

**BSD
STRATEGIC
PLAN**



The Shopping District

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 22, 2016
TO: Birmingham Shopping District Executive Committee
FROM: John Heiney, Executive Director
SUBJECT: Strategic Plan Update-Survey Results

Attached is a compilation of survey results and summaries designed to inform the update of the Shopping District 2014 Strategic Plan. Marilyn Opdyke, and BSD staff worked together to gather results. Marilyn spoke to property owners, and administered a SWOT analysis survey of Board and staff members. BSD staff conducted online surveys of downtown employees, and business owners/managers. The process was completed in less than six weeks, enabling us to present findings to you at the Executive Committee Meeting on November 28, with a goal of reviewing items with the Board on December 1.

The attached packet includes the following documents for your perusal.

1. Executive Committee data review and summary (This is Marilyn's summary of all data shown below).
2. Proposed updates to 2014 goals and "low hanging fruit" options
3. Property owner responses
4. SWOT compilation of all input
5. Board-only SWOT
6. Merchant/Owner Survey Results
7. Employee/Office Worker Survey results and Analysis

Please take a few moments to review the information. Items 3 through 7 are background detail only.

Marilyn and I will walk you through everything at the Executive Committee Meeting, and ask for your input/suggested changes at that time.

Birmingham Shopping District Strategic Plan Update 2016
Executive Committee Data Review
Executive Summary (detailed data results attached)

Stakeholder Input (key findings)

Property Owners (individual interviews n = 7)

- Assist with parking – more, support for structures, monitor valet placement, communicate/ market its availability, what has improved.
- On-going communication – with them so they can share with tenants, clarify who does what, come see their issues, clarify where the parking revenue goes.
- Help with city regulations, city permits, zoning, etc. Review building heights.
- Support increased density and outreach to younger people – help with zoning, parking regulations. “Let the developer take the risk.” Get creative. Need density for long-term viability.
- Marketing – get creative to get more people downtown; communicate parking availability, promote all retailers.
- Look for how we differentiate Birmingham from other choices. “We need a WOW factor”.
- Re-evaluate the tenant recruitment program

Merchants/ Retailers (Electronic survey n = 46)

- Parking/ Construction – cost, availability of monthly parking for employees, inconvenience for shoppers, “I am losing clients because of this”, support for everyone navigating construction.
- Appreciate and value the positive environment – walkability, atmosphere, cleanliness, security.
- Leverage the growing trend toward supporting small businesses. Growing concern with the balance between nationals and local retailers.
- E-mail communications work well with local retailers.

Office Workers/ Employers (Electronic survey n = 382)

- Communication – not getting enough information on events, what’s available, etc. This is an under-tapped market for the BSD and merchants.
- Love walkable community, atmosphere, cleanliness, etc.
- Parking and traffic a consistent issue; want more parking options.
- Want more restaurants/ food options that are less expensive and easy for quick lunch.
- Concerns over safety at Woodward/ Maple, crossing streets, etc.
- Want more variety in shopping; doesn’t cater enough to younger professionals/ millennials

Board and Staff SWOT (Electronic; n = 10 - five Board; five Staff/City)

Strengths:

- Board – balanced representation, well respected, involved
- Staff – John known and respected, dedicated staff, committed, high energy, fiscal responsibility, well-informed, caring
- Marketing and promotion of downtown; special events

- Dedicated to helping businesses succeed

Weaknesses:

- Disengaged membership; lack of involvement by constituents
- Leadership succession; recruiting new talent/members
- Involvement/ input from merchants *before* events and decisions
- Communication
- Restaurant mix (Bistro, fine dining, etc.) and retail mix (need more clothing, shoe, gift, lifestyle shops)

Opportunities:

- Expanded marketing through social media and web site
- Find a “wow” factor to differentiate us
- Renewed interest in metro Detroit, walkable downtowns, support for small businesses
- Turn construction issues into opportunity for engagement and collaboration
- Tap into office worker market more effectively

Threats:

- Construction and parking and resultant losses to businesses.
- Lack of certain restaurant types – lower cost, sports bars, etc.
- Lack of retail businesses
- Internet shopping
- New/ younger property owners – do they have the same commitment to the community?

Top priorities:

- Parking and construction – impact on merchants and whole downtown
- Keeping our “edge” as a preferred place to shop/dine; keeping our image and events fresh and in tune with new trends; setting Birmingham apart from other outdoor options
- Variety of shops/ dining options; need variety to attract young professionals/ millennials to Birmingham
- Increasing foot traffic

Other Issues:

- We need more density/ more people living downtown; they will support local merchants. How do we support this?
- Succession planning for board and board leadership
- Have to find ways to engage more members and enhance collaboration and cooperation
- Review event planning and schedule timing to support local retailers, not compete with them. I.e. not Mother’s Day or fall school/fashion shopping. Put them in July or August instead.

Impact on Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives

In reviewing all of the data and stakeholder input it is our conclusion that the Goals, with some minor modification, are still sound. They were deliberately broad when developed two years ago and still guide the major strategic direction for the organization.

The new input does suggest, however, that modifications are needed to some of the objectives as well as renewed attention to some of the previously set ones. Our recommendations are

noted (in green) in the attached "Proposed Changes to Goals" document. We have also included some Quick Actions or "low hanging fruit". These suggestions can be implemented quickly and with minimal cost and can deliver high impact on the stakeholders involved.

We welcome the discussion and your input.

It's All
BIRMINGHAM
The Shopping District

BIRMINGHAM SHOPPING DISTRICT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Submitted by John Heiney, Executive Director
7/30/14 revised 11/21/16 jth

Overview

On May 15 and June 25, 2014, the Birmingham Shopping District Board of Directors conducted a strategic planning process, facilitated by Marilyn Opdyke, of Opdyke Consulting. As a result, the Board identified four goals for the BSD, setting a course for the years ahead.

The BSD will strive to confirm the organization's leadership role as a change agent and supporter of merchants, the Birmingham business environment and the community by...

- *Engaging merchants and providing resources, education and support to assure their ongoing success,*
- *Branding and marketing the shopping district and community,*
- *Advocating for our constituents in addressing parking, traffic and infrastructure issues, and*
- *Identifying and integrating relevant trends, changing demographics, and innovative ideas that confirm Birmingham's reputation as a unique and desirable market.*

Goal 1: Engage business owners and property owners as active partners with the Birmingham Shopping District in identifying and addressing common concerns, and providing tools and resources with the intention of positively impacting their success.

The Opportunity

Achieving this goal is important in these ways:

1. To the businesses because it will help strengthen their enterprise and bring value to their business.
2. To the BSD because it will show our value as an organization.
3. To both because it will allow for a dialogue where concerns are expressed and heard.

Potential Threats/Obstacles

Currently merchants and property owners are not actively engaged. The majority do not attend BSD meetings or participate in special events. Some say they do not receive information. Others say they do not see a value to the BSD.

What Could Happen If Nothing Is Done

The BSD will become irrelevant to business and property owners. Potential for businesses and City to discontinue BSD assessment. BSD will cease to exist.

Potential Impact If the Goal is Met

1. Increase positive two way communication
2. Increase business success/retention
3. Increase effectiveness and perceived value of the BSD
4. Increase merchant and property owner participation and engagement
5. Tap the market potential of downtown employees

Champions

Richard Astrein

Rachel A. Woods

Doug Fehan (Bob Benkert removed)

No committee has been assigned. However, staff recommends that BSD establish an Organizational Committee, similar to Main Street model.

Objectives

1. Initiate effective two-way communications
 - a. For merchants; utilize Block captains, meetings, and personal outreach
 - b. For property owners; engage more actively with round table meetings and personal outreach
 - c. Enhance two-way communication with office workers; identify more ways to tap into this potential and growing market
2. Provide education and resources for businesses
 - a. Regular education forums
3. Assist with retention of businesses
4. Identify and create resources to help stores:
 - a. Bring and keep shoppers
 - b. Be strategic in their thinking
5. Lead in unification of businesses
 - a. Networking Events
 - b. Cross-promotion
 - c. Collaboration around parking/ construction issues
 - d. Coordinated store hours

Goal 2: To enhance the *brand* of the Birmingham Shopping District, by creating messaging and an experience for the visitor that is clear, cohesive and consistent in portraying our strengths and assets, and to expand the reach of Birmingham's message to new markets and new demographics.

The Opportunity

This is important because we have the opportunity to create a brand that will portray Birmingham's unique shopping and dining, walkability, great public spaces, and atmosphere, and to align messaging, events and activities in support of the brand.

Potential Threats/Obstacles

Potential threats to this include lack of agreement and unity among merchants about "what is Birmingham". Also, a potential lack of understanding or agreement on part of merchants about the definition of our core customer, and what are they looking for in a shopping experience.

What Will Happen If We Do Nothing

Birmingham loses the competitive edge to Somerset, and other downtowns and shopping centers who are competing for customers. We will continue to have events and activities that are fragmented and/or inconsistent with a common message.

Potential Positive Impact If Goal Is Met

Increased visibility for Birmingham BSD, measured through customer surveys.

1. Consistent look and feel across all advertising platforms.
2. Increased traffic to BSD website, and social media pages.
3. Positive feedback from merchants.
4. "Top of mind awareness".
5. Alignment of activities and events with the common brand

Champions

Cheryl Daskas

Committee: Marketing Committee

Objectives

1. Conduct research, and branding exercise, utilizing outside resources.
2. Achieve consistency of message and look across all platforms.
3. Target younger demographic, outside of traditional market area.
4. Evaluate current activities (events, flowers, signage, etc.) for consistency with the brand and align accordingly.
5. Apply the brand to the south end and triangle districts

Suggested Tactics

1. Create RFP for BSD Branding
2. Engage winning agency in group branding exercise with stakeholders
 - a. Include Board Members, Staff and Committee Members
3. Review/accept proposed materials
4. Implement and monitor new branding across all marketing platforms

Goal 3: Aggressively advocate for our constituents regarding parking, traffic and construction/ infrastructure issues. Inform through communication and participation in the process. Further, to confirm our commitment to being a part of the solution.

The Opportunity

Parking is a critical issue facing the shopping district, with the influx of new workers and a current parking system that appears to be over-capacity. The actions of the City to increase capacity and efficiency of the system over the next 6 - 48 months will be important for the current time and into the future. Walkability is a key to Birmingham's success as a retail district, so traffic must be carefully considered as well.

There is opportunity to work with developers to become part of the solution for parking.

Potential Threats/Obstacles

The major threat to this goal is delay. Steps must be taken expediently, before the lack of capacity begins to negatively impact the Birmingham "experience", the financial strength of our local enterprises and business retention.

What Will Happen If Nothing Is Done

Birmingham could gain a reputation for being inconvenient and unfriendly to patrons and businesses.

What Will Happen If Goal Is Met

The measures of success may include the following:

1. Urgency and awareness regarding these issues will increase
2. The BSD is part of the process in developing innovative, common sense solutions to the parking shortage.
3. Business concerns are heard by the City, and appropriate measures are taken to respond to the concerns.
4. Strategies and long term plans are put in place to help minimize these acute shortfalls in the future.

