

Background

The City of Winnipeg is making a long-term plan that will guide investment and development in Downtown Winnipeg for the next 30 years. The goal of *CentrePlan 2050* is to get more people living and visiting Downtown.

As part of *CentrePlan 2050*, we are creating designs for a re-imagined Graham Avenue. Today, Graham Avenue is primarily a bus, bike, and pedestrian only street. In June 2025, bus routes will begin moving off Graham Avenue as planned in the [Winnipeg Transit Master Plan](#).

This report summarizes the feedback we received during Phase 3 engagement on the draft *CentrePlan 2050* and redesign of Graham Avenue.

Engagement

In Phase 2, we asked stakeholders for feedback on the goals, policies, and actions in the draft *CentrePlan 2050*. We also asked for feedback on the preliminary design of Graham Avenue.

Feedback from Phase 2 helped to refine the draft *CentrePlan 2050* and draft design of Graham Avenue.

In Phase 3, the public was invited to provide comments on the draft *CentrePlan 2050*, including feedback on the draft design of Graham Avenue. Feedback was collected online and in-person. In addition, the project team met with and received feedback from key Downtown stakeholders.



Figure 1: Participants share feedback on the draft design of Graham Avenue at the *CentrePlan 2050* Open House

Table 1 below provides an overview of public engagement opportunities.

Table 1: Public engagement opportunities

Date	Activity	Details
May 8 – May 23, 2024	Project webpage	6,300 unique visits
May 8 – May 23, 2024	Online survey (Re-imagining Graham Avenue)	1,110 responses Full results in Appendix B & C.
May 8 – May 23, 2024	Online comments (<i>CentrePlan 2050</i>)	62 comments Feedback in Appendix D.
May 15, 2024*	Open house #1	86 participants Notes in Appendix E.
May 23, 2024	Open house #2	86 participants Notes in Appendix E.

* Unfortunately, the open house on May 15 ended earlier than scheduled due to a prolonged power outage affecting most of Downtown.

Promotion

Public engagement opportunities were promoted using the following methods:

- News release – May 8, 2024
- Facebook posts with over 40,000 followers – May 8 to 23, 2024
- X posts with over 127,000 followers - May 8 to 23, 2024
- Instagram posts with over 6,500 followers - May 8 to 23, 2024
- City of Winnipeg public engagement newsletter with over 5,800 recipients – May 9 and 17, 2024
- Email to 140 project subscribers – May 8 to 23, 2024
- Email to 150 stakeholder organizations - May 8 to 23, 2024
- Postcards handed out to 300 people Downtown - May 15 and 23, 2024

See Appendix A for promotional material.

Key findings – Re-imagining Graham Avenue

- Over 80% of survey respondents that live Downtown support the draft design of Graham Avenue.
- Participants indicated the most important design features to include on Graham Avenue are greenery (53%), dedicated space for pedestrians (50%), and dedicated bike lanes and bike parking (35%).
- Participants indicated strong support for prioritizing pedestrians and reducing or eliminating cars and/or parking.
- Participants noted that Graham Avenue could become a place to gather and build community, where all people are welcome.
- Participants expressed concern that safety and increased services for people experiencing homelessness, addictions, and mental health must be addressed before Graham Avenue can be re-developed.

“Implementing this design would be a big step forward for Winnipeg as a city to embrace being a place that is enjoyable for living, working, visiting, etc. Downtown is ready for this upgrade. We desperately need a safe bike corridor and more shared accessible spaces for relaxing, eating, shopping, celebrating, etc.”

-Survey respondent

What we heard – *CentrePlan 2050*

The draft Plan includes five strategic moves designed to help Downtown grow and thrive:

- Create great urban neighbourhoods
- Re-envision streets to foster urban life
- Grow a greener Downtown
- Create a lively Downtown
- Improve Downtown governance and implementation

Residents were invited to read the draft *CentrePlan 2050* and provide comments online and at the open house. A summary of feedback by strategic move is below.

