



## Downtown Bloomington

*Customer Parking Survey*

*Conducted February 2020*

# WELCOME

Through a collaborative effort between the City of Bloomington's Public Works and Economic Development Departments, Downtown Bloomington patrons and community members were surveyed regarding all facets of parking throughout the downtown. The survey were conducted in February 2020 through a multi-platform approach, utilizing the City's GovDelivery email database, the Downtown Bloomington and City of Bloomington social media channels, the Downtown Bloomington Farmers' Market social media, and digital display advertising with The Pantagraph. There were 1,004 respondents with a total of 902 completing the survey, resulting in a 90% completion rate.

Downtown Bloomington is the heart of the community. Home to many shopping, dining, and nightlife establishments, as well as many annual community events. Downtown is often very busy with people traveling on foot, by bike, and in their cars.

It is the hope of the Public Works and Economic Development Departments that the information found within this report serves as a good resource for the decisions that will be made regarding downtown parking.

# Survey Results

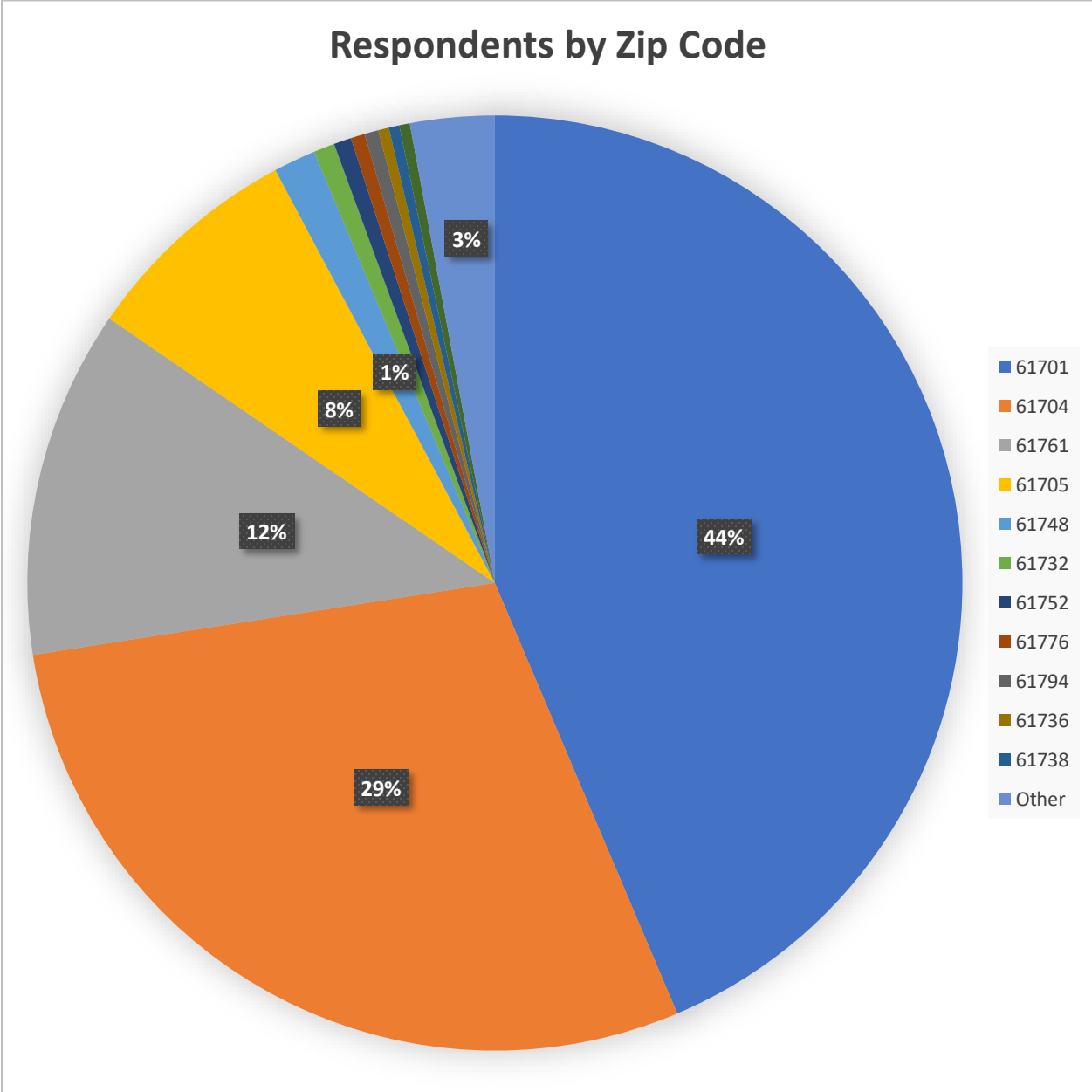
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# Respondents by Location

