

CITY OF DUNDAS

# CHAPTER 3

## SURVEY



## SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

As part of the City of Dundas' Comprehensive Plan process, a survey was created to get the perspective of community members on the City's strengths, weaknesses, and areas of opportunity. City Officials felt strongly that this engagement of the public was a necessary step for the Comprehensive Planning process. The following is a summary and analysis of the survey results. Through the rest of the Comprehensive Plan document, references may be made to this section and the survey results, as they are relevant to the planning surrounding land use, housing, public facilities, and other aspects of the Comprehensive Plan.

### Methodology

The survey ran from the middle of November to the end of the year. It was conducted online using an online survey tool. The choice to go with an online survey versus a physical mailer was to both expedite the collection and analysis processes, and to reach demographics of residents who were more likely to respond to an online survey. A physical option was created for those who would prefer to not take the test on a phone or computer but was ultimately not requested by any residents.

The survey was designed to be completed in a short period of time, under 15 minutes at the most, although some respondents took longer than others. A total of 95 distinct responses were collected.

In terms of the content of questions, some steps were taken to improve survey results. For questions that offered multiple choices, these choices were randomized to limit any perceived bias in making one issue or area appear more prominently in the questions. The survey itself was structured to have basic demographic questions at the beginning (for data analysis purposes and to ensure that the survey was representing an accurate picture of Dundas residents), broad visioning questions next, and then finally some directed questions as to city services and spending moving forward.

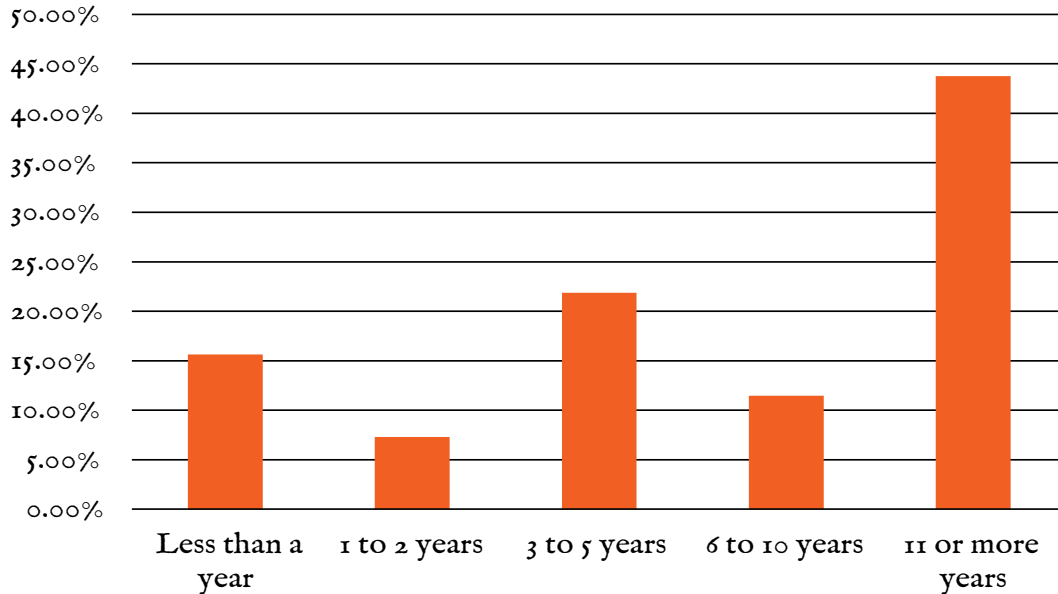
### Survey Demographics

Of the 95 individuals who answered the community survey, 49.5% were female, while 46.3% were male. Another 4.2% preferred not to share their gender on the survey. Dundas at the time of the 2010 census was almost exactly half male and half female, so the makeup of our survey respondents was very close to that of the general population.

When respondents were asked how long they had lived in the city, over 43% of respondents stated they had lived in Dundas for 11 or more years. These are community members who have grown up or lived in the city for years and who represent the interests of long-term residents. 15% of those participating in the survey were new residents, living in the city for a year or less. It is important to understand the interests of the long-term residents as well as the motivations of new residents--why they moved to the city and what they would like to see improved.

