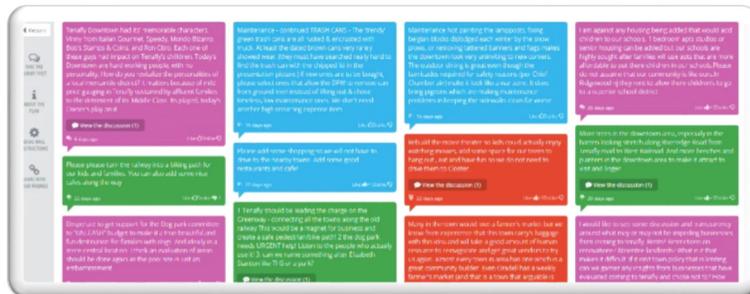




Public Survey and Ideas Wall Summary October 22, 2021



Overview

The Tenafly Downtown Revitalization Plan is a Borough-led effort to create a plan to help revitalize and bring further investment into the downtown area. As part of the public engagement effort, an online public survey was developed to gather input from the public regarding their current use of downtown, priorities for future improvement, and key issues users experience. The survey included an “Ideas Wall” visioning exercise, where participants were invited to post open-ended comments on key thematic areas such as shopping, streetscape, parks, traffic, and more.

The online public survey was accessible from the project webpage¹ for over a month and half (September 1 to October 17, 2021). A total of 418 responses were received, which represents almost 9% of the total number of households in Tenafly². This is considered to be an excellent response, in comparison to similar efforts in other communities. The survey was publicized through two Mayor’s Friday Messages, social media, flyers and the Township website. It was also highlighted during the first virtual public workshop on September 29, 2021, and during the five focus group meetings that have been conducted in September/October.

The Ideas Wall was open for the same timeframe as the public survey. The total number of comments received was 128. The total number of unique visitors to the online public engagement page was 1,203, with a total of 429 users that provided comments on the Ideas Wall and/or participated to the public survey. Although the online engagement page is now closed for comments, the Ideas Wall can still be viewed at <https://bfjplanning.mysocialpinpoint.com/tenaflydowntownplan#/>.

¹ <http://www.tenaflynj.org/542/Tenafly-Downtown-Revitalization-Plan>

² According to the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), 5-Year Estimates, Tenafly had 4,690 households.

Public Survey Summary

Q1: Do you live in Tenafly?

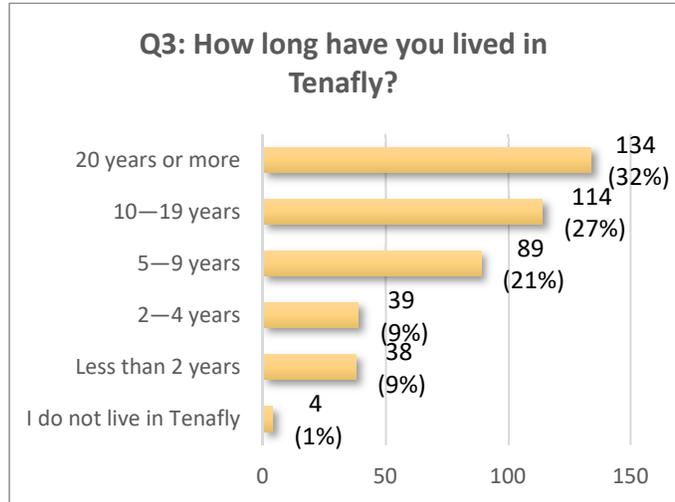
98% of the total respondents, are Tenafly residents.

Q2: If you don't live in Tenafly, where do you live?

The few respondents that do not live in Tenafly live in nearby New Jersey communities such as Cresskill and Demarest.

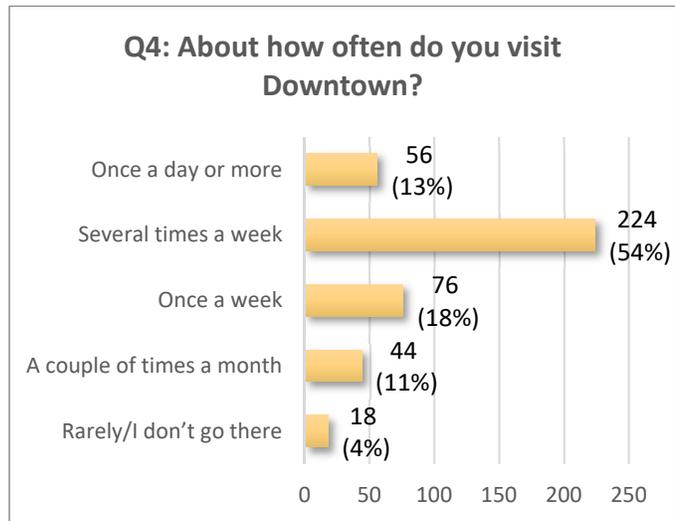
Q3: How long have you lived in Tenafly?

