



DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION Uxbridge Resident Survey Report



Building on Yesterday - Planning for Tomorrow

January 2022

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Executive Summary

In August of 2020, the Township of Uxbridge launched the Uxbridge Downtown Revitalization Project (UDRP) to develop an action-oriented plan for the future of downtown Uxbridge. The UDRP followed the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' (OMAFRA) four-stage approach to Downtown Revitalization. Stage II "Collect Data & Analyze" provides a framework for connecting with residents, business owners and visitors.

The Uxbridge Downtown Revitalization Resident Survey was a 15-question survey that received 830 responses. The Resident Survey was open from June 2021 to October 2021 and was available online and in-print.

Based on the 2016 census, the population of Township of Uxbridge totaled 21,176, with 17,860 aged 15 and over. Using this population data, 4.6% of Uxbridge residents aged 15 and older responded to the survey. Based on this response rate, if the entire population of Uxbridge residents aged 15 and older were surveyed, **we can be 95% confident that the same results would be obtained with a margin of error of just 3.32%.**

Respondent Information

- Of the 830 responses received, 37% were under the age of 45, 41% were between the ages of 45 and 64, and the remaining 22% were 65 or older.
- The majority of respondents were either employed or self-employed (57% and 16% respectively), while approximately 24% of respondents were retired.
- Of the 583 respondents who were employed, approximately 26% worked in the Township of Uxbridge, 23% in York Region, 17% worked from home, and 17% in the City of Toronto.

Current Use of the Downtown

Firstly, the Uxbridge Resident Survey sought to understand how downtown Uxbridge is currently being used by Township residents.

- 49% of the respondents visited downtown Uxbridge two or more times a week for recreational activities (walking, cycling, use of parks)
- 64% of respondents stated that they shop in downtown Uxbridge at least once a week.
- 56% of respondents stated that they visit restaurants in downtown Uxbridge at least twice a month.
- Commercial/professional services, public services, and personal care services had the lowest usage as the vast majority respondents only visited these types of businesses once a month or very rarely/never.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents stated that they will continue to choose Uxbridge over surrounding cities and towns when undertaking these types of activities.

Current Perceptions of Downtown Uxbridge

Next, the Uxbridge Resident Survey dove deeper to understand residents' thoughts on the current state of downtown.

Respondents were provided with five statements regarding the current state of downtown Uxbridge. They were asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement on a four-point scale.

- When asked if stores in downtown Uxbridge are open when residents want to shop, 76% either strongly or somewhat agreed.
- When asked if businesses in downtown Uxbridge sell the products and services residents want to buy, 69% either strongly or somewhat agreed.
- When asked if prices of products/services in downtown Uxbridge are reasonable, 71% either strongly or somewhat agreed.
- When asked if the pedestrian experience in downtown Uxbridge is convenient, accessible and safe, 66% either strongly or somewhat agreed.
- When asked if parking in downtown Uxbridge is convenient and easy to use, 65% either strongly or somewhat agreed.
- It is important to note that the most common responses for these statements were within the neutral options (somewhat agree/somewhat disagree).

Respondents were also asked why they chose to shop outside of downtown Uxbridge.

- 77% of respondents stated that it is due to better selection/availability of products elsewhere.
- 40% stated that prices are generally lower outside of the downtown.

The Resident Survey also took a deeper dive into hours of operation to examine whether businesses are open when residents want to shop, when extended hours would be most utilized, and who would benefit most from extended hours.

- As previously noted, 23% of respondents strongly agreed and 53% somewhat agreed that businesses in downtown Uxbridge are open when they want to shop.
- However, responses differed significantly based on age, employment status and where the respondent worked.
 - 58% of respondents aged 65 and over stated that they would not use extended hours compared to just 16% of respondents aged 44 and under.
 - 54% of respondents aged 44 and under and 42% of respondents aged 45 – 64 would shop if businesses remained open past 5:00 p.m. from Tuesday to Thursday.
 - Additionally, anticipated usage of extended hours was higher amongst respondents who work outside of the Township of Uxbridge.

Looking Forward in Downtown Uxbridge

Respondents were also given a series of statements related to possible areas of focus in downtown Uxbridge. They were asked to provide their level of agreement on a four-point scale. While most statements received a neutral response, the following responses are noteworthy:

- 84% of respondents strongly agreed there should be a focus on reducing heavy truck traffic in the downtown.
- 88% of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that stores and restaurants should be permitted to use sidewalk and parking space for retail and/or dining opportunities.
- 81% either strongly or somewhat agreed that Uxbridge needs to be more pedestrian and cycle friendly.

Open-Ended Responses

The final part of the Uxbridge Resident Survey included several open-ended questions where respondents were encouraged to provide their own responses.

First, respondents were asked to state what they currently like about downtown Uxbridge.

- The most prominent responses were centered around the small businesses in the downtown core, the small-town feel that the downtown gives off and the excellent customer service provided by business owners and their staff.

Next, respondents were asked what they would change about downtown Uxbridge.

- The top response was centered around giving more attention to the section of Brock Street east of Main Street (otherwise known as Lower Brock). Other responses included reducing heavy truck traffic in the downtown, providing more greenspace, and having better selection of retail throughout the downtown core.

