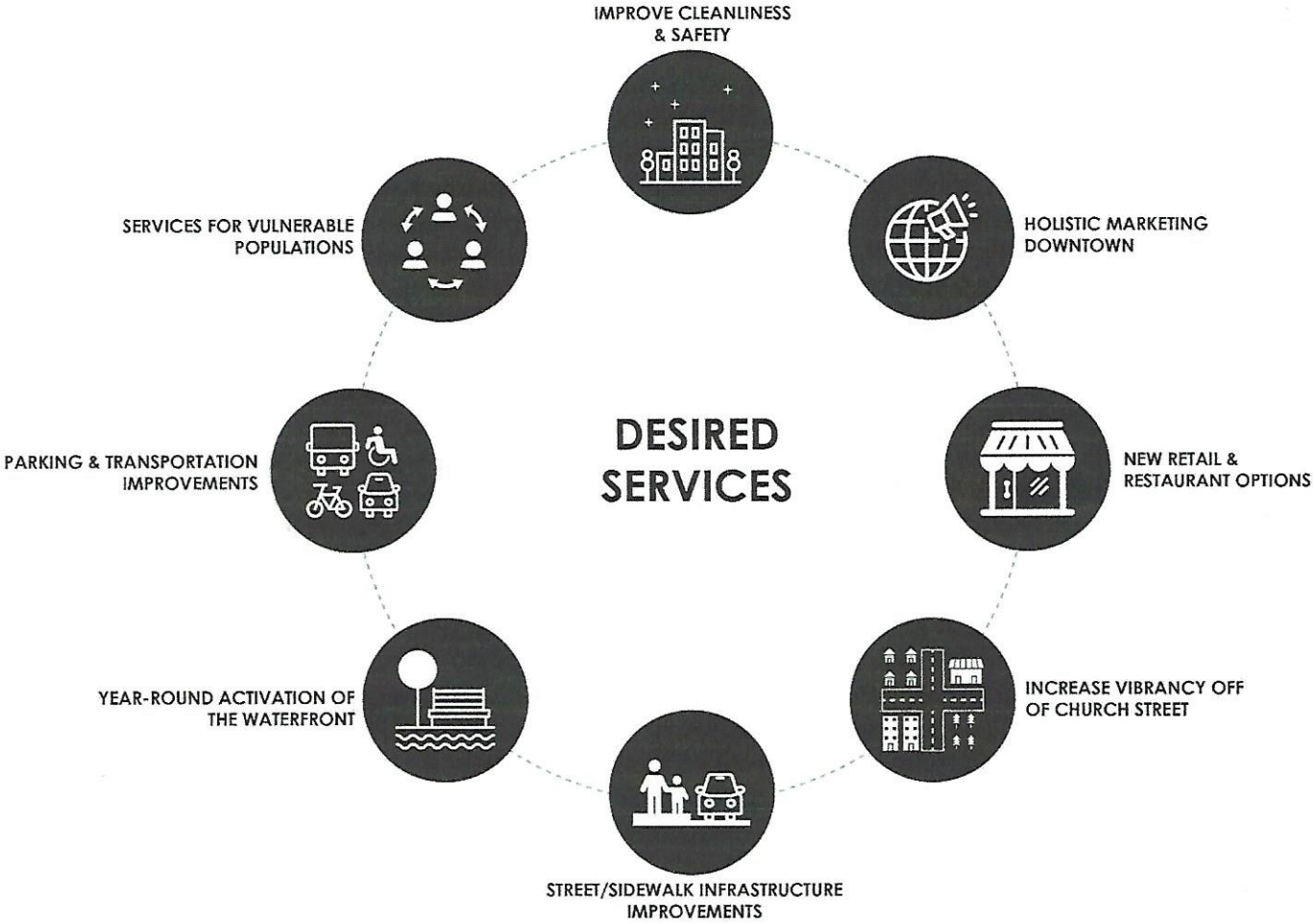
OUTREACH SUMMARY

Community outreach was critical to understand the needs and desires of downtown stakeholders and determine priorities for enhanced services. P.U.M.A. conducted outreach through a variety of channels including focus groups, one-on-one interviews and an online survey. In total more than 75 stakeholders participated in an interview or focus group and over 1,100 people responded to the online survey. The graphic below illustrates desired improvements among stakeholders that could be provided by an enhanced downtown management organization.

