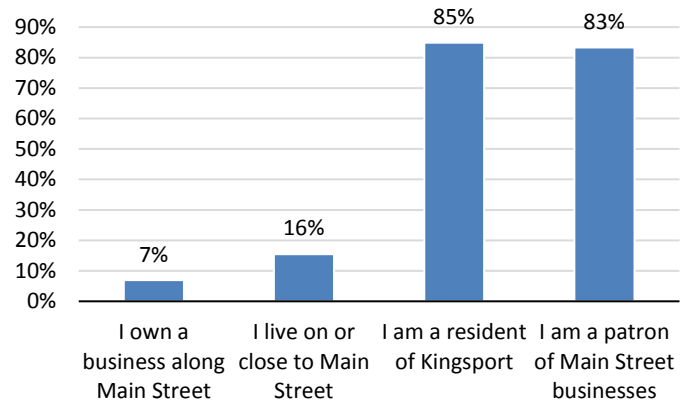
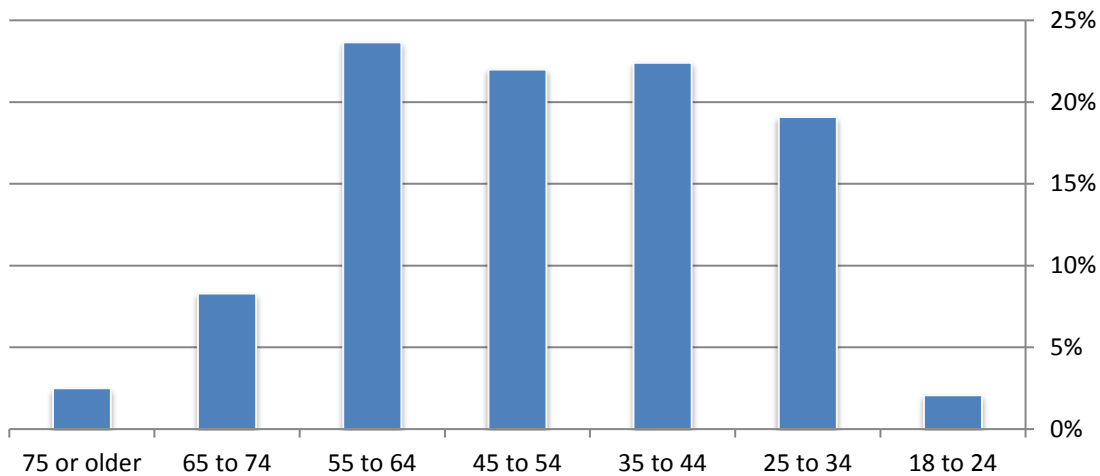


Figure 11:

### What is your age?



*Key take-away: The survey results confirm that the streetscape improvements should be designed to appeal to a wide variety of age groups and physical abilities*

## Respondents' Comments

For the final question in the survey, we asked, "Do you have any additional comments?"

Over 80 comments were gathered as part of this open-ended question.

Below are some selected comments:

- Allow/encourage outside seating for restaurants.
- Brick sidewalks that are not maintained are unsafe and an eyesore. The current brick sidewalks are missing brick which creates a tripping hazard and looks bad. Stamped pavement/concrete or another option should be considered.
- Consider play fountain for decoration and children to play in during warm months. This would be an added draw for families to come downtown. It has been a good addition to downtown Knoxville.
- Consider removing the "speed ramps" at the corner of Main Street and Clinchfield Street. Use high visibility LED type markers embedded in the asphalt for cross walk warnings. Please do not use Bradford Pear [trees]. Bury utilities; upgrade all sewer and water lines to prolong repairs. Renovate the pedestrian tunnel under the RR tracks and make it more visible.
- Don't worry about the aesthetics as much as generating more eateries, breweries, boutiques, etc. [ ] Use the old General Shale property the City is purchasing for an outdoor concert venue with an area for food trucks to park at no charge.
- Downtown Kingsport as it is currently laid out has tons of potential to be the nicest, most charming, and upscale downtown in the Tri-Cities...it just needs new life breathed into it with many improvements made to improve what's already in place, which is why this redevelopment project is exciting. Don't let downtown feel too industrial. Visit top small towns across the country where major revitalization projects have been completed to see the results in those downtowns and to "pick the brains" of locals who help spearhead those efforts. Ensure a real variety of downtown establishments from amazing restaurants across all cuisines to bookstores to entertainment options (theatre, performing arts center), to better coffee shops with an all-day food menu to an apothecary, to an old-fashioned grocery/general store, to furniture markets and home decor (not just junk antiques), to a boutique hotel, etc. Roanoke, Staunton, Lexington, VA are all excellent models.
- Great job! We love living in Kingsport.
- How long will this take, from start to finish?
- How much is this going to cost?
- I am all for updating Main Street, but I would prefer tax dollars be spent wisely and not on big money items that are not really needed.
- I am looking forward to seeing where this project goes!
- I appreciate the efforts to solicit and incorporate stakeholder concerns and suggestions, and the efforts to communicate project plans and details.
- I feel the biggest concern with this project is the impact it will have on Main Street businesses. Therefore, I feel there should be a considerable amount of this work done during the night, and not during business hours.
- I love all the things Kingsport has done to make it one of the best cities in America to live/work/play in.

