

The Village of Endicott

Downtown Revitalization Initiative

Community Survey Summary

June 2022

Prepared by Highland Planning

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OVERVIEW

Background

In May and June 2022, Highland Planning, part of the BFJ Planning Team, administered a survey to gauge community members' perceptions of the community impact of projects proposed as part of the Village of Endicott's Downtown Revitalization Initiative. This survey advances the work of the Local Planning Committee in evaluating potential projects, by identifying perspectives and concerns of community members. This document summarizes the results of the community survey administered as part of the DRI public engagement process.

Key Findings

High-level takeaways from the survey include:

Overall respondents welcomed proposed commercial and retail offerings. Though new builds were welcome, preference was given to projects that would revitalize existing or vacant properties. There remain questions on the best use of public funds for private parties.

Respondents were very much interested in the creative use of public spaces. Safety was a recurring theme as well, with respondents voicing support for police presence or security cameras in public venues.

"Downtown Amenities" projects were received positively. Priority was placed on projects that would have the greatest impact, provide the most jobs, and offer year-round activity.

Respondents generally welcomed an influx of housing, businesses, and community spaces. There was general agreement for the need to utilize existing buildings and to prioritize affordable housing, not low-income housing.

About the Survey

The online questionnaire was hosted on Instant Input and was estimated to take 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey was conducted from May 5 – June 7, 2022, and received 90 responses. The survey was promoted through the DRI website, email blasts and social media posts. While a complete listing of respondent zip codes (self-reported) is included in Appendix A, a summary is included here.

The table below shows the top four zip codes in which the survey respondents reside. A majority (74%) of respondents came from the 13760 zip code, followed by 7% of respondents from the 13850 zip code. Respondents from the 13732 and 13790 zip codes rounded out the third highest amounts at 3% each.

Respondent zip codes	
13760	74%
13850	7%
13732	3%
13790	3%

The survey provided an image and brief description for each of the 24 potential projects identified through the DRI process, and for each project asked respondents two questions:

- Do you think this project would help to revitalize downtown Endicott? (Yes / No / Neutral)
- Do you have other comments about this project? (Open ended)

SURVEY RESULTS

Results of the survey are included below. The results are organized by the community's four stated goals for the Endicott DRI:

- Goal 1: Innovation Economy
- Goal 2: Connectivity and Sense of Place
- Goal 3: Downtown Amenities
- Goal 4: Mixed-Use District

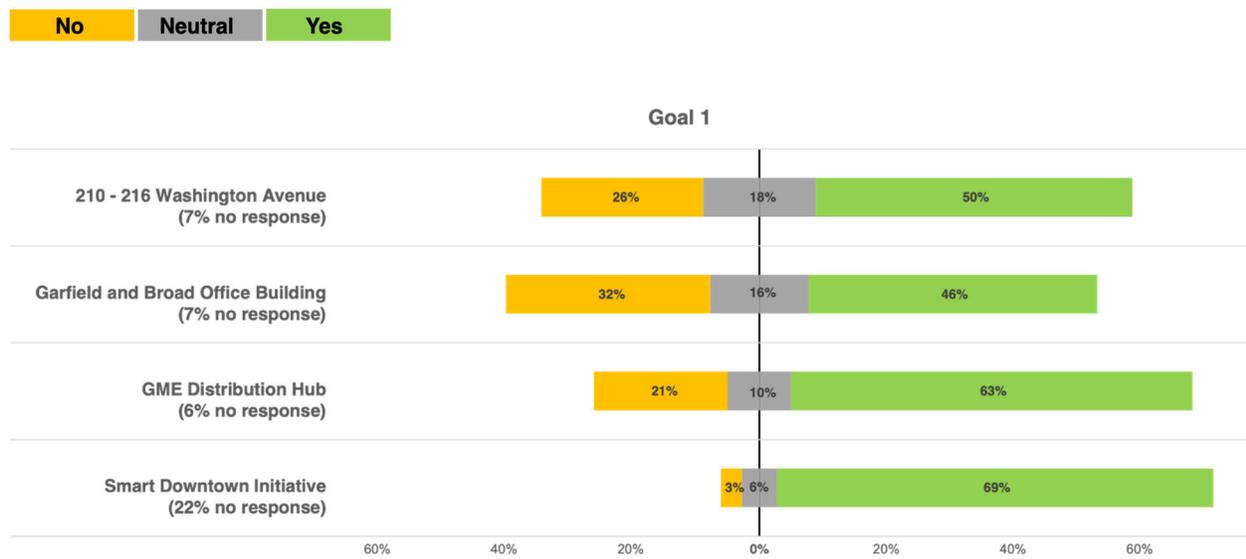
For each goal, responses to closed-ended questions are summarized in a divergent stacked bar chart to allow for comparison across projects, followed by key findings synthesized from the open-ended responses. A table detailing all closed-ended responses is available in Appendix A.