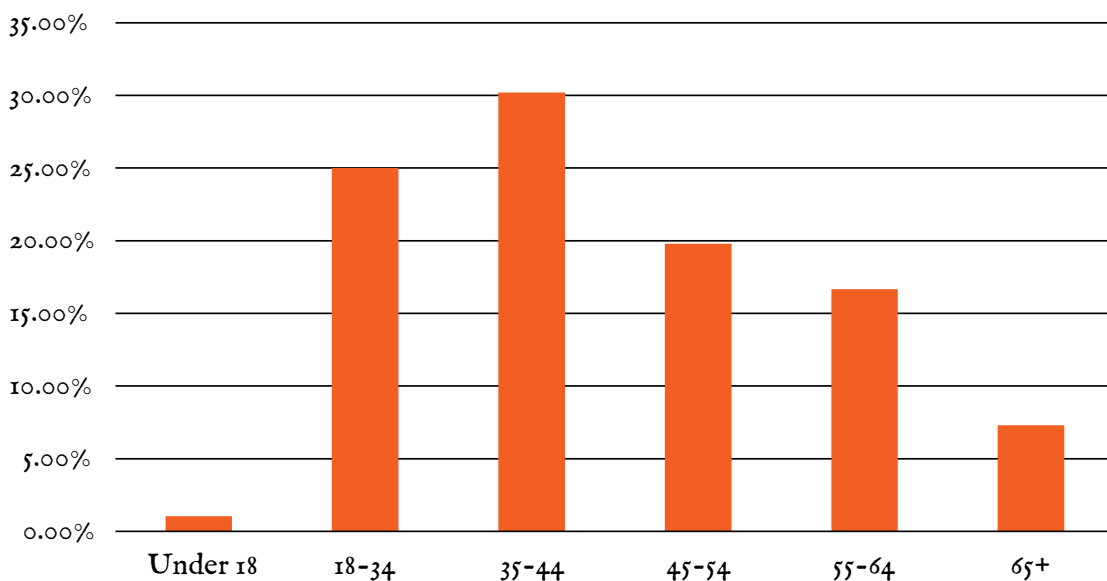
# CITY OF DUNDAS

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN DUNDAS MN?



The final demographic identifier in the survey was the respondent's age. This was an evenly distributed bell curve, peaking at the 35-44 age range which made up 30.5% of respondents. There was only 1 response from a resident under 18, and 7 from persons 65 and older on the far ends of the age spectrum.

## WHAT AGE RANGE DO YOU FALL UNDER?



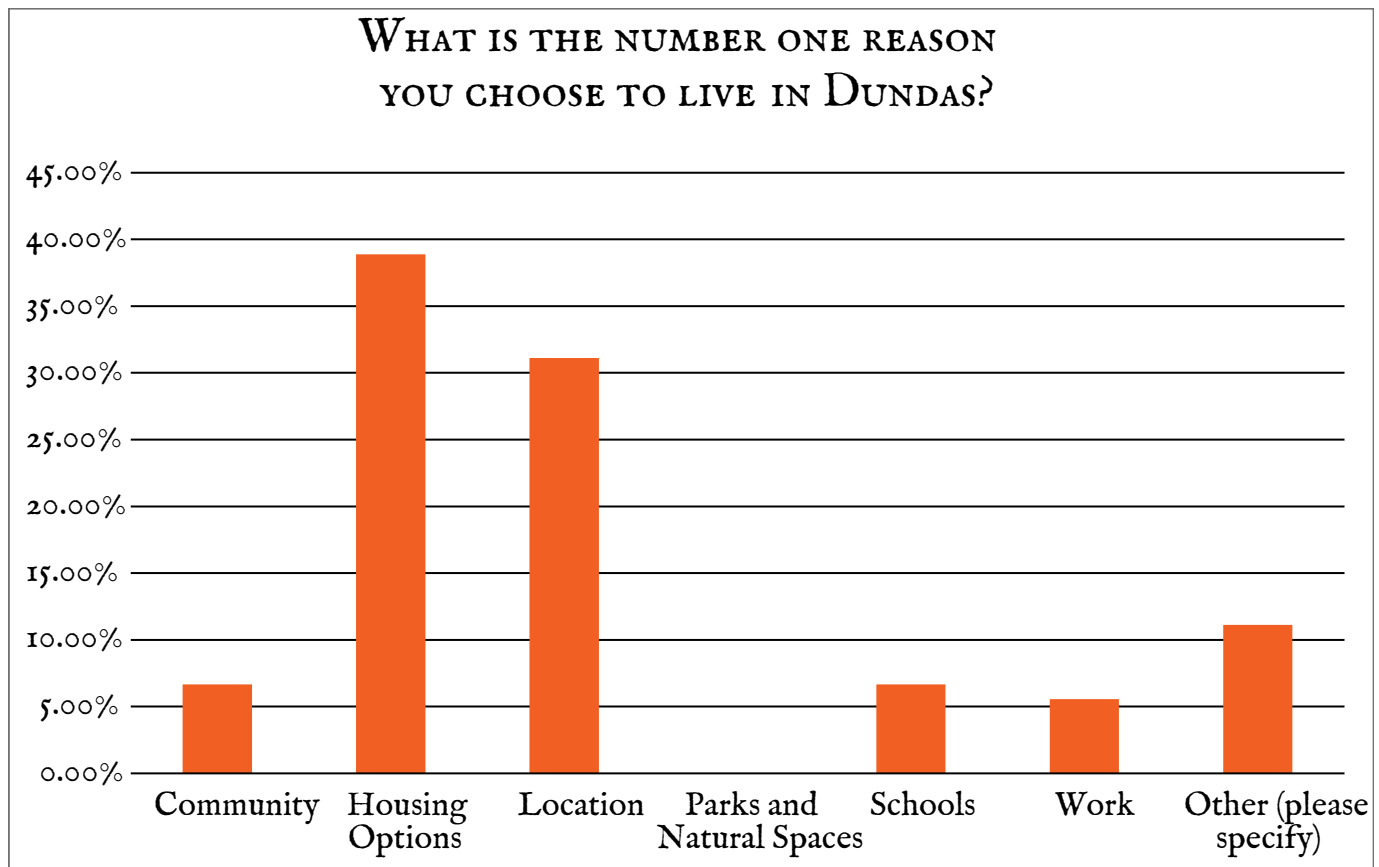
The makeup of survey respondents reflect that Dundas is a young City in terms of median age of residents. At the time of the 2010 census, the median age in the City was 33.6 when accounting for both male and female residents. Rice County's median age was 35, and Faribault's was 35.4 years old.

