



Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square 90% Engagement Summary

Results Report

November 2025

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1.0 Introduction

The City of Guelph is undertaking the Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program (DTIRP), which will improve and upgrade roads, sewers, watermains, sidewalks, cycling facilities and the streetscape in parts of the Downtown Secondary Plan area. The current phase of the project focuses on Wyndham Street North from Farquhar Street to Woolwich Street, and it includes St. George's Square.

As part of the ongoing design development for Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square, the City engaged with residents to:

- Share information about DTIRP, and specifically the renewal of Wyndham Street North, including St. George's Square.
- Share functional and streetscape designs for Wyndham Street North at the 90% detail level of design.
- Share more detailed concept designs for St. George's Square to advance the master plan process.
- Hear from residents regarding preferences and ideas about these designs.

This report provides a summary of engagement activities undertaken to support this design phase in the Wyndham Street North redevelopment project, as well as the concept design for St. George's Square. The following sections outline engagement methods and results.

1.1 Previous Engagement

The City has undertaken extensive engagement supporting the DTIRP project, and Wyndham Street North reconstruction specifically, beginning in 2021. Examples of these activities include:

- Monthly meetings with the Downtown Guelph Business Association (DGBA) beginning in 2021 and a workshop at their 2024 annual general meeting.
- Over 1,700 residents participated in City open houses (in person and virtual), including in November 2022, September 2023, March and October 2024, February, May and September 2025.
- Close to 1,000 residents interacted with City staff at community events in 2023, 2024, and 2025 including the Multicultural festival, Guelph Farmers' Market, Ribfest, and Downtown Dog Promenade, among others.
- City staff have hosted monthly drop-in Construction Cafés since August 2024.
- Diggable Downtown Day on September 18, 2025, included engagement activities around Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square.
- Engagement with Indigenous Nations.

During this time, over 900 residents participated in activities related to St. George's Square, these include:

- An online survey (2024)
- Pop ups at community events (2024)
- A virtual community design lab (2024)
- Open houses (virtual and online) (2024 and 2025)
- Dedicated Construction Cafés (2025)
- Presentations to the Downtown Business Association (2025)

The key directions for the redevelopment of Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square are based on ongoing engagement with Guelph residents, communities and partners.

2.0 Engagement Methods

Various engagement activities were hosted in September and October 2025 to support this stage of the project including the Diggable Downtown Day on September 18, 2025. Engagement activities included furnishing and temporary fixture installations in St. George's Square, the opening of the construction liaison office, a Construction Café, and in-person open house, which was supported by a virtual open house that remained open through to October 16, 2025.

2.1 Engagement Events Notification

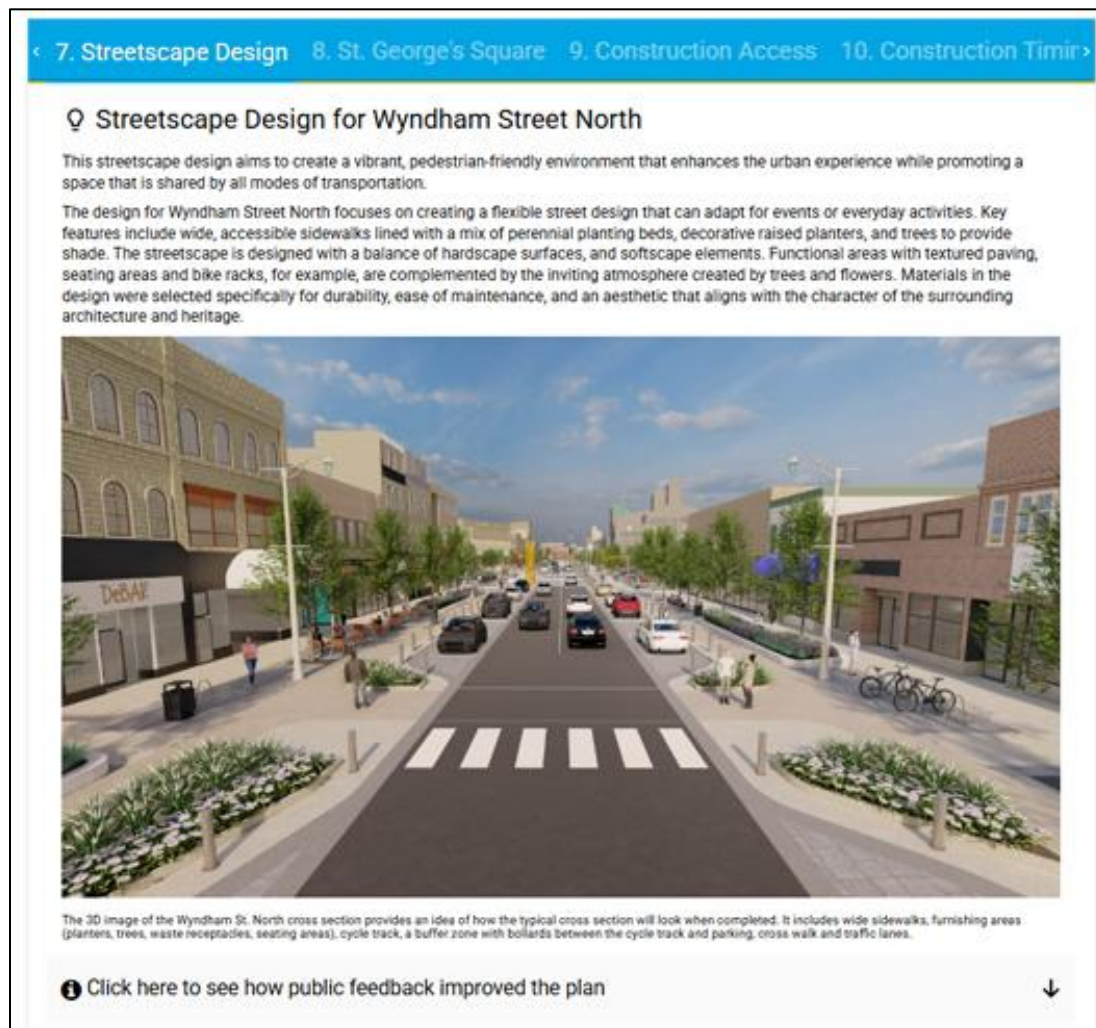
The City of Guelph undertook outreach and notification efforts to provide residents with information about opportunities to engage at this phase of DTIRP through various means, as follows:

- Public notice distributed August 27, 2025
- Messages in the Downtown newsletter on August 6, 2025, and September 8, 2025. There was also a Downtown newsletter sent that specifically focused on the DTIRP engagement on September 16, 2025.
- City of Guelph EHQ newsletter in early September
- Invitations to CAO/Council August 7, 2025
- Social media posts between September 3 – October 16, 2025
 - Facebook – 9 posts, with 577 reactions, 751 comments, 59 shares and 239,746 impressions
 - Twitter/ X – 7 posts, with a total of 6,065 impressions
 - LinkedIn – 2 posts, with 106 reactions, 7,687 impressions
 - Instagram – 7 posts, with 803 likes, 50 comments, 26,186 reach and 58,029 views

2.2 Virtual Open House

The virtual open house (vOH) was open from September 15 – October 16, 2025. Visitors to the vOH were led through display boards available online, similar to those presented at the in-person open house. The flow of the site began with information about the Downtown Infrastructure Renewal Program (DITRP), the existing conditions of Wyndham Street North including policy and design principles, constraints and opportunities. Included in the vOH were the detailed functional design concepts for Wyndham Street North, the proposed streetscape design, the detailed concept design for St. George's Square, 3D images of the designs, and examples of gateway features and placemaking structures for the Square. Throughout the virtual presentation, residents were asked to share their thoughts about the different designs. 172 participants shared their feedback online, with additional responses received via paper forms or emails to staff.