Almost a third of the respondents (~32%) are long-time Tenafly residents, having lived here for 20 years or more. Roughly 27% have lived in the town between 10 and 19 years, followed by 5 to 9 years (21%). About 9% of the respondents have lived in Tenafly between 2 and 4 years, and the same percentage of survey participants have moved to Tenafly within the last 2 years.



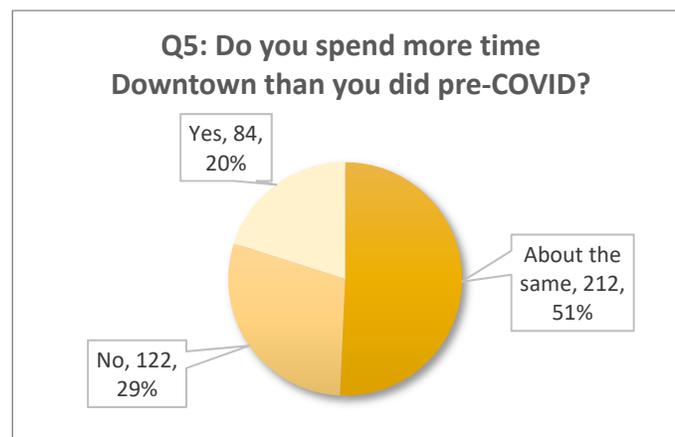
Q4: About how often do you visit Downtown?

About 64% of respondents visit downtown several times a week or more often. About 15% of the survey participants visit Downtown only a couple of times a month or less often.



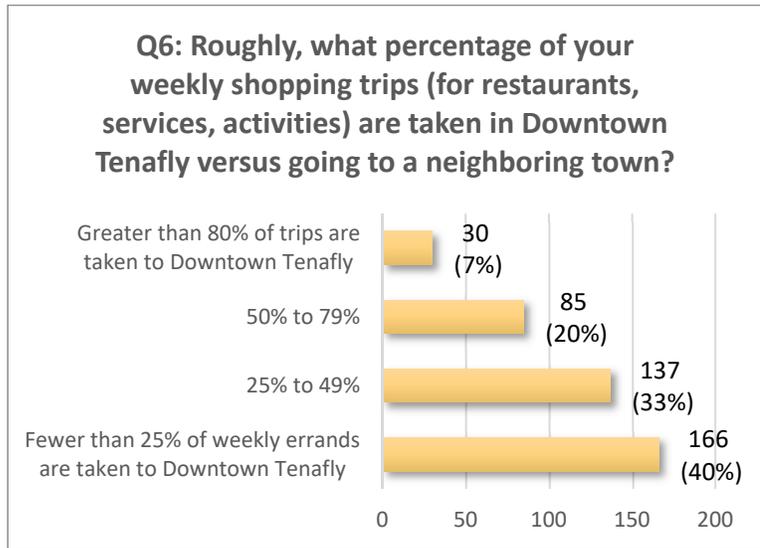
Q5: Do you spend more time Downtown than you did pre-COVID?

Approximately half of the survey participants currently spend about the same time Downtown as they did before COVID. Roughly 20% of the respondents spend more time Downtown compared to pre-COVID, while 29% indicated that they currently spend less time Downtown than before COVID.



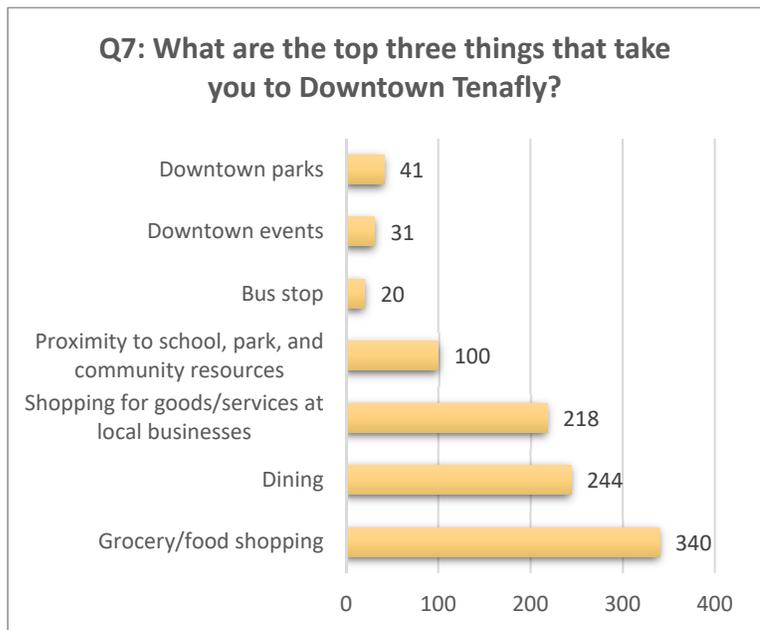
Q6: Roughly, what percentage of your weekly shopping trips (for restaurants, services, & activities) are taken in Downtown Tenafly versus going to a neighboring town?