*"Thank you for asking for resident input!"*

*Everyone likes to be heard!"*



- I love that the City is investing in revitalizing downtown! Centennial Park is awesome! I think the area of most needed improvement is Section 1. The area that is unmaintained across from the Hot Dog Hut is hideous and the triangular lot at the Sullivan and Main Street intersection (that is always overgrown/unmaintained) would make an AWESOME greenspace/park or even an outdoor venue/platform for local musicians to perform! Thank you for all you do and the hard work that goes into making this happen! The citizens of Kingsport DO care and are very excited to see progress!
- I own several properties on Broad and Market Streets. My major concerns are the poor lighting in the retail sections of downtown, the dirty sidewalks, the boarded-up buildings, and the lack of awareness that we have downtown. I hear these comments from customers practically every day. Thank you for asking for our input.
- I would like to see better lighting downtown. The current lighting situation downtown, especially on large portions of Main Street, leaves something to be desired. Replacement of the current high-pressure sodium lights with LED lighting would not only be aesthetically pleasing but provide better visibility and improve safety. There is very poor lighting especially near TNT Sportsplex which makes seeing pedestrians at night very difficult and is dangerous to not only drivers but the pedestrians crossing the street. Many areas surrounding Kingsport have already begun transitioning to LED lighting.
- If possible, divert tractor trailers via Center Street, or other access points to Domtar Paper Company, to increase the lifespan of roads.
- I'm a fan of the streetscape proposals. Speaking with the contractors and designers behind the recent Cumberland Avenue redevelopment in Knoxville would probably be informative.
- Increased signage for all businesses and directional street signs to Main Street would be extremely helpful. Also, more lighting is needed if adding trees to ensure a feeling of safety after dark.
- Install underground fiber while the street is torn up.
- It would be great if you could utilize Cement Hill. It is prime land to complement Main Street that has been underutilized forever.
- Keep traffic flowing with no roundabouts, bump-outs, speed bumps, or backwards parking.
- Keep traffic moving. Wide flat lanes and parallel parking all the way down. No bumps or back-in parking.
- Keep up the good work improving downtown!
- Keep up the good work. Our city continues to get better and better.
- Kingsport has enough roundabouts; please don't add any more.
- Looking forward to seeing the final renovations. It will also help once KATS moves to the vacant land.
- Looking forward to this and the new bus center being completed. This will really improve that portion of our great town.
- Main Street should be treated like a main street. It needs attention, maintenance, and love. Please don't forget that Main Street and especially downtown streets are good for more than just moving cars. This should be a place citizens and visitors are welcomed, want to come to, spend time and money, and want to come back to.
- Make a focus on pedestrian safety in front of TNT and the new transit center. Can we get a bike pump on corridor for cyclists, please?
- Many make fun of our roundabouts, but have they ever been to Savanna GA? The squares define the city and I believe the circles will define Kingsport for many years to come. Besides that, have you ever sat on Broad waiting for the light to change at the Main intersection? Yes, I think a circle would be better!



- My main concern is safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, and more shops. It would be nice if everything needed could be found downtown.
- Need more restaurants and activities that promote downtown businesses. Need a great promotional theme to drive demand downtown
- No bulb-outs, please.
- No bump-outs, roundabouts, or backward parking. This road needs to keep traffic flowing. Don't mess it up like Center Street.
- NO ROUNDABOUTS or BUMPOUTS. Do not disrupt traffic flow by adding impediments in the road. No speed tables or bumps.
- No, thank you for all you do for Kingsport.
- Not at this time. Thank you for providing the survey.
- Offer more incentives for downtown businesses to move in. The shops and cafes in downtown are awesome but parking is limited and there's no guide to show where businesses are located.
- One of the biggest complaints of folks that enjoy downtown is the lack of outdoor dining spaces.
- Our downtown has offices that need easy access for automobiles, so I appreciate that there will be no additional stop lights or road narrowing. It's already annoying to wait making left turns in the long lines of traffic. The Centennial Park water feature is SUPER awesome for children. Thank you to the donors and city for that addition. It has made this area more family-friendly. Would LOVE to have the walking route from Centennial Park to the Splash Pad and Aquatics Center identified with mileage, perhaps street map. Things that would help walking tourists know where they are headed and how long to get there.
- Pedestrian-scaled amenities including parklets, benches, outdoor cafes/dining areas should be limited to Section 2 in order to further develop and strengthen the Downtown Core before trying to spread it too thin. Use the monies for underground utilities instead. In Sections 1 and 3, it is important to make it warm and inviting as you welcome visitors at the gateway with the ultimate goal to channel them to the Core to get them out of their cars to have a more enjoyable downtown experience as they spend more time and money in our city.
- Please continue to add value to our downtown; also don't be afraid of change. Sometimes new businesses might be attracted to the area!
- Please do NOT narrow roadways. Please do not use landscaping that makes it difficult to see around corners now and many years from now. Please use sculptures that have more class than the ones currently in downtown Kingsport. Some of them would look okay in a city with sky scrapers, but stick out like a sore thumb in Kingsport.
- Please keep costs reasonable.
- Please look at other pedestrian friendly cities and see what works and doesn't work well for them. Savannah, GA is a good example, as well as Downtown Chattanooga, TN. Vehicular traffic is always a challenge for families trying to walk to their destination, especially with small children. Market Square in Knoxville is also a great example.
- Please work on maintaining traffic flow instead of adding elements to disrupt it. Also, NO back-in parking spaces!!!
- Preserve our history of downtown.
- Reduce heat in afternoons by planting/growing bigger trees providing bigger/better canopy.
- Stop tearing down old buildings. Reuse! The highway patrol building should have been given to the American Legion or used in any way other than paved over. I am very disappointed with that decision.
- Text road and section closure times and rerouting info to residents who desire such.
- Thank you for asking for resident input! Everyone likes to be heard!