Figure 1: Screenshot of virtual open house



Source: Virtual Open House, PlanLocal Platform, Civicplan

2.3 Diggable Downtown Day

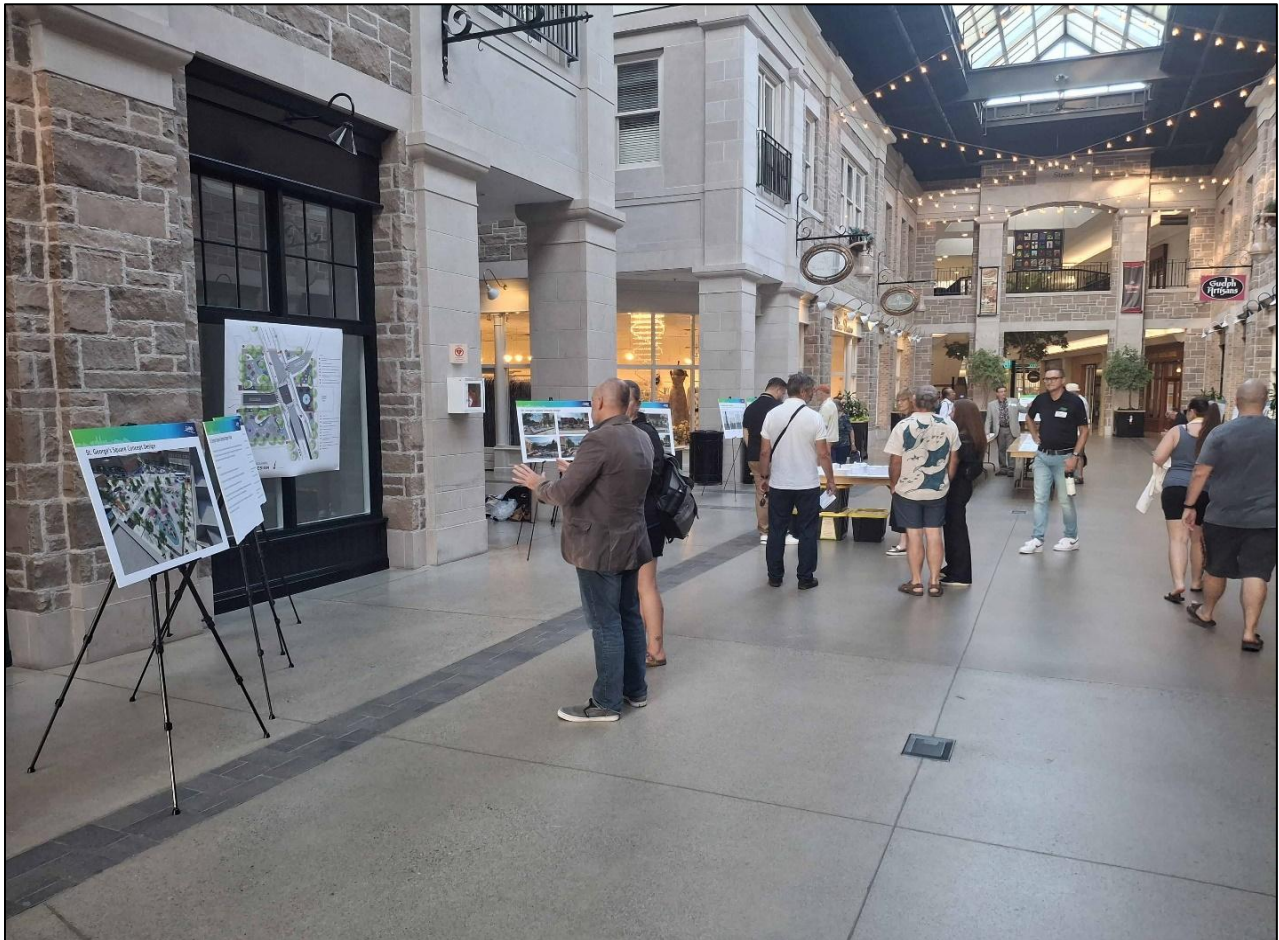
The project team coordinated a full day of activities around the Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square stage of the DTIRP project on September 18, 2025. The day began with the opening of the Downtown Construction Office in St. George's Square, followed by a Construction Café. In addition, there were installations of street furnishings and fixtures throughout the Square for a more tangible experience of some of the potential additions coming with the detailed design. The day culminated with the public open house in the Old Quebec Shoppes where City staff recorded approximately 71 conversations around the Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square project.



Source: Diggable Downtown Day installation, City of Guelph engagement team

2.4 Public Open House

The public open house was hosted in the Old Quebec Shoppes and ran between 6 and 8 p.m. on September 18, 2025. The event was facilitated by City of Guelph staff, as well as members of the project consultant team from MTE, GSP and Civicplan. The open house offered various activities, including the opportunity to review the Wyndham Street North proposed functional and streetscape designs, and the concept design for St. George's Square on display boards, models and large-scale print outs. In addition, information related to construction planning, timing and proposed mitigation activities were shared. Residents were provided the opportunity to speak with City staff and the project team about the concept detailed design. They were also able to share their preferences around gateway features and placemaking structures for the Square. In total, 42 people attended the open house.



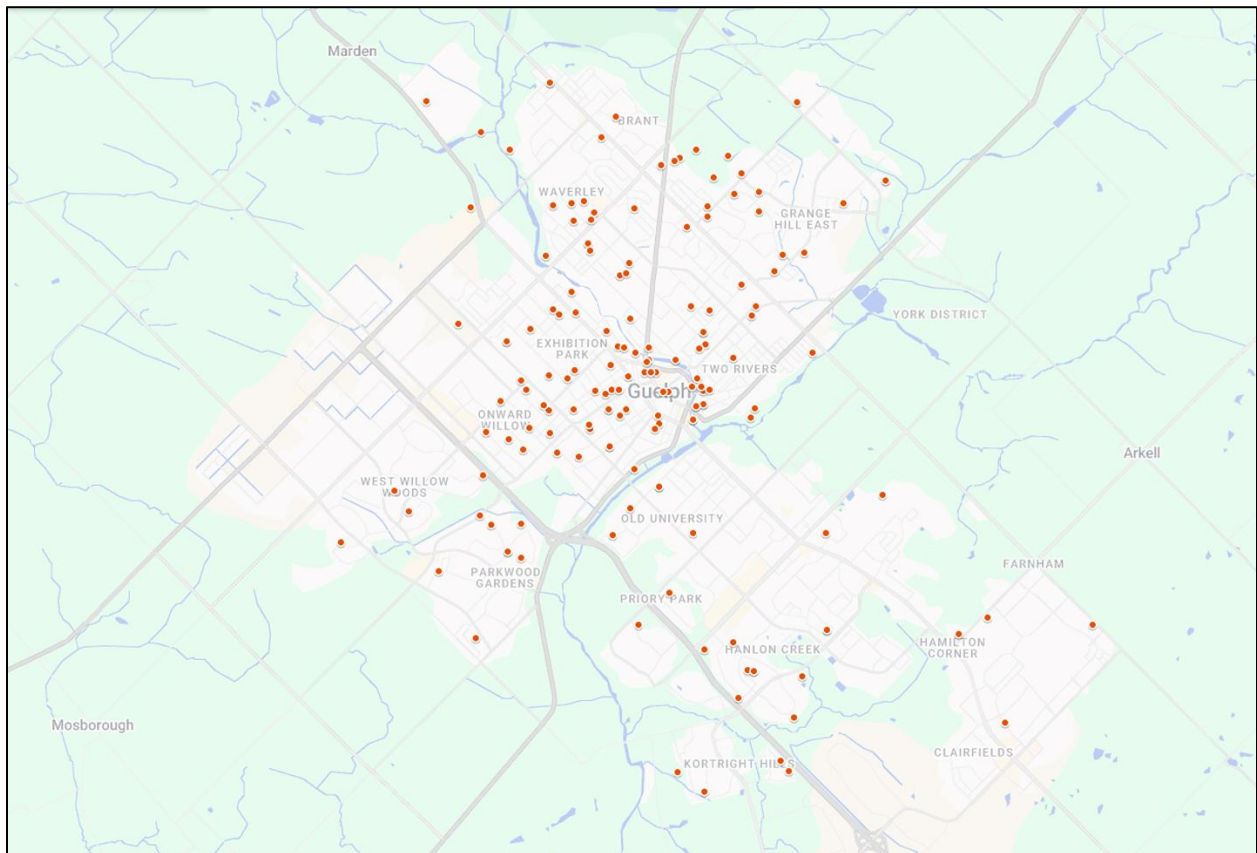
Source: September 18 Open House, Civicplan

3.0 Engagement Results

3.1 Virtual Open House feedback

The following section presents a summary of engagement feedback from Guelph residents received as part of the virtual open house which was available between September 15 and October 16, 2025. Additional comments received from residents who attended the public open house on September 18 are also included in Section 3.2. In total, 175 responses were received through the virtual open house (this includes additional responses received via questionnaires available at the open house). Figure 2 displays postal code locations shared by vOH respondents.

Figure 2: Map of respondents' postal code locations



Note: Not all respondent postal codes are shown due to map extent.

The purpose of the engagement was to share the proposed functional and streetscape designs for the Wyndham Street North reconstruction, as well as a detailed design for St. George's Square. Residents were asked how well they thought each design achieved the goals for renewal of the spaces. The following sections summarize the feedback received online.