The survey shows that most respondents do most of their weekly shopping trips elsewhere. 77% of respondents do less than half of their weekly errands in tenafly. Only 7% of respondents indicated they shop downtown most of the time (more than 80% of their weekly errands).



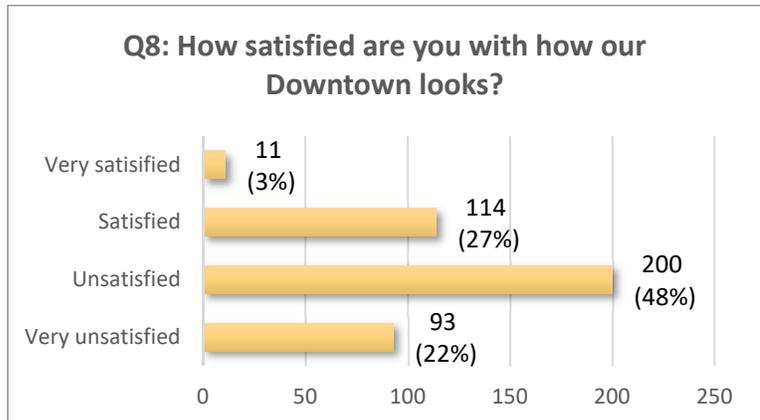
Q7: What are the top three things that take you to Downtown Tenafly?

The most selected activity that brings survey participants to Downtown is grocery/food shopping, followed by dining, shopping for goods/services other than groceries, and proximity to school, park and community resources. Fewer respondents selected other activities like going to downtown parks (41), downtown events (31) and taking the bus (20).



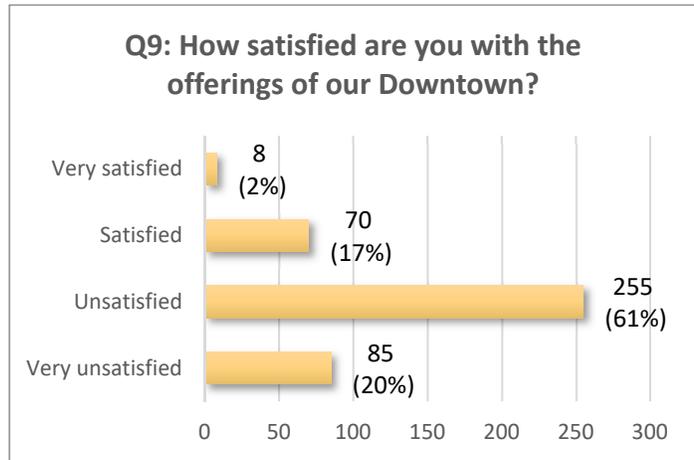
Q8: How satisfied are you with how our Downtown looks?

Survey participants were asked to rate how satisfied they are with how Downtown Tenafly looks. Almost half of the respondents (roughly 48%) are unsatisfied, and roughly 22% are very unsatisfied. Approximately 27% of respondents indicated to be satisfied with how Downtown looks, and only 3% very satisfied.



Q9: How satisfied are you with the offerings of our Downtown?

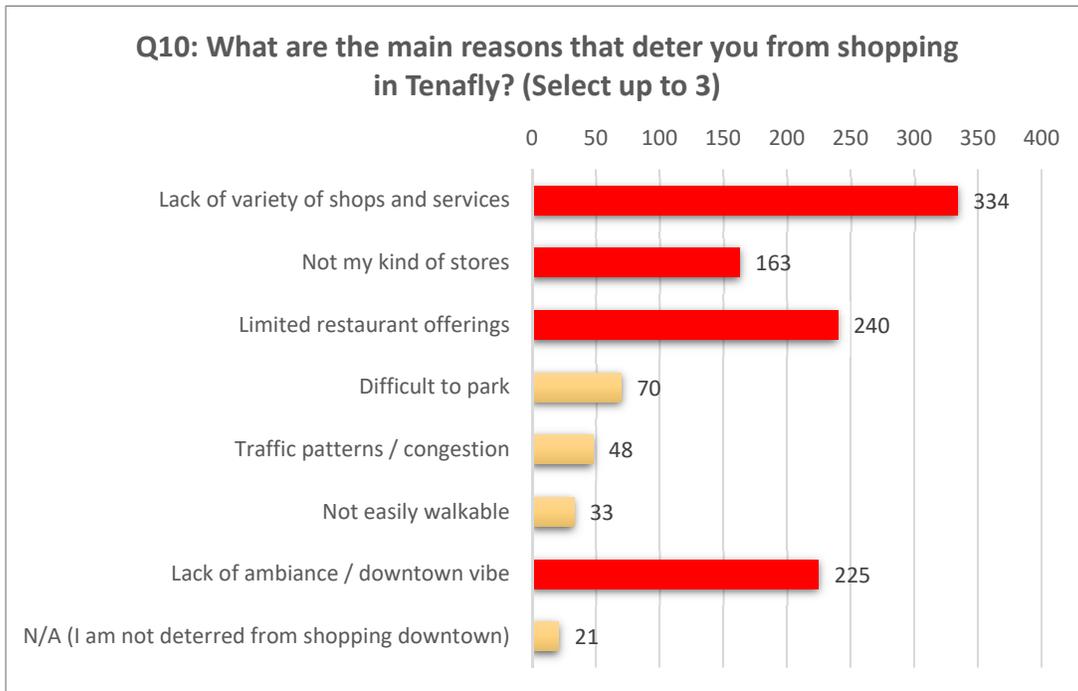
Similar to the rating of how the Downtown looks, most respondents are also not satisfied with what Downtown offers. Roughly 61% are unsatisfied with the offerings of our Downtown, and roughly 20% are very unsatisfied. Approximately 17% of survey participants are satisfied and only about 2% are very satisfied with what Downtown offers.