Following this illustration is a more detailed account of priorities among focus group participants and survey respondents.



Focus Groups Summary

P.U.M.A. made three site visits to Burlington: February 12-15, 2018, Apr. 30- May 3, 2018, and June 4-6, 2018. During each visit input was sought from a variety of stakeholders, including:

- DID Working Group
- DID Advisory Committee
- BBA staff and board members
- City Council
- City staff
- CSMP Commissioners
- Downtown property owners
- Downtown business owners
- Downtown developers
- Downtown employers
- Downtown employees
- Downtown residents
- Downtown young leaders and advocates
- Downtown business leaders

Participants were asked **what would improve Downtown Burlington and the Waterfront?** After generating a list of improvements participants were taken through a priority setting exercise. Each person was given three "votes" to use on their top priorities, which are described below.

Alternative Transportation Improvements (**38 votes**)

- Enhanced alternative mobility modes - more walkable/bikeable/transit/gondola
- Improvements to the free college street shuttle – make it circular not linear, connect to key destinations, increase frequency, new creative/fun branding

Marketing/Branding for Downtown (**36 votes**)

- Holistic marketing for downtown to let people know what downtown has to offer
- Re-brand downtown especially following new developments

Streetscape Improvements Off Church Street (**29 votes**)

- Improve the street/sidewalk condition, lighting, landscaping, design elements, pedestrian feel off of CSMP

Improve Connections Between Downtown and Waterfront (**26 votes**)

- Draw people from downtown to the waterfront
- Create improved streetscapes and more services such as retail and restaurants along connecting routes
- Make the route more welcoming and accessible via multiple modes

Make Downtown Safe and Welcoming (**17 votes**)

- Ambassador program to provide maintenance, safety and welcoming services

Heated Sidewalks (**11 votes**)

Increase Outreach Services (**11 votes**)

- Increase outreach/services for transient population; similar to what is provided by the Howard Center
- Help to reduce problem behaviors

Improve Parking Experience [**11 votes**]

- More awareness of where parking is located
- Improve safety and cleanliness of garages
- Convenient/affordable parking for employees

Visitor Information/Wayfinding [**9 votes**]

- Technology-based visitor information/wayfinding

Year-Round Activation of Waterfront [**8 votes**]

- Activate the waterfront with more events and activities during off-peak seasons

Online Survey Summary

In addition to focus groups, an online survey was administered to gather information from a broad audience about their experience and desired improvements for downtown. The survey ran between April 23, 2018 and June 20, 2018 and received a total of **1,143 responses**. A full survey summary can be found in the Appendix.

Who took the survey?

24% of survey respondents are downtown employees in the private sector, 21% are downtown residents, 12% are downtown employees in the public sector, 10% are downtown business owners, 4% are downtown commercial property owners, and 2% were students[4]. 62% or respondents identify as female, while 34% identify as male. There was a relatively even age and income distribution among survey respondents.

How do survey respondents interact with downtown Burlington?

The majority of respondents (63%) interact with downtown Burlington once a week or more.

- Respondents *'Frequently'* visit downtown for:
  - Restaurants (44%)
  - The waterfront park or other downtown parks (40%)
  - Personal services (25%)
- Respondents *'Rarely'* visit downtown for:
  - Religious services (92%)
  - City business (59%)
  - Bars, clubs, and nightlife (57%)

[4] 42% of respondents did not select their connection to downtown, indicating their status as a visitor or that they preferred not to answer.

What do survey respondents think about downtown Burlington today?