3.1.1 Wyndham Street North Functional Design

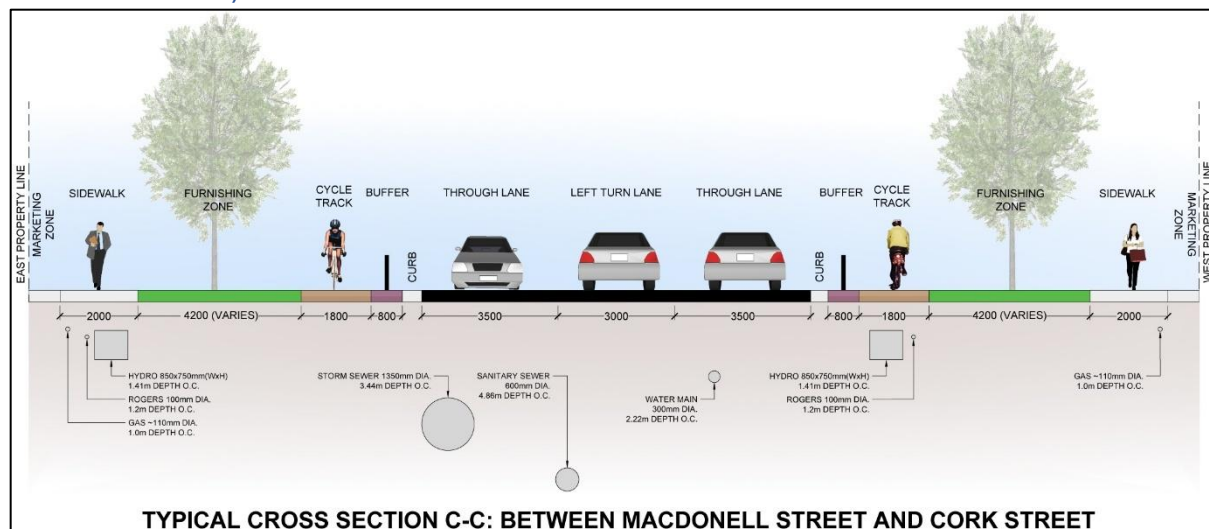
The functional design for the reconstruction of Wyndham Street North is proposed to address both above and below ground upgrades (Figure 3). In terms of above ground changes, the functional design follows the Wyndham Street Municipal Class EA (2023), where the typical cross-section for the corridor is changed to a two-lane configuration with uni-directional cycle track on either side of the roadway. Other key features of the updated design include:

- Parallel parking delineated by curb bump outs
- Removal of parking within the St. George's Square perimeter
- Permanent loading/unloading zones identified throughout Wyndham Street
- Bus pads and bus shelters included in the streetscape
- Removing turn lanes at Quebec Street

The 90% functional (detailed) design was updated based on feedback from the public, businesses, and partners received throughout the design and engagement periods. Updates include:

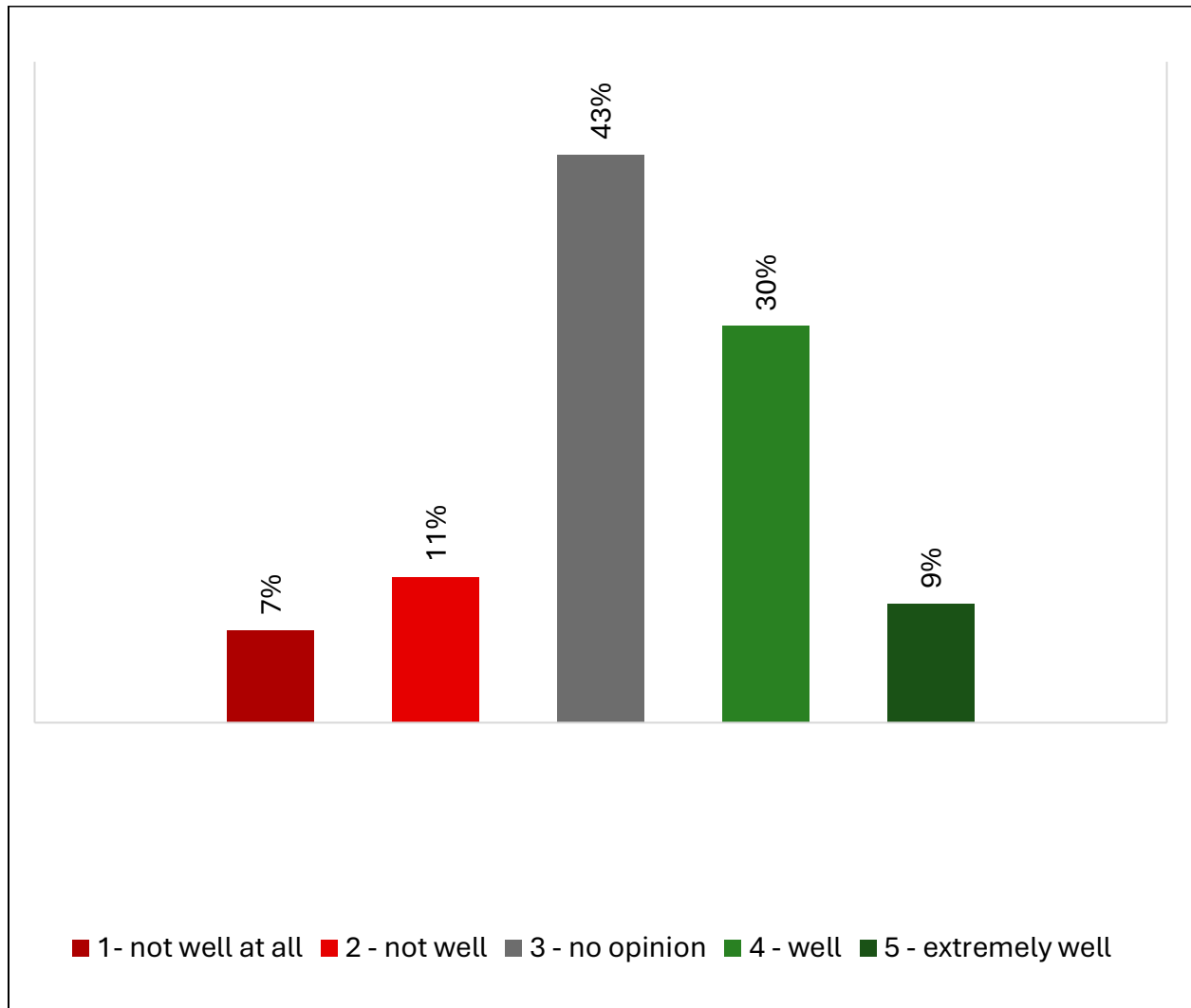
- New underground infrastructure (i.e. hydro, water) installed, including throughout St. George's Square for access during special events.
- The placement of bike lanes, sidewalks, and parking stalls have been adjusted to accommodate various community requests.
- The grading at intersections has been improved for better accessibility.
- Improvements to water/sanitary services to ensure we are ready for future development and more housing Downtown.

Figure 3: Cross section of functional design (Wyndham Street North between Macdonell and Cork Streets)



Residents were asked to indicate how well the functional design achieves the goals of improving pedestrian safety, slowing traffic and creating an adaptable space to promote an active lifestyle for people of all ages (Figure 4). Respondents could choose between 1 and 5, where 1 indicated “not well at all”, 3 indicated no opinion, and 5 indicated extremely well. The largest single segment of respondents (43%) chose “no opinion” about the functional designs, with a combined 39% choosing “well” or “extremely well” as their measure of the functional design.