Q10: What are the main reasons that deter you from shopping in Tenafly? (Select up to 3)

Participants were asked to select the top three reasons that deter them from shopping downtown. The four most common responses that have gotten between 163 and 334 votes are the following:

- Lack of variety of shops and services
- Limited restaurant offerings
- Lack of ambiance / downtown vibe
- Not my kind of stores



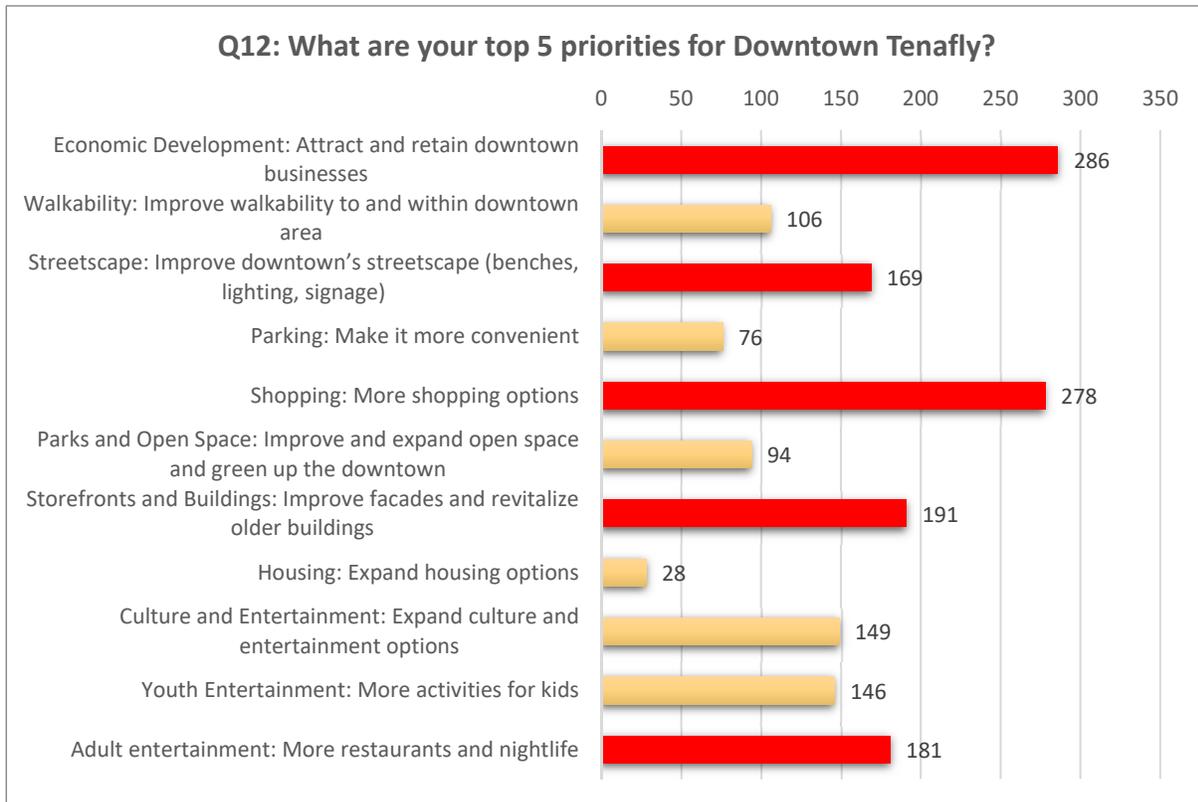
Q11: When you come to downtown Tenafly for shopping, dining, entertainment, is adequate parking available?

Parking does not appear to be a major issue for most respondents. Roughly 45% indicated that they “usually” find parking and roughly 21% “always” find parking. Approximately 28% of survey participants find available parking “sometimes”, while only about 4% responded that parking is rarely available.