Champions

Steve Quintal

Doug Fehan

Joe Valentine

Committee: Maintenance and Executive Committees

Objectives:

1. Communicate with City and businesses.
2. Identify short term strategies for businesses and property owners and communicate them accordingly.
3. Participate and advocate during the planning process.
4. Encourage the city to explore public/private partnerships, especially related to parking expansion.
5. Keep the heat on.

Suggested Tactics:

1. Receive regular updates from City staff regarding current and future parking plans.
2. Work with BSD and City staff to coordinate communication to all businesses regarding parking.
3. Develop positions on key issues and communicate those through appropriate channels.
 - a. Attend meetings
 - b. Draft papers and documents in support of key issues

Goal 4: Become thought leaders and change agents for the businesses in the Birmingham Shopping District. Provide leadership in identifying relevant emerging trends and data, providing resources and education to address these issues, and support their integration into the business culture.

The Opportunity

The retail and small business environment is changing dramatically. Retailers especially must have the latest marketing and business planning tools to thrive in the age of online retail. We have the opportunity to utilize resources to help advance the BSD and our member businesses through research, information sharing, and education of relevant topics. Providing leadership and education of key issues for small businesses will show the value of the BSD and will help to improve the business climate within the district.

Potential Threats/Obstacles

Comfort with the status quo is a threat. Lack of will to implement new ideas, and general apathy on the part of the BSD and member businesses are obstacles which must be overcome.

What Will Happen If We Do Nothing

Birmingham will lose its edge as a shopping destination, and will fall behind competing shopping venues. Our retail businesses risk failure as a business enterprise.

What Will Happen If the Goal Is Met

Enhanced data, and educational programming for member businesses will keep us on the forefront as a shopping destination. This will lead to increased perceived value of BSD membership and long term success of members and of the BSD as an organization.

Champion

BSD Director
Executive Committee

Objectives

1. Continue to review trends in retail, service and small businesses.
2. Encourage Board discussion on important issues in the industry.
3. Become a clearing house for new innovative ideas, education and resources through a variety of channels to member businesses through publications, online resources, webinars, blogs and meetings
4. Evaluate and implement models for successful downtown shopping districts, such as the Main Street approach.
5. Implement innovative incentives and enticements for shoppers such as personal shoppers, concierge services, loyalty and gift card programs.
6. Be the catalyst for engaging the city and other stakeholders in formal discussions around specific concerns raised by BSD constituents.
 - a. Density – the need for more people living downtown and patronizing city businesses. Engage in efforts to attract millennials and young professionals, including removing barriers to more affordable residential properties.
 - b. Retail mix – national versus local; restaurants versus retail; 1st floor office versus retail; types of retail and restaurants.
 - c. Alternative dining options – type and cost, especially at lunch to support increase in office workers.

Recommended Quick Actions/ "Low Hanging Fruit"

Communications:

- Close the loop with all survey/ interview respondents.
 - Property owners – be a key source of information for them; build relationships with new owners/ developers
 - Reach out in person
 - Share market information
 - Address questions regarding snow shoveling
 - Share marketing, parking and construction updates
 - Clarify the tenant recruitment program
 - Merchants/Retailers
 - What you learned in the surveys
 - Parking construction updates
 - Note: e-mail works well with this group
 - Office Workers/ Employees
 - Survey highlights
 - With new contact information, share events, activities, etc. in town
- Develop a communications plan/ structure to assure on-going two-way connections with these groups. Communicate with the WIIFM (what's in it for me) in mind for each audience.

Marketing:

- Work with south-end and triangle merchants to market them using the All In Birmingham brand.
- Target office workers (large untapped market).
 - Email connection and ask to "post" in office
 - Market promotions, events, special activities
 - Promote lunch options i.e. "Lunch under \$10 in 45 minutes or less" locations (ask restaurants to support this, do call ahead, etc.)
 - Promote holiday shopping in Birmingham to this group with ideas and locations i.e. "Shopping for Mom? Try..."

**Birmingham Shopping District
Strategic Plan Update 2016
Commercial Property Owner Interview Results – Condensed
Seven Respondents (Five phone, one in-person interview, one e-mail response)**

Current market information:

OWNER	APPROX TOTAL SQ. FOOTAGE	TYPE AND FOOTAGE	OCCUPANCY RATE	ASKING RATE	CHANGE FROM LAST YEAR
A	15,000	Retail: 7,000	100%	\$35 3N	Flat over 3 yrs./ ~2% increase
		Office: 8,000	100%	\$28 gross + utilities	
B	60,000	Retail: 8,000	100%	\$40 net	Increased; market is up
		Residntl: 35,000	Under constr. 40% pre-sold		
		Bal: common and parking			
C	25,000	Retail: 19,000	100%	\$28 3N	Flat; same tenants for 20 yrs.
		Office: 6000	100%	Own office	
D	95,000	Retail: 47,500	85-90%	\$18.50 - \$24.50 depending on floor	Going up because of improvements/ updates
		Office: 47,500	50-55%	\$26.50 - \$30.50	
		Residntl: ?	100%		
E	60 – 70,000	Retail: 50%	75%	\$28 - \$45	About the same
		Office: 50%	75%	\$20 - \$30	
F	7,500	Retail: 5,900	100%	Nothing open Declined \$\$	Flat
		Office: 1,600	100%		
G	40,000	Retail: 50%	100%	Full – average price \$35	Same
		Office: 50%	100%		

Specific input regarding BSD:

1. How has the Shopping District assisted you as a commercial property owner in Birmingham?

- a. Not much, not sure, don't see them etc. (stated 5 times) – sample comments: "They should get out and see what's going on more." "They are an expensive thing to have."

- b. Snow gets shoveled and city looks good. Assistance with putting up our Christmas wreaths. Like the flowers, decorations, etc. and anything they can do to help the tenants. Sample comments: "Love the lights, flowers, making the district look good."
- c. Valet parking has helped
- d. Marketing: "Marketing is always a help." "They have highlighted some of our commercial tenants"
- e. John's support. Sample comments: "I know John and can call him as a resource. "I appreciate the help he has given me."
- f. Specific issues or comments:
 - i. The things they do don't help us. I.e. Farmer's Market and art fairs, help the vendors but don't do anything to drive retail traffic downtown. We pay the tax – they (the vendors) get the benefit. I appreciate them sharing our listings but not sure that any serious buyer/renter goes to those
 - ii. I want John to come see what we are trying to make happen on the south end.
 - iii. I don't understand the broker/Julie Fielder situation. Thought it was a service – wanted a commission. This was not clear/ would like clarification on this arrangement.
 - iv. Downtown is well maintained. Not sure we get holiday decorations (may be too far south)

2. What are you hearing from your tenants about services or programs that would support their success?

- a. Parking (multiple responses):
 - i. Parking is always an issue. Valet has helped. Need to market the fact that valet is there, pay by phone, and other ways it is getting better. Tell them how it is better, break the perception because that is still an issue. Put it in the paper.
 - ii. Don't like valet – hurts the person just coming in for a coffee or a cupcake; too many metered spots "covered"/ held for valet.
 - iii. Parking is a continuing issue; need to figure out more ways to adequately park the city.
- b. Driving traffic downtown (multiple responses):
 - i. Need help to drive traffic downtown.
 - ii. We are not sure of the effect of the various events on our commercial tenants.
 - iii. Add more music festivals and events that will get people to come to the city.
- c. Marketing (multiple responses):
 - i. Could use on-going help with marketing. We especially need help for retailers east of Old Woodward. It is personally upsetting to me when my retailers don't do well. I care. I want to help them succeed so the city succeeds. Then I succeed.
 - ii. New tenants/ retail business should be announced, supported by press releases, announcements, etc. Let people know they are here, drive business to them, help market them.

- iii. South end - Not "normal" retail – all lifestyle, so may not be getting their "bang for the buck" from BSD. They need support in marketing themselves as a group i.e. "Lifestyle Center of Birmingham". Help them brand and market themselves that way.
- iv. Get the word out that we have parking on the south end, for retail and the restaurants.
- v. Market harder to get people to come to the city.
- d. General comments:
 - i. They don't like the charge – I only pass on part of it but it is an issue for them.
 - ii. People don't come to their locations because of anything the BSD does.

3. Do you own commercial properties outside of Birmingham? How do services compare?

- a. No (3). Was Detroit. Services are better here – poor in Detroit
- b. Yes – Royal Oak, Troy, Rochester, Oxford, Waterford, Petoskey... Way better. This is upper end. City is clean, flowers look good, fun events. It's a "good city to be in". Occupancy here is higher.
- c. Yes – all over SE Michigan. Don't see much difference. These days most have farmer's markets, events, etc. Birmingham is pretty much in line with others. All run pretty much the same – you pay your taxes, you operate your business and the city covers basic services. Not much to differentiate Birmingham, maybe a little nicer looking.
- d. Yes – Detroit/Eastern Market. Very few services in the city other than new sidewalks at Eastern Market. This is much better.
- e. Yes – Ann Arbor, Troy, Auburn Hills. Not sure how services compare – not directly involved in the management of those properties

4. In your opinion, what could the BSD do better?

- a. Parking:
 - i. Continues to be a significant issue – stay on it, improve it, add more.
 - ii. Market the changes we've made regarding access to parking.
 - iii. Promote better use of the structures. Get office workers and business owners to park at the top, leave lower spaces for retail.
 - iv. Put valet parking right near the restaurants.
 - v. There is demand for offices space in Birmingham that we can't accommodate because of parking. Should be able to attract those tenants but the parking is a barrier economically.
 - vi. Valet needs to be modified. Maybe limit it to weekends and holiday time. Takes away from local people coming in and out. Monitor it to see if it really gets used as planned. Plus it's too expensive.
- b. Communications
 - i. Inquire of our individual tenants on their view of your services and programs, since they are the direct beneficiaries. Provide us, the owner and management team,

with a list of those services. Often, we do not know about them until we see a publication or hear of an event coming.