Figure 4: Functional design

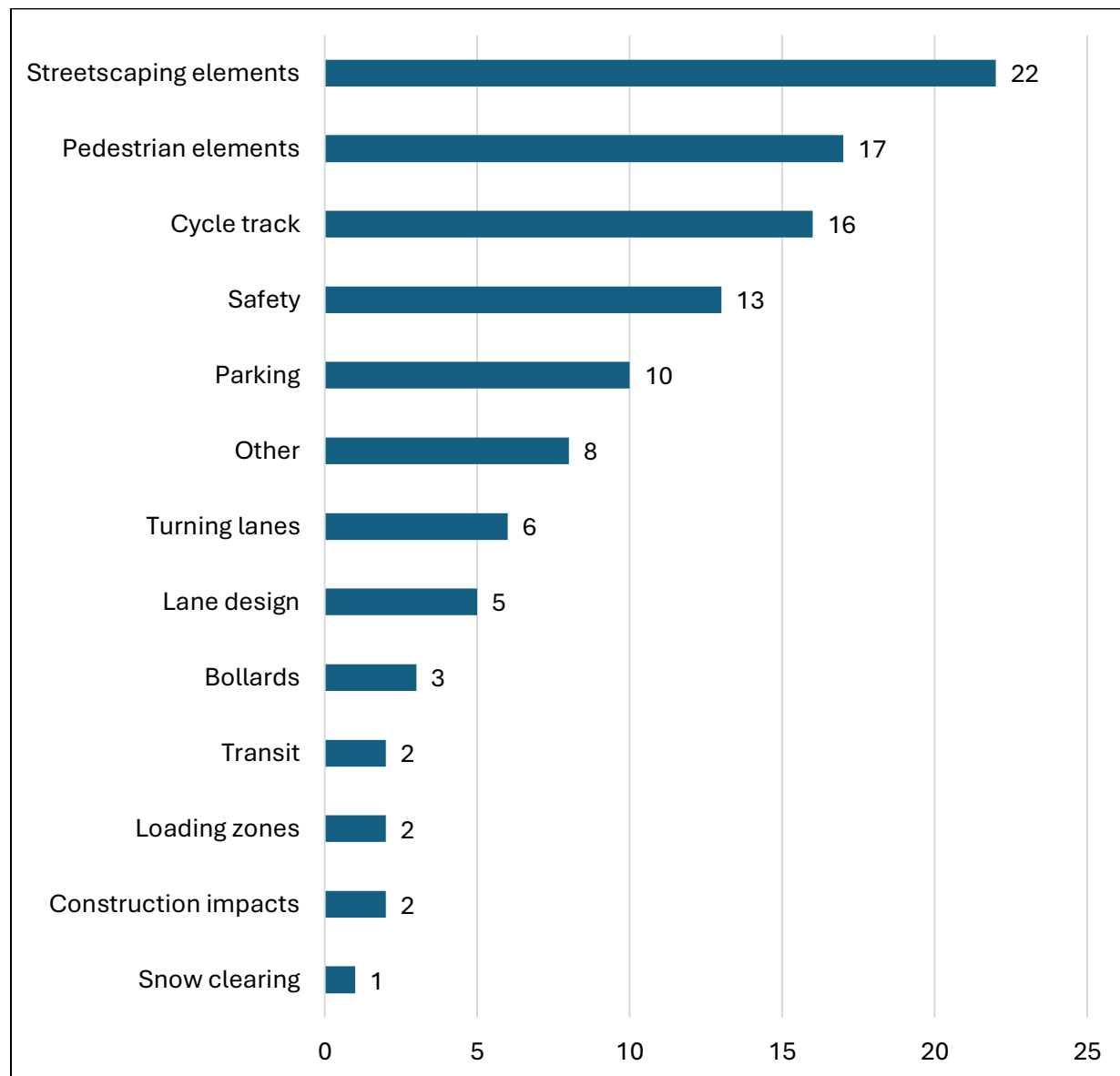


N=175

Qualitative Comments about Functional Design

Respondents were asked to share more about their choice. In total, 70 comments were received about the functional design. Figure 5 displays the number of times key themes were noted in comments. Please note that respondents may have mentioned more than one theme or issue in their comment, thus there are more than 70 mentions noted.

Figure 5: Functional design comments themes, by number of comments



The following outlines the key feedback from each of the main themes.

Streetscaping elements – Comments that related to streetscaping elements (e.g. planters, trees, benches paving etc.) are analyzed in section 3.1.2 below.

Pedestrian related – The key ideas shared were to increase pedestrianization even more, more opportunities for flexible car-free areas (e.g. closing St. George’s Square for events), and concerns about intersections/crossings and potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

Cycle track – Comments related to the cycle track focused mainly on support for a separated cycle track from the roadway, making it safer for cyclists. Comments also noted expanding separated, protected lanes beyond Wyndham Street to Eramosa Road and Woolwich Street, as well as more broadly throughout the city. Additional comments cautioned to ensure that the track and signage are clear to avoid any potential conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.

Safety – Concerns around safety were expressed in two broad categories, first was safety related to potential conflicts between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. The second category relates to a perceived sense of safety “coming Downtown” and concerns related to the opioid crisis and unhoused residents.

Parking – Comments tended to focus on the need for more parking than is shown in the designs, noting that this may dissuade people from coming downtown.

Other - The range of ideas shared in the “other” category included those comments that were less specific, in general this theme included short statements of support for the design and project overall, or alternatively those who expressed they would like to see these funds directed to other municipal priorities.

3.1.2 Wyndham Street North Streetscape Design

The streetscape design aims to create a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly environment that enhances the urban experience while promoting a space that is shared by all modes of transportation.

The design for Wyndham Street North focuses on creating a flexible street design that can adapt for events or everyday activities. Key features include wide, accessible sidewalks lined with a mix of perennial planting beds, decorative raised planters, and trees to provide shade. The streetscape is designed with a balance of hardscape surfaces, and softscape elements. Functional areas with textured paving, seating areas and bike racks, for example, are complemented by the inviting atmosphere created by trees and flowers. Materials in the design were selected specifically for durability, ease of maintenance, and an aesthetic that aligns with the character of the surrounding architecture and heritage.

Feedback from residents, businesses and other community partners informed updates to the streetscape plan displayed during the Fall 2025 engagement events, including:

- Improved lighting and access to electricity.
- Changes to planters.
- Parallel parking spaces and loading zones indicated by use of pavers.
- Enhanced public space at the intersection of Woolwich and Wyndham Streets.

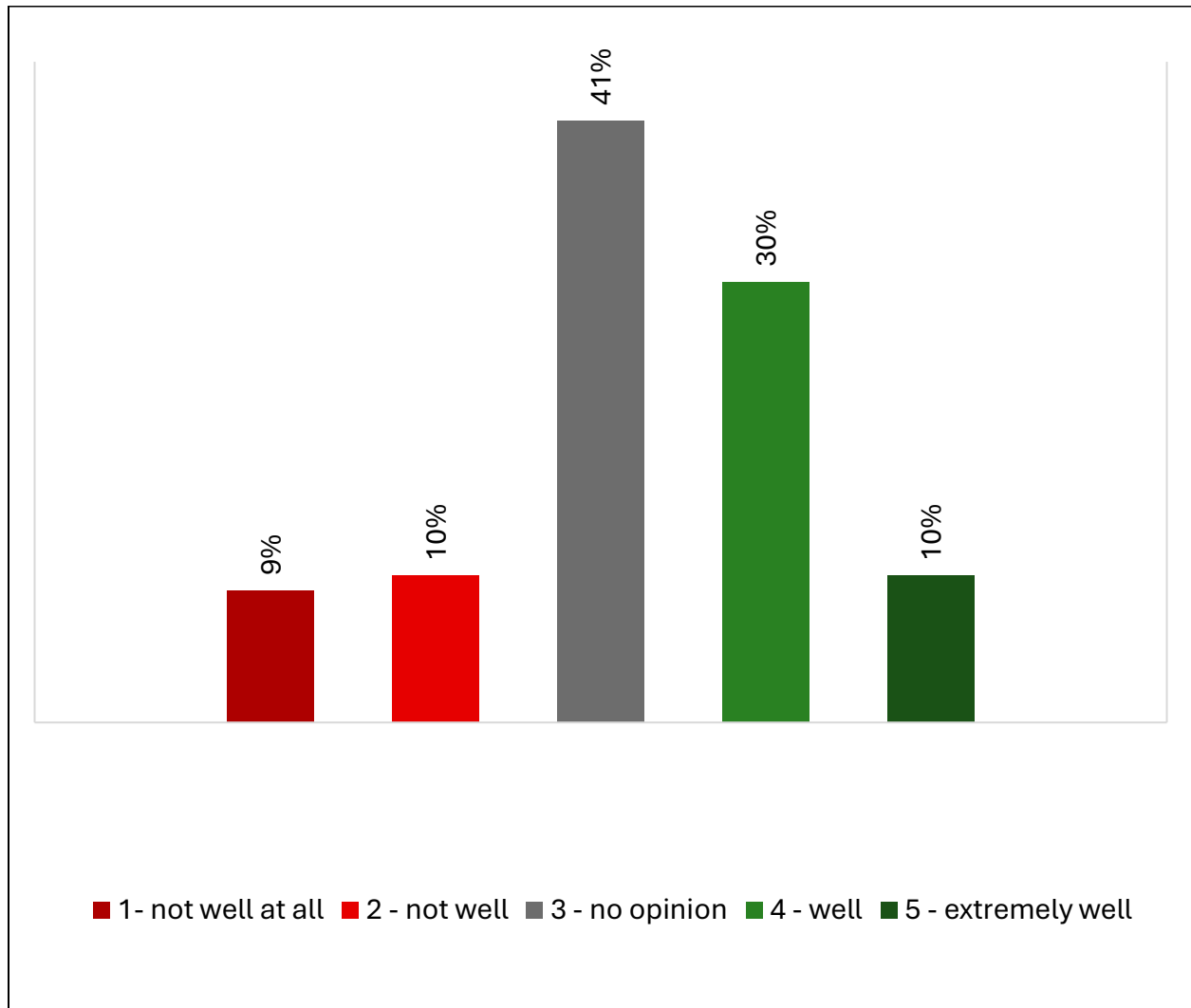
Figure 6: 3D Image of proposed streetscape design



Credit: GSP

Residents were asked to rate how well the streetscape design achieves the goals of prioritizing all modes of transportation equally and creating a flexible street design while enhancing public spaces (Figure 7). Respondents could choose between 1 to 5, where 1 indicated not well at all, 3 indicated no opinion, and 5 indicated extremely well. The largest single segment of respondents (41%) indicated they had no opinion, and a combined 40% of respondents indicated they thought the streetscape design achieved its goals well or extremely well.

