

Calgary



What We Heard:

Public Engagement Results for the Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan

For engagement that occurred on June 28, 2016 and July 19, 2016

August 8, 2016
The City of Calgary, Community Planning, Centre-West

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Project overview

The City of Calgary is working on a new Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) for Downtown West. An ARP is a statutory policy document that guides the growth and development of existing communities. The purpose of this planning study is to develop policy to ensure development in this area supports the goals of Calgary's Municipal Development Plan (MDP) and is in alignment with the Centre City Plan and other plans and guidelines.

In 2013, residents of Downtown West provided their feedback about the future of the community in terms of improvements, development and new amenities. The second phase of engagement started again in the fall of 2015 to build upon those initial ideas, inform policy development, confirm proposed land use and density concepts and introduce specific policies on built form and public realm for the draft ARP. The feedback collected from the public will be used to help inform draft policies, where appropriate.



* Please note the location of the proposed CalgaryNEXT project in the West Village falls outside of the study area for this project.



Communication techniques employed

The project team hosted one open house specifically for the Downtown West ARP on June 28, 2016. On July 19, 2016, the project team hosted a joint open house for the Downtown West ARP, East Village ARP, and Centre City Guidebook. The information for the Downtown West ARP project was the same for both open houses. The following methods of participation were available at both open houses:

1. The June 28, 2016 open house was held from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. at the University of Calgary Downtown Campus located at 906 8 Avenue S.W. The July 19, 2016 open house was held from 4:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the atrium of the Municipal Building located at 800 Macleod Trail S.E. Planning and Transportation staff attended both of these events to provide details about the project(s) answer questions and solicit feedback.
2. Paper copies of a survey were available at both open houses. A total of 18 people completed the survey.
3. An online survey was also available at calgary.ca/downtownwestarp from June 28, 2016 to July 26, 2016. A total of 26 people completed the survey.

The project team employed a number of techniques to advertise the public engagement. These included:

1. Bold signs	<p>Bold signs were placed at the following locations from June 14 to June 28:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• West side of 10 Street, South of 6 Avenue• South side of 8 Avenue, West of 8 Street• West side of 8 Street, South of 4 Avenue
2. Letter to landowners within and adjacent to Downtown West	A letter was sent to over 3,000 landowners.
3. Postcards	Over 10,000 postcards were mailed out to residents and businesses in the Downtown West ARP study area.
4. Twitter	<p>The City of Calgary Twitter account has 166,000 followers and four tweets were posted prior to the open houses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• June 27, 2016 – 1 like, 4 retweets, 13,617 impressions• June 28, 2016 – 8 likes, 8 retweets, 14,293 impressions• July 18, 2016 – 1 like, 8 retweets, 12,069 impressions• July 19, 2016 – 11 likes, 8 retweets, 16,338 impressions
5. Email to subscribers	A Downtown West ARP email list was established through previous engagement and, at the time of the engagement sessions, had 171 subscribers. An email was sent to this list on June 14, June 28, July 12 and July 18, 2016 with information about the information sessions.
6. Downtown West Community Association	Helped spread the word.
7. Ward Councillor's office	Helped spread the word.
8. Posters	Prior to the first open house, 100 posters were put up in the downtown by Be Seen Street Team. Prior to the second open house, City staff delivered posters to various residential and office buildings in the Downtown West neighbourhood to spread the word.

Input collected during this engagement is summarized below and will be used to inform the draft Downtown West ARP and report to Calgary Planning Commission and Council.



The open house

56 people attended the open house on June 28, 2016 and 59 people attended the open house on July 19, 2016.

The venue for the June 28 open house was held in a private room at the University of Calgary campus, so everyone who attended was counted as a participant. The July 19 open house was held in the public atrium of the Municipal Building, so only adults who stopped to view the panels or spoke with staff were counted as participants. Passersby were not counted.

The online and paper survey

There were 26 surveys filled out online and 18 paper surveys filled out at the open houses.

Survey questions

The same questions were asked during both open houses and for the online and paper survey, with the exception of Question 7b—do you agree or disagree that the information session was informative—which was only included on the paper survey.

The summary below includes the combined responses received from both open houses. Details for each question are outlined in the next sections.