- ii. Clarify who does what in sidewalk shoveling. Where are the boundaries to what they do and we do? Communicate that before winter.
- iii. Reach out to us more frequently.
- iv. Clarify the broker issues. Explain more how this works.

c. Help with City Regulations and Zoning

- i. Offer a more streamlined process for our commercial tenants in acquiring renovation permits. The long delays, in the past, have been detrimental to their businesses (and, ultimately, to us). Consider a designated engineer.
- ii. Help us with zoning and regulations. If restrictions would allow for it the developers would pay for more structures as part of their development.
- iii. Restricting heights and requiring parking/rules keep units unaffordable.
- iv. Help stop Birmingham from turning into a food court. It's way overdone. Too many restaurants, "Bistro" people push the limits, take over the sidewalks.
- v. Biggest help we need on the south end is with city zoning. Need help on getting buildings conforming. Support for the bridge would get access to land that can help make housing affordable.
- vi. We are an urban area and need to compete that way. Let the market dictate the parking issues. Let the developer take that risk; it's not the city's business.

d. Support increased density and outreach to younger people

- i. Advocate for residential affordability. "Empty nesters in \$2 million condos don't really help the retailers and restaurants." Need more density.
- ii. Make it easier/lighten up on the rules especially ones that will allow for more apartments/ more affordable apartments. I.e. Why is the city requiring on-site parking/ parking requirements? Not their business. People choose an apartment knowing the parking situation. Tenants can use structures or may not have a car. That's why they wanted a walkable area. City rules are hurting our getting more density.
- iii. Add more residential. Help address some of the zoning and restrictions that keep us from having more density.
- iv. Have some areas where the restrictions are modified. I.E. If you allow a 10 story building the developer can afford to put three stories as parking and the rest office or residential. Can't afford that in 3 stories.
- v. Would love the diversity that would come from supporting more affordable housing (probably in older buildings) but current cost of real estate means that only the 1% of the 1% can afford to live in a new development. Developers can't make money in the <\$2 million range. I would support efforts but it realistically won't happen.
- vi. Support creativity – help us find ways to make creative and unique use of limited square footage.

- e. Marketing
 - i. Get more creative in finding ways to get people into the city.
 - ii. Market the city and the availability of parking.
 - iii. One suggestion would be to offer discounts / coupons for our residents, as indirect “paying members” of the Birmingham Shopping District, to incentivize them to attend the various events.
 - iv. Don’t bother with property tours – they don’t help fill vacant space.
 - v. Promote our retailers; especially support new businesses who have come here.

5. General Comments/ Suggestions:

- a. Find out what the city is doing with the money they make on parking. Does it go back into downtown or elsewhere? We “pay” for it downtown by dealing with the parking challenges – the net revenue (Interviewee believed it was more that \$2 million net per year) should go back into downtown services. Also, why is parking so expensive? Are we driving shoppers away?
- b. Retail is inconsistent. Help people be successful/ stay longer. Get more viable retail and less restaurants. Rents are a challenge and BSD adds to the cost.
- c. Be more proactive.
- d. Help with the construction issues. Get them to consider the retailers when they plan the construction. Make it easier to get around them.
- e. Stop trying to turn Maple and Old Woodward into anything other than what it is.
- f. Meet some time other than 7:00pm. Once we’re home we don’t want to go back out.
- g. Support the south end being a dramatic and notable “entry” to the city.

6. If the BSD could do one thing to help you meet your business goals, what would it be?

- a. Parking is most critical issue on many levels:
 - i. Improve parking. Convince the city to build a new parking structure.
 - ii. Work to get a few more parking structures. Work with developers so we can afford to put them in ourselves. Raise the height level so we can afford to do it.
 - iii. Help get relief on number of parking places per unit – not the city’s business. Let us take that risk. These rules limit what we can build and afford to charge.
 - iv. Communicate the long term parking plan in an easily understandable way so that I can communicate it to my current and potential tenants and so I can plan better myself.
- b. Prohibit all deliveries by big trucks, particularly to restaurants, after 9:00 AM daily.
- c. Drive outsiders to shop downtown; get people here! Use parking money to help make that happen.
- d. Keep in touch with the people who pay you. Listen, pay attention to what is shared and act on it.
- e. Work on issues to allow more residential density and affordability.
- f. Really advocate for more density of housing and more affordable housing.

- g. Millennials want urban development, walkable streets, etc. They also want affordable housing and smaller units. Million dollar condos don't bring density. We want to encourage higher density to get more traffic to all of the businesses in town. Remove the barriers to doing that.
- h. This is a really desirable place to be. That's why we are here. Keep it that way.

Birmingham Shopping District
Board of Directors and Key Stakeholder SWOT Input Full Compilation
(11 responses as of 11/20/16 – 6 Board; 5 Staff/City)
November 2016

1. What do you consider to be the BSD's most important strengths? What does the organization do best?

- Overall programing and direction for the Business District...takes a long term approach. Tremendous organizational philosophy and implementation.
- Solid Board: Involved, good participation in Board Committees, mutual respect and listen to each other's opinions. Great balance of good thinkers from property owners, business owners and residents. Strong committee structure. Respected. Input valued by elected officials...opinions solicited.
- John Heiney and his staff:well regarded in community & city administration; high achieving; great rapport with community organizations; high commitment; very efficient. When an item comes to the Board, it is well-conceived and already vetted. This helps the Board feel confident in approving projects and overall direction. Assists with any issues a member may have.
- Financial management and capacity.
- Focus is doing what is in the best interest of the business district, however recognize the need be pragmatic and take into consideration of other community needs. Helping Birmingham merchants succeed in the community.
- Energy and ambition to complete the mission.
- Work to promote a unique experience for customers when wanting to shop or go out for a meal.
- Communication to members.
- Marketing and promotion of downtown. Promoting the stores/restaurants to customers through events such as Restaurant Week, Small Business Saturday, Day on the Town and Shop Pink IN Birmingham to show merchants that the BSD is accomplishing creative ways to help their business.
- Special events. From marketing, planning, coordinating and drawing crowds to town, our events make us shine; not just the BSD, but the entire City.
- Excellent reputation in the community.
- Our ability to adapt to changing trends when the times change.
- Maintaining a very attractive environment, very pleasing to the eye.
- Bridging the gap between residents and businesses.

2. What are the weaknesses? Where do you/they struggle?

- Inability to secure more participation from constituents in programs. Ability to attract new gifted and meaningful talent/members. A disengaged membership/ lack of participation by membership. Hard to get solid volunteers.
- Lack of a succession plan for Board leadership.
- Need to re-evaluate the Tenant Recruitment program. There are some negative feelings by broker and property owner community.
- Subconscious reluctance to blow our own horn...humility is certainly good in reasonable doses, but we need to get proper credit for what we do. Public awareness could assist us in attracting more talent.

- Need to work to better identify available properties and help bring in businesses, especially retail into town.
 - Diversify the Birmingham magazine so that each business over a designated time period has an article written about them. Thus, supporting all the businesses in town, not just a limited few.
 - Inconsistent Board attendance at BSD-sponsored events, and perception of some merchants that Board does not visit merchants and retailers. Perceived sometimes as "Ivory Tower" leadership.
 - Limited staffing / part time staff can be challenging during peak event seasons because consistency is lacking internally.
 - Soliciting input from merchants *before* an event. Need their perspective earlier in the process.
 - Parking for retail shoppers.
 - Too many office employees.
 - Need to attract more software clothing.
 - Because we have independent and corporate entities it is difficult to have consistency, i.e. hours of operation.
 - We need a "balance" with regards to the mix of businesses and mix of restaurant types.
3. What opportunities in the external environment do you see for the BSD? What is happening that could create an opportunity that the organization could take advantage of?
- Continue to expand marketing through social media and web site work. Capitalize on all media opportunities – social and otherwise.
 - Reinforce value of BSD to the members with innovative programs associated with the road construction.
 - Adversity is simply opportunity dressed a little differently. The reconstruction of Maple and Old Woodward is a terrific opportunity for the BSD to shine. Our creativity, planning and implementation of ideas to minimize the angst and economic impact upon the merchants will garner the BSD the respect and credit it so richly deserves. The upcoming construction on Woodward will actually give the BSD a good chance to get more merchants together, like they did on Hamilton.
 - Because of the growth in the outdoor shopping experience throughout the area, we need to take the opportunity of the Old Woodward re-development to incorporate a central "wow factor" that sets Birmingham apart from the others.
 - Commercial investment in Birmingham is currently at an all-time high. This equates to hundreds of new employees working downtown, and new space for retailers and other businesses. The opportunity is to continue to attract strong businesses, and to market to the ever-expanding group of downtown employees.
 - A renewed interest in metro Detroit by new businesses that didn't exist previously.
 - Struggles by malls in general to keep viable.
 - Outdoor malls are increasing in popularity. We are already walkable, we just need to spread the word so those who are unfamiliar with Birmingham will select us for a day of shopping instead of indoor malls such as Somerset.
 - Take advantage of the many employees in town. People who work in town are more likely to be customers. Listen to what they want and market to them.
 - Having our downtown keep ahead of trends; knowing what the consumer wants as things have a tendency to change very quickly.
 - "Shop Local" message and trend.

4. What threats do you see? What trends or situations are you observing that could threaten or limit the organization's success?
- New property owners/ landlords not committed to "community view" and more to maximize their own investments i.e. selling first floor condo to office users.
 - City policies/ordnances that don't reflect commitment to maintain the retail sector, i.e. first floor red line retail and Bistro licenses in core downtown area.
 - Trend to high end housing, restaurants & retail and lose the appeal across diverse socio-economic community....become only affluent area.
 - Construction. Maple and Woodward reconstruction. Upcoming major multi-year infrastructure projects could create business turnover and disrupt successful events and activities.
 - The increasing trend toward on-line shopping. Internet remains the "evil empire" threatening the entire street-marketing concept. Results in changes to downtown tenant composition. We need ways to counter this.
 - The lack of retail businesses within town. Too many nationals.
 - The lack of a sports restaurant or more family style restaurants. As a result of both of these, we lose customers to Rochester and Plymouth.
 - Parking! Perceived parking shortage as a result of commercial growth has been a major talking point for businesses since 2014. This issue can hinder shoppers to come to town. Many other close cities have less expensive parking and malls are free.
 - Targeting same markets rather than reaching new markets and expanding the customer base.
 - The "Shop Local" message is good but not strong enough. If and when Michigan consumers realize the economic impact their \$\$\$ spent in Michigan make, everyone will benefit.
5. What in your opinion are the three most critical issues facing the BSD in the next three years? Do you see longer term issues we should be aware of or consider in our planning?
- Retail mix is critical. Mix of locals vs national retailers, and retailers vs restaurants and retail vs office in first floor spaces. Maintaining viable retail district in a balanced way with food and services. More variety in stores and restaurants that are more affordable to various social groups. Many millennials/young professionals want to shop in Birmingham but only find a few places that they can make their purchases. Lack of affordable dining options for local employees' lunch breaks.
 - Parking. Address perception/reality that parking is difficult. Need innovative approaches. Addressing the perceived parking shortage effectively, and changing consumer and business-owner perceptions about lack of parking. Critical to remain actively engaged and advocating for businesses as major decisions are made.
 - Managing increased office growth and related parking demands.
 - Continue to be the preferred place to visit for retail, service and food and beverage over the continuing and better competition from other downtowns and shopping centers. Setting Birmingham apart from new outdoor shopping environments. Competing shopping opportunities – other downtowns & indoor malls.

- Construction. Maintaining a strong customer base through the Old Woodward infrastructure changes. Major road infrastructure projects over the next five years that will reduce business, increase disruption and increase costs to property owners and business owners.
- Internet. Responding to increasing trend for on-line shopping.
- Rising rent and finding businesses that can sustain themselves with the high rental rates. Trend to higher commercial rents which could drive local business owners out. We are already starting to hear stories about this.
- Keeping good occupancy rates/ merchant retention. Nationals make the \$ per square foot go up (versus independents).
- Keeping events fresh and current.
- Increase foot traffic.
- Collaboration. Restaurants need to collaborate with retailers.
- Longer term: Development of Board leadership to survive Board transitions.