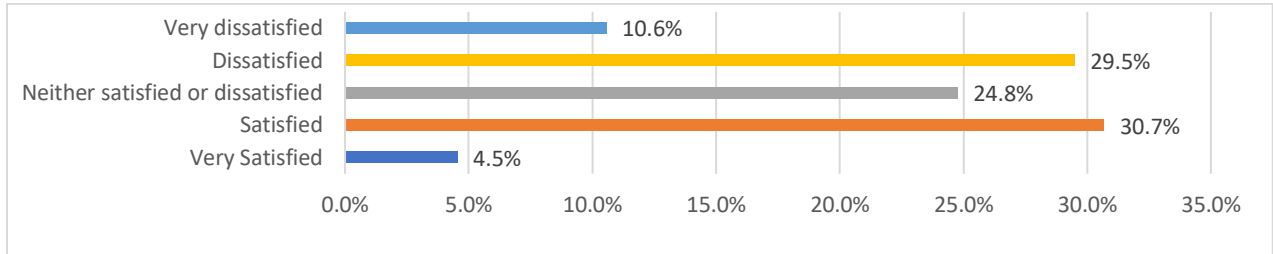
## Question 1: Where did the respondents come from?

Out of the 1004 respondents, 838 people provided their zip code for a response rate of 83%. People from 31 different zip codes participated in the survey.

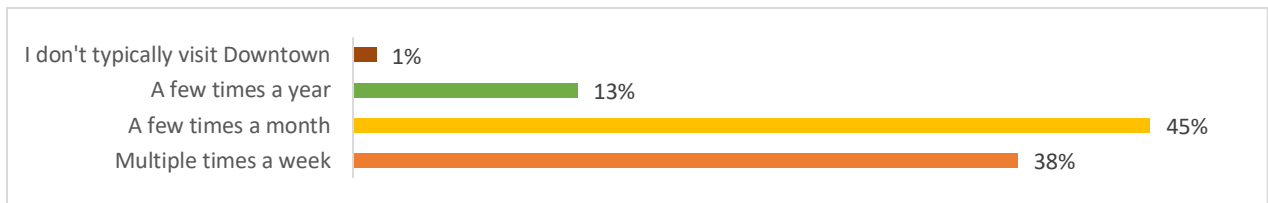


# Satisfaction & Visit History

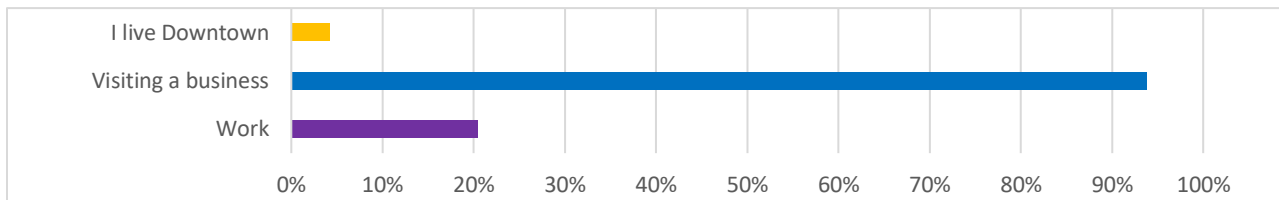
## Question 2: How would you rate your satisfaction with parking in Downtown Bloomington?



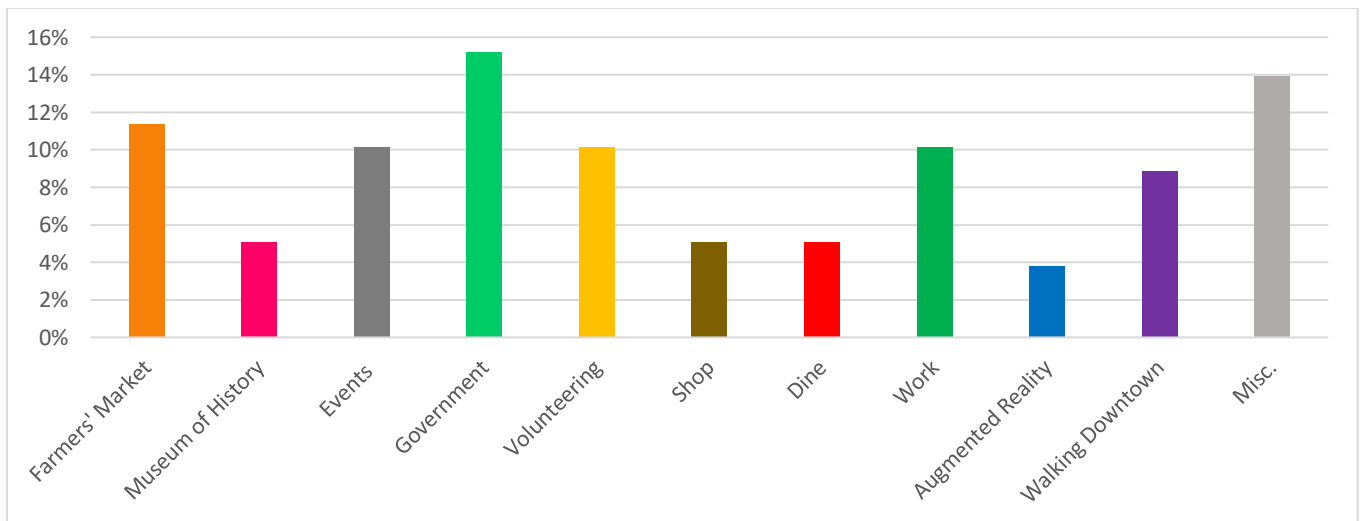
## Question 3: How often do you visit Downtown?