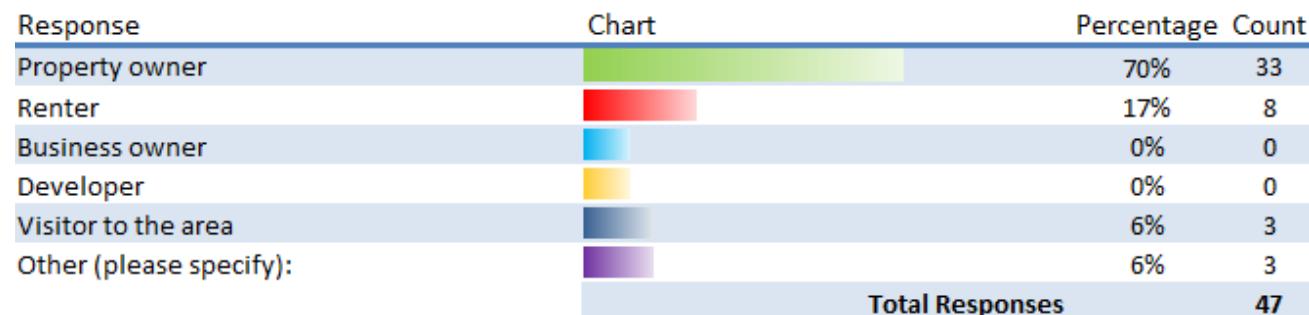
Participants

Question 1: summary of findings

There were 47 respondents to Question 1; 28 to the online survey and 19 to the paper survey. Of those, 70 percent were property owners.

Question 1: survey question

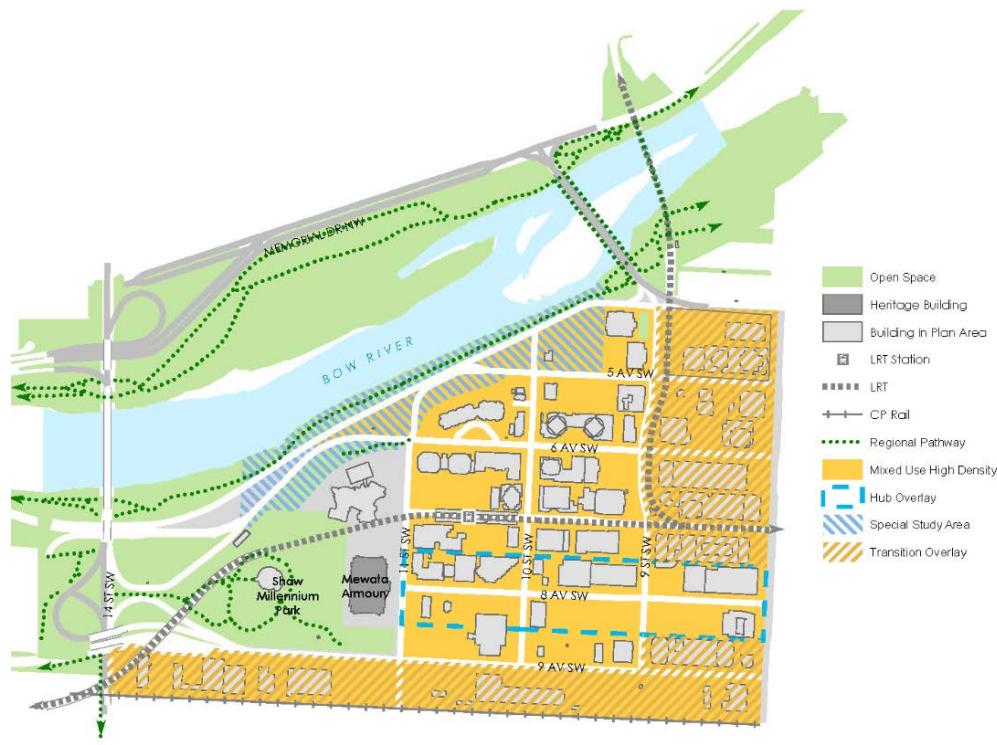
Tell us about yourself: Please choose the option that BEST describes your interest in Downtown West.





Downtown West Land Use Concept

A common land use framework is established in the Centre City Guidebook and applied to all Centre City neighbourhoods to facilitate high density, mixed-use development. The proposed land use concept for Downtown West is for the entire area to be a mixed-use high density area with a Transition overlay along the Canadian Pacific Railway corridor and 8 Street S.W., a Hub overlay along 8 Avenue S.W., and a special study area along the riverfront.