- Thank you for working on this!
- Thank you for your plans to improve Main Street. I strongly favor putting utilities underground or in the alleys. Leaving them where they are will minimize all the aesthetic upgrades and features. Also, as a business owner, I appreciate advance notification of changes/street closings/construction/etc. so that I can notify my customers. Thank you.
- Thanks for asking!
- Thanks for keeping Kingsport young and fresh looking!
- The design concepts needed additional clarification as there were designs that were unclear or unidentified.
- The parking lot of Red Dragon Karate is a wreck. The parking situation for TNT sports is dangerous!
- The roads throughout Kingsport are horrible!! It's like driving on a dirt country road! They need to be addressed also!
- This family loves to bike and walk, but have found it difficult since moving to Kingsport. It seems we risk getting hit by cars every time we venture out unless we also use a car.
- This is very exciting to think about and I look forward to the final result. Please don't let the naysayers deter you from your goal!
- This will be a great upgrade of our community and encourage additional private investment downtown. Thank you.
- Trying to slow traffic would just make me more frustrated when driving downtown and make me not want to go there.
- The vacant lot at corner of E. Sullivan Street and Main Street is very unattractive. Don't know if anything is planned for this space. Was disappointed Centennial Park wasn't located there.
- Very excited to see this project completed! Love the beautification that is happening downtown!
- Very glad you are asking for public input and have exciting plans for the city.
- We need parking, not parks.
- While construction is taking place, it would make great sense to replace the aging sewer and water delivery system underground on Main Street. If you are pulling up the street and sidewalks, please go ahead and repair the very outdated underground water system which is prone to leaks and flooding.
- Why was narrowing streets at intersections the only option repeatedly given? Additional traffic calming best practices could be explored - curved street with built in public space including shade, seating, drinking fountains, and air pumps to promote and facilitate active transportation which reduces obesity and diabetes while reducing stress and enhancing quality of life.
- With new businesses and new city park, traffic and pedestrian volumes have drastically increased, extending out past Section 2 of Main Street. It should go to at least Island Street with the addition of raised pedestrian crossways that makes traffic slow down as more pedestrians are parking along both sides of Main Street along this area. With the new KATS station coming to the end of Main Street at Sullivan Street, I would imagine there would be an even larger increase in pedestrians all the way from Center Street to Sullivan Street.
- Would like to see bike lanes on Main Street and other ways to make Kingsport more cycle friendly. Would like a connector from Main Street to the reenbelt.
- Would love to see crepe myrtle along the streets—they would be blooming now!!
- Yes, please stop slowing traffic and reopen all the lanes on Center Street. The road diet was a ridiculous use of money. It slows traffic unnecessarily, prevents left hand turns for extended



periods of time, and so far, I have only seen one bicycle on that road when there are plenty of alternate routes to use. Quit taxing the citizens for garbage pickup too.

- You did not ask as to what we deemed unimportant which is more sensitive to people.
- You don't query those over 54? I would like to see biking, parking, and pedestrian use, and the elder active population considered. Many communities work to eliminate their car traffic altogether on some shopping streets with great success, although there is initial business concern. I would like to see a plan that has that forethought - will we have MOSTLY pedestrians and bikers, not cars, in 5 or 10 years, down here in Kingsport, to make this a healthier place? Is that our responsibility? Could we park our cars aside somewhere, and trolley in the non-walkers?

## Most Frequent Comments

Below is a "Cloud view" of the most commented words and phrases in the additional comments. The larger font indicates the more often the word was used in the comments.

Sidewalks Seating Plans Goal Additional Providing Center  
 Thank You for Asking Traffic Bike Kingsport TNT  
 Downtown Forward to Seeing Parking Efforts  
 Main Street Given Pedestrians Redevelopment Section  
 Good Work