Create great urban neighbourhoods

Participant comments emphasize revitalizing Downtown by:

- Attracting people and businesses
- Opening affordable grocery stores or markets
- Replacing surface parking with multi-storied parking or mixed-used development

Re-envision streets to foster urban life

Participant comments noted the importance to:

- Redesign streets to prioritize pedestrians and cyclists
- Improve public transit and reducing car dependency
- Increase affordable and social housing
- Foster community spaces and nightlife
- Create a safer, cleaner, and more vibrant Downtown

Grow a greener Downtown

Participant comments indicated the need for:

- Diverse greenery and landscaping
- Family-friendly amenities
- Electric buses
- Open-air venues
- Ensuring environmental sustainability and proper maintenance of sidewalks, pathways, benches, and streets

Create a lively Downtown

Participant comments included ideas to enhance Downtown:

- Add safety measures and better lighting
- Winter amenities

- Add Indigenous art and cultural programming
- Increase connectivity between key areas
- Add more gardens and supermarkets
- Improve and maintain cleanliness

Improve Downtown governance and implementation

Participant comments highlighted the need to:

- Develop Downtown with a focus on affordable housing and safety
- Collaborate with stakeholders and other levels of government
- Plan for long-term maintenance
- Eliminate or reduce parking lots
- Include accessible public amenities such as washrooms
- Ensure inclusive and transparent processes

“Love it! Winnipeg needs more bike lanes, green space and areas with no cars. A dedicated fan zone for hockey is awesome! This plan will encourage people to go outside, visit downtown and for those who don't bike regularly they will be encouraged to grab their bike and go for a ride.”

-Online commenting tool respondent

What we heard – Re-imagining Graham Avenue

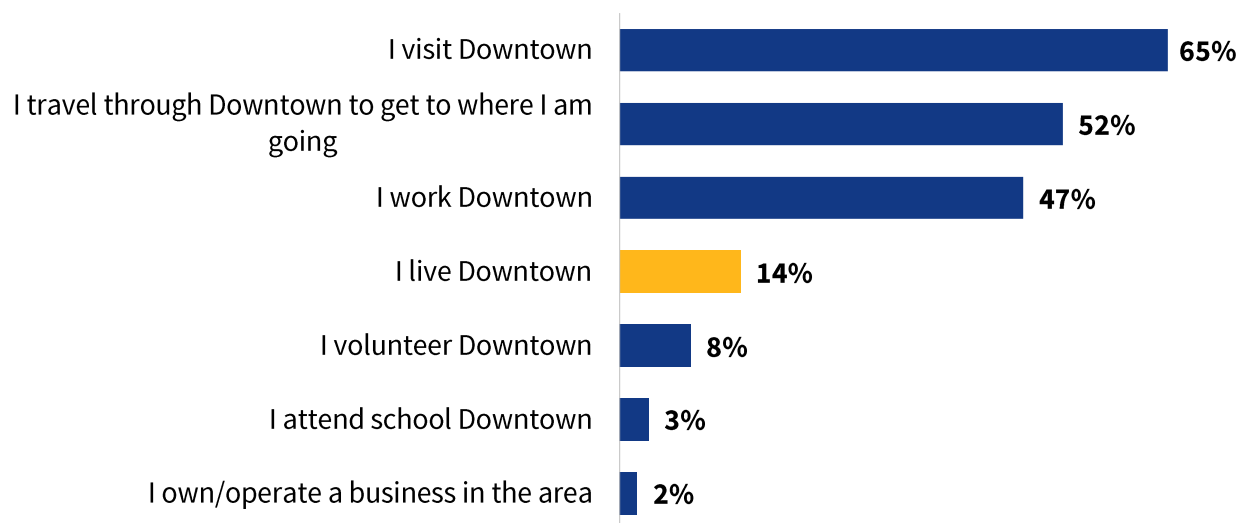
Residents were invited to provide feedback on the draft design of Graham Avenue through an online survey and at the open houses. A summary of feedback is below.

Who we heard from

We asked survey participants their connection to Downtown. Almost half (47 percent) of survey respondents work Downtown and 14 percent live Downtown (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Connection to Downtown Winnipeg

What is your connection to Downtown? Select all that apply.



Total responses: 1,110

Level of support

Three proposed street zone types have been developed for Graham Avenue:

- Shared Zone: Vaughan Street to Carlton Street
- Celebration Zone: Carlton Street to Donald Street
- Green Zone: Donald Street to Fort Street

We asked survey respondents to review each zone and indicate their level of support. Over 70 percent of respondents somewhat or strongly support the draft design for each zone (Figure 3):