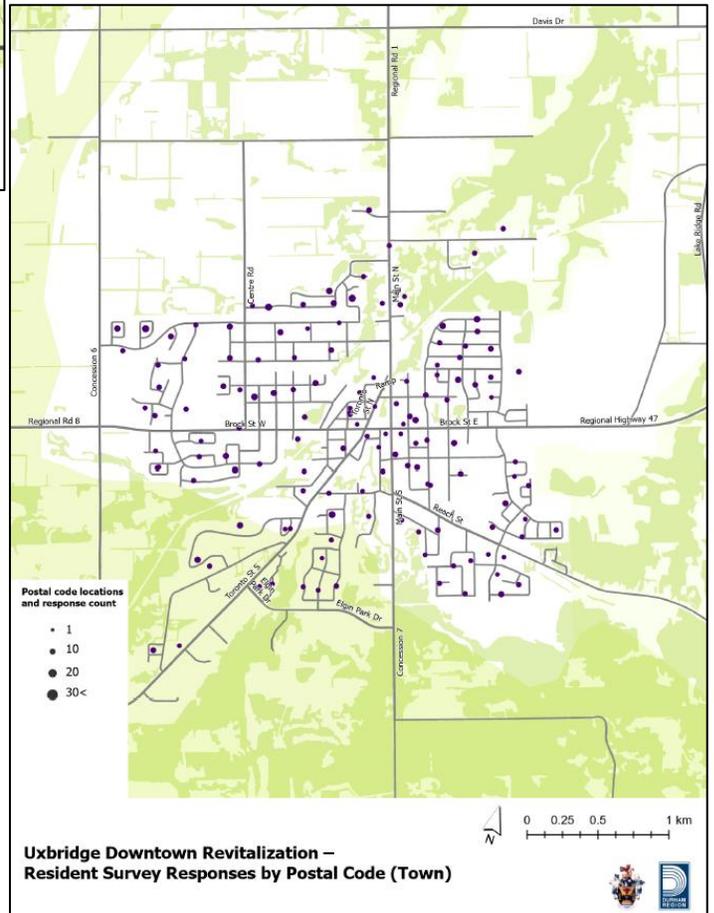
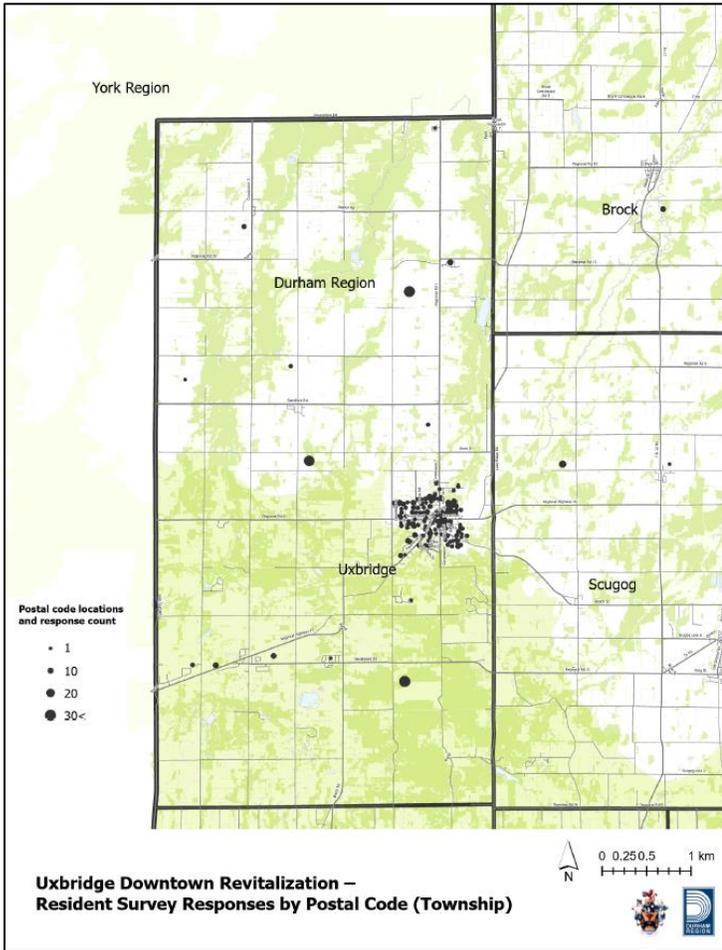
Lastly, respondents were asked to provide ideas for new types of businesses, services, events or facilities that they would like to see in downtown Uxbridge.

- The most prominent types of suggested new businesses were a grocery store/market and a clothing store.
- The most common types of eating establishments were casual dining, cafés, and more ethnic cuisine.
- Other suggested additions to downtown Uxbridge included more festivals/events and a town square.

Respondent Information

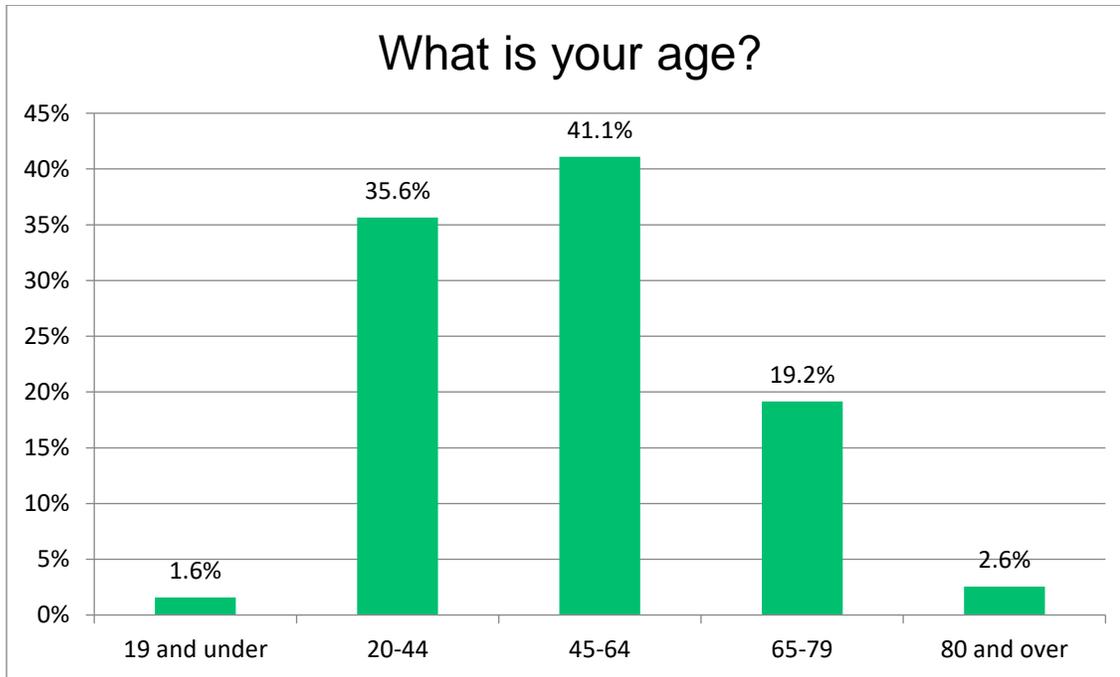
Postal Codes of Respondents

Number of Unique Postal Codes: 160



Age of Respondents

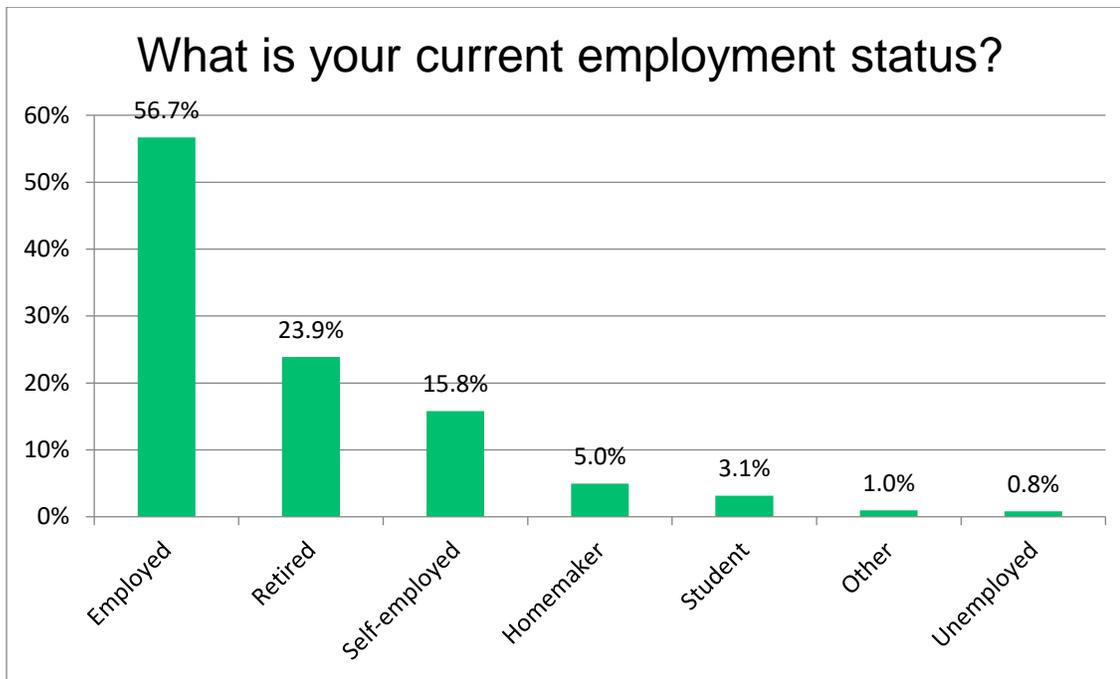
Total Respondents: 825



The most prominent age groups of respondents were 45 – 64 (41.1%), 20 – 44 (35.6%), and 65 – 79 (19.2%), respectively. There was a very small proportion of respondents aged 80 and over (2.6%) and 19 and under (1.6%). For this reason, ages will be grouped as “44 and under”, “45 – 64”, and “65 and over”.