6. Are there any additional issues or challenges would you like to see included in our planning discussions?

- No.
- I think we have enough on our plate.
- Succession planning for BSD Board in coming years.
- Membership engagement.
- Good communication among all city departments.
- Need more people living downtown.
- John and his staff do the absolute best with what they have to work with.
- The planning of events in town:
 - Some of the events need to appeal to Millennials and older teens. These groups are our future and they need to be enticed to come to Birmingham.
 - Events need to be planned when they would be most beneficial to the shops.

Birmingham Shopping District
Board of Directors SWOT Input Compilation (Board Only n = 6)
November 2016

1. What do you consider to be the BSD's most important strengths? What does the organization do best?
 - Overall programming and direction for the Business District...take a long term approach.
 - Solid Board...great representation...involved Board. Participation in Board Committees,...mutual respect and listen to each other's opinions.
 - John Heiney and his staff...well regarded in community & city administration.
 - Financial management.
 - Respect and input valued by elected officials...opinions solicited.
 - Focus is doing what is in the best interest of the business district, however recognize the need be pragmatic and take into consideration of other community needs.
 - Tremendous organizational philosophy and implementation.
 - Energy and ambition to complete the mission.
 - Great balance of good thinkers from property owners, business owners and residents.
 - Work to promote a unique experience for customers when wanting to shop or go out for a meal.
 - Our ability to adapt to changing trends when the times change.
 - Maintaining a very attractive environment, very pleasing to the eye.
 - Helping Birmingham merchants succeed in the community.
 - Bridging the gap between residents and businesses.
 - BSD keeps their members informed on events, city regulations.
 - Assists with any "issues" a member may have.
 - Extremely organized with a well-informed, caring staff.
 - John Heiney is an incredible leader moving Birmingham in a positive direction.

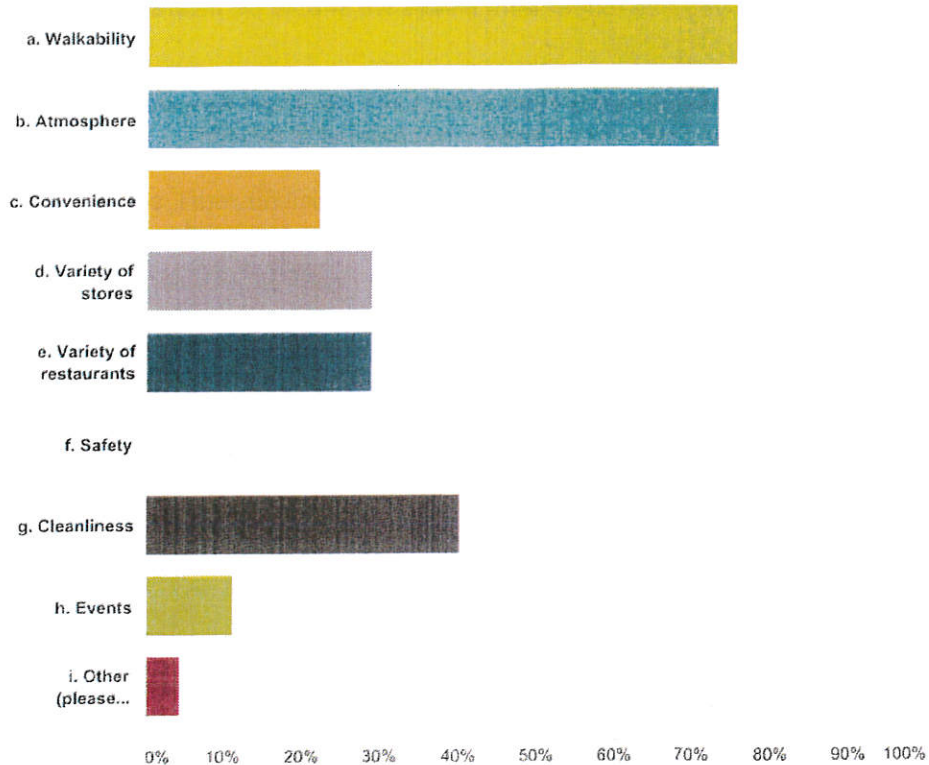
2. What are the weaknesses? Where do you/they struggle?
 - Inability to secure more participation from constituents in programs.
 - Lack of a succession plan for Board leadership.
 - Need to re-evaluate the Tenant Recruitment program.....some negative feelings by broker and property owner community.
 - Ability to attract new gifted and meaningful talent/members.
 - Subconscious reluctance to blow our own horn...humility is certainly good in reasonable doses, but we need to get proper credit for what we do...public awareness could assist us in attracting more talent.
 - Need to work to better identify available properties and help bring in businesses, especially retail into town.
 - Diversify the Birmingham magazine so that each business over a designated time period has an article written about them. Thus, supporting all the businesses in town, not just a limited few.
 - Parking for retail shoppers!
 - Too many office employees.

- Need to attract more software clothing.
 - Because we have independent and corporate entities it is difficult to have consistency, i.e. hours of operation.
 - Birmingham needs a "balance" with regards to the mix of businesses in town.
 - The addition of "Bistro" licenses has allowed too many restaurants to open. We are now seeing restaurants both old and new close. My assumption is there are now too many restaurants and not enough people to support them. Birmingham is not a tourist destination so the restaurants depend on people living in the area. Also the new restaurants opening in Detroit are pulling diners away.
 - Birmingham needs more clothing, shoe, gift and lifestyle shops.
3. What opportunities in the external environment do you see for the BSD? What is happening that could create an opportunity that the organization could take advantage of?
- Continue to expand marketing through social media and web site work.
 - Reinforce value of BSD to the members with innovative programs associated with the road construction.
 - Adversity is simply opportunity dressed a little differently. The reconstruction of Maple and Old Woodward is a terrific opportunity for the BSD to shine. Our creativity, planning and implementation of ideas to minimize the angst and economic impact upon the merchants will garner the BSD the respect and credit it so richly deserves.
 - Because of the growth in the outdoor shopping experience throughout the area, we need to take the opportunity of the Old Woodward re-development to incorporate a central "wow factor" that sets Birmingham apart from the others.
 - Having our downtown keep ahead of trends; knowing what the consumer wants as things have a tendency to change very quickly.
 - The upcoming construction on Woodward will actually give the BSD a good chance to get more merchants together, like they did on Hamilton.
 - Residents in Southeast Michigan need to support the area businesses, whether individually or corporate owned. The "Shop Local" message is good but not strong enough. If and when Michigan consumers realize the economic impact their \$\$\$ spent in Michigan make, everyone will benefit.
4. What threats do you see? What trends or situations are you observing that could threaten or limit the organization's success?
- New property owners not committed to "community view" and more to maximize their own investments.....e.g. selling first floor condo to office users.
 - City policies/ordnances that don't reflect commitment to maintain the retail sector.....e.g. first floor red line retail and Bistro licenses in core downtown area.
 - Trend to internet shopping resulting change to downtown tenant composition.
 - Trend to high end housing, restaurants & retail and lose the appeal across diverse socio-economic community....become only affluent area.
 - Maple and Woodward reconstruction is our GREATEST threat.
 - Landlords may be our greatest future challenge along with addressing the parking issues.
 - The Internet remains as the "evil empire" threatening the entire street-marketing concept...we need to find new roads.
 - The lack of retail businesses within town.
 - The lack of a sports restaurant or more family style restaurants. As a result of both of these, we lose customers to Rochester and Plymouth.

- Internet has a huge impact on shoppers.
 - Construction and too many nationals.
 - The upcoming Birmingham road construction is an issue. Looking at the negative impact the road closures had on Birmingham businesses is frightful. The North Old Woodward reconstruction a few years back almost cost store owners their businesses.
5. What in your opinion are the three most critical issues facing the BSD in the next three years? Do you see longer term issues we should be aware of or consider in our planning?
- Maintaining viable retail district in a balanced way with food and services.
 - Address perception/reality that parking is difficult.....need innovative approaches.
 - Continue to be the preferred place to visit for retail, service and food and beverage over the continuing and better competition from other downtowns and shopping centers.
 - Construction
 - Parking
 - Internet
 - Rising rent and finding businesses that can sustain themselves with the high rental rates.
 - Setting Birmingham apart from new outdoor shopping environments.
 - Maintaining a strong customer base through the Old Woodward infrastructure changes.
 - Internet
 - Somerset adding more stores
 - Increase foot traffic
 - Construction
 - Nationals make the \$ per square foot go up (versus independents).
 - Restaurants need to collaborate with retailers.
 - The closure of West Maple between Cranbrook Road and Southfield Road this past summer had a negative impact on business. One of the shop owners mentioned his August business was down by 50% compared to August 2015. The timing was bad. Construction should have started earlier in the summer when families were on vacation. Construction on Brown during the same time certainly did not help the situation either.
6. Are there any additional issues or challenges would you like to see included in our planning discussions?
- No.
 - I think we have enough on our plate.
 - Need more people living downtown.
 - John and his staff do the absolute best with what they have to work with.
 - The planning of events in town, some successful most not so much. I know it is not easy but some of the events need to appeal to Millennials and older teens. These groups are our future and they need to be enticed to come to Birmingham. Events need to be planned when they would be most beneficial to the shops. The art fairs, why we need two is questionable, should be in July and August when Birmingham needs the foot traffic. Certainly not on Mother's Day weekend or during Back to School and the start of Fall fashion shopping. Birmingham shops/owners and employees are here 365 days a year and should not have to compete against weekend art fairs.