Goal 1: Innovation Economy

Do you think this project would help to revitalize downtown Endicott?

There were four projects included under this goal category, as shown in Figure 1. On the whole, respondents expressed agreement that projects in this category would support downtown revitalization efforts in Endicott. An overwhelming majority (69%) of respondents indicated agreement that the Smart Downtown Initiative would help to revitalize downtown Endicott (it should be noted, however, that 22% of respondents did not provide a response to this question). The GME Distribution Hub project also garnered significant support among a majority of respondents (63%). Responses on the Garfield and Broad Office Building and 210-216 Washington Avenue Projects were split.

Figure 1 Goal 1 Project Responses



Overview of open-ended responses

Overall respondents welcomed the variety of projects that diversified the present mix of commercial and retail offerings. The inclusion of mixed-use type housing with retail was appreciated as affordable housing in the community is vital. And though new builds were welcome, preference was given to projects that revitalize existing/vacant properties. In general, the projects received positive reviews; however there remained questions on the best use of public funds for private businesses.

Open ended responses – Key Comments and Concerns by Project

210 - 216 Washington Avenue

- Concerns about consistent occupancy.
- Architectural style fit with the Avenue.
- Parking concerns; preferred off street or in back.
- Though new construction is welcome, there is mass underutilization of vacant buildings. Concerns on types of tenants.
- Most likely would just shuffle current businesses with offices; not create new.

GME Distribution Hub

- General preference was for this to be redeveloped as a retail/mixed use site; however, respondents appreciated the renovation of the building and the 20-40 jobs it would provide. Encourage a strong focus on green practices and landscaping.
- Investigate property history as "unstable ground" due to formerly being a landfill.
- Flooding concerns.
- Outside of jobs, very little impact to community.
- Preference for truck traffic to remain in the front of the building, to respect nearby residents.

Garfield and Broad Office Building

- Include landscaping.
- Ignores vacant buildings.
- Not new or expanding business, just relocation.
- How many jobs is this bringing to the area?
- How much will it help contribute to drawing people to the downtown area?
- Should be privately funded.

Smart Downtown Initiative

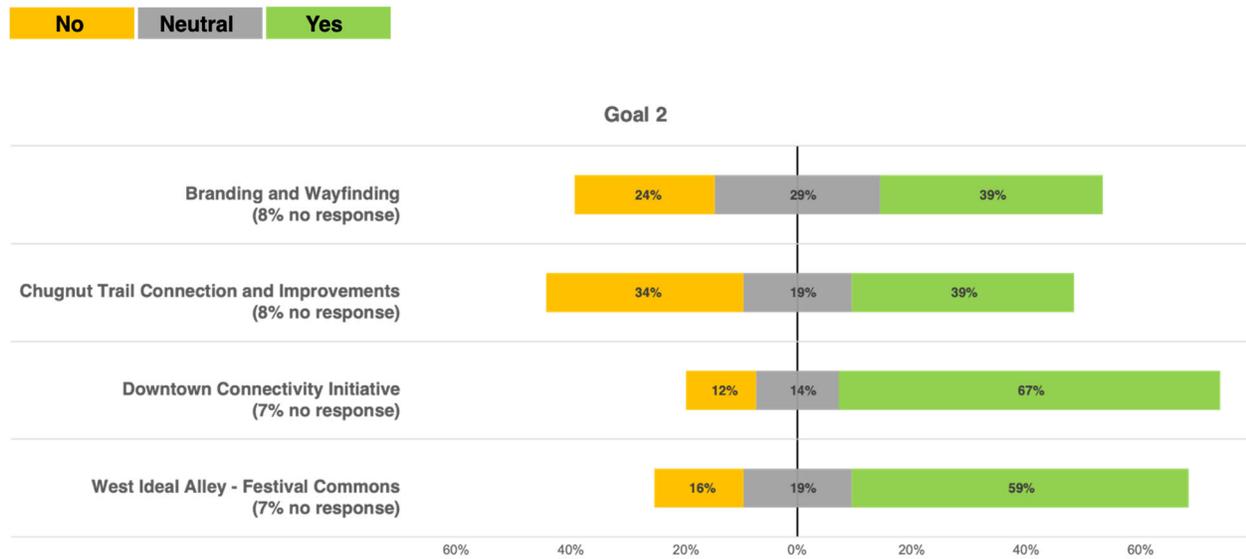
- Not enough traffic to warrant this now but could pay dividends in the future.
- Safety is a concern for the community.
- There are hundreds of alternative grants for this kind of improvements.
- Use this \$\$ for the highest of priorities.
- Focus on downtown with focus on improving buildings and beautification of the area.