Employment Status of Respondents

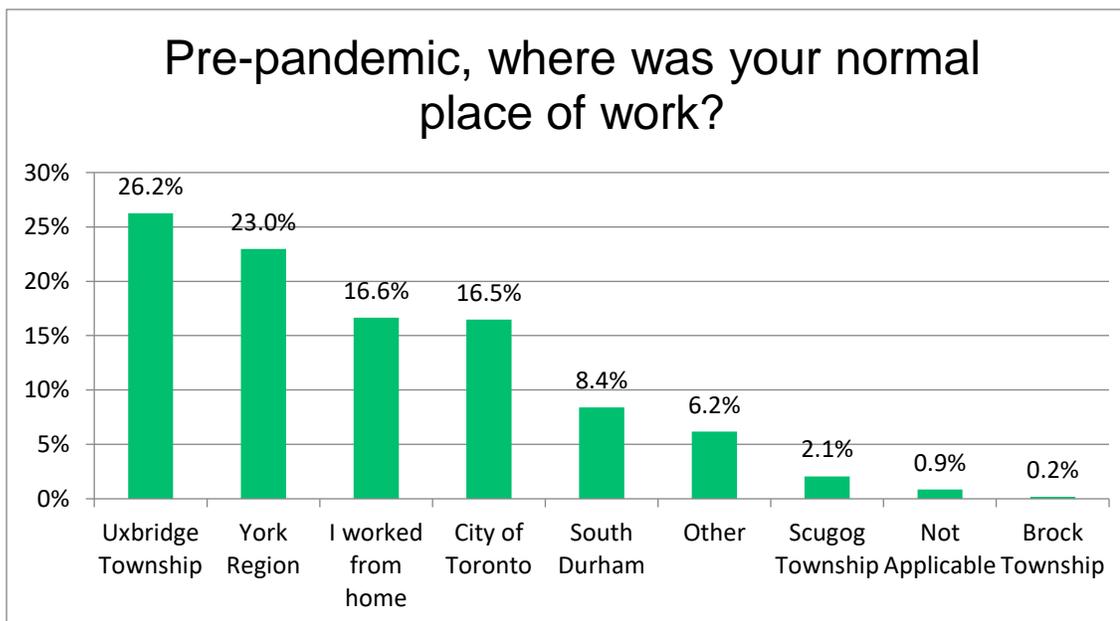
Total Respondents: 829



As shown above, the vast majority of respondents were employed/self-employed. 23.9% of respondents were retired, 5% were homemakers, 3.1% were students, and 0.8% were unemployed. 1% of respondents did not identify with any of these categories.

Normal Place of Work of Respondents

Total Respondents: 583

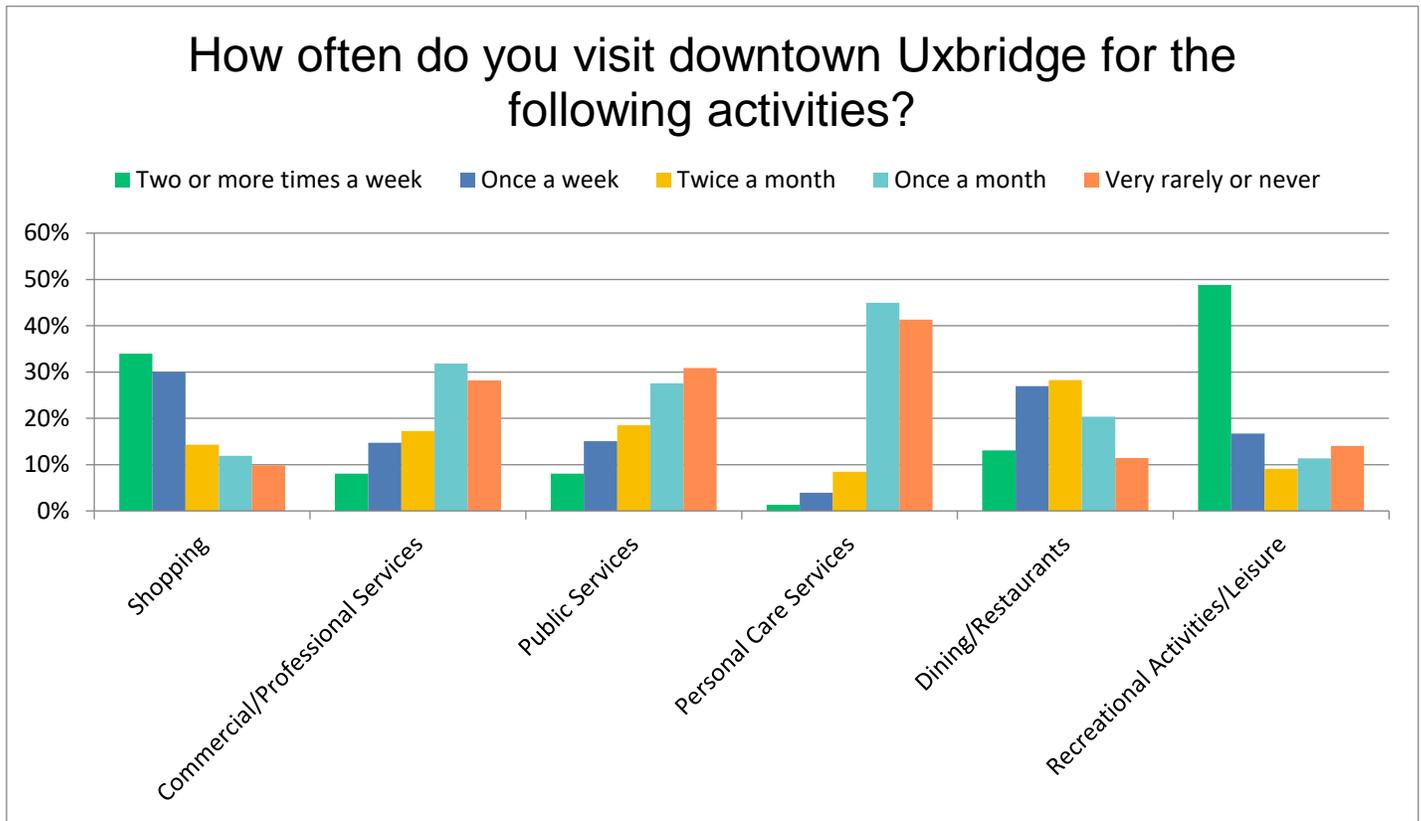


Of the 583 respondents who were employed or self-employed, 26.2% worked outside of their home in the Township of Uxbridge. An additional 16.6% worked from their home. Approximately 23% worked in York Region, 16.5% worked in the City of Toronto, and 8.4% worked in south Durham (Pickering, Ajax, Whitby, Oshawa, Clarington).

