

OUR CITY. OUR FUTURE.



# Downtown Pedestrian Mall

Review and Engagement



ST. JOHN'S



Amid a global pandemic, the Downtown Pedestrian Mall (DPM) project was developed to provide the downtown business community expanded space from which to sell their goods and services with the anticipated result of stimulating the downtown economy.

The area within the Mall sought to maximize the number of restaurants, retail and related businesses captured in the pedestrianized sections of road closure, while maintaining and offering:

- Access to parking garages
- Traffic detours
- Emergency access
- Accessibility



# Timeline

## June 16

- Council approved the Downtown Pedestrian Mall (July 3 to September 7).

## July 3

- Downtown Pedestrian Mall opened.

## July 6

- After a public advertising period, Council gave approval to allow businesses outside the immediate Mall footprint the option of expanding their space to adjacent areas. A total of 24 businesses took advantage of this option.

## August 31

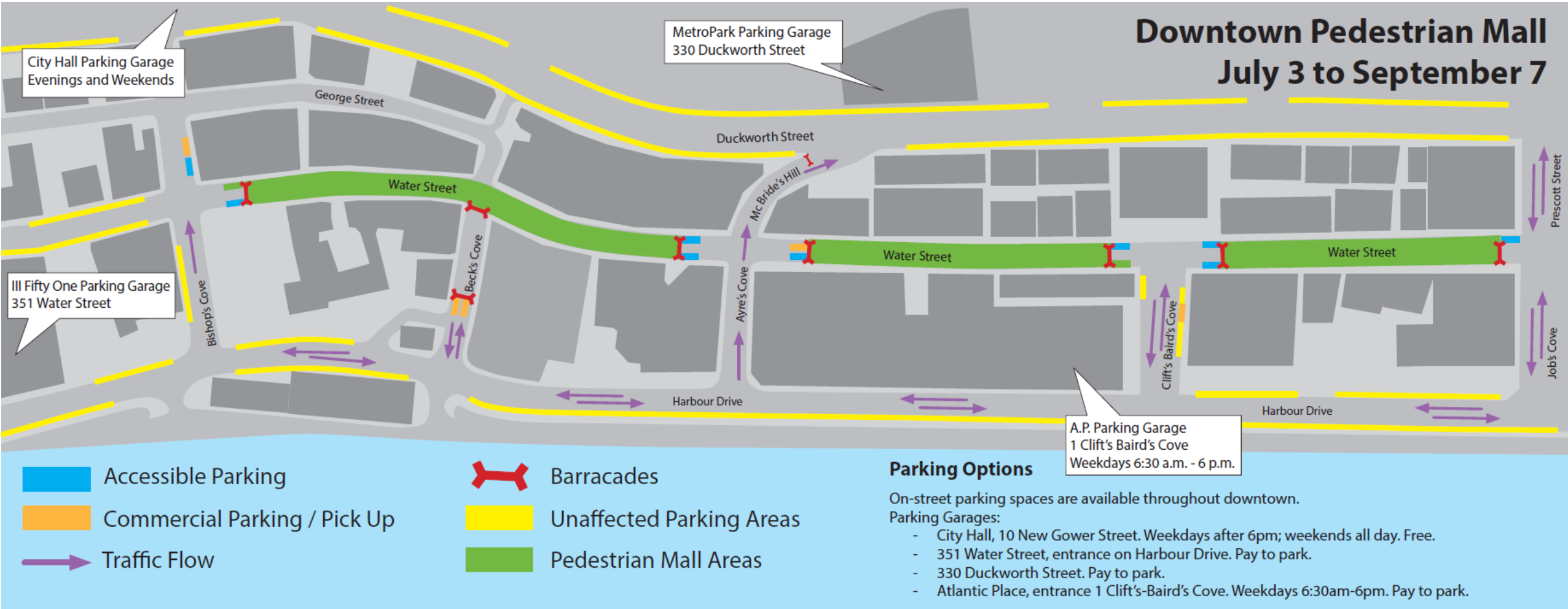
- Council, in response to demands from businesses operating exterior spaces, agreed to allow the patio/parklette option until November 1.