Figure 7: Streetscape design support

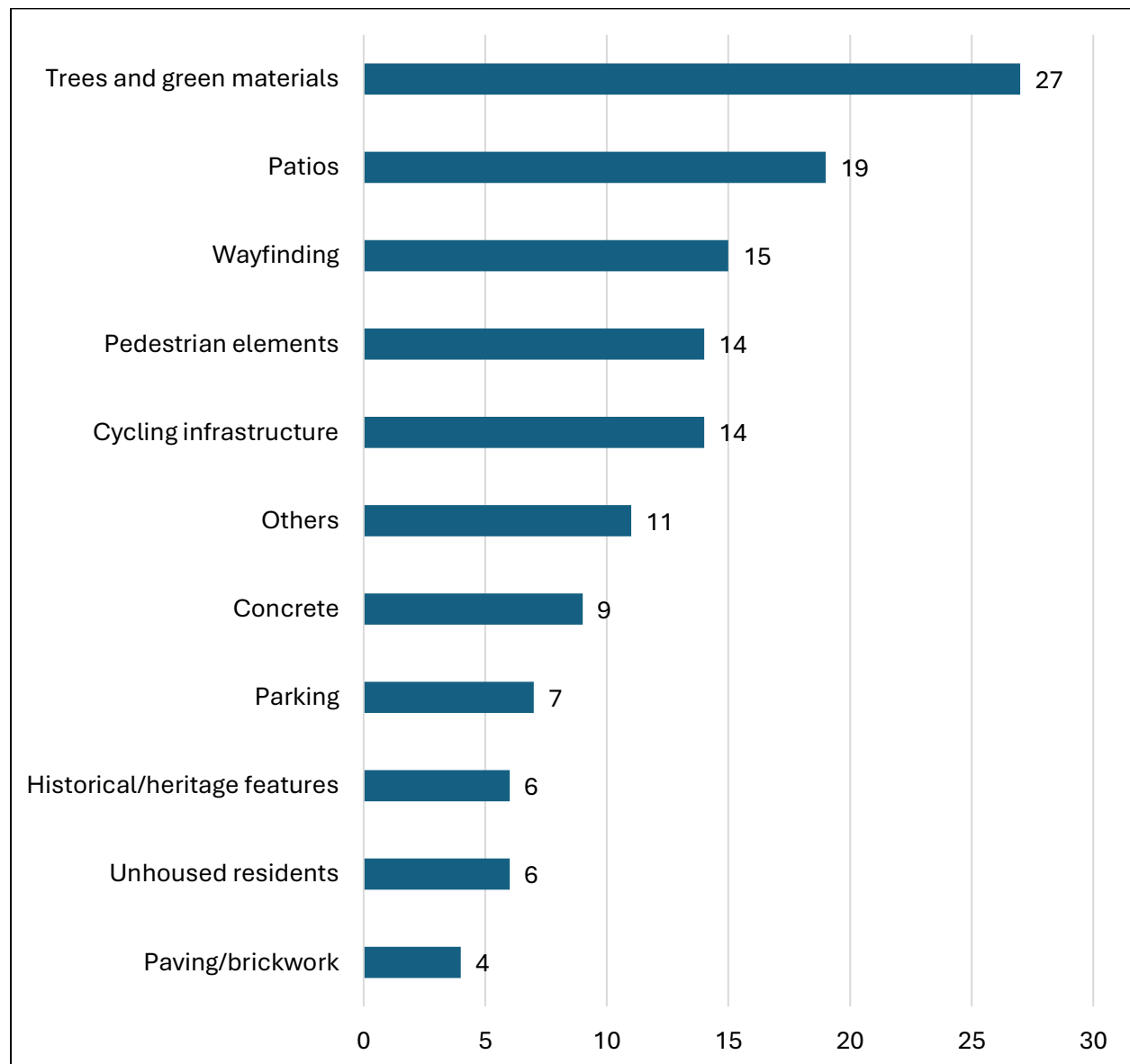


N=175

Qualitative comments about streetscape design

Residents were also asked to share more about the streetscape design. In total, 96 comments were received. Figure 8 displays the number of times key themes were noted in comments. Please note that respondents may have mentioned more than one theme or issue in their comment, there are more than 96 mentions noted.

Figure 8: Streetscape design comments themes, by number of comments



The following provides more details about the comments received under the key themes.

Trees and green materials – Comments called for more trees and green materials to provide additional shade, countering a perception of too much concrete.

Patios – All comments supported patios, specifically ensuring that there would be ample space for these in the furnishing zones, where needed, and that they are surrounded by greenery.

Wayfinding – Comments emphasized the need for clear, legible street signage with sharp colour contrast for accessibility. Other wayfinding related comments included reducing signage “clutter” for cyclists/pedestrians and incorporating heritage or City symbols.

Pedestrian elements - Comments around pedestrianization and pedestrian elements can be split in two groups: The first, those who feel that more effort should be made to prioritize pedestrian infrastructure and reduce vehicular movement. The second group expressed that there is already adequate space for pedestrians, and any further vehicular restrictions would impede traffic, reduce parking and make access to downtown even less appealing.

Cycle infrastructure – There is overall support for improved cycling infrastructure throughout the comments. Questions or suggestions that arise in the comments included better delineation between cycle track and pedestrian areas to avoid conflict and questions about whether the cycle track is blocked off when seasonal patios are in place.

Other – Comments in the other theme include more general statements received, such as general support for the project, comments focused on spending funds on other city priorities, as well as concerns about making Wyndham Street North less focused on efficient car traffic.

3.1.4 St. George's Square

The concept design for St. George's Square blends many elements, old and new, to create a renewed public open park space that is flexible and can hold a wide range of events and activities. The concept plays off the rolling hills found throughout Guelph and uses limestone elements to reflect the importance of heritage in the city.

Design features:

- St. George's Square is unified across roadways through the use of paving materials.
- The perfect square footprint is highlighted through pathways and banding on the outside of the space.
- Trees, planters and other seasonal plantings will bring a natural element to space.
- The layout is both durable and functional, featuring paved areas, flexible seating, shade structures and open spaces that can be easily transformed for festivals, performances, markets, and community gatherings.

This urban space is an inviting hub for outdoor activities, with ample room for gathering and play, making it a dynamic, year-round destination for people of all ages.