Current Use of Downtown Uxbridge

Frequency of Visits

Total Respondents: 829



Note: Respondents were asked to select one (1) answer per category.

Shopping (e.g. bakery, butcher, clothing, gifts)

When asked how often respondents shop downtown Uxbridge, the most common responses were two or more times a week (34%) and once a week (30%). This means that nearly two-thirds of respondents shop in downtown Uxbridge at least once a week.

Commercial/Professional Services (e.g. banking, insurance, doctor, dentist)

When asked how often respondents use commercial/professional services in downtown Uxbridge, the most common responses were once a month (31.8%) and very rarely/ never (28.2%). This is quite likely due to the nature of these types of businesses.

Public Services (e.g. library, post office)

When asked how often respondents use public services in downtown Uxbridge, the most common responses were very rarely/never (31%) and once a month (27.6%). There is a significant difference between the use of public services in downtown Uxbridge by respondents who work in Uxbridge compared to respondents who work elsewhere. 30.2% of respondents who work in Uxbridge use public services downtown at least once a week, compared to just 15% of respondents who work elsewhere.

Personal Care Services (e.g. hair salon, aesthetician)

When asked how often respondents use personal care services in downtown Uxbridge, the most common responses were once a month (45%) and very rarely/never (41.3%). Personal care services had the lowest usage when compared to the other five categories within the question. This could be due in part to the longer time intervals needed between many personal care services (e.g. haircut, nails, eye lashes, etc.).

Dining/Restaurants

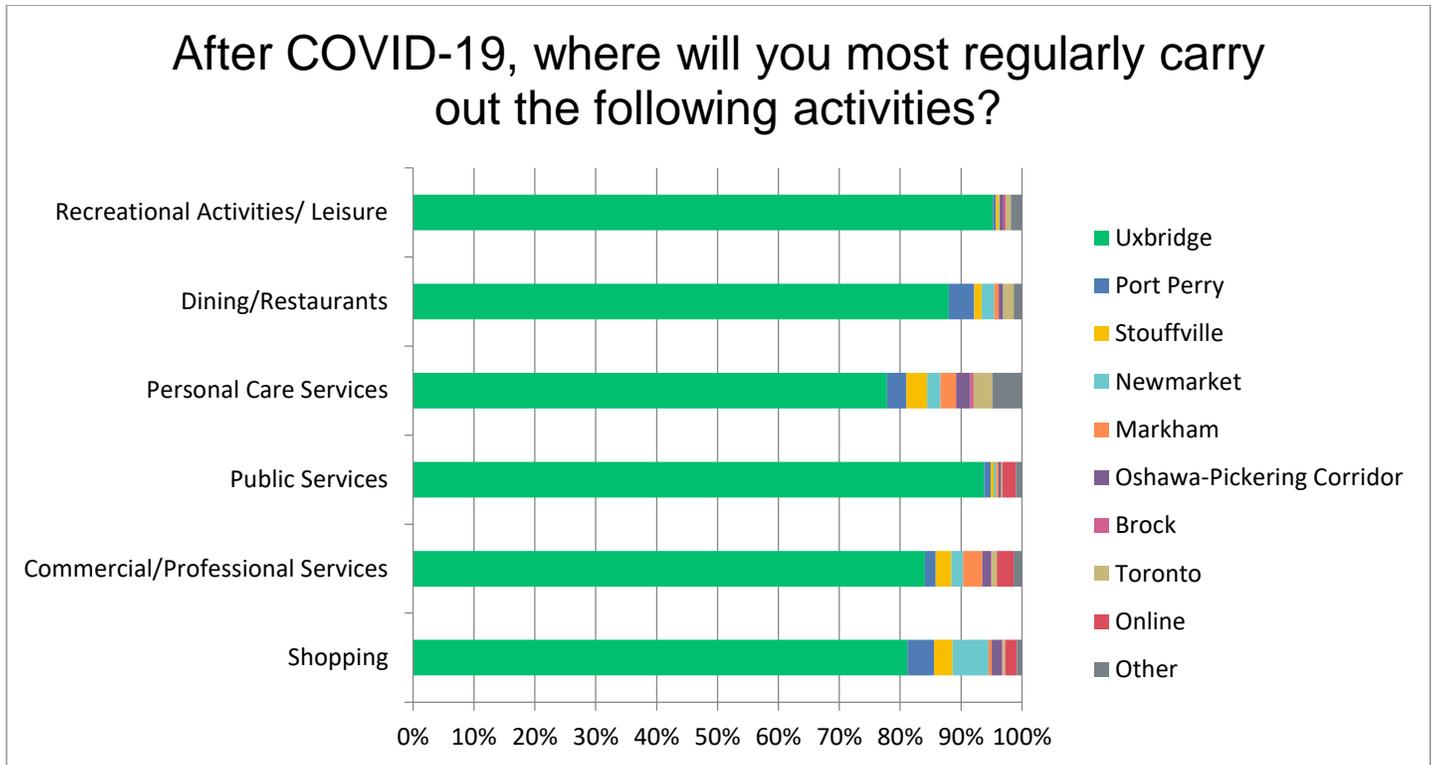
When asked how often respondents dine or visit restaurants in downtown Uxbridge, the most common response was twice a month (28.2%) followed by once a week (27%). Interestingly, 38.5% of respondents who work in Uxbridge also dine in Uxbridge at least once a week. In comparison, 44.8% of respondents who work elsewhere dine in Uxbridge at least once a week. Retired respondents tend to dine in downtown Uxbridge the least as only 29.8% do so once a week or more.

Recreational Activities/Leisure (e.g. walking, cycling, parks)

When asked how often respondents visit downtown Uxbridge for recreational or leisure activities, the most common response was two or more times a week (48.8%) followed by once a week (16.7%). This is the most common activity that is performed in downtown Uxbridge two or more times a week.