**Q1 What do you like most about managing or owning a business in Birmingham?
 (Select top 3)**

Answered 45 Skipped 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
a. Walkability	75.56%	34
b. Atmosphere	73.33%	33
c. Convenience	22.22%	10
d. Variety of stores	28.89%	13
e. Variety of restaurants	28.89%	13
f. Safety	42.22%	19
g. Cleanliness	40.00%	18
h. Events	11.11%	5
i. Other (please specify)	4.44%	2

Total Respondents: 45

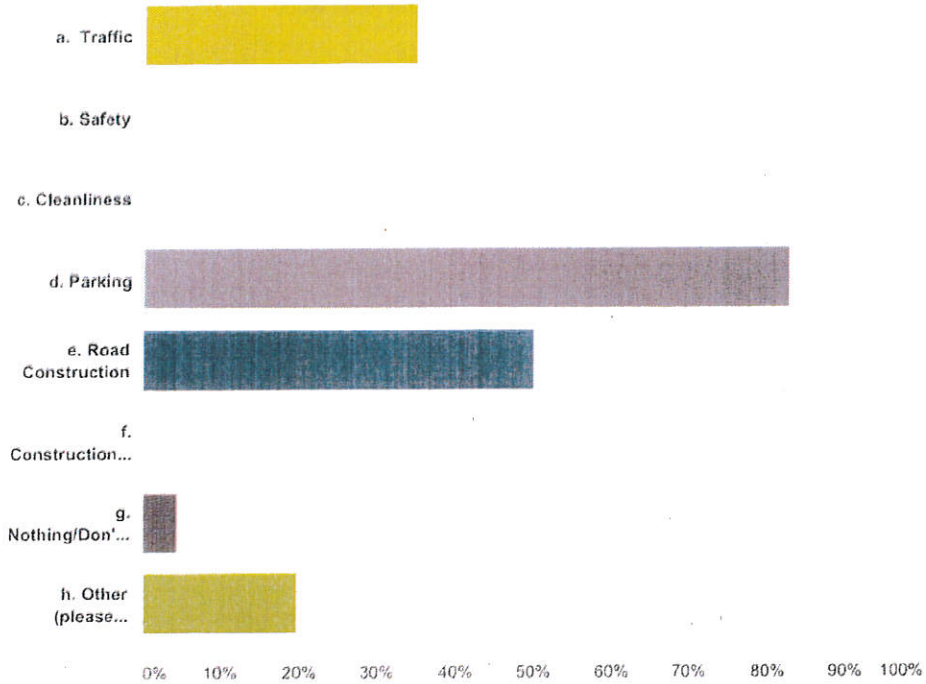
QUESTION 1 COMMENTS (What do you like?)

I like it all! It's a wonderful and well run city! Keep up the good work!
11/1/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Small businesses have the power to transform America. Every day, from street corner to street corner across the United States, small business owners apply their extraordinary potential to spark competition, drive innovation, build communities, and better the quality of life for citizens.

Q2 What do you find challenging about managing or owning a business in Birmingham? (Select top 3)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Traffic	34.78%	16
b. Safety	0.00%	0
c. Cleanliness	0.00%	0
d. Parking	82.61%	38
e. Road Construction	50.00%	23
f. Construction/Building Development	52.17%	24
g. Nothing/Don't Know	4.35%	2
h. Other (please specify)	19.57%	9

Total Respondents: 46

QUESTION 2 COMMENTS (What Do You Find Challenging)

Showing 9 responses

Lack of variety in retailers

11/4/2016 6:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

City admin. people seem to put businesses at the bottom of list for attention except when it comes to collecting taxes

11/2/2016 8:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Parking meters could be more fair with charges. Townsend and Pierce and other meters cost more than on main street.

11/1/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Forced closure during some events

11/1/2016 12:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

the traffic back ups on maple through the intersection of maple and old woodward ave that will continue through the a sequence of changing lights. something needs to be don about it. statin a police car to inforce the lights and traffic to stop at the cross walk for a red light not completely through the intersection

11/1/2016 12:35 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Rent... \$\$\$

11/1/2016 12:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

taxes

11/1/2016 11:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Allow more outdoor seating! It brings customers to Birmingham. Astreins business would benefit from more people in town. Simple economics.

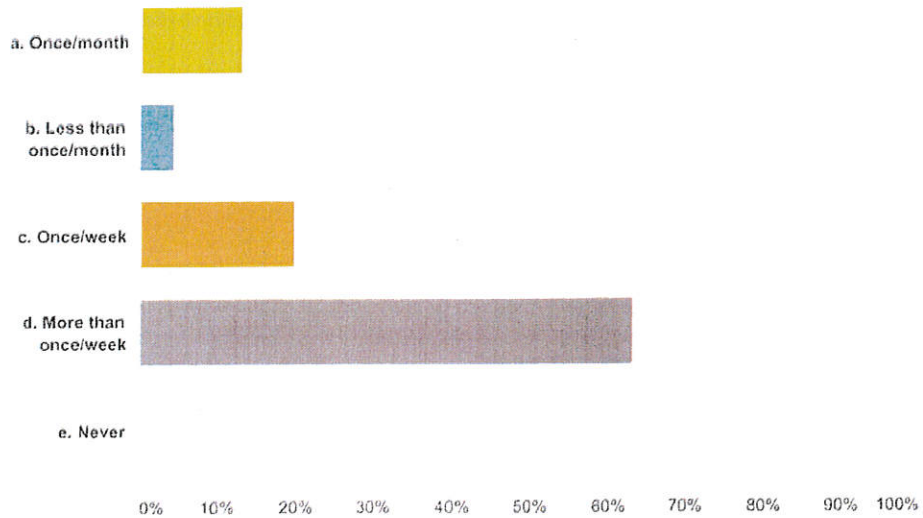
11/1/2016 10:54 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Over-development without concern for parking

11/1/2016 10:12 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q3 How often do you patronize Birmingham restaurants and stores during the work day, i.e. lunch, before or after work?

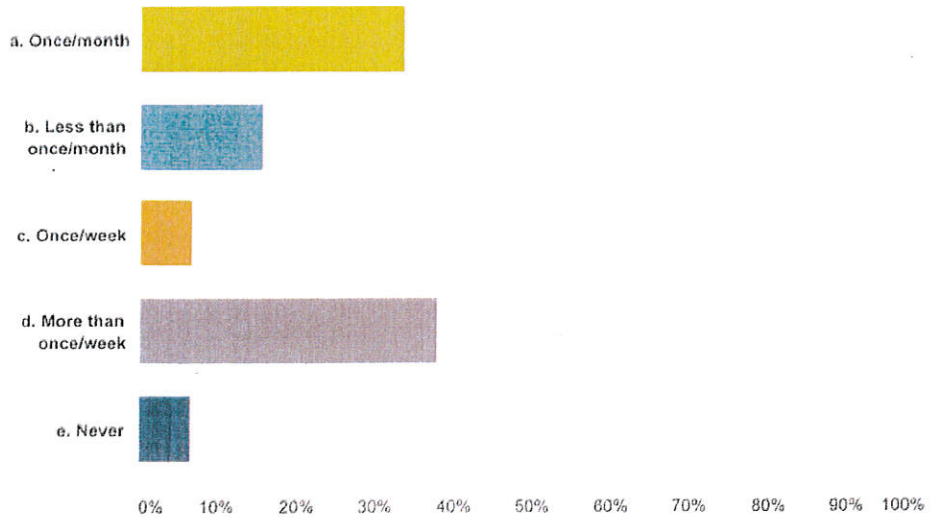
Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Once/month	13.04%	6
b. Less than once/month	4.35%	2
c. Once/week	19.57%	9
d. More than once/week	63.04%	29
e. Never	0.00%	0
Total		46

Q4 How often do you visit downtown Birmingham outside of the work day?

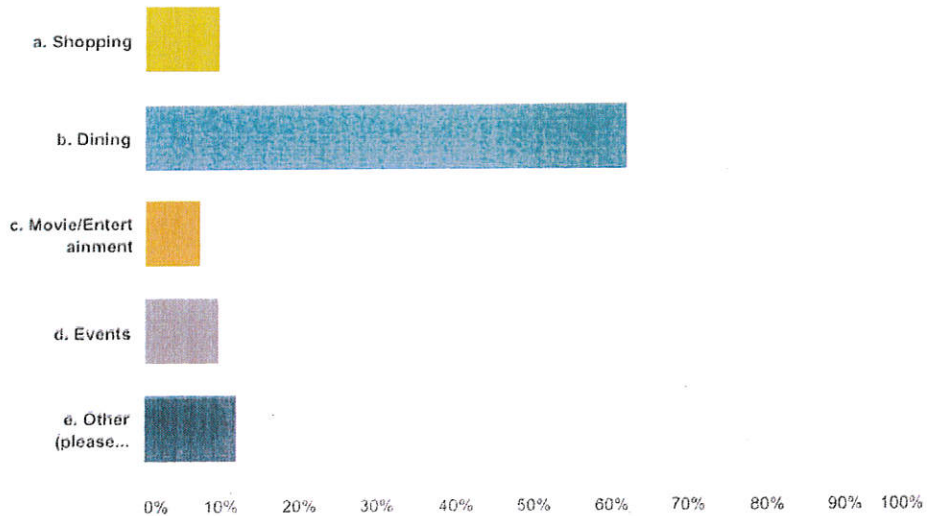
Answered: 45 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Once/month	33.33%	15
b. Less than once/month	15.56%	7
c. Once/week	6.67%	3
d. More than once/week	37.78%	17
e. Never	6.67%	3
Total		45

Q5 Outside of the work day, what is your primary reason for coming to Birmingham?

Answers: 42 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
a. Shopping	9.52%	4
b. Dining	61.90%	26
c. Movie/Entertainment	7.14%	3
d. Events	9.52%	4
e. Other (please specify)	11.90%	5
Total		42

QUESTION 5 COMMENTS (Primary reason for coming other than work)

walking

11/2/2016 10:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

nail services on Sunday

11/1/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Leisure

11/1/2016 12:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Library, movies, dining

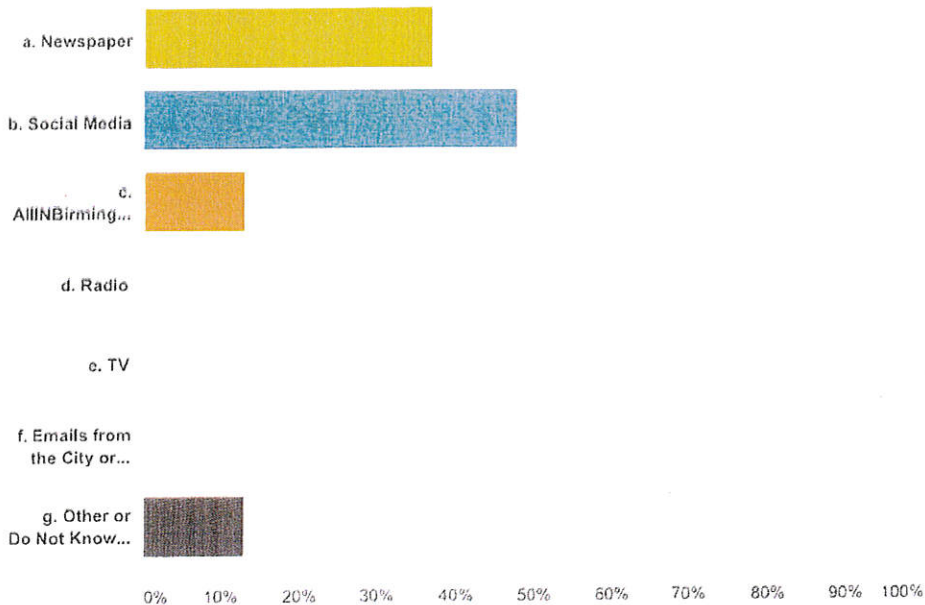
11/1/2016 11:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I like taking walks in area

11/1/2016 10:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q6 How do you learn about events and promotions in Birmingham? (Select top 3)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Newspaper	36.96%	17
b. Social Media	47.83%	22
c. AllINBirmingham.com website	13.04%	6
d. Radio	0.00%	0
e. TV	0.00%	0
f. Emails from the City or Shopping District	76.09%	35
g. Other or Do Not Know (please specify)	13.04%	6

Total Respondents: 46

QUESTION 6 COMMENTS (How Do you Learn about Promotions – “Other”)

Word of mouth

11/4/2016 5:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

local magazines

11/2/2016 10:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The marketing of the city needs to improve

11/1/2016 12:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

word of mouth...