Respondents were asked to select the three most important factors in their enjoyment of downtown and the waterfront. The top factors are:

- Safe streets and public spaces (55%)
- Restaurants and retail (47%)
- Clean streets and public spaces (36%)
- Visiting the waterfront (30%)
- Enhanced mobility (i.e. better connections, improved sidewalks, bike lanes) (20%)

What do survey respondents think will improve downtown Burlington for the future?

DOWNTOWN OVERALL

The enhanced services that were selected as most important for improving the overall downtown experience are:

1. Parking and transportation services (43%)
2. Homeless outreach and assistance services (34%)
3. Infrastructure improvements (31%)
4. New restaurants and retail options (31%)
5. Enhanced security services (23%)

CHURCH STREET MARKETPLACE

The enhanced services that were selected as most important for improving the Church Street Marketplace experience are:

1. New restaurants and retail options (41%)
2. Homeless outreach and assistance services (40%)
3. Parking and transportation services (37%)
4. Infrastructure improvements (26%)
5. Enhanced security services (25%)

WATERFRONT

The enhanced services that were selected as most important for improving the waterfront experience are:

1. Parking and transportation services (42%)
2. Special events (38%)
3. Maintenance and management of public parks (34%)
4. Activities for people in public spaces (33%)
5. New restaurants and retail options (31%)

YOUNG VS. OLD

Cross-tabulation of the online survey revealed different priorities for improving downtown from different age groups. Younger respondents (under 34) were most concerned with new restaurant and retail options. Older respondents (over 45) rated improving parking and transportation services as the top priority.

FREQUENT VS. INFREQUENT VISITORS

Cross-tabulation of the online survey showed that respondents who visit downtown Burlington less frequently (approximately twice a month or several times a year) were more concerned about improving parking and transportation services than respondents who visited downtown Burlington more frequently.

Looking to the future, what three words best capture your vision for downtown Burlington in 2030?

All respondents were asked to provide three words that best capture their vision for the future of downtown. In the word cloud below, words that are used more frequently are illustrated in larger font. Overall, respondents seek a downtown that is **vibrant, safe, accessible, clean and affordable.**

safe
vibrant
accessible
clean
affordable
green
diverse
welcoming
friendly
community
sustainable
restaurant
parking
housing
inclusive
fun
waterfront
shop
bikeable
beautiful
thriving
greenspace
culture
livable
entertaining
bustling
food
small
active
pedestrian
entertainment
walkable
family
retail
unique
local
innovative
interesting
density
equality
convenience
growing
inspiring
lake
beauty
futuristic
natural
event
lively
trash
economic
better
improved
connected
mixed
path
art
exciting
energetic
option
play
healthy
picturesque
captivating
authentic
infrastructure
marketplace
dynamic
opportunity
inviting
enjoyable
beer
cool
uncongested
warm
hospitable
recreation
varied
cleanliness
updated
busy
scale
store
young
architecture
eclectic
cleaner
vermont
free
urban
business
activity
funky
restroom
popular
comfortable
conscientious
outdoor
aesthetic
availability
efficient
experience
charming
music
everyone
populated
person
work
homeless
occupied
booming
vibrancy
traffic
mobility
access
delicious
diversity
development
park
environment
employment
equitable
dense
town
scenic
artistic
multi
alive
space
service
job
non
convenient
pretty
growth
prosperous
functional
fresh
transit
modern
tree
zero
well
cultured
ethnic
building
destination
energy
smart
engaging
variety
nightlife
vitality
car
creative
progressive
street
less
attractive
modernized
human
successful
dog
vital
open
innovation
tourism
quaint
eco
live
special
social
self
easy
relaxing
productive
walking
available
place
resilient
downtown
maintained
future
testive
historic
viable
complete
recycling
easier
safer
current
economica
use
relevant
ease
marketplace
market
warm
cleanliness
updated
artsy
store
young
architecture
vermont
free
urban
business
activity
funky
restroom
popular
comfortable
conscientious
outdoor
aesthetic
availability
efficient
experience
charming
music
everyone
populated
person
work
homeless
occupied
booming
vibrancy
traffic
mobility
access
delicious
diversity
development
park
environment
employment
equitable
dense
town
scenic
artistic
multi
alive
space
service
job
non
convenient
pretty
growth
prosperous
functional
fresh
transit
modern
tree
zero
well
cultured
ethnic
building
destination
energy
smart
engaging
variety
nightlife
vitality
car
creative
progressive
street
less
attractive
modernized
human
successful
dog
vital
open
innovation
tourism
quaint
eco
live
special
social
self
easy
relaxing
productive
walking
available
place
resilient
downtown
maintained
future
testive
historic
viable
complete
recycling
park
development
diversity