Figure 9: 3D proposed design for St. George's Square



Credit: GSP

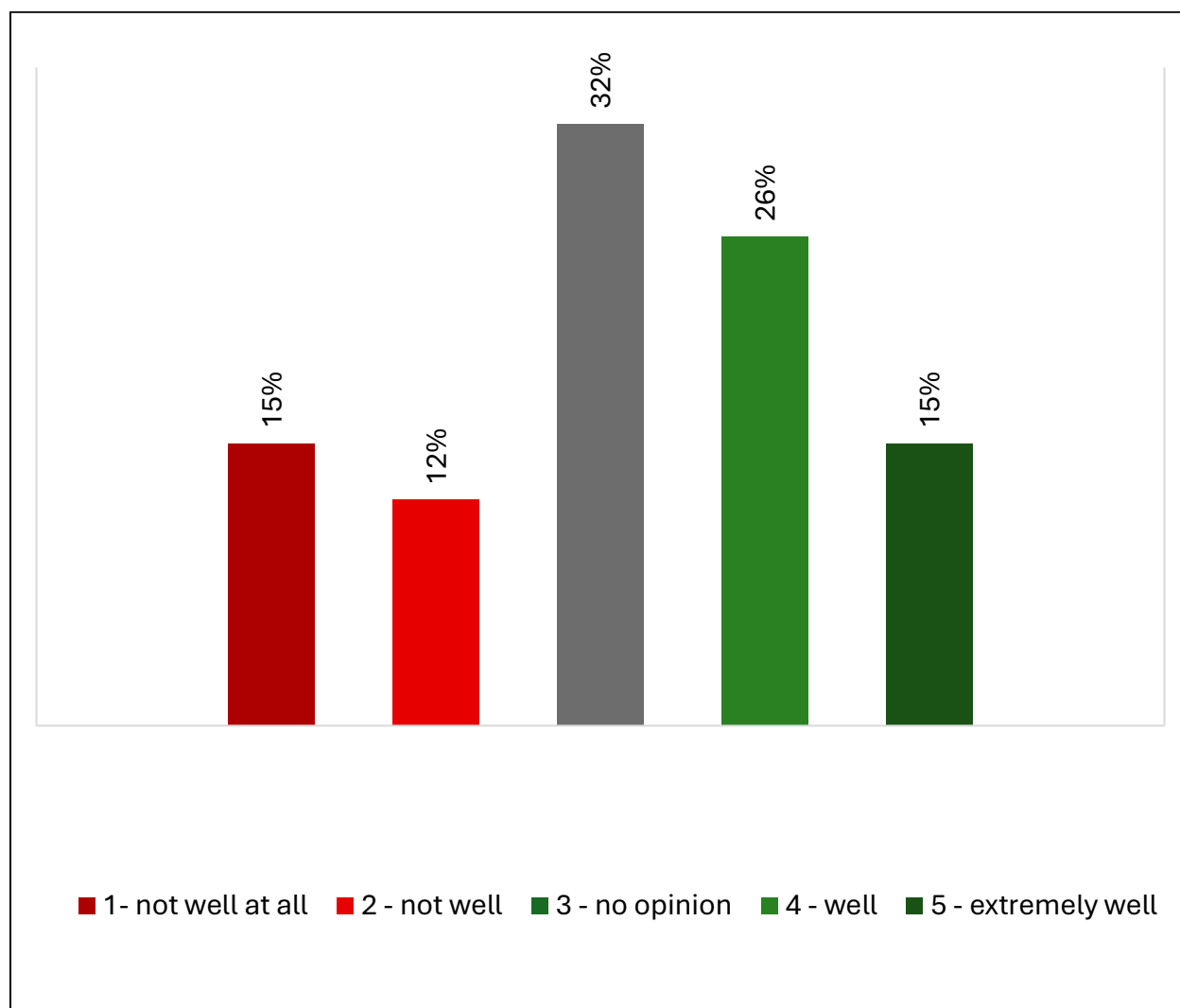
The design of St. George's Square has been updated based on feedback received through previous engagement, and includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Changes to the proposed footprint of the play area to provide a climbable placemaking structure while balancing the need for patios or special events space in the southwest part of the Square.
- Developing the shade structures throughout the Square to reflect the theme of community. The structures also build from the agricultural roots of the City through potential patterns and colour overhead.
- Temporary shade features, like large-scale umbrellas (canopies), are proposed for the space. These can be moved throughout the Square to enhance the comfort of people visiting during day-to-day use or for special events.
- Changes to the planter layouts to provide more seating and space for trees, while opening up more of the area for moveable furnishings and programming.
- Finalizing the new location of the fountain. The sculpture and water display of the fountain will remain the same, but the size and look of the lower basin may change to fit into the space in front of the Old Quebec Street Shoppes.
- Moveable bollards have been added between the sidewalk and street, which can be used to close-off Quebec Street for larger special events.
- The addition of reclaimed heritage materials, including the possible use of limestone in the terraced seat-walls and stairways, while still maintaining an accessible space for all.
- Improvements to the lighting of the space including a mix of light standards, inset wall lighting, and lighting of shade structures and the fountain to increase visibility and to highlight features during evening hours.
- Gateway elements which contribute to the branding of the space, while providing opportunity for signage and wayfinding.

Residents were asked “how well the St. George’s Square design renews the Square, making it a more unified and inviting space for outdoor activities that is also flexible for events and activities all year round?” Figure 10 shows a summary of results to this question.

Respondents were able to select from a scale to indicate how well they thought the proposed designs renew the Square. On the scale, 1 was not well at all, 2 was not well, 3 was no opinion, 4 was well, and 5 was extremely well. While the largest segment of respondents selected no opinion (32%), the second largest segment was 26% of respondents who selected well, and a combined 41% selected “well” and “extremely well.” Conversely, a combined 27% of respondents selected “not well at all” and “not well.” It is also notable that there was polarized support for the design, where 15% of respondents selected either “not well at all” or “extremely well.”

Figure 10: St. George’s Square support for preferred concept design

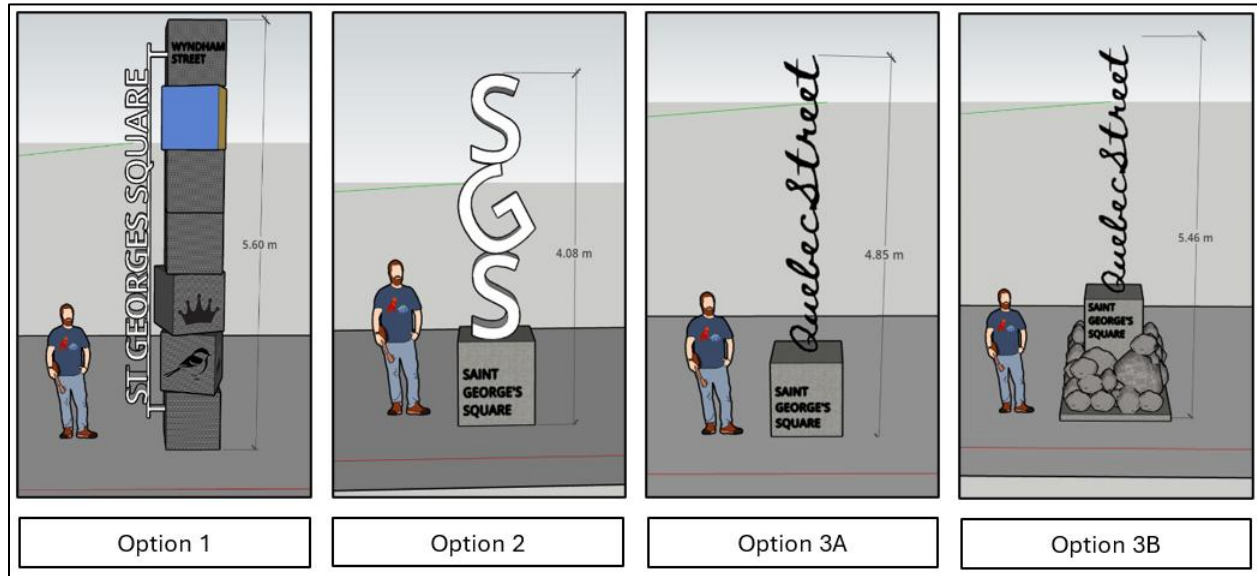


N=175

Gateway Features

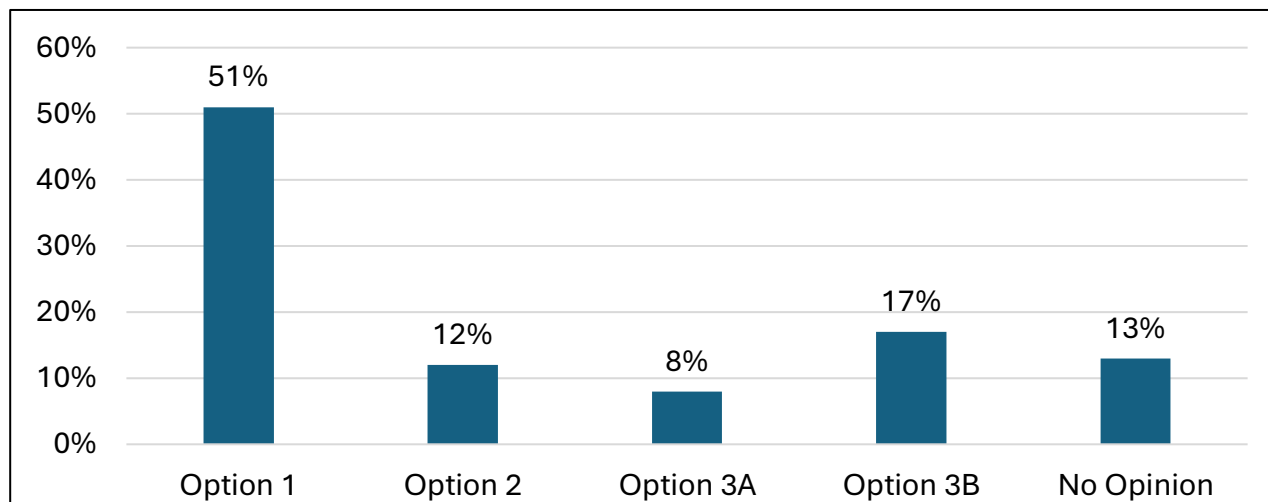
An element of the concept design was the addition of gateway features to help frame the boundaries of St. George's Square. Four examples of possible features were presented to gauge support (Figure 11). Figure 12 displays the support from engagement activities for the different options. Please note that the total responses reflect preferences noted both online and at in-person events.

Figure 11: Gateway Features Options



A majority of respondents from all engagement activities preferred Option 1 (51%). This was followed by 17% for Option 3B, 12% Option 2, and 8% Option 3A. Online respondents were also able to select no opinion, and 13% of them did so.