## Question 4: When you visit Downtown, what do you do?

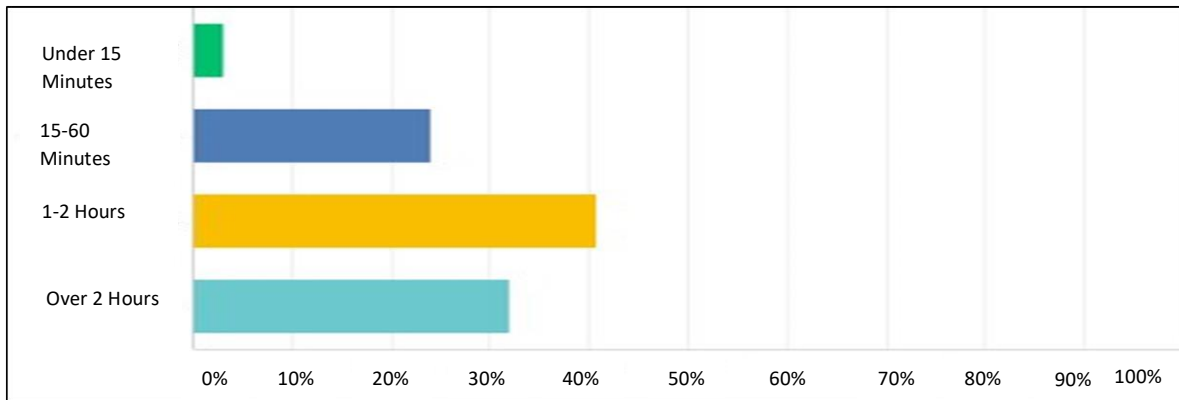


79 respondents chose "other" as one of their choices and added their reasons for coming downtown. Below is a chart of the most popular responses.

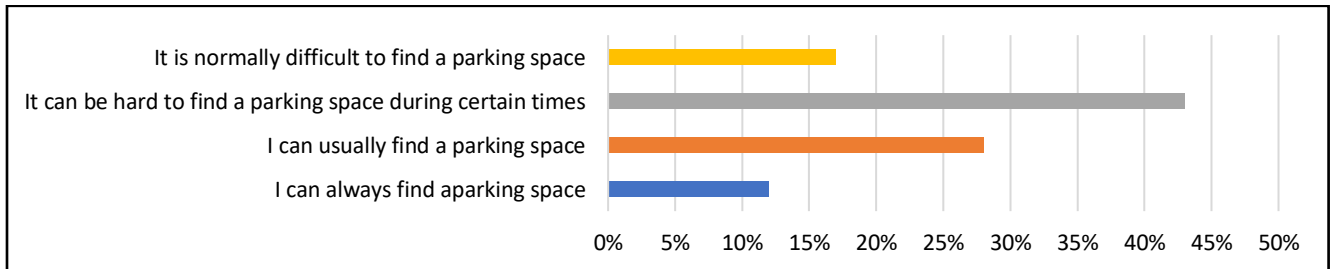


# Length of Stay & Parking Availability

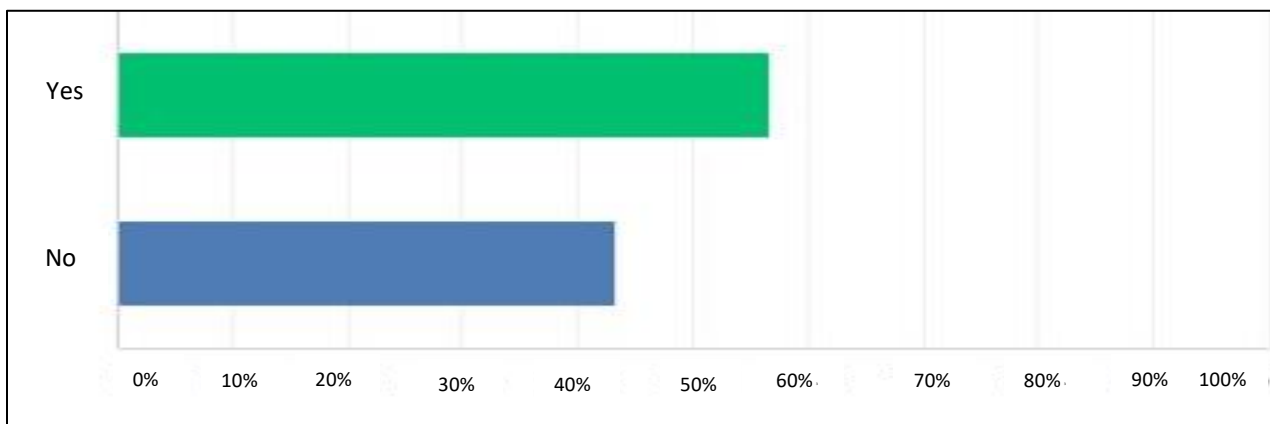
Question 5: On average, how long do you park Downtown?