Locational Preference

Total Respondents: 828



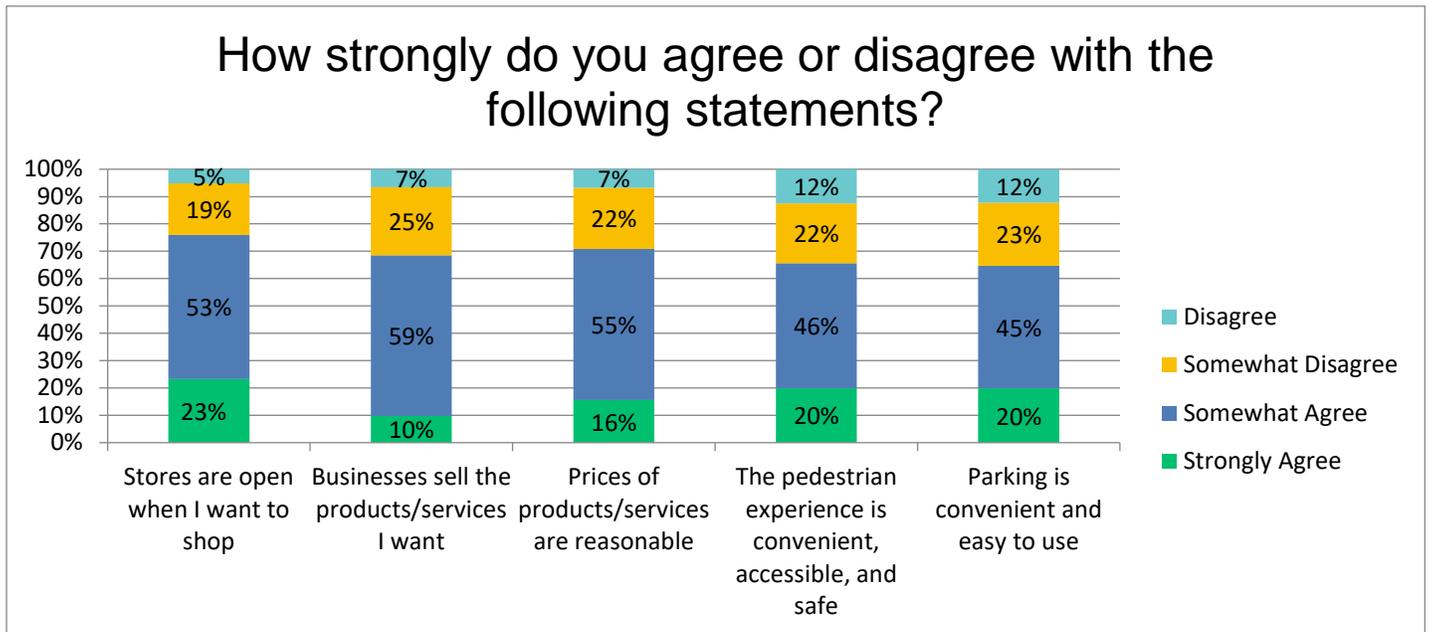
Note: Respondents were asked to select one (1) answer per category.

As shown above, an overwhelming majority of Uxbridge residents plan to stay in Uxbridge to shop, use commercial, professional, public and/or personal care services, dine out, and partake in recreational/leisure activities post-pandemic. While minimal, a slightly higher proportion of respondents stated that they would leave Uxbridge to shop and access personal care services. Some of the more common places to shop outside of Uxbridge included Newmarket (6%), Port Perry (4.4%) and Stouffville (3%).

Current Perceptions of Downtown Uxbridge

Customer Experience

Total Respondents: 828



Note: Respondents were asked to select one (1) answer per statement.

The above graph shows the level of agreement towards a series of statements related to current perceptions of downtown Uxbridge. The data above is aggregated across all age groups. Many of the themes seen above remained consistent when data was examined by age group. However, some notable exceptions were found. See below for details.

Stores in downtown Uxbridge are open when I want to shop	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
44 and under	13%	55%	25%	8%
45 - 64	20%	56%	20%	4%
65 and over	47%	43%	8%	2%

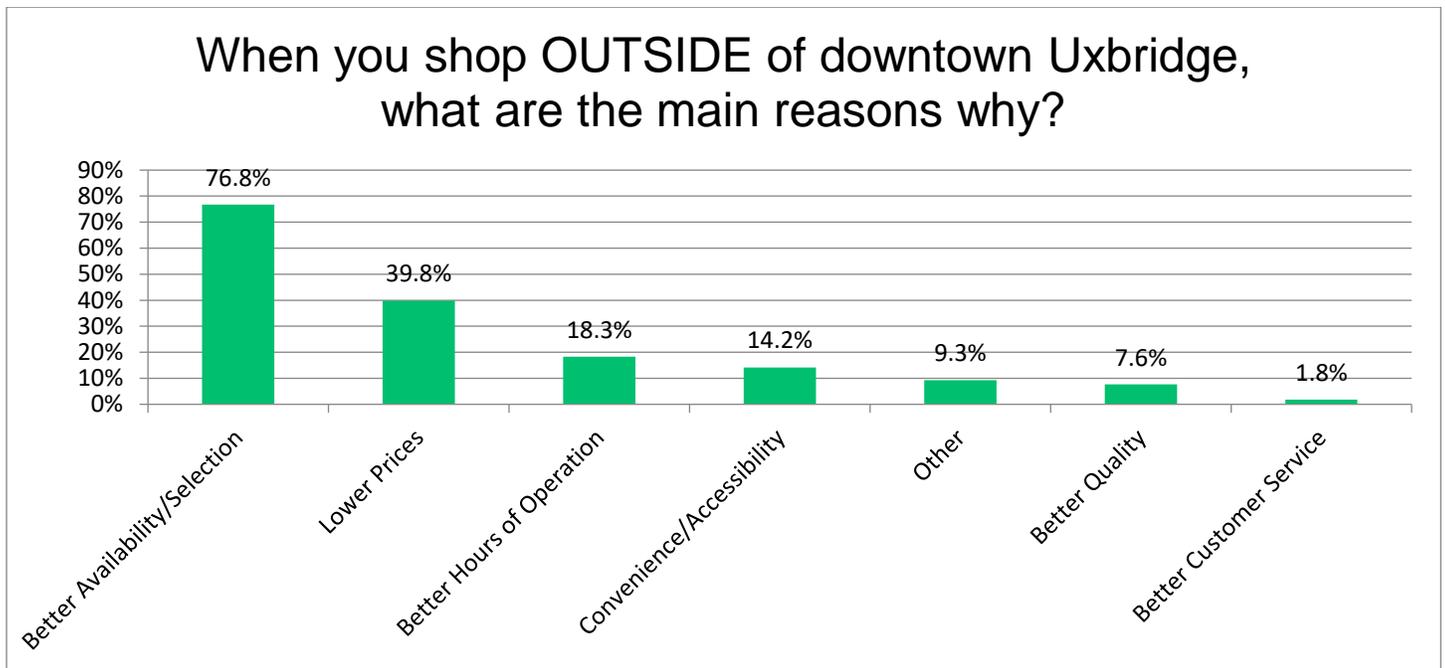
As shown above, a far higher proportion of respondents aged 65 and over thought that existing store hours suited their needs, whereas younger respondents were less enthused with current store hours. That being said, the vast majority of respondents either strongly or somewhat agreed that stores in downtown Uxbridge are currently open when they would like to shop.

Prices of products/services in downtown Uxbridge are reasonable	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
44 and under	13%	53%	23%	10%
45 - 64	14%	53%	27%	6%
65 and over	22%	63%	13%	3%

The above chart shows that a greater proportion of respondents aged 65 and over thought that the prices of products and services in downtown Uxbridge are reasonable compared to respondents under the age of 65.

Competitive Disadvantages

Total Respondents: 827



Note: Respondents were asked to select up to two (2) answers.