## Visioning Questions

To start the survey, we asked several broader questions to begin to get a perspective on the community's vision for Dundas. These questions got residents to think more critically about what they valued about their City but were broad enough that they were a good introduction to more direct questions. These questions play a role in determining the goals and policies that are a central component of the City's comprehensive plan, impacting decision-making.

### What is the number one reason you choose to live in Dundas?

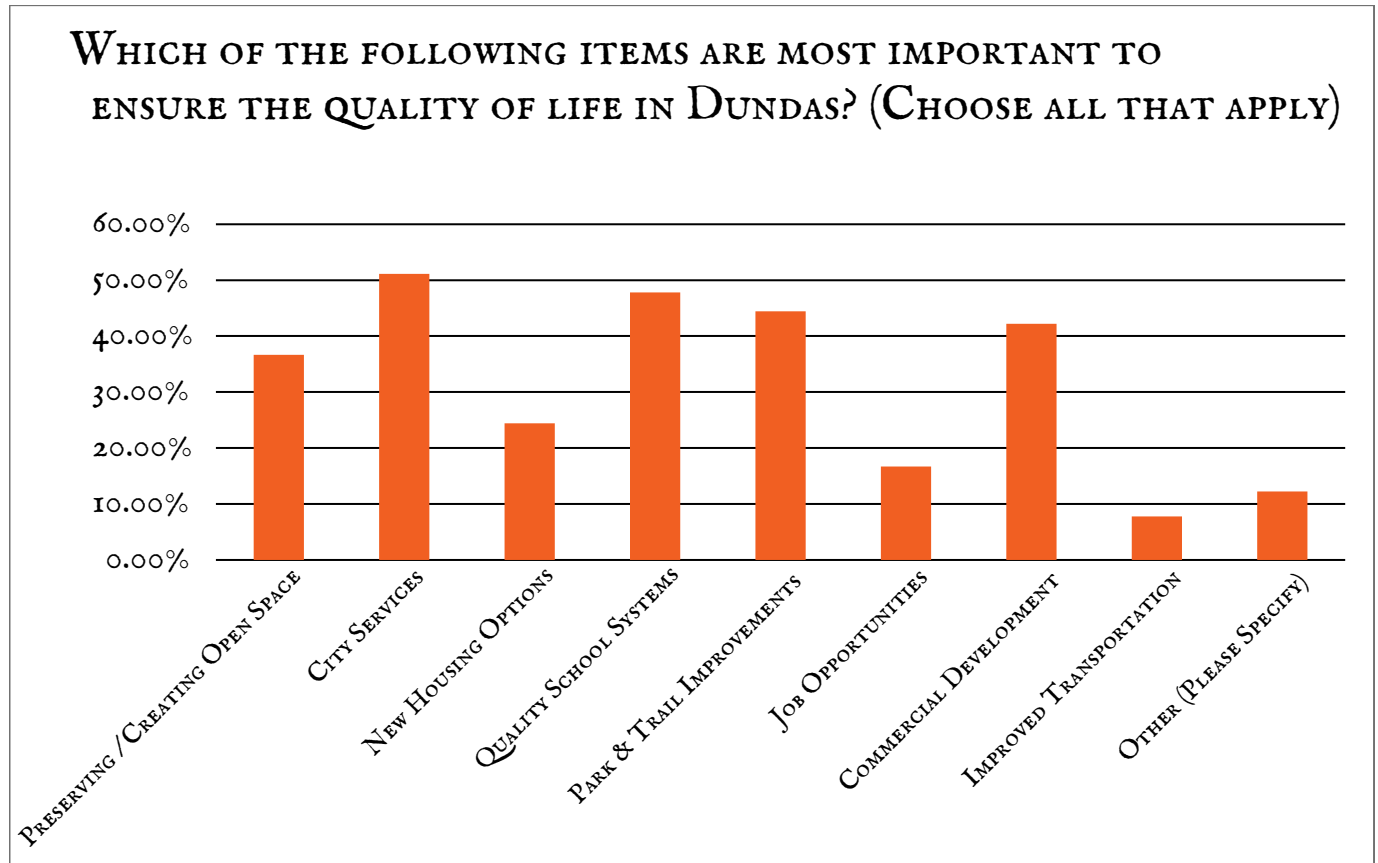
This question offered respondents a set of six multiple choice options to select what they felt was the most important reason they chose to live in Dundas, along with an "other" option to write in their own answer. The two most picked reasons were "housing options" and "location". Ten respondents selected "other" and gave a reason not listed under the six options, most referenced was either that the person had grown up in the City, had a spouse or partner who grew up here, or another family connection to the city. Parks and Natural Spaces was the only one of the six options provided that did not receive any votes. This question asked for the main reason that a person would choose to live in Dundas, not things of secondary or tertiary value for residents.