Question 6: How would you describe the availability of parking in Downtown?

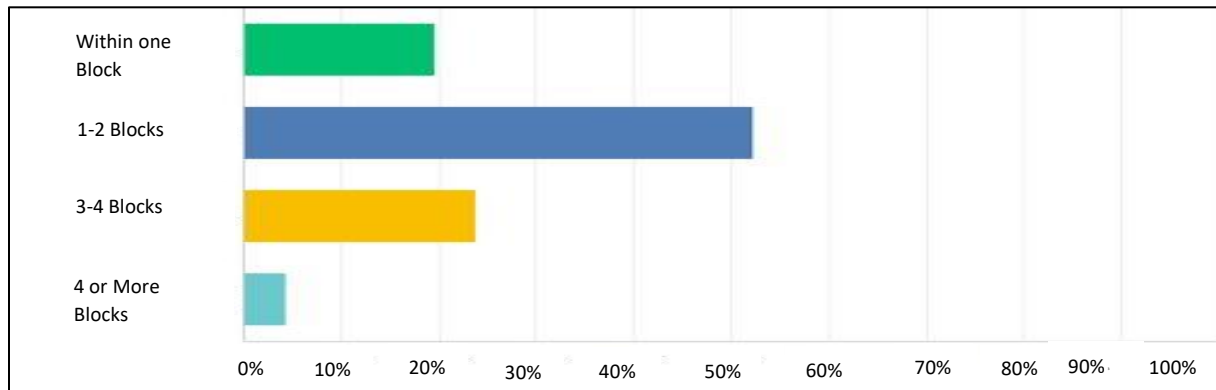


Question 7: Have you ever tried to patronize a business in the Downtown and left because you were unable to find a parking spot?

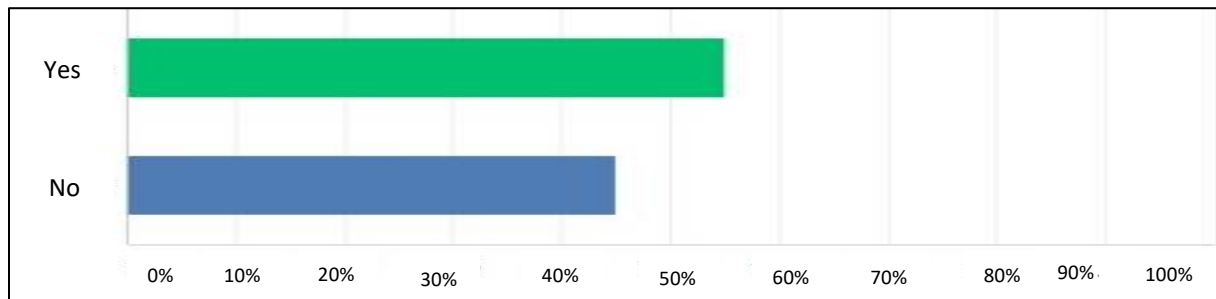


# Distance & 4-Hour Parking

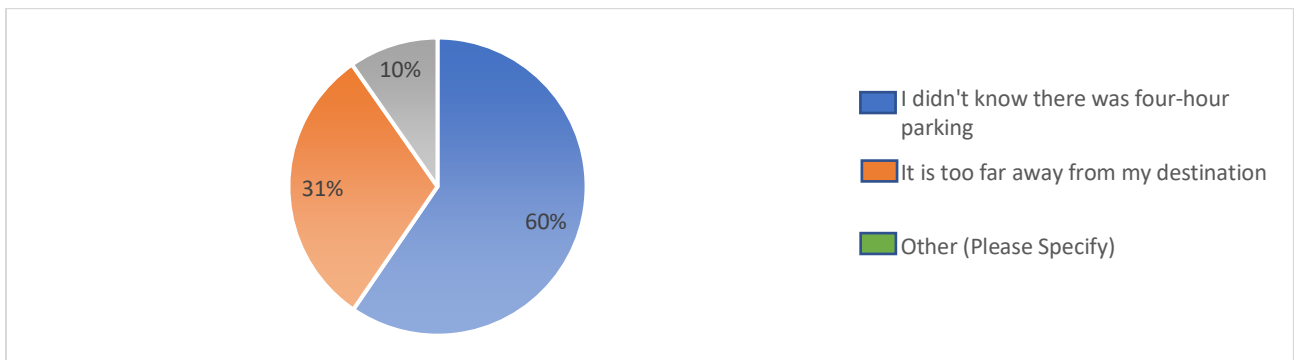
**Question 8: How far from your destination are you willing to park?**