11/1/2016 12:19 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Word of mouth

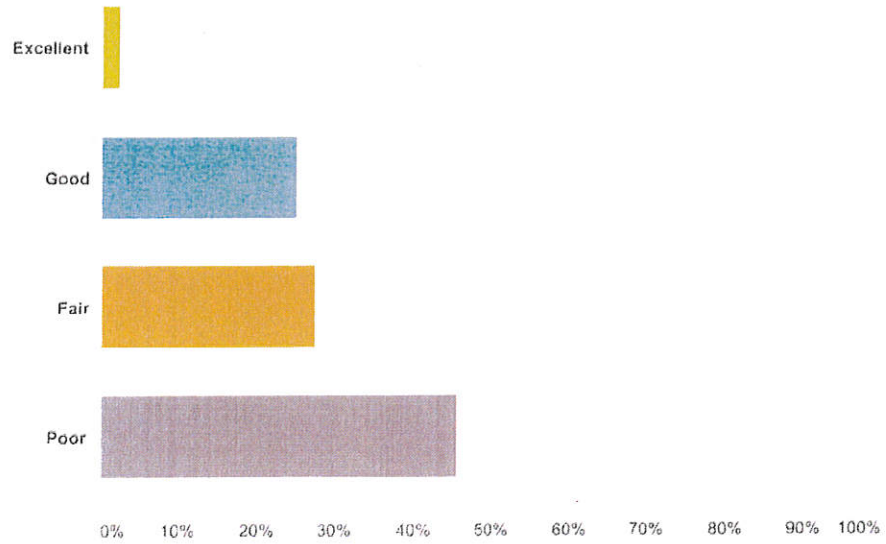
11/1/2016 11:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

word of mouth. Birmingham does a lousy job with their advertising

11/1/2016 11:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q7 Overall, how would you rate your parking experience?

Answers: 44 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	2.27%	1
Good	25.00%	11
Fair	27.27%	12
Poor	45.45%	20
Total		44

QUESTION 7 COMMENTS (How would you Rate Parking?)

Expensive. Had a parking pass for a while and always circled trying to find a spot. The time it takes to be on the waitlist for lots is absurd. Need more free commuter spots/lots.

11/4/2016 5:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

my store is located outside downtown area and parking is not the problem it is there. parking downtown continues to be a problem

11/2/2016 8:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

THE PIERCE AND BROWN LOT NEEDS TO BE DOUBLE IT'S CURRENT SIZE

11/2/2016 12:40 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Extremely difficult mid-day. Our clients complain.

11/2/2016 10:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I find it ridiculous that orange bags are blocking so many spots---let people park for free while work is being done.

11/1/2016 3:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

There is no parking. I have been asking for 5 years what Birmingham is going to do and nothing has happen. Losing business because of it

11/1/2016 3:02 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

I have a Pierce St parking permit so I do not have issues. However, employees should have a discounted rate in the parking structures. \$10 a day is a LOT for employees to pay and as employers we cannot pay for all of their parking.

11/1/2016 1:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

i have my own space

11/1/2016 11:00 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

There is too little parking up here at North Old Woodward at it seems the entire city. Patients complain, employees complain, other business's complain. It is a constant problem and the building that will be going up at the north end will not help matters either

11/1/2016 10:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Mine is good I have a parking pass - but my staff and guests complain

11/1/2016 10:18 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Monday when the salons are closed is the only day during the week when parking is available during the day. I avoid downtown the rest of the daytimes.

11/1/2016 10:12 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Doubling the parking rates and not having permits for years for the business owner is a real challenge and once my lease expires, I will not be renewing. You have no other options for the businesses in regards to parking. Working on it..... what for years!!!!

11/1/2016 10:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Parking can be a challenge in the decks especially after 9:30a.m.

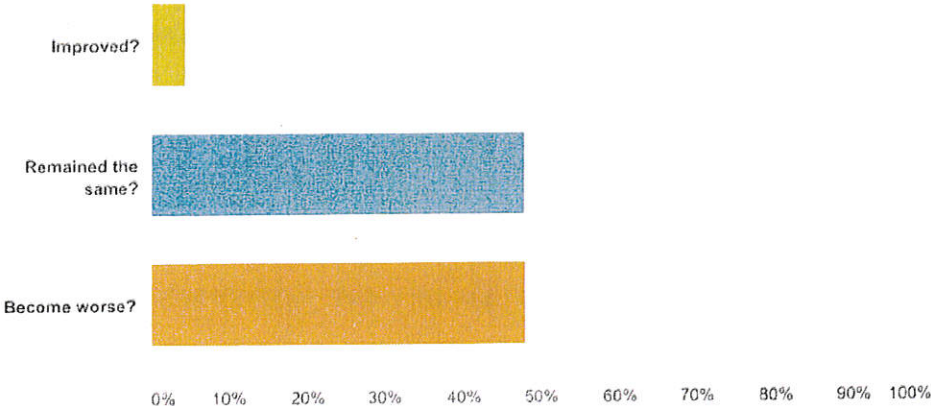
11/1/2016 9:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Our company has been in town for over 12 years we can not get parking passes we have been on a 3 year waiting list.

11/1/2016 9:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q8 Over the past six months, in your opinion, has parking availability in Birmingham ...

Answered: 46 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	
Improved?	4.35%	2
Remained the same?	47.83%	22
Become worse?	47.83%	22
Total		46

QUESTION 8 COMMENTS (Has Parking Improved)

THE PIERCE AND BROWN PARKING LOT NEEDS TO BE DOUBLED ITS CURRENT SIZE

11/2/2016 12:46 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

There are way too many handicap spots and way too many spots blocked in anticipation of work being done.

11/1/2016 3:50 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

customers complain there is no where to park and that is why they don't come to birmingham

11/1/2016 1:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Townsend events/guests take all the parking in the area and leave it difficult for shoppers to park.

11/1/2016 12:55 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Thanks to valet!

11/1/2016 11:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

valet at this point in time is useless

11/1/2016 11:00 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

What is ONE THING that the City/BSD could do to make your time working in or visiting Birmingham more enjoyable?

Improve parking

11/12/2016 10:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

The meter rates (@ .25 per 15 minutes) are excessive. Parking is a definite deterrent.

11/12/2016 10:16 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Improve parking. For many retailers we have part time employees that cannot afford to park in a lot for several hours with the new \$2/hour fee.

11/14/2016 8:20 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

work on a better employee parking system. Be it shuttle, walkway across woodward...

11/15/2016 12:06 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

lower taxes and special charges (eg: water bills) on businesses. Sell one or both of the golf courses; they are used by less than 10% of the residents and the rest of us pay for them. let private enterprise take them over and pay the city a percentage of the profits and reasonable taxes.

11/22/2016 9:31 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

PEOPLE SIT IN THE INTERSECTION OF OLD WOODWARD AND MAPLE BLOCKING TRAFFIC. WHY DON'T THE POLICE KEEP THE INTERSECTIONS CLEAR?

11/22/2016 12:41 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Provide additional parking

11/22/2016 11:17 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Improve parking ASAP

11/22/2016 10:16 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

be able to park and have more small local stores

11/22/2016 11:11 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

remove the pan handlers

11/22/2016 11:53 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Add more parking or add to the parking structures.

11/22/2016 11:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

MONTHLY MEETINGS / HOLIDAY PARTIES FOR BUSINESSES

11/22/2016 11:14 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

better maintain the snow and ice in the alleys behind the shops. However, when we needed alley repair we had IMMEDIATE response and attention which we greatly appreciate!!! thank you! City has an amazing road/bldg team.

11/22/2016 12:13 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Improve the look and feel of the city

11/22/2016 11:54 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

enforce traffic stops at intersections on maple

11/22/2016 11:26 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Less traffic/construction

11/22/2016 11:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

...local bus transportation. ... flower carts at various street corners.maybe even have some food carts. ... create a "farmers market" (which is sooo successful) all year long.

11/22/2016 11:56 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

sometimes it is not easy to park or get around town other than walking

11/22/2016 11:57 PM [View respondent's answers](#)

Better parking. ...trolley service...

11/1/2016 11:29 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Parking

11/1/2016 11:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Make the deliveries of food and other service done after 11 pm on weekdays so traffic isn't tied up.

11/1/2016 11:04 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Add more retail variety.

11/1/2016 10:54 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

make meters longer than one hour. Our clients HATE having to run out to feed the meter.

11/1/2016 10:44 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Increase parking

11/1/2016 10:43 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Offer community classes (exercise and other options) and events during the work week (lunch and after work hours).

11/1/2016 10:38 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Less corporate stores. For things like that I just go to the mall but when coming to Birmingham to shop I'm seeking out independent shops with different items

11/1/2016 10:21 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Improve the parking.

11/1/2016 10:19 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

I would like to see more retailer focused events, things where we can all play together. Whether it's a city wide sale day, or a charity event involving the retailers, that's my one thing I feel I miss not being in a mall.

11/1/2016 10:18 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

play music outside or have more events

11/1/2016 10:12 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

City needs to control development, BSD is doing a great job.

11/1/2016 10:12 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

increase free valet parking downtown.

11/1/2016 10:08 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Build another parking structure. Parking is the number ONE issue for business owner and shoppers. Way too many restaurants too, it is ridiculous.

11/1/2016 10:07 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Shuttles to lots on out skirts of Birmingham but not at employers expense. At what point will the city realize they have a responsibility to support public transportation?

11/1/2016 10:03 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Parking has been the biggest issue we have had over the last 6 years. My staff walks the city every day they love to work in Birmingham. So I would say anything for a lunch hour events would be fun. They also shop often on lunch hours.

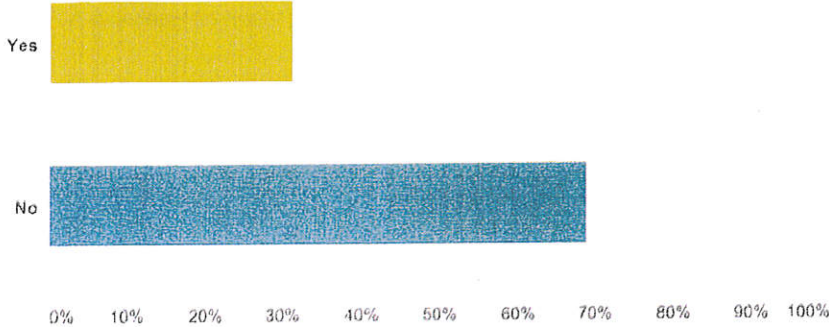
11/1/2016 9:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Include all businesses in Birmingham as equals not just the downtown area as superior.

11/1/2016 9:57 AM [View respondent's answers](#)

Q10 Are you a Birmingham resident?