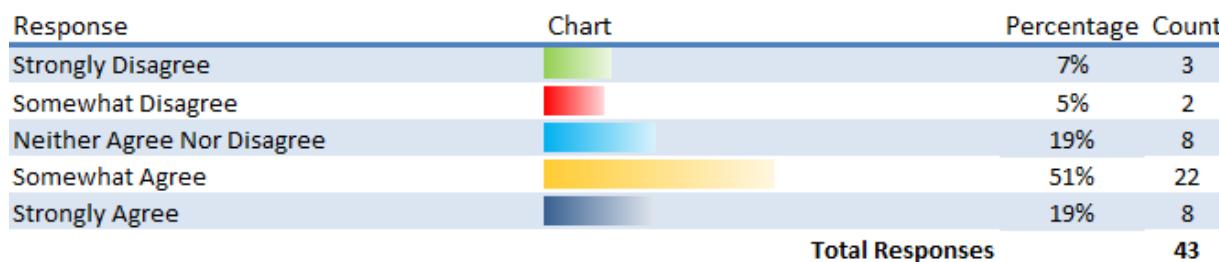
Participants were asked their degree of support for this proposed land use concept, as outlined in question two.

Question 2: summary of findings

Approximately 70 percent of respondents support the proposed land use concept, compared to roughly 10 percent of respondents who are not in support of the concept.

**Question 2: survey question**

**With respect to this land use concept, do you agree or disagree with the following statement?
I support this land use concept for Downtown West.**



Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	# Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Transition overlay/hub overlay/special study area difficult to understand	4	18.2%
Support for 10 Street becoming more pedestrian friendly from 8 Avenue to the river pathway	2	9.1%
Desire to see more park/green space for all users and other child friendly areas within Downtown West	2	9.1%
Concern over height of new buildings, especially in regards to loss of views for existing residences	1	4.5%
Concern over maintaining visually appealing site lines	1	4.5%
Desire to maintain Downtown West as distinct from the Downtown, with less dense development and primarily residential character. Want to avoid the area becoming highly commercial in nature	1	4.5%
Concern over maintaining the "tapering" of the skyline from Downtown. FAR should be more gradual, with the area between 11th and 10th having lower density	1	4.5%
Desire for lower density in general	1	4.5%
Desire to see 10 Street added as part of the Hub Overlay	1	4.5%
Support for special study area along the riverfront, similar to Eau Claire & East Village	1	4.5%
Desire to see additional amenities like great lighting, ice maintenance, public washrooms and showers, water fountains and businesses open all night/all year	1	4.5%
Support for mix of uses in the area	1	4.5%
Desire to see a distinctive character develop for the riverfront area, with additional uses such as temporary vendors, picnic areas, outdoor gyms. Opportunities here for independent businesses with potentially lower rents.	1	4.5%
Support for extending pedestrian and bike friendly aspects of Stephen Avenue to 11 Street	1	4.5%
Not supportive of 8 Avenue incorporating a bike path	1	4.5%
Suggestion that 7 Avenue should be better utilized and free up 8 Avenue for other uses	1	4.5%
Desire to see 11 Street become more pedestrian friendly, and serve as a link from the Beltline to the river pathway	1	4.5%
Total	22	100.0%



* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.

Downtown West Density

Density in Downtown West is measured by Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which is measured by dividing the building area by the parcel area. The density scenario for the Downtown West ARP proposes a maximum density of 7.0 FAR, with the exception of parcels already zoned Commercial Residential CR20-C20/R20, which have a maximum density of 3.0 FAR. Additional density may be achieved up to:

- 8.0 FAR (Area A) from 6 Avenue S.W. to the riverfront between 9 Street S.W. and 11 Street S.W.;
- 10.0 FAR (Area B) between 9 Avenue S.W. and 6 Avenue S.W. and 11 Street S.W. and 9 Street S.W.;
- 12.0 FAR (Area C) in the Transition overlay next to the CPR corridor; and
- 20.0 FAR (Area D) in parcels zoned CR20-C20/R20.