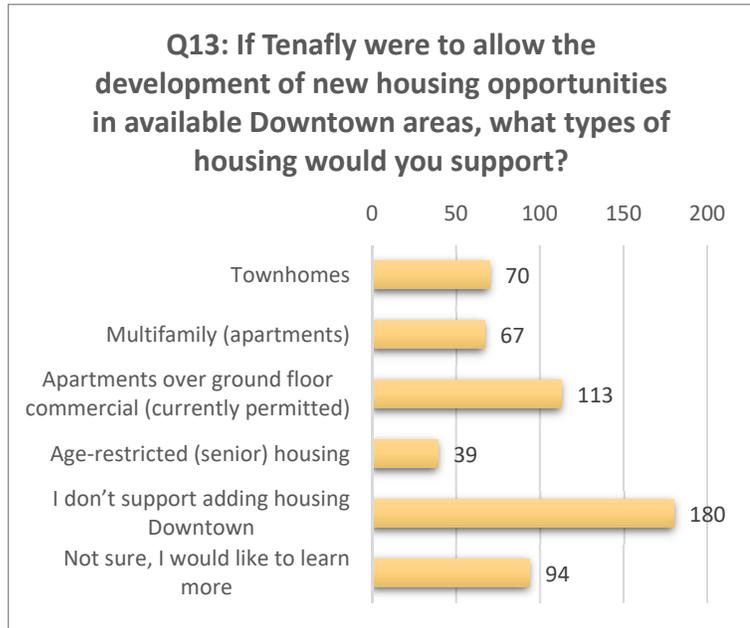
Q12: What are your top 5 priorities for Downtown Tenafly?

The two most popular priority topics for Downtown are “Economic Development: Attract and retain downtown businesses” (286 votes) and “Shopping: More shopping options” (278 votes). Following those, other two common themes were “Storefronts and Buildings: Improve facades and revitalize older buildings” (191 votes), followed by “Adult Entertainment: More restaurants and nightlife” (181 votes), “Streetscape: Improve downtown’s streetscape” (169 votes), “Culture and Entertainment: Expand culture and entertainment options” (149 votes), and “Youth Entertainment: More activities for kids” (146 votes).



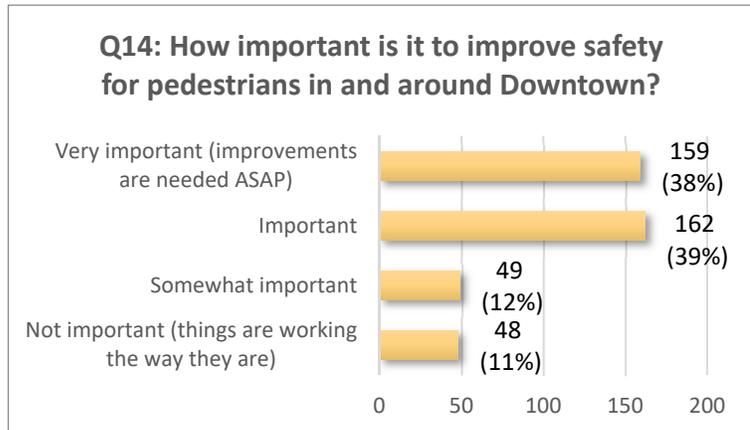
Q13: If Tenafly were to allow the development of new housing opportunities in available Downtown areas, what types of housing would you support?

180 respondents indicated that they do not support adding housing Downtown. The most selected housing type is "Apartments over ground floor commercial" (113 votes), a typology that is currently allowed by zoning. Following that, 94 respondents indicated that they would like to learn more ("not sure"), while "Townhomes" and "Multifamily (apartments)" housing types received 70 and 67 votes, respectively.



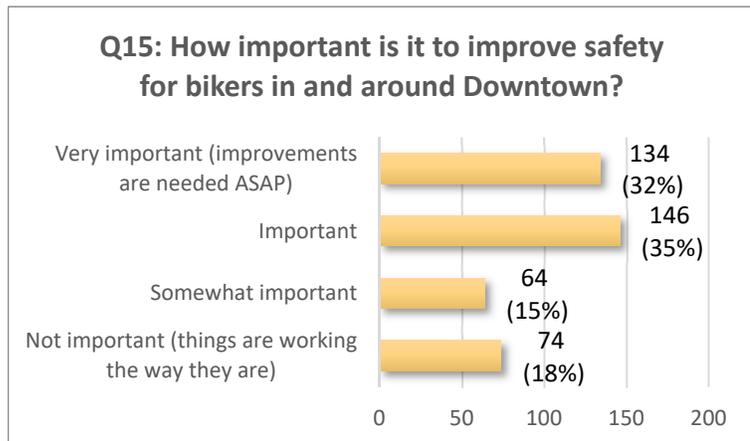
Q14: How important is it to improve safety for pedestrians in and around Downtown?

Most survey participants rated safety improvements for pedestrians as a priority, either as "Important" (39%) or "Very important" (38%).