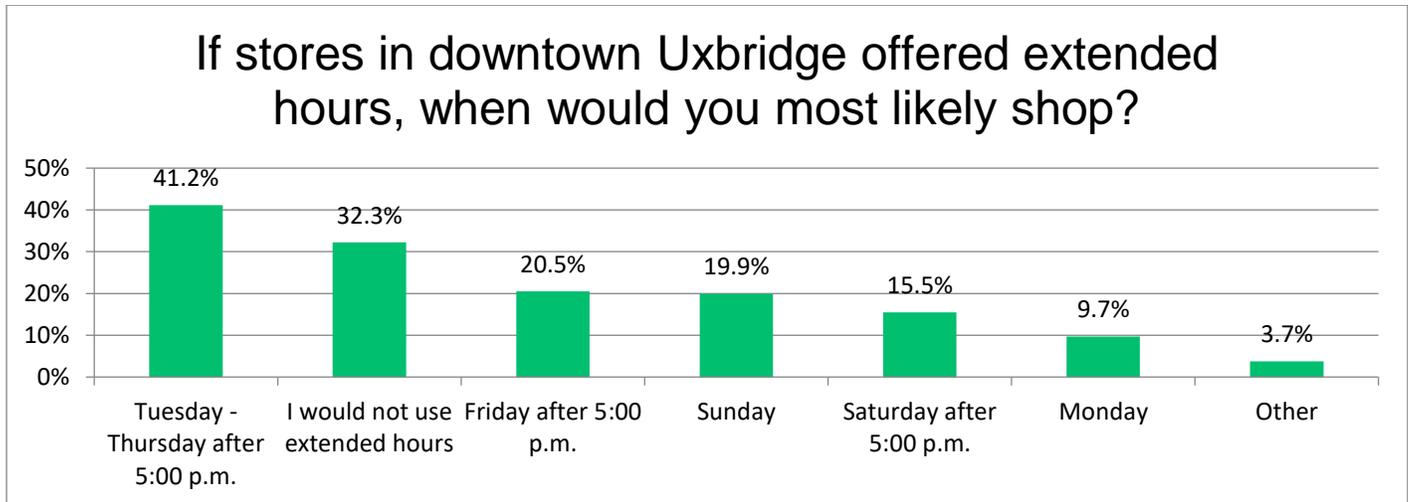
As shown, the top two reasons for shopping outside of downtown Uxbridge better availability / selection and lower prices at non-downtown businesses. These trends remained consistent across all age groups.

When examining the aggregate data displayed above, the third most common reason for shopping outside of downtown Uxbridge was that non-downtown businesses offer longer / better hours. This became less of an issue as with older age groups. This was only the 5th most common issue among respondents aged 65 – 79 and did not receive a single vote from respondents aged 80 and over. Hours of operation will be explored in further detail below.

The data consistently shows that customer service and product quality issues are not the reason for people shopping elsewhere. Therefore, we can safely infer that the majority of respondents value the customer service and product quality that they receive from businesses in downtown Uxbridge.

Hours of Operation

Total Respondents: 828



Note: Respondents were asked to select up to two (2) answers.

When examining responses across all age groups, the most common responses were to extend hours of operation past 5:00 p.m. from Tuesday to Thursday, followed by respondents stating that they would not use extended hours. Extending hours past 5:00 p.m. on Fridays and opening stores up on Sundays were also common responses. However, responses for this question differed dramatically based on the age of the respondent and where they work. See below.

Use of Extended Hours of Operation by Age

Ages 44 and under (n = 307)			Ages 45 – 64 (n = 339)			Ages 65 and over (n = 178)	
Monday	11.1%		Monday	8.6%		Monday	9.6%
Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	54.1%		Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	41.6%		Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	18.5%
Fri after 5 p.m.	26.4%		Fri after 5 p.m.	18.9%		Fri after 5 p.m.	13.5%
Sat after 5 p.m.	23.1%		Sat after 5 p.m.	11.8%		Sat after 5 p.m.	9.0%
Sunday	28.3%		Sunday	20.1%		Sunday	5.6%
Would Not Use Extended Hours	16.3%		Would Not Use Extended Hours	33.0%		Would Not Use Extended Hours	57.9%
Other	3.9%		Other	3.0%		Other	5.1%

As shown above, extended hours of operation were not identified as a preference by older age groups. This is most likely due to older populations being retired or working fewer hours, allowing them visit local merchants during current business hours. Among extended hour options, remaining open past 5:00 p.m. from Tuesday to Thursday was the most popular choice across all ages.

Respondents under the age of 64 also saw value in downtown merchants remaining open on Fridays past 5:00 p.m. or on Sundays.

Use of Extended Hours of Operation by Place of Work

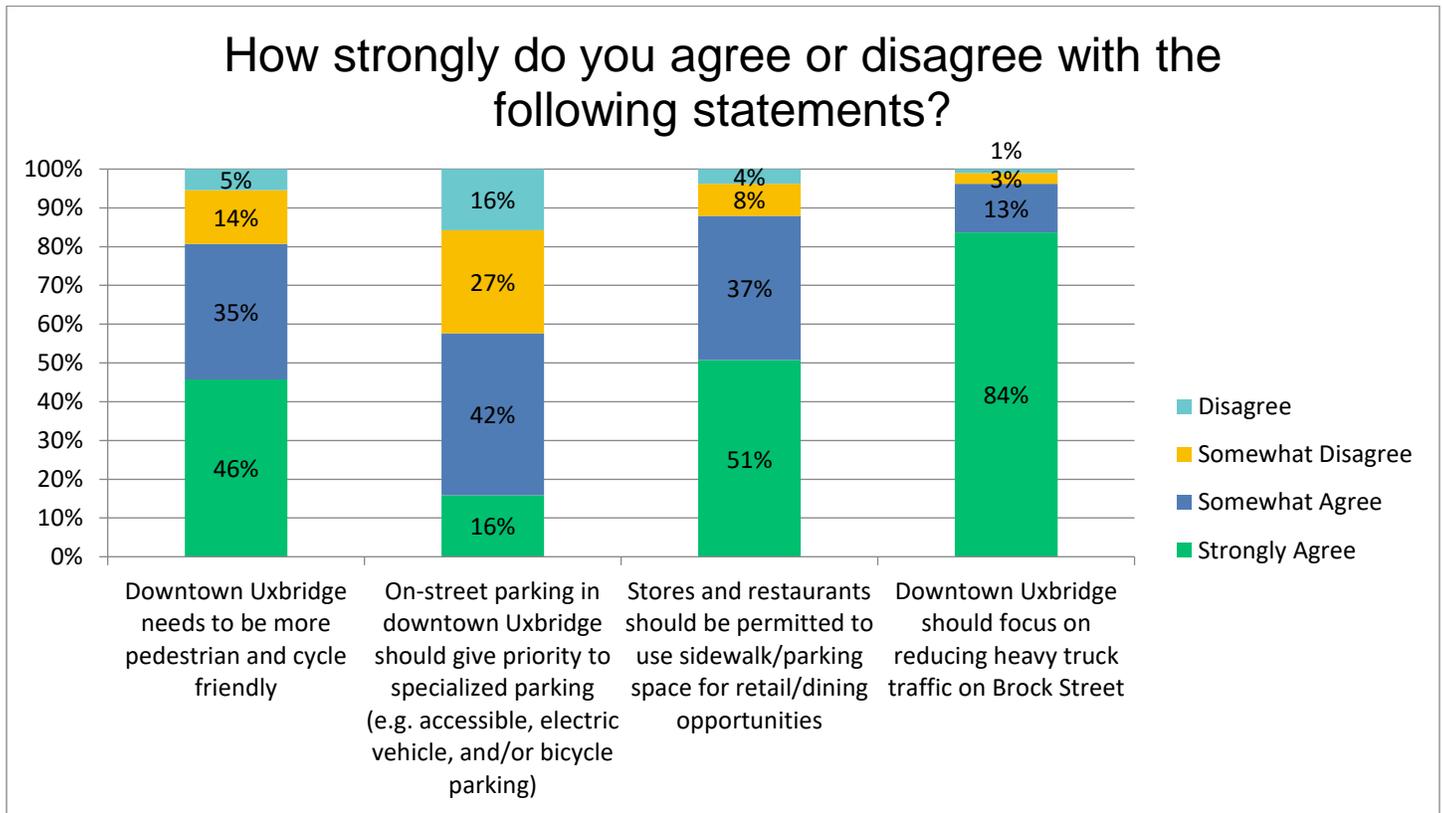
Work in Uxbridge (n = 306)		Work Elsewhere (n = 376)		Retired (n = 197)	
Monday	9.5%	Monday	10.9%	Monday	9.6%
Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	40.9%	Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	48.9%	Tues - Thurs after 5 p.m.	20.8%
Fri after 5 p.m.	21.9%	Fri after 5 p.m.	23.4%	Fri after 5 p.m.	12.2%
Sat after 5 p.m.	13.7%	Sat after 5 p.m.	19.4%	Sat after 5 p.m.	9.6%
Sunday	20.9%	Sunday	23.4%	Sunday	6.6%
Would Not Use Extended Hours	32.4%	Would Not Use Extended Hours	22.1%	Would Not Use Extended Hours	57.9%
Other	3.3%	Other	4.0%	Other	3.1%