# CITY OF DUNDAS

Which of the following items are most important to ensure the quality of life in Dundas?  
(Choose all that apply)

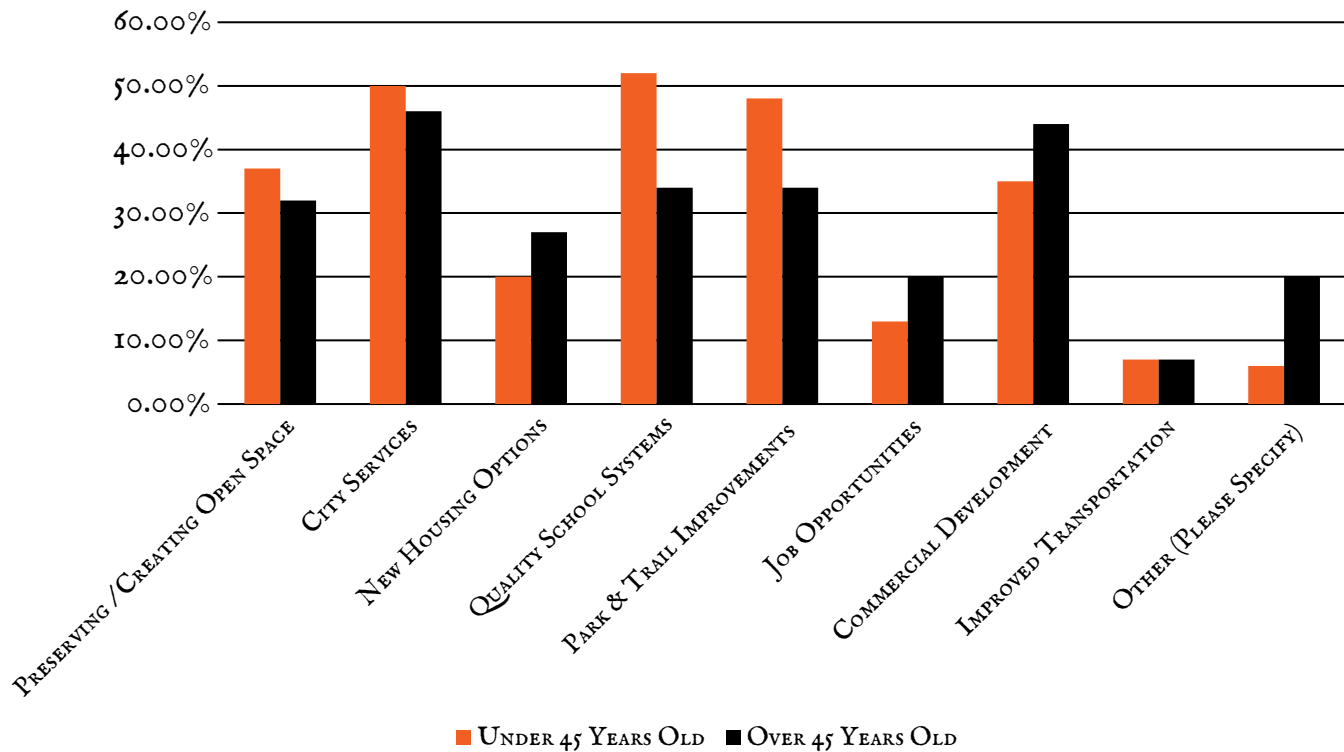
The second question allowed respondents to choose as many options as they would like regarding things which ensured quality of life in the City.



With this question there was a much greater variety of responses, allowing the respondent to select multiple items that they valued highly. City Services, Quality School Systems and Park and Trail Improvements were the topmost commonly selected by residents. City Services was selected by over half of all respondents who answered the question as being important to maintaining quality of life in the City.

Below are two graphs, showing the similarities of the response data from survey takers who were 44 and under, and the other being those 45 and above.

## QUALITY OF LIFE RESPONSES, BY AGE GROUP



From this analysis, there was a greater emphasis on quality schools and open spaces/parks from the cohort below 45 years old, and more emphasis on new housing options, jobs and commercial development from the older cohort. The differences in these priorities mostly fit what any person would informally expect: younger residents and families want strong schools for their children and parks and open space to provide public health and recreation benefits, while older residents want housing options now that they're empty nesters and more businesses/service nearby that they can frequent now that they may be retired or working less.