**Question 9: Have you used any of the free four-hour parking within the Downtown?**



**Question 10: If you don't use the four-hour parking, why?**

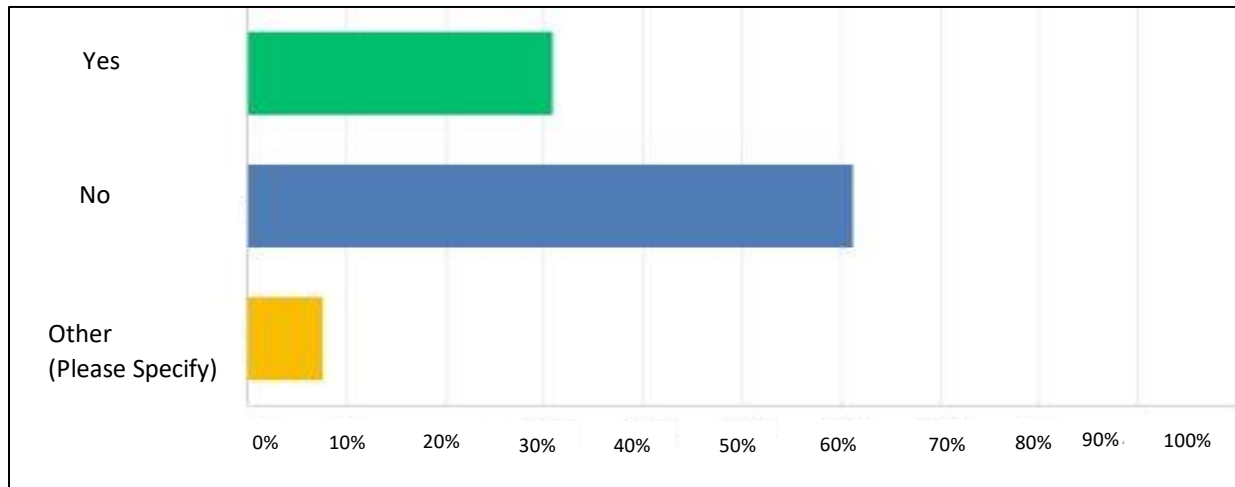


10% of respondents who selected "other" provided the following reasons:

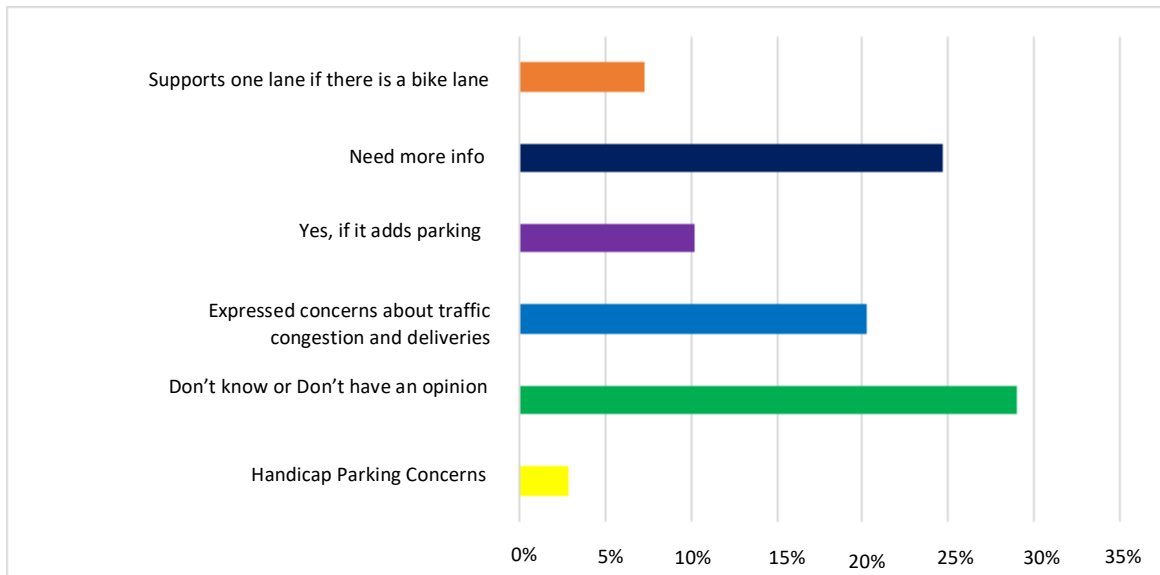
- *Felt unsafe using the four-hour parking (33%)*
- *Found parking elsewhere (30%)*
- *Need more than 4 Hours (18%)*
- *4-Hour Parking was full (8%)*
- *Other miscellaneous comments (11%)*

# Main Street Traffic Lanes

**Question 11: Should the City reduce Main Street to one lane of traffic rather than keeping it at two lanes of traffic?**