Goal 2: Connectivity and Sense of Place

Do you think this project would help to revitalize downtown Endicott?

There were four projects included under this goal category, as shown in Figure 2. A majority of respondents indicated agreement that both the Downtown Connectivity Initiative and West Ideal Alley – Festival Commons projects would help to revitalize downtown Endicott. Responses on the other two projects were split, with the Branding and Wayfinding project skewed slightly to “Yes.”

Figure 2 Goal 2 Project Responses



Overview of open-ended responses:

The public general responded well to the activation of public spaces. Respondents were very much interested in the creative use of parking lots throughout the village. Community members were not as responsive to Chugnut trail improvements, due to its isolation, low maintenance and lack of safety. Safety elements such as video cameras were prioritized to be in public spaces.

Open ended responses - Key Comments and Concerns by Project

Downtown Connectivity Initiative

- Less murals, more greenery and functional upgrades.
- Oak Hill could use paving for sure.
- This would benefit "the Hill" which already seems to get preferential treatment compared to other parts of the Village.
- A videoed area to lock/secure bikes should be included to encourage cycling to downtown.

West Ideal Alley - Festival Commons

- The DRI should take a look at all the parking lots to identify opportunities for improvements and make sure they complement the other parking lot improvement projects taking place on the east alley.

- Would have to be paired with a marketing initiative to incentivize park use.
- Need for an increased police presence is maintained in the area.
- All the alleys and parking lots at the back of stores on Washington Avenue need attention. All the back exits of stores should be spruced up because those are entrances also.

Chugnut Trail Connection and Improvements

- Many residents don't know about, or don't use the trails.
- Isolated, some safety concerns.
- Should include a maintenance plan and address flooding.
- Regular signs of criminal activity.

Branding and Wayfinding

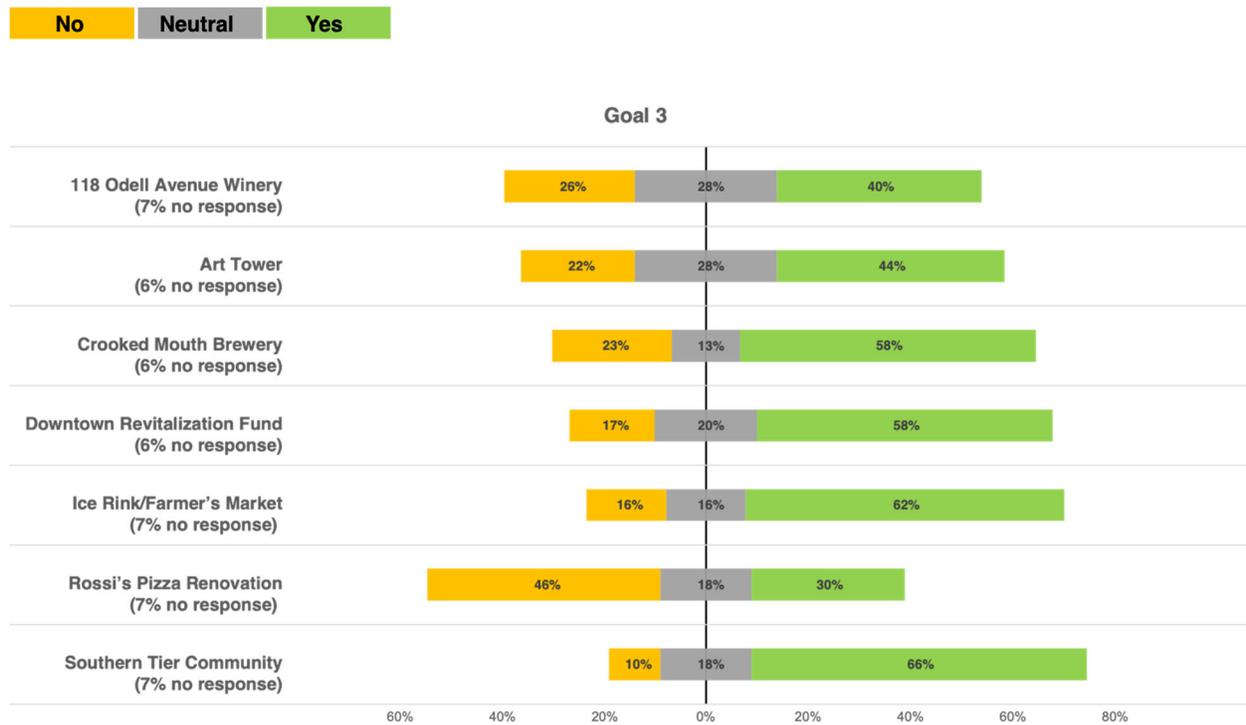
- Nice but not nearly as important as improving buildings.
- This could be a good component of a comprehensive marketing plan.
- Won't have a big as impact as focusing on development.
- Funds could be better spent.