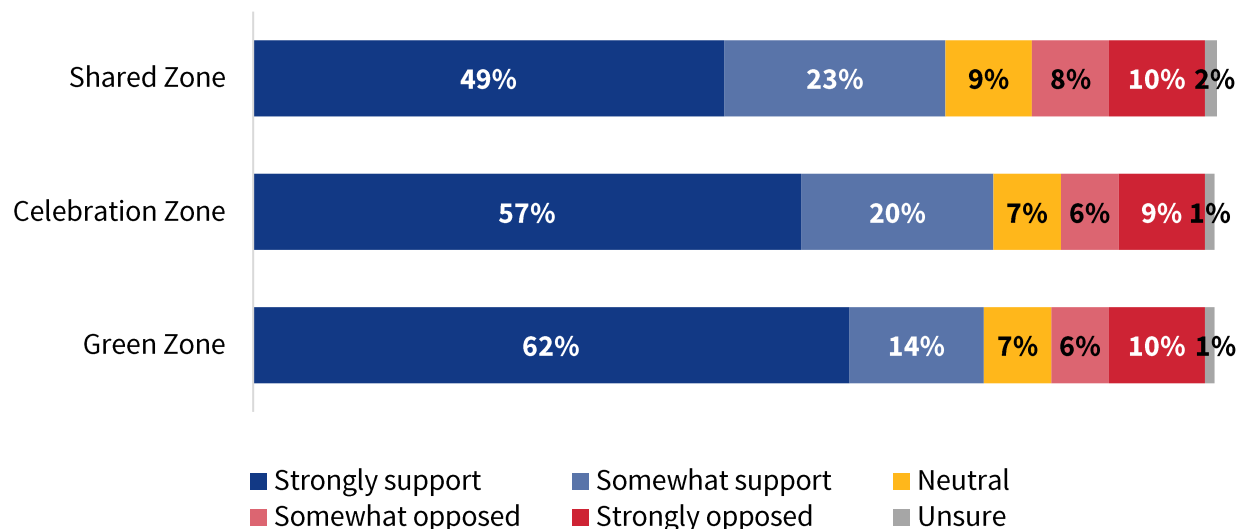
- Shared Zone - 72 percent somewhat or strongly support
- Celebration Zone - 77 percent somewhat or strongly support
- Green Zone - 76 percent somewhat or strongly support

Survey respondents that live Downtown indicated slightly higher levels of support for the draft design:

- Shared Zone – 80 percent somewhat or strongly support
- Celebration Zone – 83 percent somewhat or strongly support
- Green Zone – 85 percent somewhat or strongly support

Figure 3: Level of support for draft design of Graham Avenue

How much do you support or oppose the draft design of Graham Avenue?



Total responses: 1,110

Design features

We asked survey respondents how important each design feature is to them. Of the design features they indicated as very important, we then asked respondent to indicate their top three (Figure 4). The top three most important design features included:

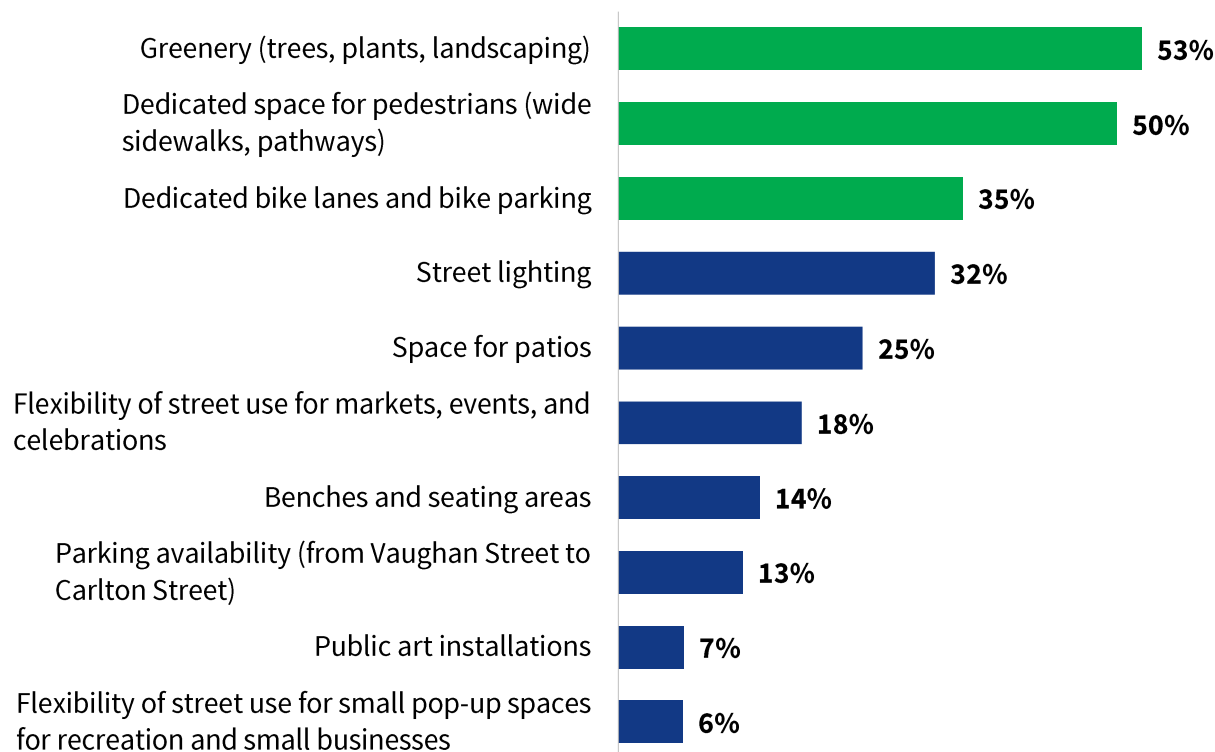
- Greenery (trees, plants, landscaping) – 53 percent
- Dedicated space for pedestrians (wide sidewalks, pathways) – 50 percent
- Dedicated bike lanes and bike parking – 35 percent