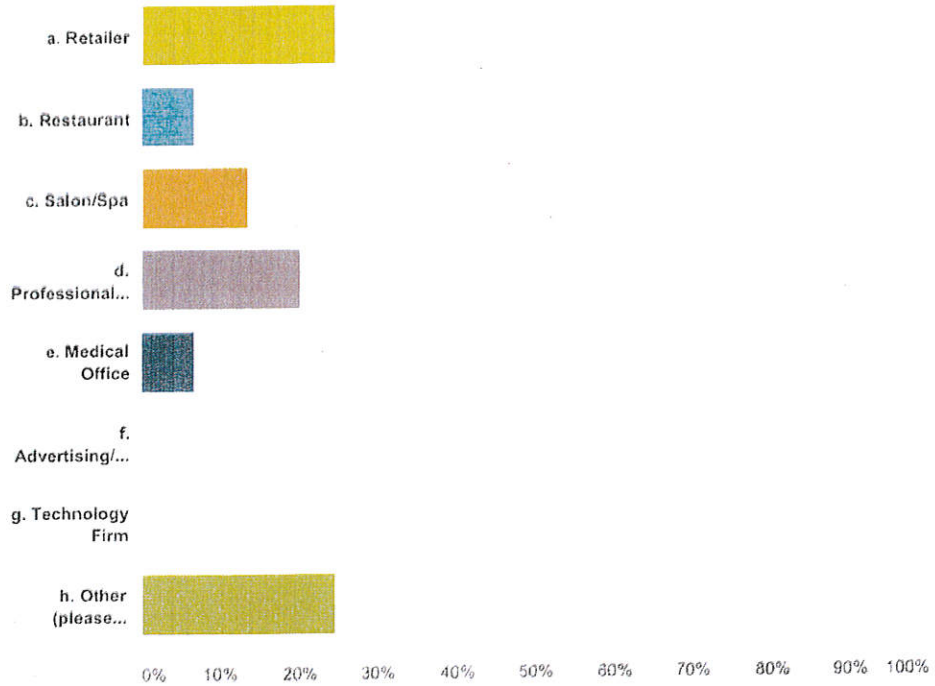
Answers: 15 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	31.11%	14
No	68.89%	31
Total		45

Q11 What type of business do you manage or own in Birmingham?

Answers: 45 Skipped: 3



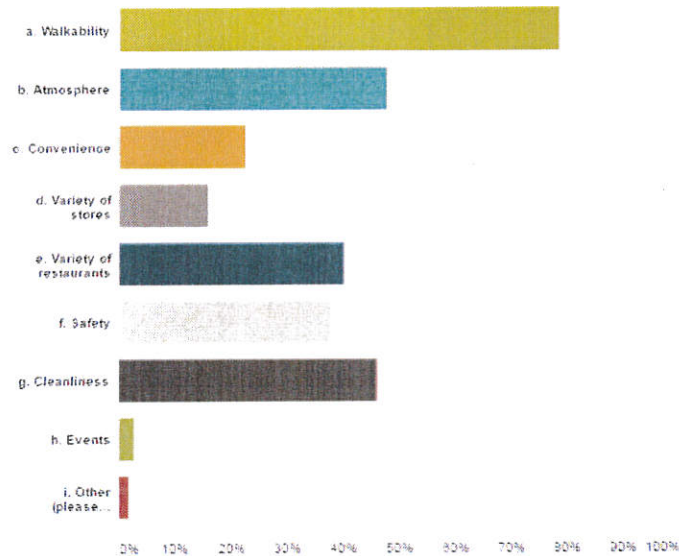
Answer Choices	Responses	
a. Retailer	24.44%	11
b. Restaurant	6.67%	3
c. Salon/Spa	13.33%	6
d. Professional Office	20.00%	9
e. Medical Office	6.67%	3
f. Advertising/Marketing	4.44%	2
g. Technology Firm	0.00%	0
h. Other (please specify)	24.44%	11
Total		45

Birmingham Employee & Office User Survey Analysis

1.

What do you like most about working in Birmingham? (Select top 3)

Answered: 382 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Walkability	78.53%	300
b. Atmosphere	47.91%	183
c. Convenience	22.51%	86
d. Variety of stores	15.97%	61
e. Variety of restaurants	40.31%	154
f. Safety	37.96%	145
g. Cleanliness	46.07%	176
h. Events	2.62%	10
i. Other (please specify)	1.83%	7

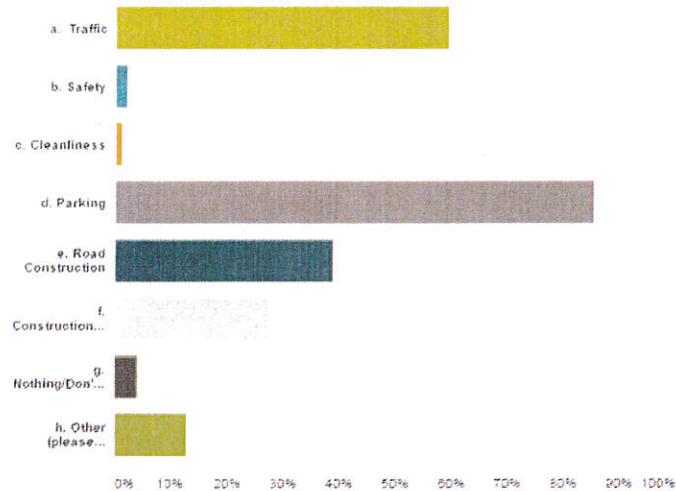
Total Respondents: 382

Birmingham's slogan "a walkable community" hits home for many employees in town. Employees love the convenience, atmosphere, and cleanliness. These responses show that employees may need a different source for Birmingham events or perhaps an incentive to have them join events.

2.

What do you find challenging about working in Birmingham? (Select top 3)

Answered: 381 Skipped: 2



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Traffic	59.32%	226
b. Safety	2.36%	9
c. Cleanliness	1.31%	5
d. Parking	85.30%	325
e. Road Construction	39.11%	149
f. Construction/Building Development	27.56%	105
g. Nothing/Don't Know	4.20%	16
h. Other (please specify)	12.86%	49

Total Respondents: 381

Comments show four categories: Restaurants, city operations, parking, and traffic safety. Employees are concerned that there is a lack of future parking solutions for the city. In general, there is a wide negative response concerning the difficulty and availability for parking in Birmingham.

An issue employees have in common and are very passionate about was the desire for a mix variety of restaurants. Employee responses request a quick lunch option rather than an expensive sit down. One employee's response about this topic was very detailed: "Birmingham doesn't seem to know what it wants to be as a city, but especially a downtown. Virtually all of the chain restaurants have been closed down, but the remaining restaurants are far too expensive to function as quick lunchtime fare. Most of the new people coming to work in this city are in their early to late 20s, but the shops seem mostly targeted at women in their mid 30s and up. Virtually all of the businesses seem to be centered around catering to long-established business firms (lawyers, real estate agencies, architectural firms, etc.) but those industries are not growing at any significant rate."

The comments also show responses that reflect general city functions and maintenance. These were focused on the difficulty of the parking garage transaction kiosk and their complaints about vagrants around town.

Traffic is also rated as a high challenge for employees. Responses include concerns for pedestrians' safety especially around Maple/Old Woodward.

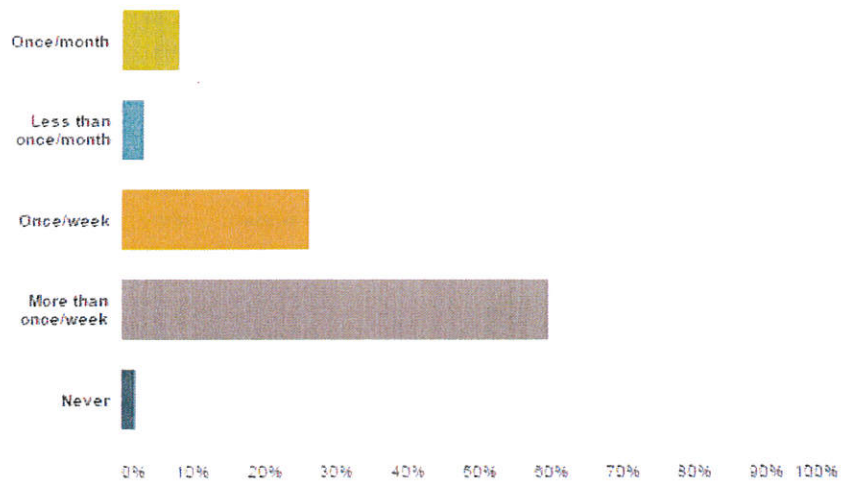
Number of responses per category

Parking: 8
 Restaurants: 22
 Function: 12
 Safety: 7

3.

How often do you patronize Birmingham restaurants and stores during the work day, i.e. lunch, before or after work?

Answered: 383 Skipped: 0

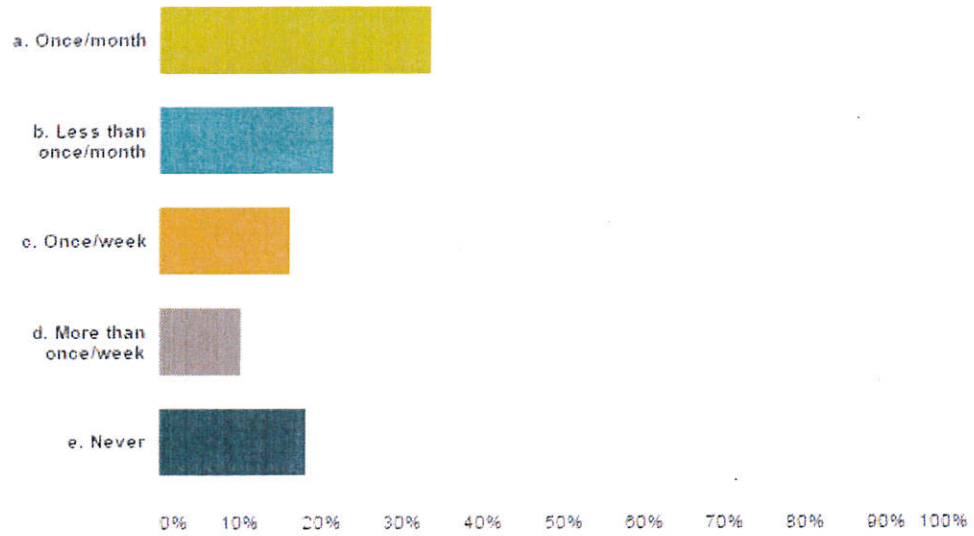


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Once/month	8.09%	31
Less than once/month	3.39%	13
Once/week	26.37%	101
More than once/week	59.79%	229
Never	2.35%	9
Total		383

4.

How often do you visit downtown Birmingham outside of the work day?