Q15: How important is it to improve safety for bikers in and around Downtown?

Similarly to pedestrian safety improvements, improving safety for bikers also received support of most respondents. 35% of survey participants rated it as "Important" and 32% as "Very important". 18% indicated that improvements are "Not important", while 15% responded that they are "Somewhat important".



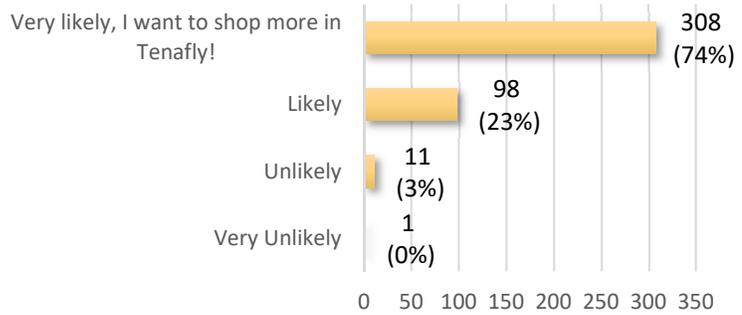
Q16: Is there a particular place that feels unsafe to walk or bike? (Please list)

The most mentioned locations where participants feel unsafe to walk or bike are the two 5-way intersections north and south of Huyler Park (Highwood/Hillside/Piermont/W Railroad and Clinton/County/Piermont/W Railroad). Many participants mentioned the intersection with the blinking light by Dean Street and E. Clinton as unsafe. Some specified that crossing Riveredge Road feels dangerous (at most intersections). More than 10% of respondents indicated that all or most Downtown crossings feel unsafe due to cars speeding and/or failing to yield to pedestrians.

Q17: With improved looks and offerings of Downtown Tenafly, how likely are you to shift more of your trips to Downtown Tenafly?

A large majority of survey participants indicated that it is “very likely” they would visit Downtown more often if it had improved looks and offerings (roughly 74%), and about 23% responded as “likely”. Only 3% of participants indicated as “unlikely” that they would visit Downtown more even if it improved looks and offerings.

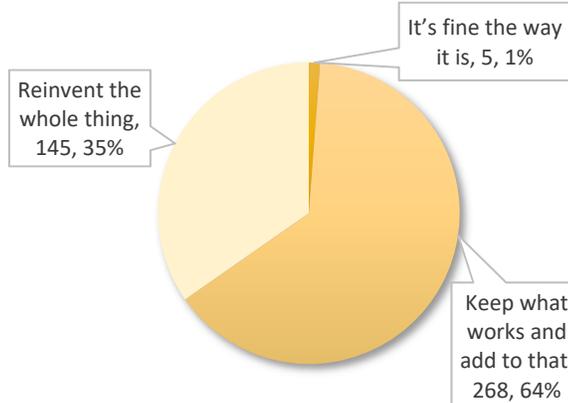
Q17: With improved looks and offerings of Downtown Tenafly, how likely are you to shift more of your trips to Downtown Tenafly?



Q18: How ambitious should plans for the Downtown be?

Roughly 64% of respondents indicated that plans for Downtown Tenafly should seek to keep what works and add to that, while roughly 35% said that plans should “reinvent the whole thing.” Only about 1% of respondents would like to keep Downtown the way it is.

Q18: How ambitious should plans for the Downtown be?



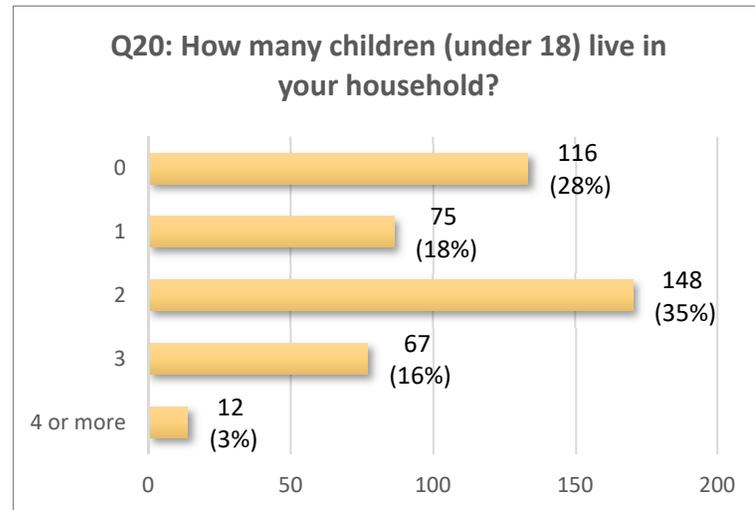
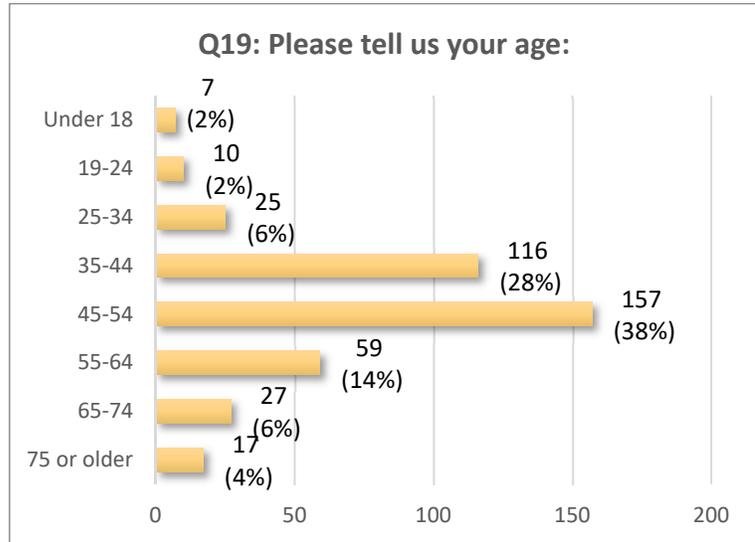
Demographic Questions