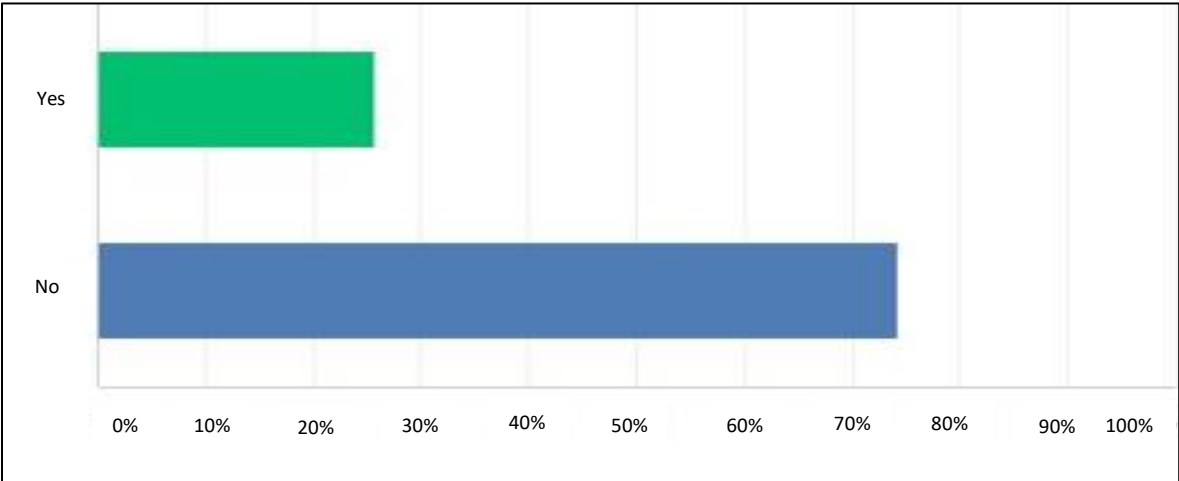
*Out of the 8% that responded "other" their comments can be categorized as follows:*