Answered: 382 Skipped: 1

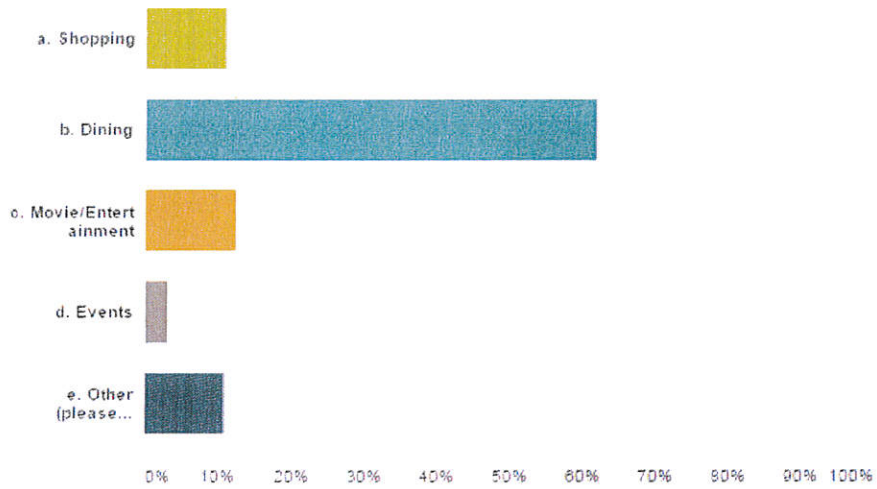


Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Once/month	33.51%	128
b. Less than once/month	21.73%	83
c. Once/week	16.23%	62
d. More than once/week	10.21%	39
e. Never	18.32%	70
Total		382

5.

Outside of the work day, what is your primary reason for coming to Birmingham?

Answered: 368 Skipped: 15



Answer Choices	Responses	Total
a. Shopping	11.14%	41
b. Dining	61.96%	229
c. Movie/Entertainment	12.50%	46
d. Events	3.26%	12
e. Other (please specify)	11.14%	41
Total		368

Other reasons employees to come to Birmingham

Personal (gym, salons, etc.): 10

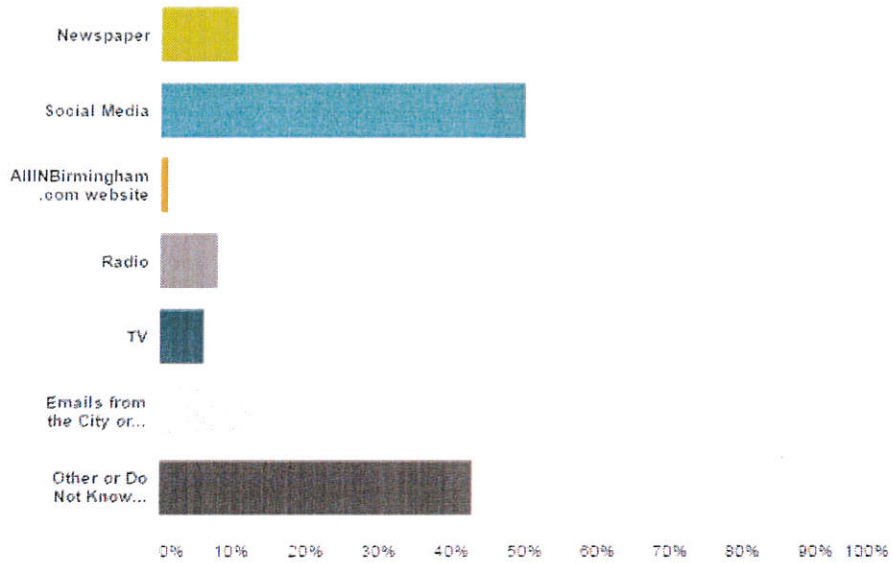
Family & friends: 4

Employees who don't come at all: 24

6.

How do you learn about events and promotions in Birmingham? (Select top 3)

Answered: 369 Skipped: 14



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Newspaper	10.57%	39
Social Media	50.14%	185
AllINBirmingham.com website	1.36%	5
Radio	8.13%	30
TV	6.23%	23
Emails from the City or Shopping District	14.91%	55
Other or Do Not Know (please specify)	43.09%	159

Total Respondents: 369

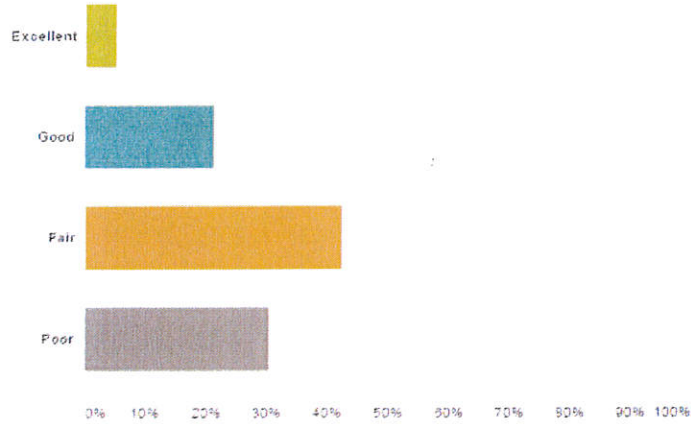
Other responses categories

- Uninformed of events: 71
- Informed from work relations: 40
- Informed by word of mouth: 36
- Informed by local signage: 11

7.

Overall, how would you rate your parking experience?

Answered: 382 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Excellent	5.24%	20
Good	21.47%	82
Fair	42.67%	163
Poor	30.63%	117
Total		382
Comments: 187		

The stories of daily problems employees have with parking for work is very thorough. The main complaints about the parking are that there is simply not enough. Several employees mention walking a long way to their job from where they parked (often in poor weather), long lines as they are exiting the decks, desire for parking lines to be painted at Park Street and disapproval of the parking costs.

Comment categories

Requests for more parking: 83

Complaints about long lines and other functionality issues: 35

Requests for closer parking/elimination of walking to work: 24

Positive comments: 17

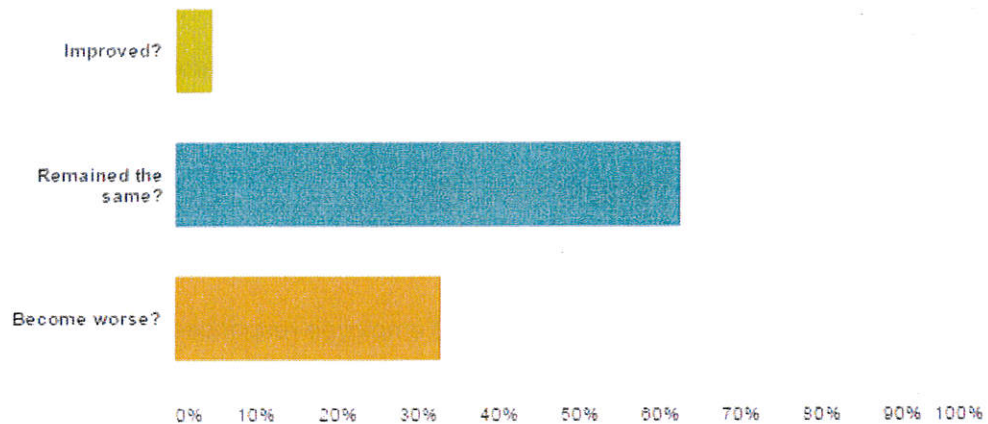
Concerns about parking costs: 5

Parking safety concerns: 2

8.

Over the past six months, in your opinion, has parking availability in Birmingham ...

Answered: 374 Skipped: 9



Answer Choices	Responses	
Improved?	4.55%	17
Remained the same?	62.57%	234
Become worse?	32.89%	123
Total		374
Comments (79)		

Example comments that make up the majority of opinions:

The parking structures are all oversold, and cannot accommodate both those who have passes and those visiting.

Price has increased, so the days I have to use a different garage it is costing me a fortune.

Birmingham continues to add offices and stores but does not introduce additional parking.

Categories within comments

Mentions of parking areas being too full: 39

Complaints of parking closures (handicap spaces, construction): 16

Complaints about parking costs: 5

9. What is ONE THING that the City/BSD could do to make your time working in or visiting Birmingham more enjoyable?

1st Response category: Parking (143 employee responses)

- Employees want to see more parking options, more parking structures, and more efficient decks.
- Responses request employee only parking to ensure spots throughout the day

2nd Response category: Restaurants (40 employee responses)

- Employees want more variety of restaurants
- Requests for in and out places like Subway/Cosi
- More places to drink/nightlife

3rd Response category: Old Woodward/Safety (30 employee responses)

- Employees state unsafe experiences with crossing at Old Woodward/Maple. There are requests for more alerts to drivers and longer cross time.

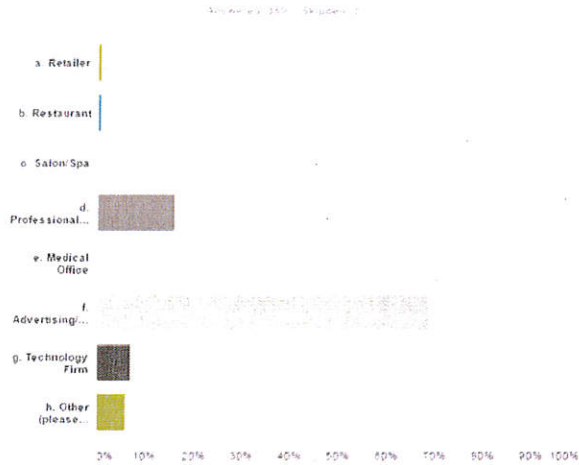
4th Response category: Shopping (17 employee responses)

- Employees are interested in having more variety of stores. Comments were all over from “more chain clothing stores” to “we should only have independent stores” and “want more affordable shops”.

However, 11 employee responses said they wouldn't change a thing!

10.

What type of business do you work for in Birmingham?



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
a. Retailer	0.79%	3
b. Restaurant	0.79%	3
c. Salon/Spa	0.26%	1
d. Professional Office	16.95%	61
e. Medical Office	0.00%	0
f. Advertising/Marketing	68.95%	252
g. Technology Firm	7.11%	27
h. Other (please specify)	6.05%	23
Total		330

Other types of businesses

Hotel: 15

Law Practice: 3

Finance: 3

11. Name of company you work for?

210 responses:

Universal McCann/ IPG Mediabrands: 109

Shift Digital: 61

Clark Hill, PLC: 15

Townsend Hotel: 11

Schechter Wealth: 8

Cadreon: 3

Huge Inc: 2

Alicia Masciulli: 1

12. Are you a Birmingham resident? (349 responses)
>10% are residents and <90% are not residents of Birmingham.
13. May we add your email to receive news from the Shopping District?
32% said yes, 68% said no.

Brief Summary

Employees of Birmingham are overall pleased with the Birmingham community and lively atmosphere. The main source of dissatisfaction comes from issues with parking and traffic, an issue that any populated, successful city will find. Speaking generally from this survey's data, the average Birmingham employee lives outside Birmingham, works in advertising, hears about events through social media, comes into Birmingham for dining opportunities and has difficulty parking in town, but enjoys the walkable community, unless it's walking from parking to work.