Q20: Please tell us your age

The survey had a good representation of two age groups: 45-54 (roughly 38%) and 35-44 (roughly 28%). The 55-64 age group had a fair number of participants with roughly 14%. The senior population accounted for approximately 6% between 65 and 74, and 4% for over 75. Age category 25-34 was roughly 6%, while age groups 19-24 and under 18 were at roughly 2% each.

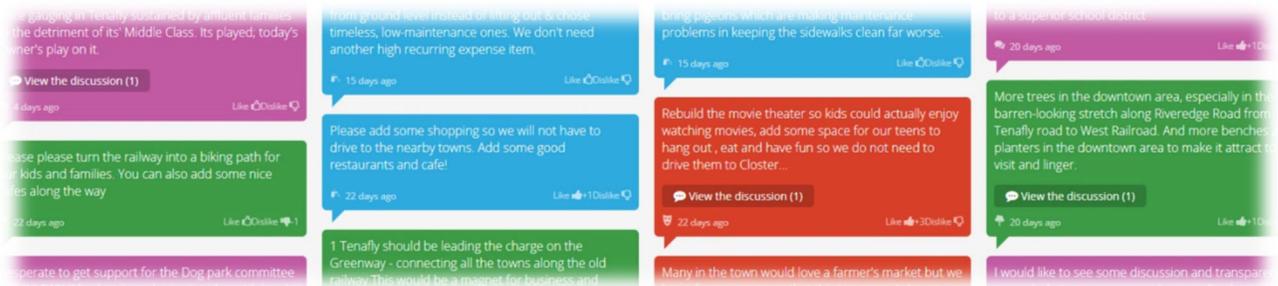
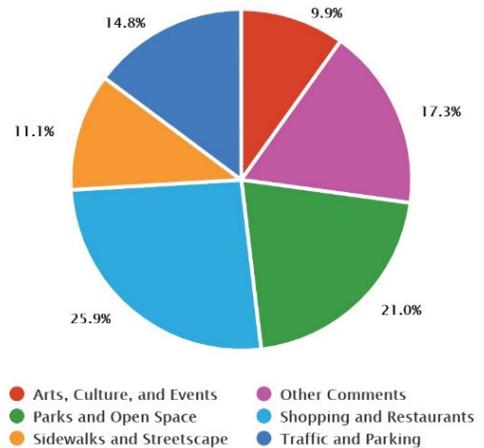
Q21: How many children (under 18) live in your household?

Roughly 35% of respondents have 2 children living in their household, while the second most represented category have no children living with them (28%). Approximately 18% and 16% of participants have respectively 1 children or 3 children living in their household. Roughly 3% of respondents live with 4 children or more.



IDEAS WALL

This visioning exercise was meant to gather input on issues and opportunities for the Downtown. A total of 128 open-ended comments were received. Participants had the opportunity to up- or down-vote other ideas presented. Comments were grouped into the following areas: Sidewalks and Streetscape; Parks and Open Space; Arts, Culture, and Events; Shopping and Restaurants; Traffic and Parking; and Other Comments. The following chart shows the breakdown of public comments by category.



Sidewalks and Streetscape (10 comments)

The most popular idea is the need to improve Downtown’s look and feel to attract residents and visitors. Ideas frequently mentioned, and that received the most “up votes” from other participants, included: update building facades; need for anchor stores; desire for some outdoor dining to become permanent; create murals on blank walls on sides of buildings; and improve walking conditions throughout downtown.

“Make some of the outdoor eating areas permanent.”

“Add sidewalks to a few key pedestrian routes. Just start picking away at the most used most dangerous ones.”

“Our town looks boring and only the newer retail/restaurants look good on the outside.”

“It would be nice to see pretty awnings over the storefronts, more attractive doorways to shops, and something more attractive than the concrete barriers for outdoor dining. If I really had my wish list, I would have Washington St as a pedestrian walkway with a central water fountain and benches.”