The important takeaway from this is that Dundas must be a city which provides a fantastic quality of life for every one of its residents, which will require finding the right balance between these competing priorities.

# CITY OF DUNDAS

What characteristics fit your vision for Dundas?(Choose all that apply)

## WHAT CHARACTERISTICS FIT YOUR VISION FOR DUNDAS?(CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)

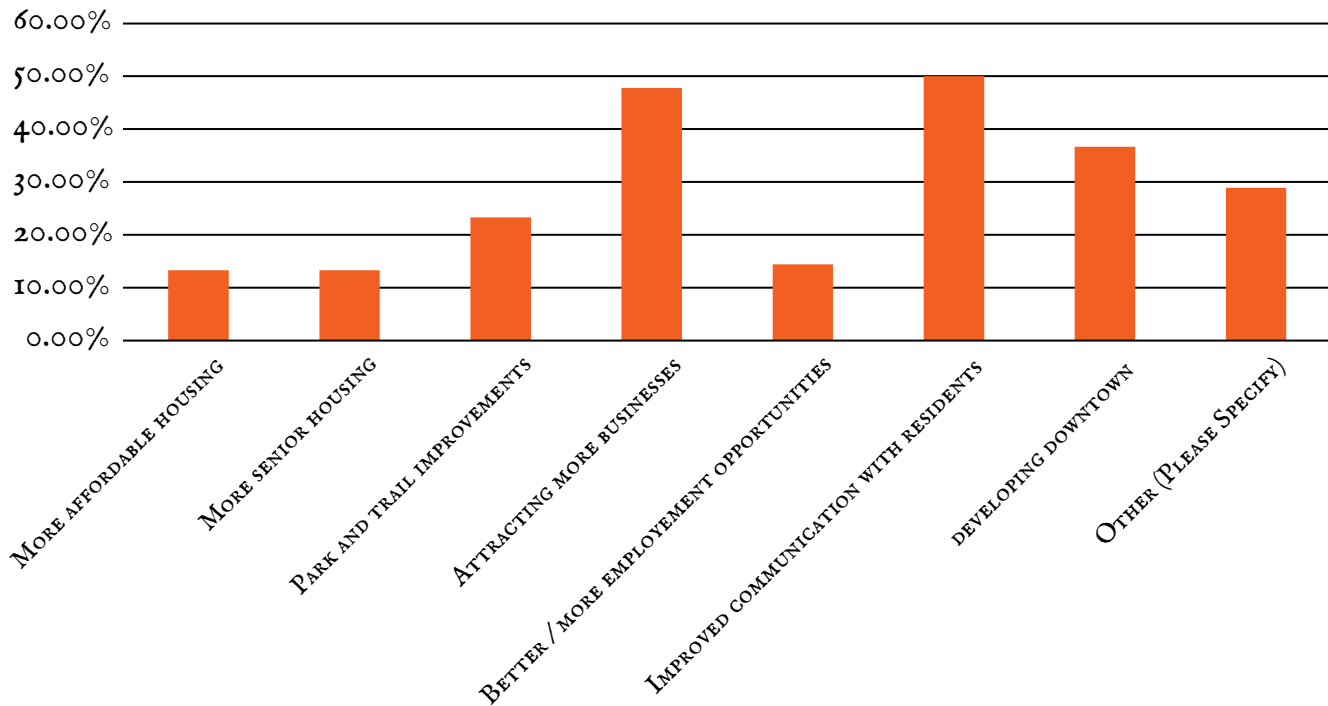


Residents identified the small-town character of the city as the primary characteristic that they identified with for their vision of the city. This was a comment sentiment throughout the survey, with some commenters directly calling out the fact that they wanted Dundas to remain distinct from the larger cities that surrounded it like Faribault and Northfield. Amongst the other choice options none clearly stood out like “small town” character. All the remaining options fell somewhere between being in 30-40% of responses. Very little difference from these overall results was found when further analyzed based on age and other demographics.

What issues does the city have that you think need to be addressed? (Choose all that apply)

Whereas previous questions had focused on the City’s identity and what people valued about it, this question asked residents to identify existing weaknesses and areas of opportunity for the city to improve on. This question provided several options relating to the city itself and its services, but this question also saw several other write-in comments for areas of improvement.

### WHAT ISSUES DOES THE CITY HAVE THAT YOU THINK NEED TO BE ADDRESSED?(CHOOSE ALL THAT APPLY)



The two most common options from the pre-established responses were improved communication between the City and residents and the attraction of more businesses. Business recruitment and transparent communication are both at odds with the other more physical environment improvements but are both easily implementable by City Officials with some modification of existing practices.

37% of respondents identified developing downtown as an issue with the City--above items like affordable and senior housing and park and trail improvements. Downtown redevelopment is a key aspect of this comprehensive plan but will more than likely still require its own separate long-range planning document outlining the steps, costs associated, parties involved and an overall timeline that will be associated with a redevelopment project.