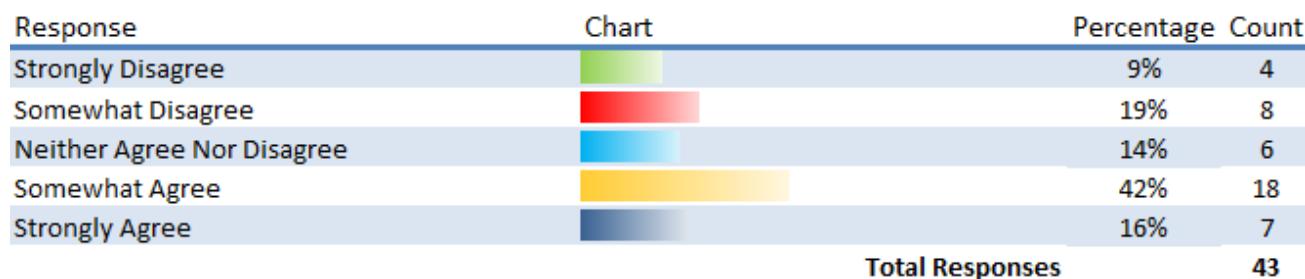
Existing densities within the Direct Control Districts will remain.

Question 3: summary of findings

Approximately 60 percent of respondents are in support of the proposed density, compared to roughly 30 percent of respondents who are not in support of this proposed density.

Question 3: survey question

With respect to the proposed density scenario, do you agree or disagree with the following statement? I support this density scenario.





Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	# Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Increasing FAR is supportable, but too much FAR proposed	4	16.7%
Desire to preserve sunlight on park areas and the river/pathways	3	12.5%
Concern that increasing FAR will increase prices and reduce diversity	2	8.3%
Desire to see reduced FAR/limited density	2	8.3%
Desire to see no change to the existing FAR	2	8.3%
Desire to see maximum densities and heights	2	8.3%
Concern that proposed densities are high, but with nothing to support these densities from an amenity perspective	1	4.2%
Desire to see lower densities by the river front respecting shadows	1	4.2%
Density should be lower towards the West edge, e.g. max of 7.0 FAR West of 10 Street	1	4.2%
Desire to see no "bonus" options for density and no variances to allowable density	1	4.2%
Concern that FAR does not reflect the actual form a building will take and will not help preserve or enhance neighbourhoods	1	4.2%
Concern over how far north 20 FAR extends, especially because of shadow protection requirements	1	4.2%
Concern over the impact on traffic flows in the area with a large increase in population	1	4.2%
Desire to see lower FAR in Area C e.g. 8.0 FAR	1	4.2%
Any new development should have Area A densities	1	4.2%
Total	24	100.0%

* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.

Downtown West Building Form

The Land Use Bylaw 1P2007 currently has a (relaxable) regulation within the Commercial Residential District (CR20-C20/ R20) for ground floor height that states:

"The minimum height of the ground floor of a building is 4.5 metres as measured vertically from the floor to the ceiling" (1315).

This is being considered as a policy for the Downtown West ARP in areas where we would like to have commercial and retail frontages, such as 8 Avenue S.W. Having a ground floor height of 4.5 metres would give the flexibility to accommodate future retail uses that require higher ceilings. The development authority would be able to relax this policy.

Question 4: summary of findings

Over 80 percent of respondents agree with the concept of requesting a ground floor height of 4.5 metres for areas with commercial retail frontage.



Question 4: survey question

Do you agree with the intent of this proposed policy to request a ground floor height of 4.5 metres in areas where we want commercial retail frontage?

Response	Chart	Percentage	Count
Yes		85%	34
No		15%	6
Total Responses			40

Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	Number of Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Desire to see increase in retail in Downtown West	3	33.3%
Desire to see accessibility improved in new buildings	1	11.1%
Concern over mixing residential uses with commercial uses	1	11.1%
Concern that increase in retail may not thrive in this area	1	11.1%
Concern that this will put an additional costs on developers	1	11.1%
Supported as this would increase options for development of commercial uses	1	11.1%
Desire to see thriving commercial areas along 8 Avenue S.W.	1	11.1%
Total	9	100.0%

* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.

Downtown West Sunlight Protection

The Downtown West ARP is proposing policy to optimize sunlight access to streets and public spaces. The proposed policies are that the following areas cannot be placed in greater shadow:

- Mewata Armoury as measured on the northerly 160.0 metres of the site on Plan 3445JK, Block 2 from 12 to 2 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time.
- 8 Avenue S.W. buildings on the south side of the street should mitigate shadow impacts by modelling conditions on September 21 at 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.
- Top of the south Bow riverbank, buildings shall not shadow an area 20 metres from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on September 21.



Question 5a: summary of findings

Ninety percent of respondents agreed that there should be a sunlight protection policy for Mewata Armoury.

Question 5a: survey question

Do you agree with this proposed sunlight protection policy for Mewata Armoury?