Figure 12: Gateway Features Options preference, by percentage

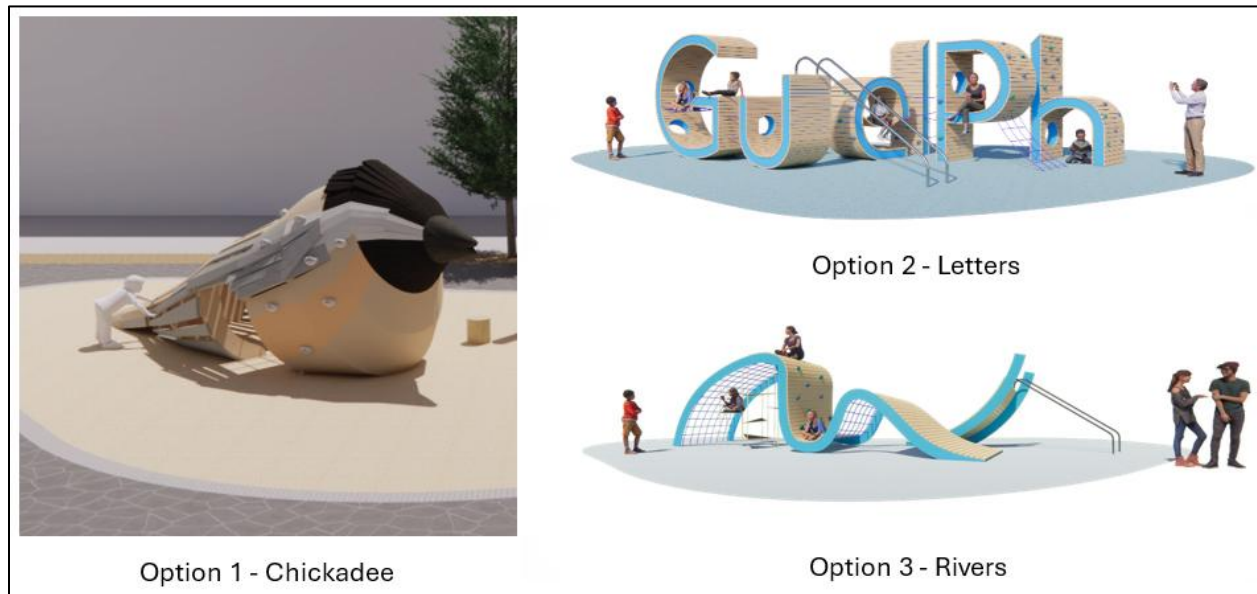


N=230

Placemaking Structures

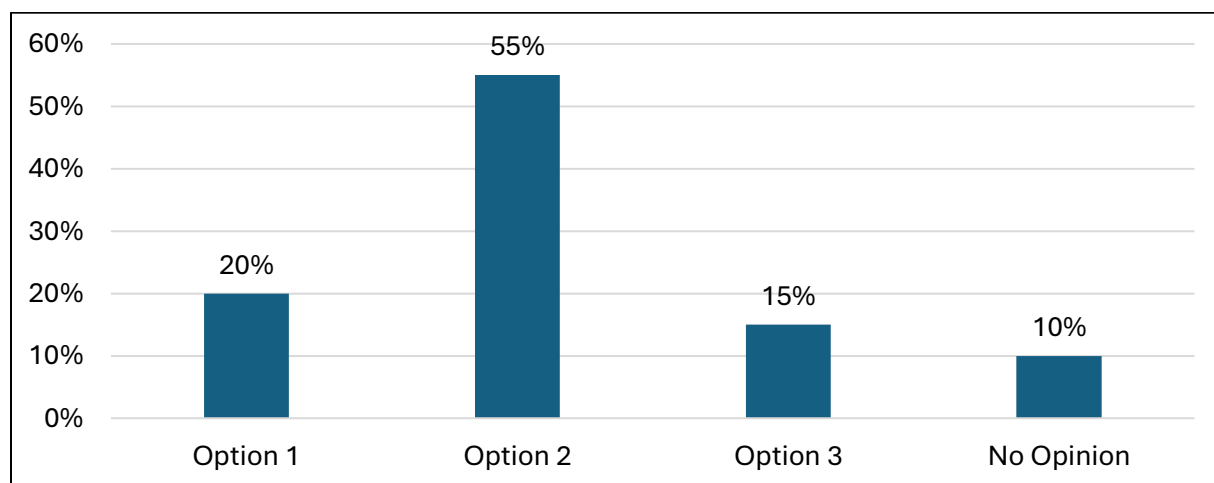
As part of the redesign of St. George's Square, a small play area is proposed for the Southwest quadrant of the Square. Included in this space is a proposed placemaking structure that could also act as a play structure. Three ideas for structures were presented at engagement events as displayed in Figure 13. Figure 14 shows the preferred structure identified by engagement participants.

Figure 13: Placemaking Structures Options



A majority of respondents (55%) chose Option 2 – Guelph letters, as their preferred placemaking structure. This was followed by 20% who selected Option 1 – Chickadee, 15% who selected Option 3 – Rivers, and 10% of online participants chose no opinion.

Figure 14: Placemaking Structure Preference, by percentage

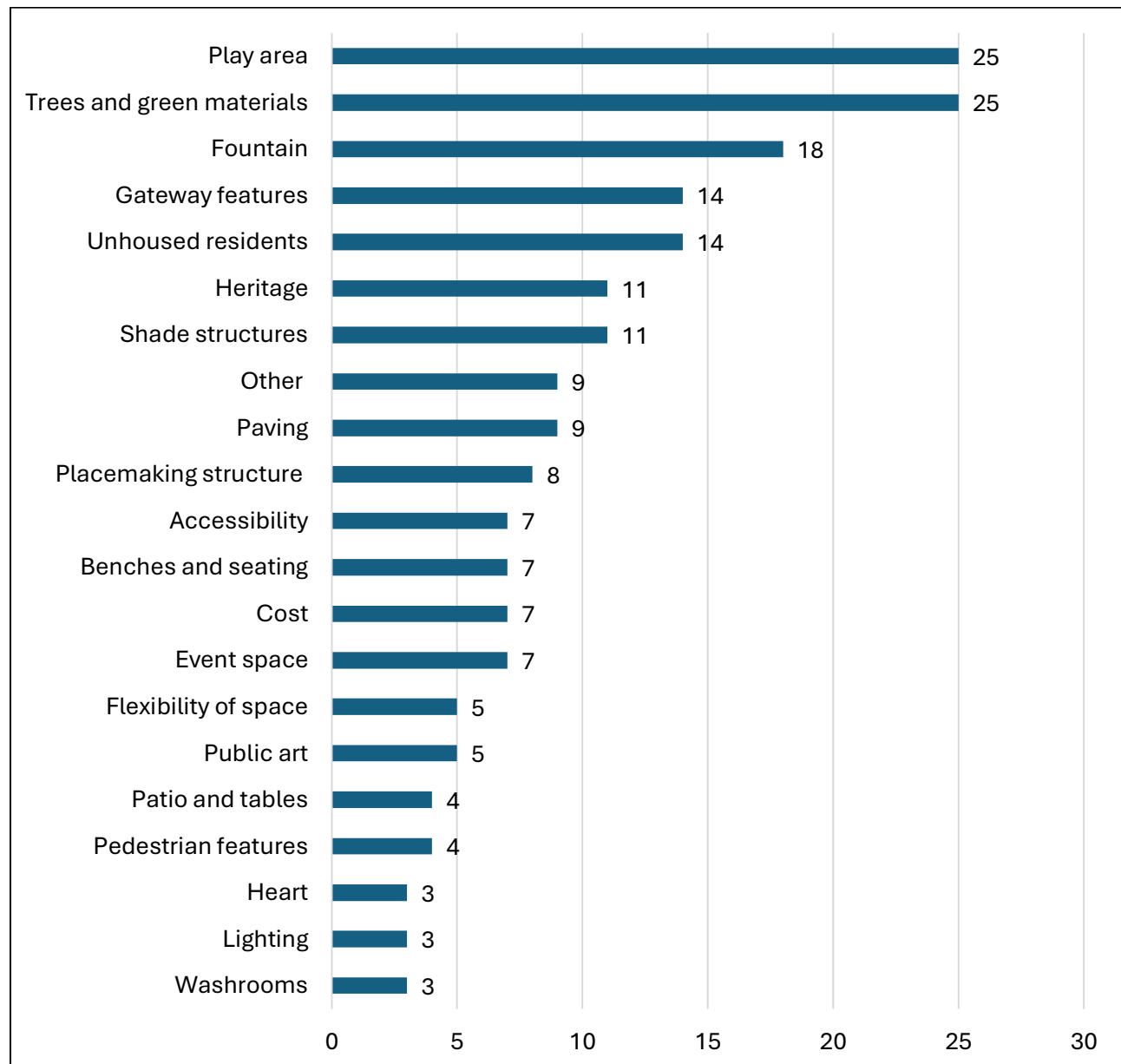


N=243

Qualitative comments about St. George's Square

Finally, engagement participants were asked to share any additional thoughts they might have about the design for St. George's Square. Responses were received from the virtual Open House, as well as from a questionnaire available at the in-person open house and pop-up events. In addition, some residents provided comments via email received by City staff. In total, 97 comments were received. Many respondents shared multiple ideas within one comment, and these have been captured across numerous themes. Figure 15 displays the key themes from the comments, followed by more detail about what people said in relation to those themes.