From write-in comments, there were some common threads. A few comments were centered around municipal services and the enforcement of City Code. Some respondents wanted more active enforcement, as well as the maintenance of public areas and right of ways to the same standard as residential properties. Another common issue was the level of taxes and fees levied by the city and the payment options for those fees.



# CITY OF DUNDAS

## City Services Matrix

	POOR		FAIR		GOOD		TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
OVERALL CITY SERVICES	15.91%	14	53.41%	47	30.68%	27	88	2.15
APPEARANCE OF THE CITY	16.09%	14	52.87%	46	31.03%	27	87	2.15
QUALITY OF FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES	6.98%	6	32.56%	28	60.47%	52	86	2.53
QUALITY OF POLICE SERVICES	10.47%	9	23.26%	20	66.28%	57	86	2.56
CONDITION OF LOCAL STREETS	11.36%	10	54.55%	48	34.09%	30	88	2.23
SNOWPLOWING OF LOCAL STREETS	22.73%	20	50.00%	44	27.27%	24	88	2.05
QUALITY OF SCHOOLS	6.98%	6	16.28%	14	76.74%	66	86	2.7
DRINKING WATER QUALITY	13.64%	12	34.09%	30	52.27%	46	88	2.39
CONDITION OF PARKS AND TRAILS	2.27%	2	47.73%	42	50.00%	44	88	2.48
CITY'S COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC	34.09%	30	56.82%	50	9.09%	8	88	1.75
BUSINESS CLIMATE	25.58%	22	45.35%	39	29.07%	25	86	2.03
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	45.24%	38	50.00%	42	4.76%	4	84	1.6

The table above shows the results of a matrix-question in which residents were asked to rank items as either poor, fair, or good. These responses were coded 1-3 for poor-good respectively, and then a weighted average could be found for the total collected responses. Based upon weighted averages, Employment Opportunities was the lowest rated overall and the most rated as poor amongst all items. Conversely, Quality of Schools had a weighted average of 2.7, with 76.7% of respondents ranking it as good in terms of service.

Overall, most of these items have a weighted average falling somewhere between fair to good, with only two of the twelve having a weighted average of less than 2, putting them in the poor category. And the core services like schools, fire protection, police services, and water quality are all among the highest-ranking items in the matrix. There is room for improvement and iteration about the services the city provides, but overall, the opinion on these services is a positive one.

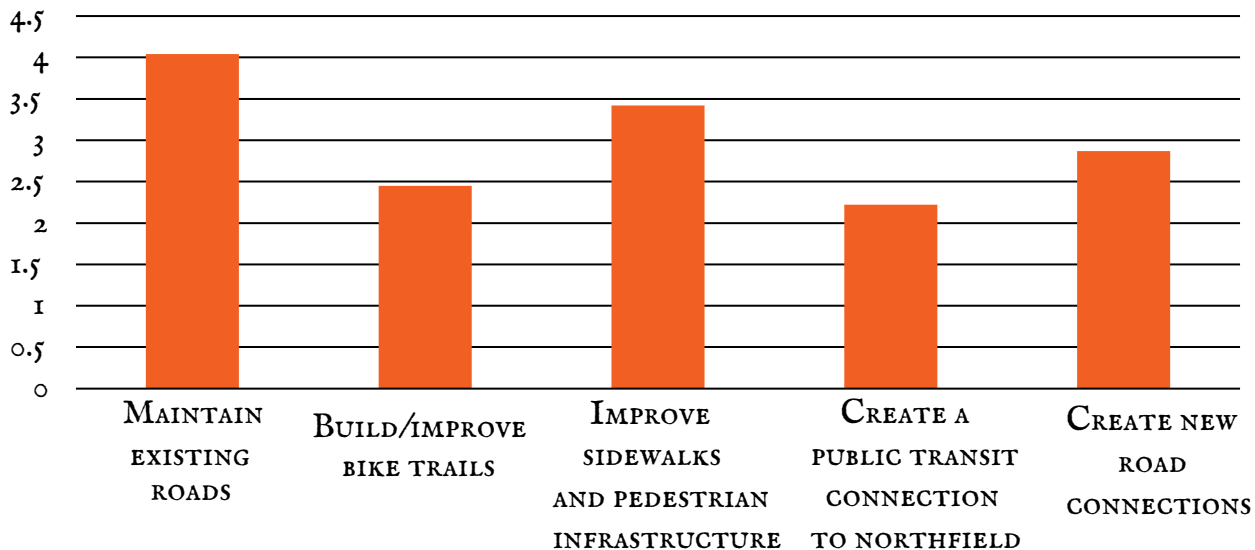
## City Investment and Prioritization

The final set of questions asked of participants was a series of ranking questions, all relating to one or more areas of development and growth in the city of Dundas such as housing or parks and recreation. Each question provided 5 options, and participants were asked to rank them, with 1 being the highest priority and 5 being the lowest. Much like with the matrix table, ranking items then had a weighted average calculated based upon the total responses for each. This gives a quick at-a-glance read on how these items were favored or disfavored by residents.