“I like the green zone in particular, with lots of space for pedestrians and cyclists, and lots of greenery, which we desperately need more of downtown.”

-Survey respondent

Figure 4: Importance of design features

Which design features are most important to you? Select up to three design features.



Total responses: 895

Overall draft design

What participants like the most

We also asked survey respondents what they like most about the draft design of Graham Avenue. Responses were consistent with open house feedback (see Appendix E). The most mentioned themes included:

- Pedestrian prioritization and accessibility (179 comments)
 - Creating walkable spaces that prioritize pedestrians over cars
- Vehicle access (132 comments)
 - Support for reducing or eliminating cars and/or parking
- Greenery (130 comments)
 - Appreciation for green spaces, trees, and other greenery
- Biking (124 comments)
 - Desire for dedicated bike lanes and secure (monitored) bike parking
- Place for people (117 comments)
 - Place to gather and build community, where all people are welcome

- Arts, culture, and entertainment (96 comments)
 - Desire for a lively Downtown
 - Focus on arts and culture
- Beautification (65 comments)
 - Beautifying the street through landscaping, lighting, seating areas, and other elements

“Love the focus on pedestrians and active transportation. I always thought our city is missing a pedestrian corridor like most major cities have.”

-Survey respondent

What participants like the least

When asked what respondents like least about the draft design of Graham Avenue, the most mentioned themes included:

- Vehicle access (203 comments)
 - Reduce or eliminate all cars/parking (133 comments)
 - Increase cars/parking. Concern how reduced car access will impact Downtown traffic (70 comments)
- Community safety and well-being (84 comments)
 - Concerns about safety, including crime, harassment, and the presence of vulnerable populations
- Biking (61 comments)
 - Opposition to bike lanes on Graham Avenue
- Transit (54 comments)
 - Opposition to buses coming off Graham Avenue
- Lively downtown (29 comments)
 - More space for large events
 - Less space dedicated for large events
- Greenery (28 comments)
 - Lack of greenery and trees and too much concrete
- Business impact (21 comments)
 - Concerns about negative effects on local business

When asked if there are any other comments about the draft design, about one-quarter of comments related to community safety and well-being (141 of 516 comments). Several comments noted that before Graham Avenue can be re-developed, safety and increased services for people experiencing homelessness, addictions, and mental health must be addressed. Open-ended survey analysis can be found in Appendix C.

Activities or programming

We asked survey respondents to share their ideas for activities and programming that would work well on Graham Avenue. Participants suggested free or low-cost activities in each category. The most mentioned themes included:

- Food and markets (176 comments)
 - Farmers'/makers' markets, food trucks, unique dining experiences
- Live entertainment (129 comments)
 - Buskers, live music, theatre, poetry, entertainers
- Arts and culture (84 comments)
 - Art installations and competitions, cultural celebrations
- Festivals and large events (80 comments)
 - Street parties, festivals, collaboration with existing large events
- Sports and recreation (78 comments)
 - Yoga/fitness classes, sport courts, sport camps, lawn games
- Family-friendly events (51 comments)
 - Spray pad, youth activities, family events
- Patios and beer gardens (49 comments)
 - Year-round patios, beer gardens

Next steps

In summer 2024, the draft *CentrePlan 2050* will be presented to Council for consideration. This includes a funding request for Graham Avenue to:

- Develop construction drawings
- Create an activities and programming plan for the street (Animation Strategy)
- Maintain the street after construction is complete

Council approval and funding is needed before we begin these next steps. Feedback from this final phase of engagement will be used in the next step of the design process.

Appendices

Appendix A – Promotional material

Appendix B – Survey results

Appendix C – Open-ended survey analysis

Appendix D – Online comments feedback

Appendix E – Open house feedback