## September 7

- Downtown Pedestrian Mall concluded, with Water Street reopening to traffic.



# Event Footprint





# Logistics



Creating the Downtown Pedestrian Mall was more than closing Water Street to vehicular traffic. Various resources were deployed to make the space attractive, safe, and comfortable for businesses and consumers.

- Special Event Regulatory Committee
- Security/Project Staff
- Amenities

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CSJ  
Picnic Tables

DTSJ  
High Top Table

DTSJ  
Chairs

CSJ  
Garbage Bins

CSJ  
Recycling Bins

47

11

25

14

13





# Participation



A total of 24 businesses used the opportunity to extend their presence in some manner outside their interior space with the primary business type being restaurants.

Business Type	Number
Restaurant	17
Bar/Lounge	4
Retail	2
Other	1



# Budget

Total Expenditures	
Marketing	\$6,089
Security/Staffing	\$163,068
Amenities	\$11,194
Cleaning Materials/Supplies	\$3,581
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$183,932</b>

Financing		
City of St. John's	ACOA	TCII
\$63,932	\$60,000	\$60,000



# Engagement Goals

- Gather feedback and perspectives from businesses within the pedestrian mall about their experience from both the planning and implementation process as well as impact on their business.
- Gather feedback and perspectives from businesses downtown but outside the pedestrian mall about their experience from both the planning and implementation process as well as impacts on their business.
- Gather feedback and perspectives from users of the mall about their experience visiting the mall and Downtown including how they got there, time spent, money spent, types of businesses visited, what they liked, what was challenging, etc.
- Gather feedback and perspectives from people who were aware of the Mall but did not use it, to better understand why they did not attend.
- Gather feedback from targeted stakeholder groups, such as the Inclusion Advisory Committee, Special Events Regulatory Committee, and transportation industry.

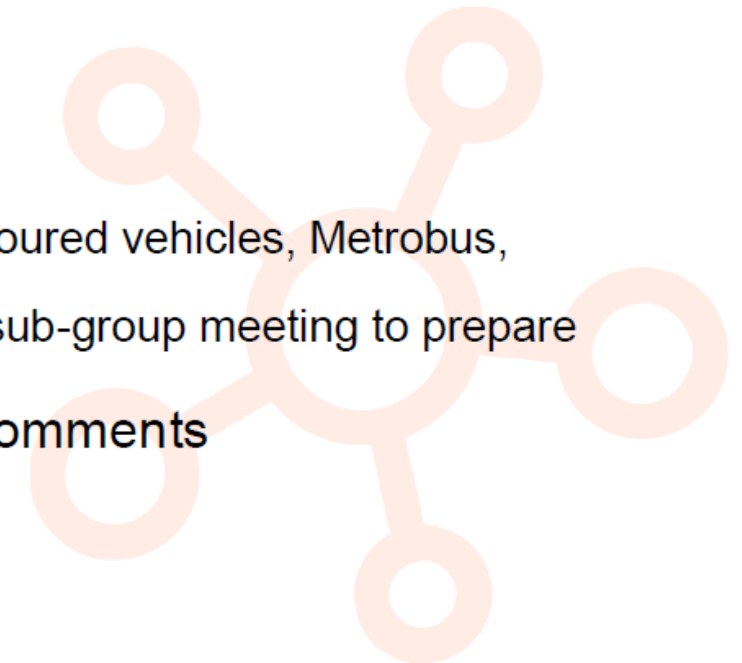




# Engagement



- Nearly 1,900 visitors to engage, 177 of whom were actively engaged – 779 interactions with the ideas tool
- Public surveys – 463 responses to the public online survey, 57 intercept surveys on the street during the Mall
- Business survey – 114 surveys completed
- Business stakeholder focus groups - five sessions – 16 business participated
- Business feedback via email or phone call – three submissions
- Public feedback via email – 12 submissions
- Other stakeholder sessions:
  - One session with transportation sector which included taxi, courier, armoured vehicles, Metrobus, Go-Bus
  - One meeting with City's Inclusion Advisory Committee who then had a sub-group meeting to prepare a response
- Social Media – reached 50,777 people, 1987 engagements, 13 comments





# Engagement



Feedback gathered through the engagement process indicated an overall positive response:

- 98% of the public indicated there should be future Downtown Pedestrian Malls, giving a 4.5 out of 5 average rating.
- Businesses within the Mall footprint rated it 4.3 out of 5, with 89% indicating there should be future Malls.
- 67% of businesses outside the footprint indicated there should be future Malls.