Goal 3: Downtown Amenities

Overview: Do you think this project would help to revitalize downtown Endicott?

There were seven projects included under this goal category, as shown in Figure 3. With the exception of the Rossi's Pizza Renovation project, on the whole responses skewed to a sense of agreement that these projects would help to revitalize downtown Endicott. An overwhelming majority (66%) of respondents indicated agreement that the Southern Tier Community Center project would support the revitalization of downtown Endicott. A majority of respondents also agreed that the Crooked Mouth Brewery (58%), the Downtown Revitalization Fund (58%) and the Ice Rink / Farmer's Market (62%) would serve to revitalize downtown.

Figure 3 Goal 3 Project Responses



Overview of open-ended responses:

Overall, projects in this category were received positively. Many respondents saw these properties or potential projects as great assets. However, concerns still remain on the level of support that private business owners should receive from public funding. Priority was placed on projects that would have the greatest impact, provide the most jobs, and offer year-round activity.

Open ended responses - Key Comments and Concerns by Project

Ice Rink / Farmer's Market

- Should be a private enterprise and not government owned.
- Concerns about maintenance cost.
- Needs to have year-round use.
- Should be multi-sport venue.
- Concerns about parking.
- Concerns on level of impact for the community.

Art Tower

- Too narrow a scope and impact.

- Appreciate prioritizing the arts.
- Already have several coffee shops.
- Concerns on return on investment.

118 Odell Avenue Winery

- Tough area, not ready for this type of business.
- Prefer to be privately funded.
- Endicott is not considered wine country.
- Little impact on Community.

Southern Tier Community Center

- Ensure access for low-income families.
- Will fill void left by old Boys & Girls club.
- Flooding concerns.
- Cost of membership concerns.
- Not considered downtown.

Crooked Mouth Brewery

- Preexisting breweries in the area.
- Portions of lot may be good for solar farm.
- Should be privately funded.
- How many projected jobs?
- Limited impact on community.

Downtown Revitalization Fund

- Solar should be researched for ROI.
- Request for more information.
- Allocate to private homeowners not rentals or absentee landlords.
- Property owners should be required to make sure that they have adequate lighting outside their buildings.
- Be target instead of opened to everyone.
- Must not serve select few community members.

Rossi's Pizza Renovation

- These improvements will benefit the business more than the village or community as a whole.

- The location is a little too far to directly support downtown.
- Should be privately funded.
- Appreciate inclusion of electric charging stations.

Goal 4: Mixed-Use District

Overview: Do you think this project would help to revitalize downtown Endicott?

There were nine projects included under this goal category, as shown in Figure 4. With the exception of the New Life Ministries project, responses generally skewed to a sense of agreement that these projects would help to revitalize downtown Endicott. An overwhelming majority (76%) of respondents indicated agreement that the Washington Center project would support the revitalization of downtown Endicott, and a slightly smaller majority of respondents expressed agreement that the 116-118 Washington Avenue (52%), 32-36 Washington Avenue (63%), and Endicott Johnson Heritage Center (52%) projects would serve to revitalize downtown Endicott.

Overview of open-ended responses:

Respondents generally welcomed the influx of housing, businesses and community spaces these projects would bring. Housing has been a critical issue in the village; however, some community members were concerned about the housing types and locations of the projects. Many of the housing and business proposals may face challenges being financially supported by the surrounding community. There was general agreement for the need to utilize existing buildings and to prioritize affordable housing not low-income housing.