## Transportation

When asked to consider how the city should be using tax dollars to improve transportation facilities, survey participants strongly favored the maintenance and improvement of existing infrastructure versus support for new types of transportation or new transportation connections. Maintenance of existing roads was most consistently ranked the 1<sup>st</sup> priority by participants and ended with a weighted average of just above 4. The second most popular choice was the maintenance and improvement of sidewalks and pedestrian infrastructure. Rounding out the rest of the choices, new road connections, new bike trails, and a public transit connection to Northfield.

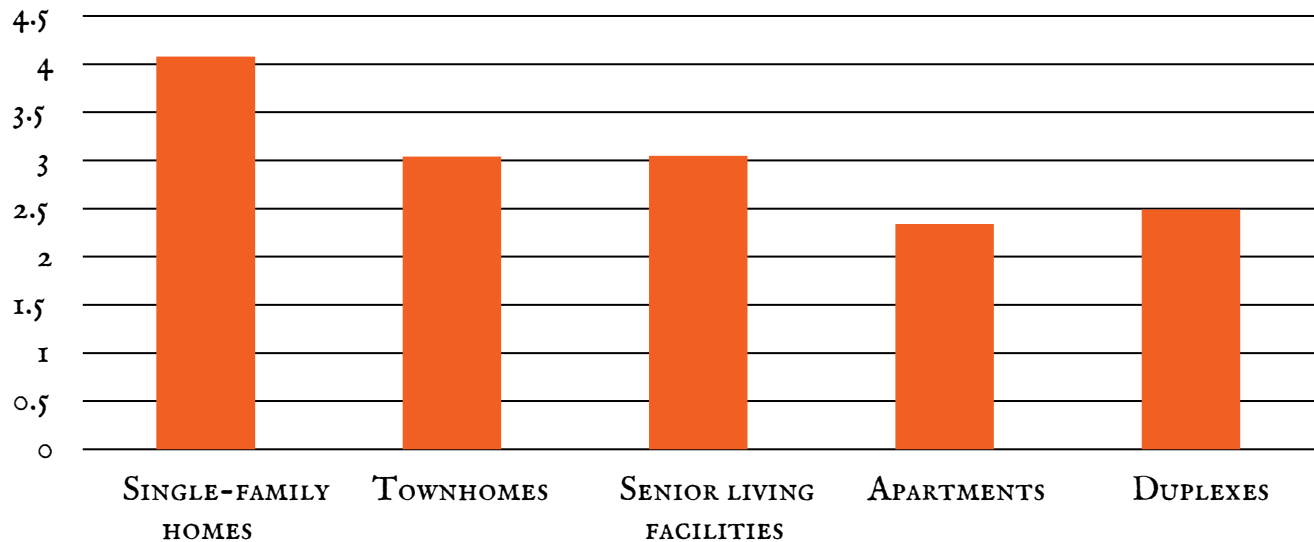
HOW SHOULD THE CITY OF DUNDAS USE TAX  
DOLLARS TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES  
IN THE CITY?



## Housing

When asked to rank different types of home styles, residents preferred more traditionally low-density styles of homes. Single family homes were the overwhelming favorite, being ranked the number one priority for housing by 63.6% of respondents. As seen on the chart below, townhomes and senior living facilities ended up having nearly identical weighted averages of 3.04 and 3.05, but differences emerge when ranked.

## WHAT TYPES OF HOUSING SHOULD THE CITY PRIORITIZE AND HELP TO PROMOTE AND DEVELOP?



Around 12% of respondents ranked senior living facilities as their number one priority for housing and around 25% put it as their second priority. This is a good indication that there is a market for senior-marketed and assisted living communities within the community, and an opportunity for the City to retain its residents as they age out of larger single-family homes. Townhomes meanwhile were nearly the lowest of all 5 options in terms of number one priority rankings with just 3 people making them their top priority. Where they gained background was strong placing in the second and third ranking spots, making up 36% and 28.6% respectively. While townhomes were not a top priority for survey participants, they were commonly chosen as a good to fair option for new housing, with only 9% of participants putting them as their lowest priority.

Duplexes and apartments were the least highly ranked housing options proposed by the survey. Duplexes did not seem to stand out for too many people, they were commonly a person's third or fourth choice when it came to new housing, and just under 20% of participants made them their lowest priority option. Despite having the lowest weighted score, around 17% of participants listed apartments as their top housing priority for the city. People seemed to either feel very strongly in favor of more apartments in the city, or they were strongly against this type of housing development. Moving forward Dundas will need to consider when and where this type of higher density housing makes sense--to help create more workforce and affordable housing--as well as to allow continued growth of the city's population.