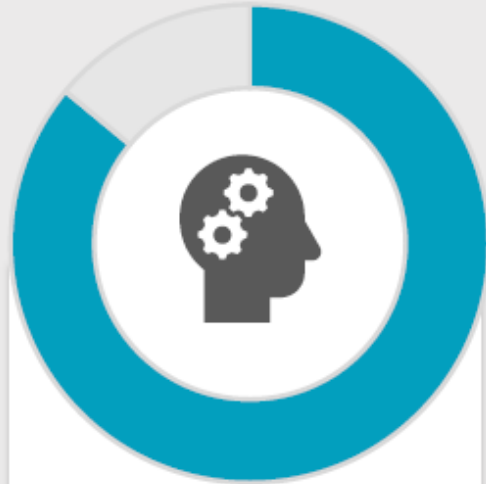
# Engagement



Of the businesses outside of the mall footprint who completed the Business Survey:

- 31% of businesses applied to extend their premises or make modifications to their outside footprint.
- 50% experienced new customers.
- 46% benefited financially.
- 46% felt the overall viability of their business during the pandemic was improved because of the increase in customer flow from the mall.

## Deciding to go downtown



**89%**

The availability of the Mall influenced the decision to go Downtown.

n = 486

## Discovering new services

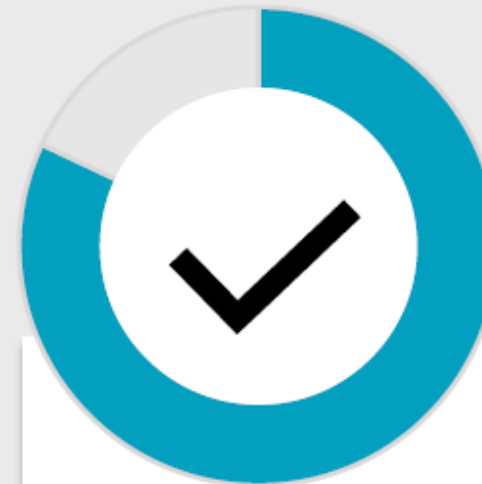


**63%**

The Mall helped the patron discover new services or businesses in the Downtown.

n = 486

## Choosing Downtown in the future



**82%**

Experience with the Mall increased the likelihood the patron would shop/dine etc. in the Downtown in the future

n = 476

6% of people surveyed did not visit the Mall. Reasons for not visiting included:

- Parking
- Public health concerns
- Not interested
- Accessibility concerns

**75%**

Of respondents who were previously infrequent visitors to the downtown (yearly or never) indicated they were now more likely to choose the Downtown in the future

n = 73



# Evaluation

In addition to the public investment and the investment by Downtown St. John's, many businesses within the Mall footprint made their own investments whether by increasing employment, advertising, purchasing materials or equipment therefore generating some economic spinoffs in addition to their product/service offerings.

Businesses within the Mall indicated, (79%) that the Mall had a mostly positive impact, with 7% indicating a mostly negative impact.

- Positive impacts included new customers, and increased exposure translating into improved financial returns.
- Conversely businesses citing a negative experience noted customer access concerns and no increase in customer base.

Given the objective of the project to provide businesses with the platform/opportunity for increased economic activity, the project can conclude that this was achieved



# Findings, Insights and Recommendations

- Stakeholder Insights in Mall Design
  - Business Community
  - Transportation Sector
  - Inclusion Community
  - General Public
- Pedestrian Mall Team
- Continuous Improvement
- Animating the Mall





# Next Steps

Use the information from the Downtown Pedestrian Mall Report, the What We Heard Document, the Continuous Improvement Yellow belt Project and other forms of stakeholder feedback, to develop a list of recommendations for Council consideration in future mall projects.



# Questions