As displayed above, extended hours would be most beneficial for those who work outside of the Township of Uxbridge, as many small businesses within the downtown are closed upon their return home. This being said, the vast majority of employed respondents would use extended hours in downtown Uxbridge with Tuesday to Thursday after 5:00 p.m. being the most popular option.

Looking Forward in Downtown Uxbridge

Preferred Action Items

Total Respondents: 828

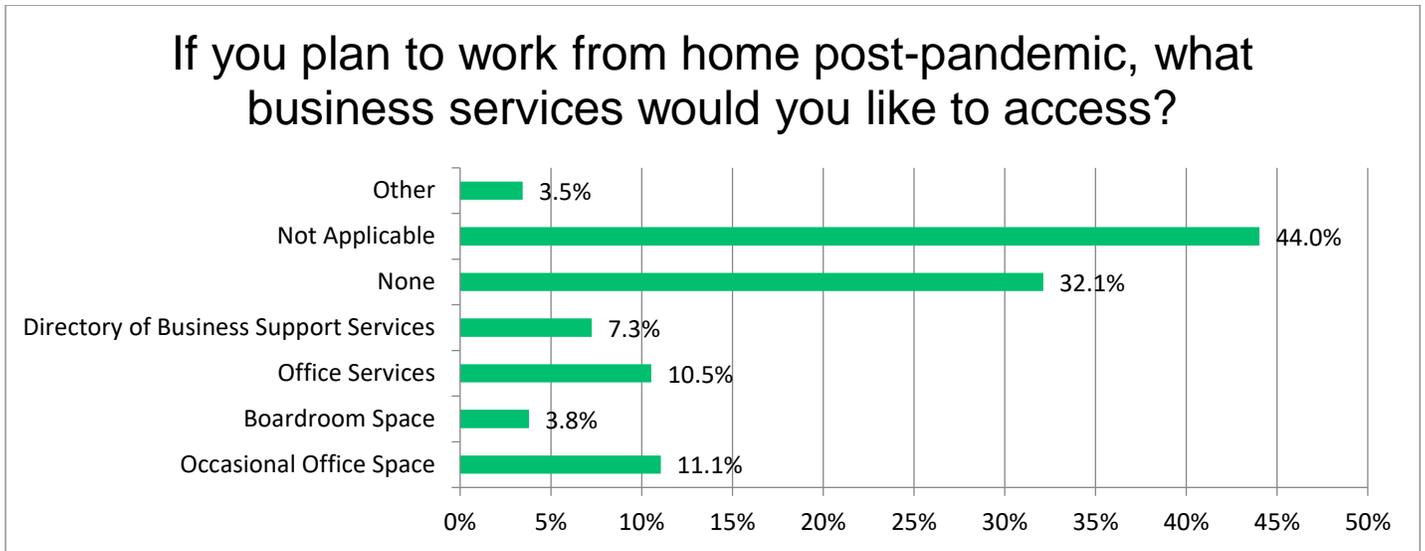


Note: Respondents were asked to select one (1) answer per statement.

The above graph shows the level of agreement towards a series of statements related to potential issues/initiatives to address in downtown Uxbridge as the downtown revitalization project moves forward. This data is aggregated across all age groups. General themes illustrated above remained consistent when data was examined by age group.

Work from Home Services

Total Respondents: 579

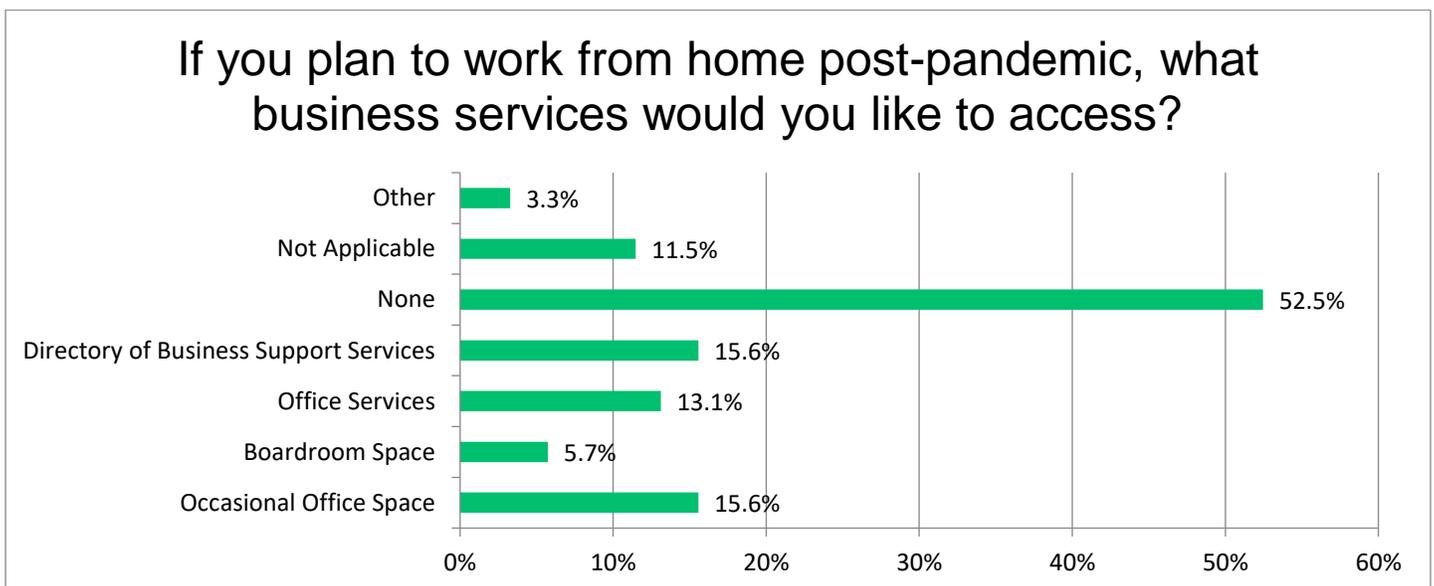


Note: Respondents were asked to select all that apply.