Figure 15: Comments about St. George's Square design, by number



The following is a summary of key themes that arose in these comments:

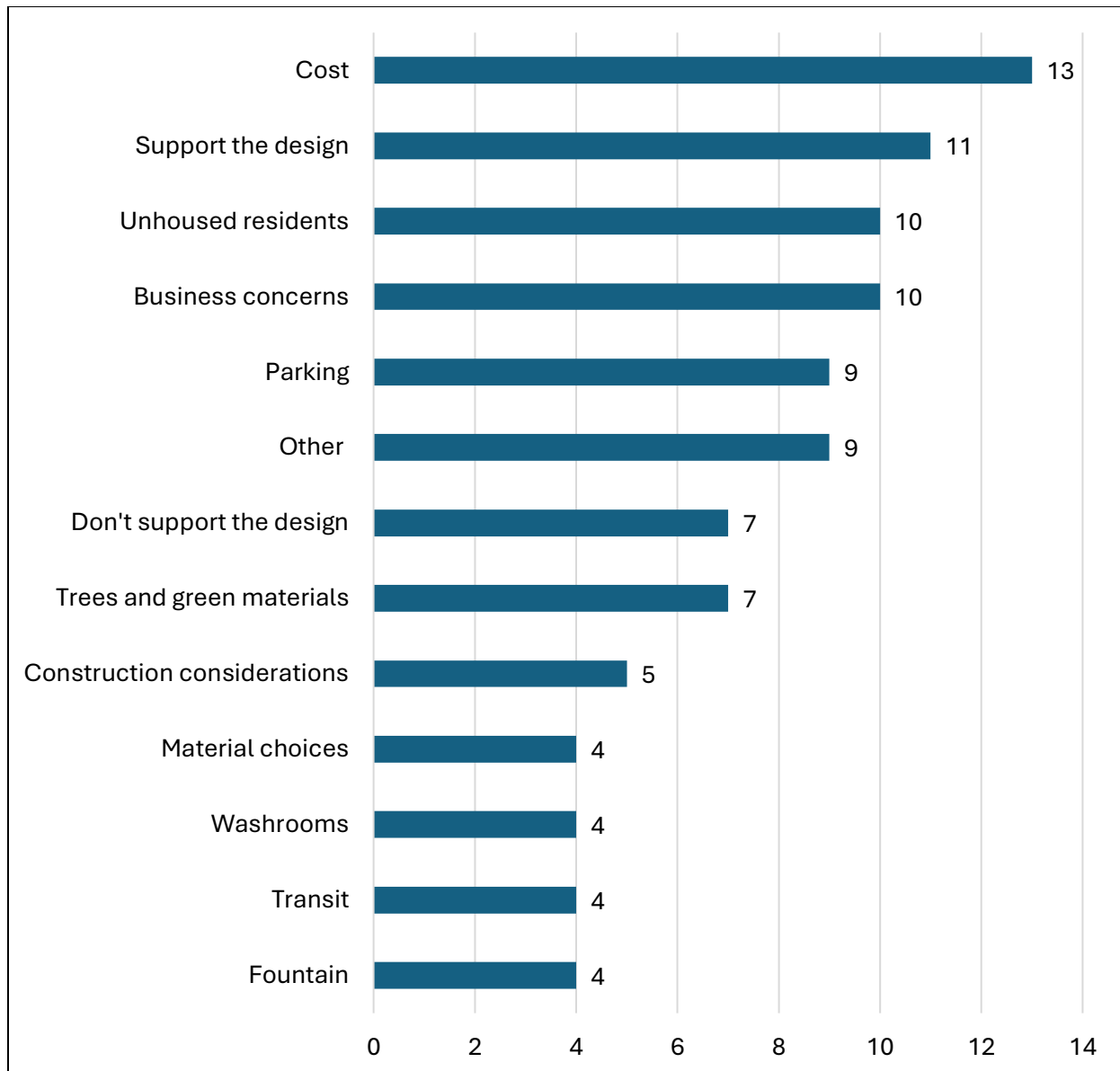
- **Play area** – Comments about the play area ranged from support and desire to see it expanded, to those thinking it is unnecessary. More specific concerns related to safety of children so near cars and surrounded by hard surfaces (i.e. concrete), and maintenance and cleanliness.
- **Trees and green materials** – Comments expressed concern that there was too much concrete in the design and called for more green, specifically support for more trees, green materials and native planting throughout the design.
- **Fountain** – A mix of comments about the fountain include those not seeing the need to move it balanced with those who like that the move gives the post office space more flexibility and openness for events. Other comments relate to the fountain's new location and concerns that it will block access to the Old Quebec Shoppes for emergency vehicles and accessibility concerns.
- **Gateway** – Comments tended to focus on people disliking the proposed options for the gateway features and suggesting eliminating them, proposing public art alternatives, or green vertical gardens and public art combined.
- **Unhoused residents** – Concern was expressed about prioritizing spending on the Square design instead of addressing the housing crisis in Guelph. Additionally, some comments focused on ensuring the design does not invite the return of encampments to the Square.
- **Heritage/historical Guelph** – Comments focused on heritage or the history of Guelph were concerned that the design was too modern and not reflective enough of the unique built heritage in the city.
- **Shade and shade structures** – Many comments called for more opportunities for shade in the design, whether from trees or shade structures. Concerns were expressed about the longevity and maintenance of umbrellas in the Square. Other comments focused on the design of the shade structures presented and some noted a desire to see different designs, those that are more closely aligned with Guelph's branding, e.g. crown, poppy or Basilica shapes.
- **Other comments** – A number of these were focused on expressing support for the project and design.
- **Paving** – Comments relating to paving ranged from those supporting the use of different paving elements to break up the feeling of uniform concrete, as well as ensuring that the paving is sympathetic to people using mobility devices.

- **Placemaking structures** – Comments supported the introduction of placemaking structures with people reflecting their preferences for either the Chickadee or the Guelph letters.
- **Accessibility** – Comments here were focused on ensuring that paving materials used are friendly for mobility devices, liking the “flat,” accessible design throughout the Square, ensuring seating and tables chosen are accessible for wheelchair users, and finally concerns about the relocated fountain impeding access to Old Quebec Shoppes.
- **Benches and seating** – Comments supported the seating presented in the designs, including patio style seating, benches, but called for more and ensuring what is chosen is accessible. Ensuring these are shade covered as well.
- **Cost** – These comments focused on a desire to see funds directed to other municipal priorities (e.g. housing, opioid crisis).
- **Event space** – Comments supported the idea of the event space in general, with some liking where it is located, others suggesting it is better suited in other parts of the Square, while others generally supporting the idea of a stage or event space without focusing on the specific location.

3.1.5 General Comments

Finally, residents were able to share any general comments at the end of the virtual open house. A total of 78 general comments were received. Figure 16 displays common themes found in the comments.

Figure 16: General comment themes, by number



The following were key themes that arose in these comments:

- **Cost** – Cost concerns range from a general criticism that this project is too costly, and tax dollars are better spent on the housing and opioid crises, to a caution to City staff to ensure that it is done in a fiscally responsible way, and finally that funds should be spent to upgrade underground infrastructure but not streetscaping.
- **Support the design** – General comments of support for undertaking the project, as well as for the design and features overall.
- **Unhoused residents** – Comments indicating that addressing the housing crisis should be a priority before the redesign of Wyndham Street North and St. George's Square, as well as concerns that unhoused residents will return to the Square.
- **Business concerns** – Comments expressing concerns about the viability of Downtown businesses during the construction, and the impact of the design on businesses once it is completed.
- **Parking** – Comments expressing a desire for more parking or the need to keep existing parking in the new design.
- **Other comments** – General comments about broader principles that should inform the streetscaping and St. George's Square design.
- **Do not support the design** – General comments expressing a dislike of the design.
- **Trees and green materials** – Ensuring that there is ample green throughout the designs to balance hard materials like concrete, dark stone and paving.

3.2 Open House Feedback

The following is a summary of comments received by staff during the September 18 open house:

- Appreciation for detail in open house materials and presentation, especially the construction phasing maps.
- Increase pedestrianization of St. George's Square, including continuous sidewalks or raised crossings.
- Desire for City to communicate frequently and broadly throughout construction process.
- More details provided on tree species to be used.
- Public art for gateways, emphasizing the importance of City symbols (e.g. Chickadee, Royal City etc.).
- Seating options – ensure that these have back rests and arm rests.
- Concrete planters – seating should be facing into the Square, no skateboarding in the Square.
- Add solar panels on the shade structures.
- Add placemaking boards throughout the space.

4.0 Next Steps

This round of engagement marks the final opportunities for engagement before construction begins on Wyndham Street North in Spring 2026. The feedback and comments received from the fall 2025 engagement activities will inform final detailed designs for the Wyndham Street North construction.