Figure 4 Goal 4 Project Responses



Open ended responses - Key Comments and Concerns by Project

Washington Center

- Make it an art studio/gallery, that would attract many artists and people.
- Repurpose for recreational activities for ALL AGES.
- Considered an “anchor” space on Washington Avenue; its revitalization should be a high priority.
- Arcade business is questionable.

Washington Ave Apartments

- Housing needs critical but prefer no low-income housing in this location.
- Enhancing the area first with other projects is the way to go.

- Public access through the walkway is a must.
- Utilize existing buildings.
- Some parking concerns.

32-36 Washington Avenue

- More housing unsuitable for area.
- Focus on fixing roads and parking lots.
- Concerns about restaurant viability.

Little Italy Heritage Center

- Site too far from downtown area.
- Doesn't bring business. Limited community impact.
- Focus on Italian community, not larger community.
- Should be privately funded.

Endicott Johnson Heritage Center

- Parts of project laudable but the Museum and Heritage Center has consistently done little to enhance community.
- This is an idea linked to Endicott's history that could draw interest from outside the area.
- The improvements will have no significant impact on the revitalization effort, but the need for maintenance and updates is acknowledged.
- This does not make the Avenue more attractive or show the community that these funds are being spent wisely.

Center for Endicott Revitalization

- Affordable housing has to be a part of any project that includes residential development.
- Consolidate like activities. Endicott cannot support multiple cultural centers.
- No low income housing.

New Life Ministries Renovations

- DRI funds should not be used to fund renovations at a church.
- This is a private organization. If their business model cannot afford this renovation, they should not be expecting taxpayers to do it for them.
- This doesn't create anything new for the village.

54 Washington Avenue Renovation Phase II

- Improve existing buildings before building new ones.

- Yes, to facade improvements. No to apartments.
- This would help the building's owners, not improve the downtown.

116-114 Washington Avenue Renovation

- Another case of a project that would benefit the building's owners but not the broader community at large.
- Yes, to facade improvements. No to apartments.
- Reuse existing buildings.

APPENDIX A

Zip Codes of Respondents (*As reported by respondent)

	#	%
13760	67	74%
13850	6	7%
13732	3	3%
13790	3	3%
13901	2	2%
13905	2	2%
2493*	1	1%
13761	1	1%
13769	1	1%
13815	1	1%
13827	1	1%
13903	1	1%
13904	1	1%
Total	90	100%

Closed-ended Responses

PROJECT NAME	YES		NEUTRAL		NO		NO RESPONSE		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
210 - 216 Washington Avenue	45	50%	16	18%	23	26%	6	7%	90
GME Distribution Hub	57	63%	9	10%	19	21%	5	6%	90
Garfield and Broad Office Building	41	46%	14	16%	29	32%	6	7%	90
Smart Downtown Initiative	62	69%	5	6%	3	3%	20	22%	90
Downtown Connectivity Initiative	60	67%	13	14%	11	12%	6	7%	90
West Ideal Alley - Festival Commons	53	59%	17	19%	14	16%	6	7%	90
Chugnut Trail Connection and Improvements	35	39%	17	19%	31	34%	7	8%	90
Branding and Wayfinding	35	39%	26	29%	22	24%	7	8%	90
Ice Rink/Farmer's Market	56	62%	14	16%	14	16%	6	7%	90
Art Tower	40	44%	25	28%	20	22%	5	6%	90
118 Odell Avenue Winery	36	40%	25	28%	23	26%	6	7%	90
Southern Tier Community	59	66%	16	18%	9	10%	6	7%	90
Crooked Mouth Brewery	52	58%	12	13%	21	23%	5	6%	90
Downtown Revitalization Fund	52	58%	18	20%	15	17%	5	6%	90
Rossi's Pizza Renovation	27	30%	16	18%	41	46%	6	7%	90
Washington Center	68	76%	9	10%	6	7%	7	8%	90
Washington Ave Apartments	44	49%	14	16%	26	29%	6	7%	90
32-36 Washington Avenue	57	63%	22	24%	5	6%	6	7%	90
Little Italy Heritage Center	34	38%	23	26%	27	30%	6	7%	90
Endicott Johnson Heritage Center	47	52%	13	14%	22	24%	8	9%	90
Center for Endicott Revitalization	30	33%	31	34%	22	24%	7	8%	90
New Life Ministries Renovations	13	14%	14	16%	57	63%	6	7%	90
54 Washington Avenue Renovation Phase II	42	47%	30	33%	10	11%	8	9%	90
116-118 Washington Avenue Renovation	47	52%	23	26%	11	12%	9	10%	90