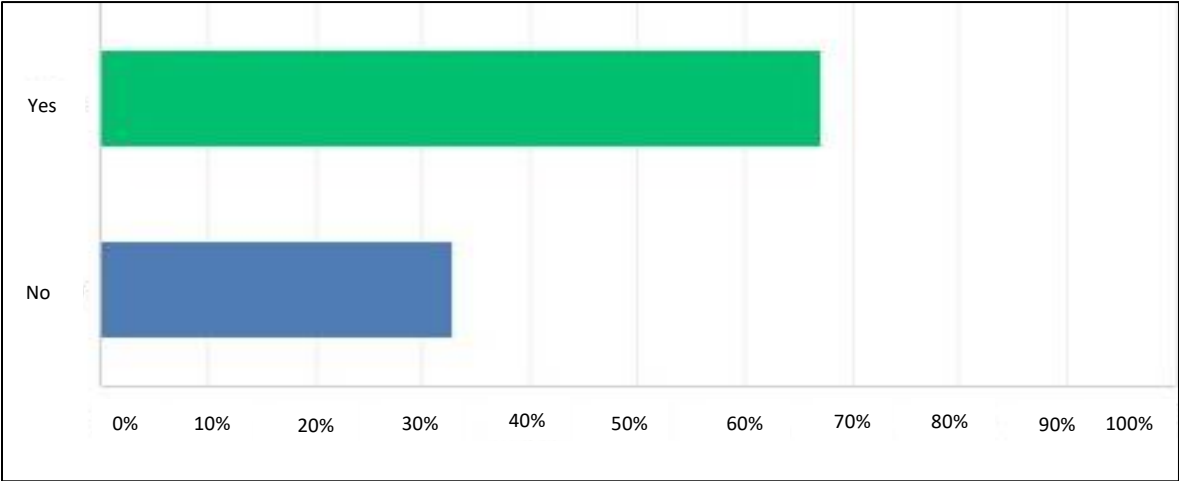


# Paid Parking Options

**Question 12: Would you be willing to pay for on-street parking in Downtown if the City parking decks are free?**

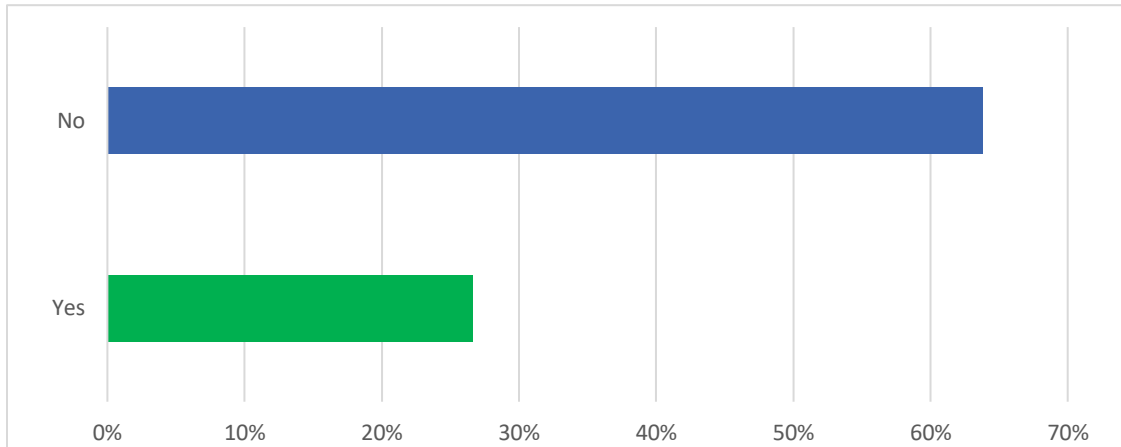


**Question 13: Would on-street metered parking deter you from coming Downtown?**

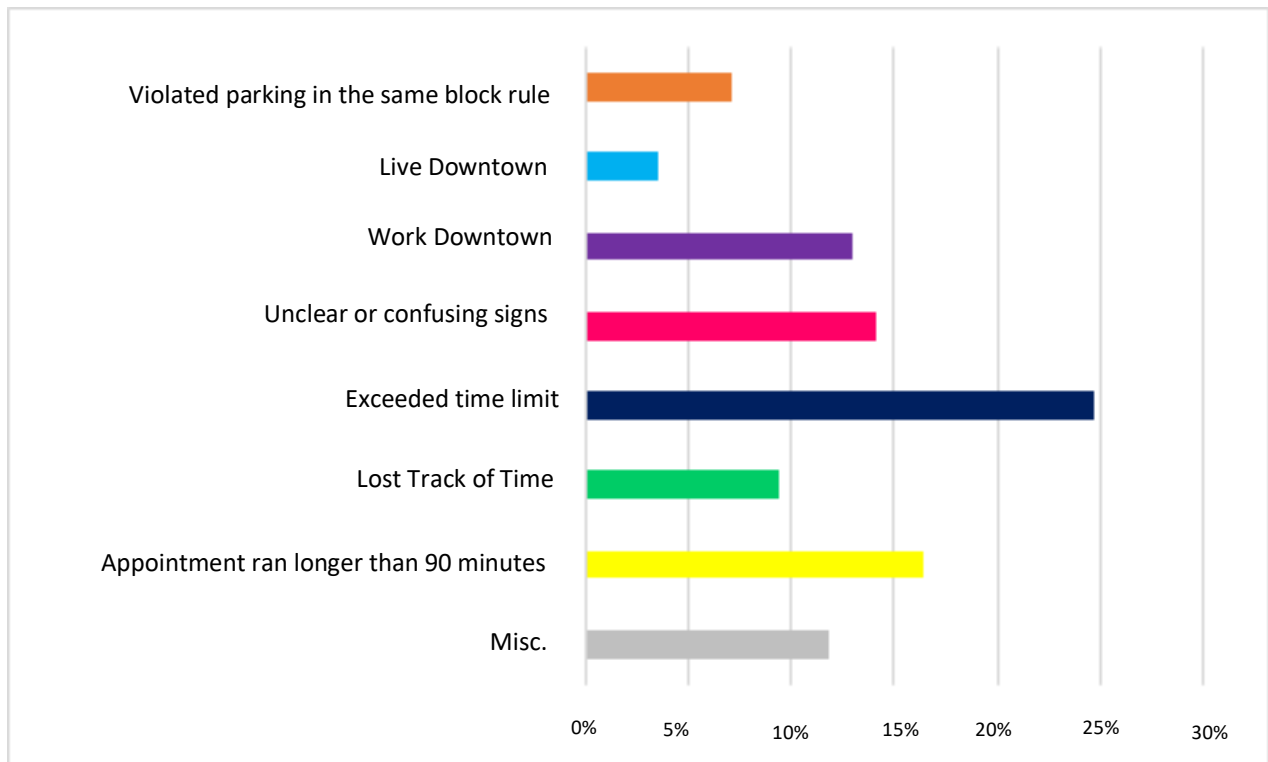


# Parking Tickets

## Question 14: Have you ever received a ticket in Downtown?



Only 9% of respondents gave reasons for why they had received a ticket in Downtown. See responses below.



# Additional Comments, Concerns, and Suggestions

*In the final question of this survey, participants were asked if they had other comments, concerns or suggestions they would like to add. Out of the 1,004 respondents, 40% (399) left comments. The following is a sample of the comments divided into the most common categories:*