The graph above reflects responses from individuals who stated that they were either employed or self-employed. Within this group, 44% stated that work from home business services would not be applicable to them as they will not be working from home or will be returning to their normal place of work post-pandemic. An additional 32.1% stated that they would not access any of the business services listed. That being said, 11.1% stated that they would like to access occasional office space in Uxbridge while 10.5% stated that they would like to access office services such as videoconferencing, printing and copying services.

Seeing as these services are typically most useful for those who work from home, the graph below outlines responses from individuals who stated that their normal place of work pre-pandemic was their home. Similar results were observed.

Total Respondents: 122



Open-Ended Responses

The final four questions of the Uxbridge Resident Survey were open-ended, allowing respondents to type in their answers. Each and every response was read and categorized in order to quantitatively analyze responses. The vast majority of responses were placed into multiple categories as most open-ended responses touched on a variety of different items and topics.

The following word clouds have been created to illustrate common responses in a simple and easy-to-read format. The font size of each word refers to the frequency in which the specific response was heard. The larger the text, the more common the response.

Current Strengths of Downtown Uxbridge

Total Respondents: 794

To understand the current strengths of downtown Uxbridge, respondents were asked to state what they like about downtown Uxbridge today. The most prominent themes are illustrated in the word cloud below.

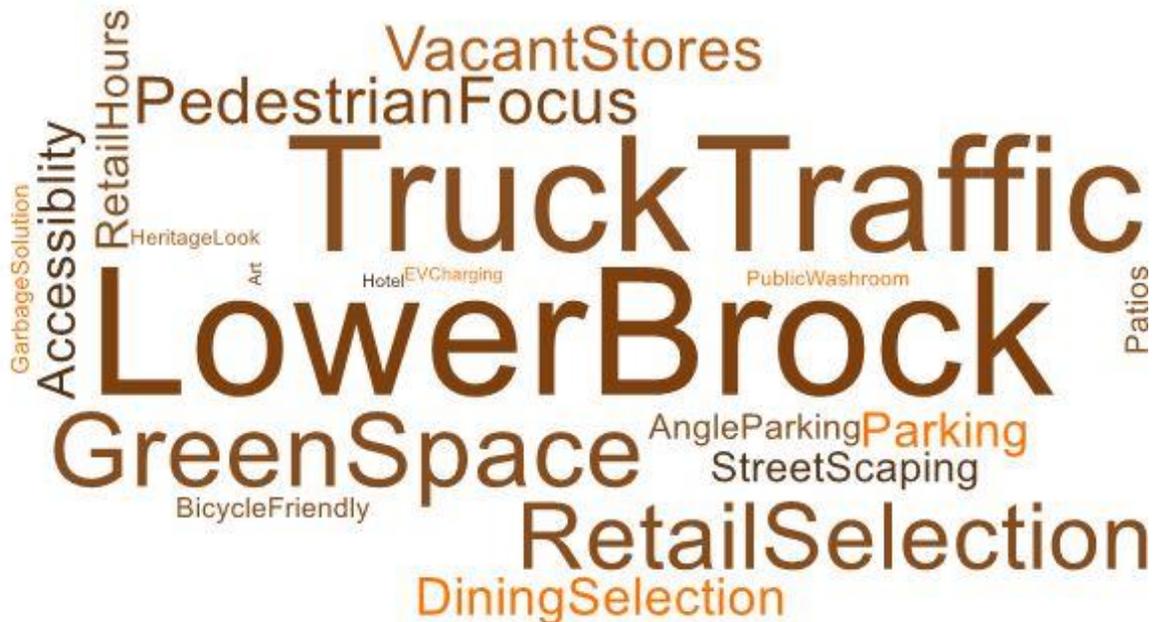


Strength	% of Total Responses	Actual #
Small Businesses	24.6%	195
Small-Town Feel	23.3%	185
Customer Service	21.5%	171
Quaint/Ambiance	11.3%	90
Convenience	11.2%	89
Heritage Buildings	10.8%	86
Variety/Selection	9.5%	75
Walkable	8.9%	71
Restaurants	8.7%	69
Upper Brock	8.1%	64
Lights in Trees	6.1%	48

Suggested Improvements for Downtown Uxbridge

Total Respondents: 795

Respondents were asked what elements of downtown Uxbridge they would like to see changed or improved upon throughout the downtown revitalization process. This open-ended question received 795 responses. The most prominent themes are illustrated in the word cloud below.



Suggested Improvement	% of Total Responses	Actual #
Lower Brock	23.4%	186
Truck Traffic	19.3%	153
Greenspace	13.1%	104
Retail Selection	12.0%	95
Pedestrian Focus	7.6%	60
Vacant Stores	7.3%	58
Dining Selection	5.7%	45
Accessability	5.4%	43
Parking	4.9%	39
Hours of Operation	4.4%	35

New Businesses, Services, Events or Facilities in Downtown Uxbridge

Total Respondents: 741

Respondents were asked to provide suggestions regarding the types of new businesses, services, events or facilities that they would like to see in downtown Uxbridge in the coming years. More than 740 responses were submitted and many of these responses provided multiple suggestions. The following word clouds have been broken down by category; types of new businesses, types of new eating establishments, and other additions.

New Types of Businesses



Business Type	% of Total Responses	Actual #
Grocery Store/Market	21.5%	159
Clothing Store	20.7%	153
Unique Shops	11.2%	83
Art Shop/Gallery	5.3%	39
Home Décor/Gift Shop	5.0%	37
Children's/Toy Store	4.6%	34
Hardware Store	4.3%	32
Personal Services	3.9%	29
Bakery	3.9%	29
Craft/Hobby Store	2.6%	19



Business Type	% of Total Responses	Actual #
Casual Dining	13.4%	99
Café	10.9%	81
Ethnic Cuisine	8.0%	59
Ice Cream Store	5.5%	41
Fine Dining	4.9%	36
Bar/Lounge	1.9%	14

Other Additions



Item	% of Total Responses	Actual #
Festivals/Events	17.1%	127
Town Square	11.6%	86
Parks/Greenspace	8.0%	59
Patios	6.1%	45
Recreation/Fitness	5.3%	39
Hotel	2.8%	21
Bike Friendly	2.0%	15
Trail Connectivity	1.5%	11
Longer Hours	1.2%	9
Public Washroom	1.2%	9

This project made possible with funding from