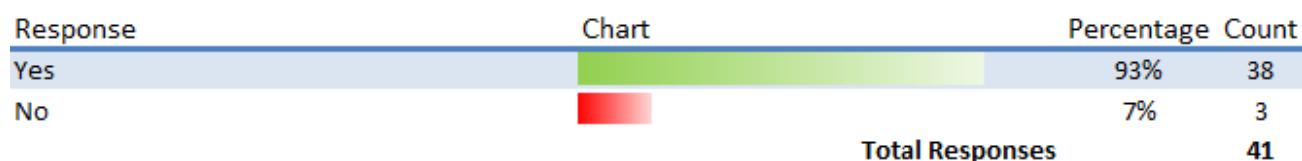
Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	Number of Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Desire for historic landmarks to be treated with respect	1	14.3%
Opportunity here to also install solar panels	1	14.3%
Desire to see sunlight protection extended to include winter time too	1	14.3%
Important, as it will save the community gathering function of this area	1	14.3%
Concern as to why sunlight protection is not extended to residential developments as well	1	14.3%
Suggestion that this area may need some shaded areas as well for protection	1	14.3%
Supported as this forms a pathway connection to Shaw Millennium Park	1	14.3%
Total	7	100.0%

* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.

**Question 5b: summary of findings**

Over 90 percent of respondents agreed that there should be a sunlight protection policy for 8 Avenue S.W.

Question 5b: survey question**Do you agree with this proposed sunlight protection policy for 8 Avenue S.W.?**

Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	Number of Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Supported if the goal is to make this avenue a hub	2	25.0%
Supported as natural light is important for safety	1	12.5%
Desire that tall buildings should not be built in general to protect natural light for residents	1	12.5%
Concern that this may impact ability for density along the LRT corridor	1	12.5%
Supported, as lower buildings will reduce wind tunnels	1	12.5%
Supported, as this will encourage activity on the street	1	12.5%
Supported, especially if buildings remain lower closer to the river	1	12.5%
Total	8	100.0%

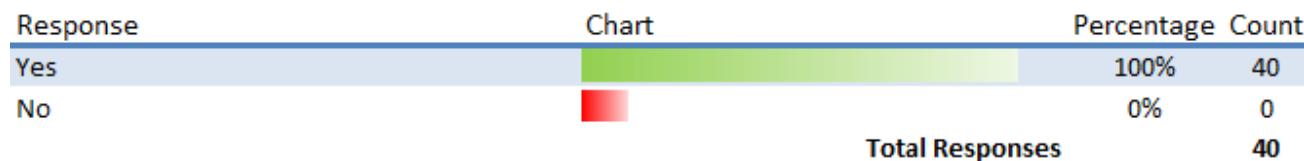
* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.

**Question 5c: summary of findings**

There was overwhelming support for a sunlight protection policy for the South Bow River bank, as 100 percent of respondents answered yes to this question.

Question 5c: survey question

Do you agree with this proposed sunlight protection policy for the South Bow River bank?



Respondents provided additional comments to this question. These comments have been reviewed and summarized below.

Theme	Number of Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Supported, as the Bow River is an important amenity for Calgary	6	66.7%
Desire to have this area become a community use focal point like in Eau Claire/East Village	2	22.2%
Desire to see sunlight protection extended to winter time as well	1	11.1%
Total	9	100.0%

* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.



General Questions

Question 6: summary of findings and survey question

Participants were asked if they had any other comments regarding the Downtown West Area Redevelopment Plan. The comments received were reviewed and summarized below:

Theme	Number of Times Theme Identified*	% of Total
Concern as to traffic noise, especially along 6 Avenue. Possible measures to address could be, e.g. specs for windows to decrease noise or change traffic patterns	2	7.4%
Ensure that new development is compatible with existing development	1	3.7%
Ensure that new development is visually appealing e.g. no blank concrete walls	1	3.7%
Avoid rental only development as tenants may not take care as good care of the building as would owners	1	3.7%
Concern that 8 Avenue is already busy, can it also accommodate a bike lane?	1	3.7%
Support for keeping the science centre, as it is an art piece for the area	1	3.7%
Desire to keep residential development separate from commercial development	1	3.7%
Consultant must work closely with the Community Association, especially when considering proposed public amenity items	1	3.7%
No need for electrical vehicle charging stations in the area, as these should be provided in all parkades	1	3.7%
Desire to see more green space/open space	1	3.7%
Desire to see a reduction in the overall density of the area from current levels	1	3.7%
Reduce FAR gradually towards the West, with the lowest FAR between 10 Street and 11 Street	1	3.7%
Desire to see widening of the river pathways, as they get very busy	1	3.7%
Desire to see bike lanes separated from traffic along 11 Street	1	3.7%
Consider traffic impacts with the development of this plan. More development means more traffic congestion. Find ways to increase the smooth flow of traffic	1	3.7%
Need to make this area feel safe 24/7, but avoid light pollution from security lighting or illuminated advertising	1	3.7%
Privacy concerns and reduction in quality of life with increase in density	1	3.7%
Current density is sufficient	1	3.7%
Support for increased focus on pedestrians for the area	1	3.7%
Concern over creation of wind tunnels with towers. Consider ways to mitigate to encourage pedestrian movement	1	3.7%
Desire to see more park spaces geared for families and children	1	3.7%
Desire to see more family-friendly or senior-friendly apartments built in future	1	3.7%
Desire to see increase in retail space, restaurants and a grocery store, as these amenities are desperately needed	1	3.7%
Safety concerns around speed of traffic, especially along 6 Avenue. Could speed cameras be used to discourage this behaviour?	1	3.7%
Add additional services to the transitional area to support this significant increase in density	1	3.7%
Improvements are needed to the CPR crossing along 11 Street to make it more user-friendly and safer	1	3.7%
Total	27	25.9%

* **NOTE:** the number of times a specific theme was identified does not equal the total number of comments (persons commenting) as some individual comments included more than one theme.



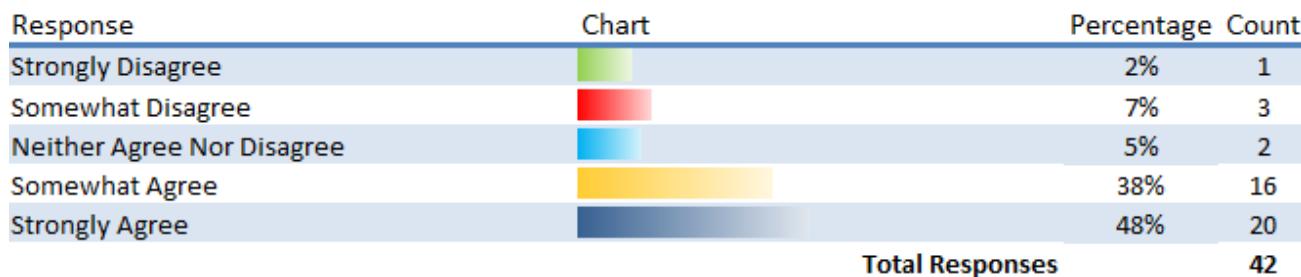
Question 7a: summary of findings

Almost 90 percent of participants agreed with this question.

Question 7a: survey question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

I was able to share my ideas for Downtown West.



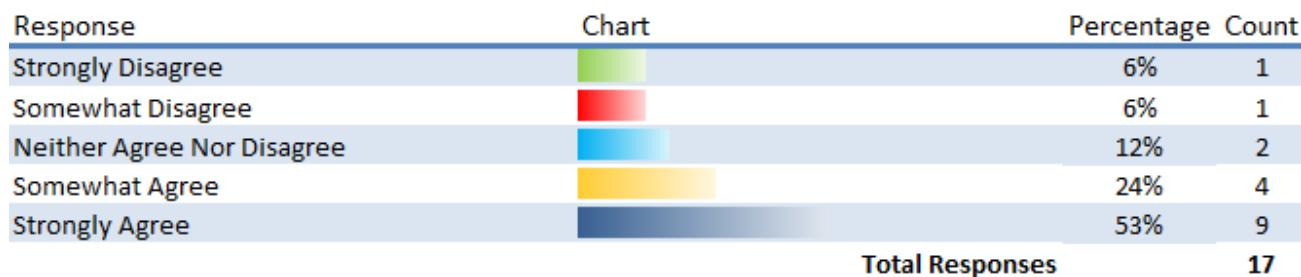
Question 7b: summary of findings

This question was only included in the paper survey. Nearly 80 percent of participants agreed that the information session was informative.

Question 7b: survey question

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

This information session was informative.



**Question 8: summary of findings**

Almost half of the participants who filled out the survey online and/or attended the open house heard about this event through email. Approximately 25 percent of participants learned about the open house by the postcard they received in the mail.

Question 8: survey question**How did you find out about this event / survey?**