## **General comments:**

- I think free parking in the parking garages on the weekend is great! Note: Since on street parking is usually an issue, I typically park in the garage and walk.
- Keep parking free, enforce the time limits. Most people complain because they can't park directly in front of the shop they want to visit. The walk is part of the experience of going to downtown. You find new things on every visit.
- Love the refresh of downtown that is happening. Keep expanding this, focusing on human scale development and pedestrian safety. Maybe someday reduce the number of lanes and speed of cars on East and Madison streets flanking downtown. This would sure encourage me to walk or ride my bike to downtown.
- I Uber frequently to downtown and extra space for Uber pickups/drop offs need to be available.
- We are not approaching this the right way. We are trying to paint lines to solve real or perceived problems. We need to step back and rethink what Main Street - and all Downtown streets could look like if we had a blank canvas. Should we continue to have one-way streets in Downtown (they have not always been like that)? Should we make spaces for parklets in front of restaurants? Where are we placing way finding signage to help people find the garages? I know people freak out about outside consultants, but there are professionals who do traffic flow and parking - specifically in downtown areas - for a living. A fresh set of eyes on the hot mess that is Downtown Bloomington parking and our traffic flow would serve us well. Also, on a related topic, can we possibly get more signs with parking rules, hours, etc. posted on the streets in Downtown? Kidding. Those signs and all of the rules need to be reined in. People want to live, work, and shop Downtown. Why are we going out of our way to make this hard for them?

## **Parking Meters:**

- I don't think there is any perfect parking solution. My wife owns a business downtown. She works past sunset many nights. There is no way I would ever want her using a parking garage! I think parking meters could work They would need to be something like what Chicago uses. You can pay for your parking with your phone. You get notification to extend your time. It's very convenient.
- I love the fact that there are no meters downtown. It's stressful when you're meeting for coffee to be always looking at your watch for example. I usually have no problem finding space but I would hate to have to think 'ugh parking' if I want to go downtown

## **Downtown Parking Limits:**

- I just think that 90 mins is way too short of a time. People come downtown to eat, walk around, shop. I cannot do all these things before 90 minutes. Especially since I can't even park on the same block in an open spot when I move every 90 mins. I think the allotted time should be upped to at least 2 hours, 3 hours being the best.
- Hair salons need more than 90-minute parking. Plus, their staff have to park too far away when they have to walk a few blocks after dark. Dangerous.
- Downtown businesses that involve service should be 2+ hour parking. Hair salons, tattoo shops, and a few spots by coffee hound would be amazing. Visiting downtown is great, being ticketed for a hair appointment is not. A lot of clients drive from out of town to support our small businesses — they pay extra in gas, and shouldn't have to pay extra to stay for a full 2 hours.

## Additional Comments, Concerns, and Suggestions (*Cont.*)

### **Parking enforcement:**

- Parking enforcement generally takes up one lane of traffic. This is a determinant to reducing one lane. Also parking enforcement on foot or bikes would make the downtown atmosphere much more inviting.
- Parking enforcement is ridiculously strict which indicates the parking spots are overvalued. During lunch hour, there is a 50/50 chance of finding parking. I have changed business lunch locations many, many times due to the poor parking options.
- The parking enforcement does a great job.

### **Working Downtown:**

- Stop ticketing people who have to work downtown and employers don't provide parking!!!!!!
- I work in downtown 5 days a week from 6am to 2pm baking and I have to move my car 3 times a day. The parking deck is about 4 blocks away so I do not park there in the morning to have to walk 4 blocks in the dark while there are still people wondering the streets. I find it ridiculous that I get ticketed while I'm at my job.

### **Angled Parking:**

- I prefer angled parking. Parallel parking requires opening the car door into a traffic lane. I would also like to see the addition of dedicated "people loading" spaces with a 3-minute time limit or some other safe solution for dropping off & picking up people with limited mobility. I would also like to see a dedicated loading space in front of Neighborhood Thrift.
- Angled parking is a PAIN; unless you drive a van, truck etc. backing out of angled parking in a CAR is treacherous to life and limb; you cannot see behind larger vehicles for oncoming cars; so you ease out slowly only to have some driver lay on the horn cause you could not see them approaching

### **Living Downtown:**

- Because I live downtown, it would be nice to be allowed to park in the parking deck for free but it seems unfair to charge downtown resident to park whether on the street or in the deck.
- The real problem seems to be that so many people have moved into those buildings to live and they need parking of course, but when they hog up all the street spots the shops have nowhere for their customers and workers to park. Maybe the condo/renter people should be required to stay off the street, say park in the garage during the daytime hours and be free to park where they want after regular business hours. Something's got to give or downtown will never be able to grow. With new workers coming in as the State Farm building is renovated the shops will be able to thrive again with more foot traffic but parking will continue to be a problem.

### **One Lane traffic:**

- Go to one lane, allow businesses and restaurants to expand into sidewalk areas. Make a comprehensive plan. For inspiration look at Austin, Champaign, Portland Maine, Louisville.
- Reducing the lanes to one doesn't really help much and the inconvenience for delivery trucks is not worth the change.

### **Parking Garages:**

- I think the parking decks are free is pretty amazing. I enjoy that option and it is a distinct advantage over Uptown Normal. I finding parking there is far more challenging.
- I feel very uncomfortable parking in the market street parking garage.
  - It is difficult to pull in without scraping your car. It is also difficult to navigate the configuration.
  - I also do not feel safe in this garage as a woman because there is no attendant, particularly at night.