Results: Community Survey on the Downtown Improvement District
Last updated: 12/10/2018

The following are results from a paper form survey distributed on 11/29/2018 to attendees of the Town Hall Meeting covering the DID options. Bold numbers represent responses

Where do you live?

A. **6**- Downtown Burlington
B. **12** - Burlington (outside Downtown)
C. **5** - Outside the City of Burlington

Where do you work?

A. **13** - Downtown Burlington
B. **6** - Burlington (outside Downtown)
C. **2** - Outside the City of Burlington

How often do you come Downtown?

A. **15** - Everyday
B. **7** - Consistently (a few times a week)
C. **1** - Sometimes (a few times a month)
D. **0** - Rarely (a few times a year)

What services do you see having the most value? Please mark your top three.

A. **3**- An ambassador program
B. **14** - Enhanced cleaning, maintenance, and beautification
C. **3** - Enhanced security services
D. **6** - Economic development services
E. **13** - Street and sidewalk improvements
F. **4** - Visitor information services
G. **2** - New restaurant and retail services
H. **7** - Homeless outreach and services
I. **6** - Enhanced parking and transit services

Do you think that residents should participate in funding the new Downtown Improvement District?

A. **5** - Yes, every resident should pay.
B. **5** - Yes, but only owners of residential properties valued above $250,000 should pay.
C. **3** - Yes, but only owners of residential properties valued above $350,000 should pay.
D. **4** - No, I think that residents should not pay anything under any circumstance.

Assuming we create a new improvement district in the Downtown what do you think the makeup of the governance board should be?
See below

Do you think that a new improvement district in the Downtown is generally a good idea?

A. **9** - Yes
B. **1** - No
C. **11** - Depends on the details

Please provide below and general feedback that you'd like to share:

- Board should be made up of property owners and business owners and voted on by the fee participants. The board should also have a city council representative
- The draw of Burlington is not just the marketplace, but the entire district, this expansion is needed.
- Board should be made up of business owners, property owners, city heads, and citizens
- Board should not be privatized,
- Board should be made up of residents and business owners
- I am worried that this might separate Downtown Burlington from the rest of town, all Burlington should help pay for the district - perhaps the prohibition against using general tax money for the marketplace should be removed. The deterioration has gone far enough and I doubt the money raised from the expanded district would be enough to do the work that needs to be done.
- Board should be comprised of residents and business owners.
- There should be cops on foot helping to identify people with problems.
- More light in the parks
- Link cherry st directly with the waterfront
- Don't bring a charter change vote in March
- Eliminate the prohibition on general fund monies going to district improvements
- Rent control for the entire city
- Board makeup should be: city officials, property owners, business owners
- Whatever the governance is, it should go beyond public forums. It should reach out to the homeless and vulnerable populations. It should also help write policy
- Growth does not always equal prosperity.
- If this goes forward, make sure it includes outreach to the homeless population.
- Board should be majority fee payers with city representation and some citizens.
- I am a small business owner on a side st., I would gladly contribute to a new DID with the hope of creating a cohesive and vibrant downtown district. I envision business owners and residents alike benefitting from a DID.
- Board makeup should include property and business owners, residents, non-profit.
- Board should be 75% property/business owners and 25% city reps and citizens
- Board should be a public commission
- Board should be business owners, residents, non-profits, social service agencies.
- We need more snack bars on the waterfront. As well as bathrooms, better parking, more swings, ice skating, and a warming hut in the winter.
- Board should NOT have city employees
- Please include advocates for equity and non-comercioal interests