Parks and Open Space

(31 comments)

Participants highlighted the desire for a large open space that could be used for multi-purpose activities such as for gathering, walking, or running along a path as a supported idea with the most “up votes”. Other key ideas that received the most “up votes” from other participants, included: planting more trees; adding a splash ground to Roosevelt Commons similar to the one in Votee Park in Teaneck, NJ to attract all residents; providing more places to sit throughout the downtown, especially in the parks; implementing sustainable practices in all downtown improvements (i.e. native plants and low-impact building materials); adding bike lanes along E Clinton Avenue and Piermont Road.

“Although TenaFly has parks, it needs a large open space where people can meet and go for a walk.”

“TenaFly should become a leader in NJ in the way we build, develop and maintain our town with an environmental purpose.”

“More places to sit in the downtown (e.g. in the parks) to meet up with friends and have a coffee.”

“We should also embrace those bikers on their return trip to NYC by making a bike lane for the climb back up east Clinton for those who return from the north via Piermont ave.”

Arts, Culture, and Events

(12 comments)

The most common ideas that were discussed included live entertainment, activities, and restaurants. The idea with the most “up votes” by participants was the desire for a place to hear live music in the Downtown. Participants suggested that TenaFly youth could perform live musical concerts at cafés or bars. Recurring topics included the aspiration to see the movie theater reopen, the need for more variety in shops such as a bookstore or antique shop, and desire for more diverse restaurants including Latin food.

“...it was great having a movie theatre in town and it would be a great way to attract people to our town by offering a small film festival.”

“Can we please have a place where we can hear live music?”

“Would be great to have the variety of shops available in Closter commons.”

“We need a good cafe/bar that encourages concerts so we can have our children playing their instruments somewhere.”

Shopping and Restaurants (36 comments)

Popular topics that received the most “up votes” are the following: improve the variety of restaurants including healthy food options; desire for downtown to have a similar modern shopping destination and experience like Closter Plaza; and replace all car dealerships with shops and restaurants. Participants highlighted the desire to improve the variety in retail to include a bookstore, clothing store, shoe store, hardware store, candy store, coffee shop, café with ample seating, reasonably priced everyday necessities store, sports bar, full service fitness center, and Trader Joe’s. In addition to improving shopping and restaurants options, participants mentioned there is a need to also improve downtown’s overall ambiance and feel, clean up the traffic patterns, create a safer pedestrian environment, and enhance building façades to be more uniform.

“We need better restaurants, coffee places with a nice vibe.”

“We should use Ridgewood as a great example. One main king street with lots of parking, restaurants and shops. You only have to park once to walk most of the town.”

“Fewer nail salons more variety of shops.”

“Need to provide adults and teenagers alike more places to hangout.”

“Let’s try to move all the car dealerships out of downtown Tenafly and replace them with shops, and restaurants.”

Traffic and Parking (18 comments)

The most common ideas that were discussed included walkability, safety, and traffic patterns. The following, in particular, received the most “up votes”: improve the traffic patterns throughout downtown, especially during morning rush hour (i.e. School schedules could be staggered,); add a 4-way stop at the intersection of Jay Street and Highwood Avenue as its dangerous for both pedestrians and drivers; make Piermont Road a two-way street from Central Avenue to E Clinton Avenue; and make it safe to walk throughout downtown.

“The traffic patterns in the downtown are confusing.”

“Piermont between Central Ave and East Clinton should be 2 way.”

“Traffic in town during the morning rush especially is absolutely awful.”

“There needs to be more crosswalks for the safety of our kids walking to and from school.”

“(…) The railroad ave/washington st area is separated from other areas because it’s unsafe to cross to piermont/jay/highwood or the stop n shop area.”

“There needs to be a 4-way stop at highwood and jay, it’s unsafe for pedestrians and cars…”

Other Comments (21 comments)

Comments under this category covered some of the themes specified in the other topic areas, including improvements to traffic patterns, streetscape, and shopping options. Participants expressed great interest in closing some roads near the train station area to create a balanced environment for pedestrians and drivers; adding bike lanes; converting the train tracks to a bike path (The Northern Valley Greenway project); installing more sidewalks; creating a shared working space paired with a coffee shop and gym; and creating more activities and entertainment options such as a temporary roller skating rink, indoor play space for kids, art gallery, museum, concert venue, movie theater, playhouse, Target, and local drugstore.

"Close some of the useless roads around the train station and totally reconfigure that area with fewer traffic lights, better mixing of cars and pedestrians, new parking, parks, and even a new shop or two, to extend the pedestrian draw there from Washington St."

"Would love bike lanes! How about converting the train track to a bike path!"

"More sidewalks."

"...it can be nice to have a shared working space where people can rent offices per day\hours for meetings or just to get out of the house."

"I would love it if tenafly had a roller skating rink, maybe even a temporary one like they did with the ice skating rink."