## Parks & Recreation

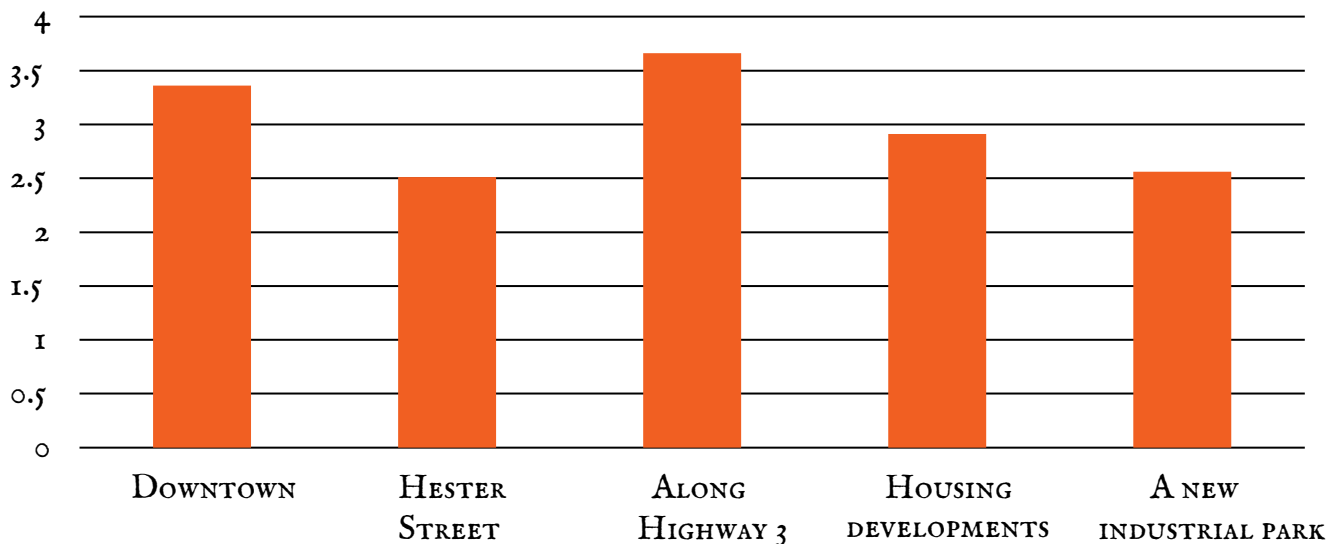
When asked to rank what types of park and recreation improvements residents would like to see, there was interest in more general use facilities as opposed to sport-specific options. Both playgrounds and trails saw strong support from participants. Both categories were the top vote-earners in both the first and second ranked categories. Trails was voted the top priority by 44% of participants, while playgrounds received 33.8% of top rank votes and 40.3% of second rank votes. Baseball fields received the most high-priority votes, but most people just put it somewhere in the middle, with just under half of its votes being either rank 3 or 4. Basketball courts and soccer fields failed to make a meaningful impact.

The presence of three different sport facilities may have harmed their placement by creating competition for votes but clarified the overwhelming popularity of trails and playgrounds. An option for the city to consider when examining future park improvements would be the inclusion of multi-purpose fields which could support any number of turf-based sports.

## New Development

The final prioritization question we asked participants was more complex, asking them where they would like to see new development/redevelopment occur, about where the city should be directing its energy and resources.

### WHERE SHOULD THE CITY BE DIRECTING IT'S ENERGIES IN TERMS OF PROMOTING NEW DEVELOPMENT?



# CITY OF DUNDAS

Participants were provided choices that were a mix of geographically specific locations, and more general types of development such as an industrial park. The city's downtown and the area along Highway 3 were both strong performers, capturing 27.3% and 38.9% of the top rank votes, respectively. These areas would primarily see commercial growth and development, although there would be differences between the types of development located on the highway or in downtown.

After the two more commercially focused development areas, housing was another development option that saw a mix of support and opposition. Housing development was split evenly, ranging from between 14.3% and 23.4% of votes in each separate rank. It seemed a general understanding and agreement that more housing was a necessary step for the city, but that people disagreed on what priority it held.

The two least favored options were new industrial developments and the redevelopment of Hester Street. Both items are part of the city's long-range goals: making Hester Street more mixed-use and commercially friendly to connect the downtown and Highway, and the annexation and development of new industrial land to create new employment opportunities. However, it appears that these items will require more communication and education efforts to build up more public support. The limitation of this survey is that it could not go into detail about the planning and implementation of these items, and that may impact residents' opinions.

## Conclusion

From this survey, the City has gained a lot of insight and information, both for the purposes of the Comprehensive Planning process, but also in terms of its own services and procedures. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, survey results were considered along with the direction of the previous Comprehensive Plan when analyzing and updating of the city's goals and policies. Some of the big conclusions we pulled from the survey included:

- Residents appreciate Dundas for its small-town character. Growth should retain this atmosphere.
- Residents would like to see the Downtown area improved and see more new businesses move to the City.
- The Community places a high value on their natural and open space areas and see these as well as the city's park system as a major priority moving forward.
- Residents are generally satisfied with the current level of city services but identify the continuation and improvement of these services as important to the City's future success.
- Resident preference is for future housing to be primarily single-family residential, with the recognition that apartments and senior housing is a current void within the city.

