

# Kingborough Council

**Transform Kingston Survey**

**February 2022**



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# Executive Summary

- Citing the benefits of enhanced safety for cyclists, a greater number of respondents from the general public supported having a protected bike lane at the expense of more parking spaces, but the opposite was true for the business sector.
- At the same time, concerns about limited parking availability manifested in residents' survey responses and conversations online.
- Locals use cars to get to the Kingston CBD far more than bikes, indicating that the driving and parking infrastructure impacts a greater number of community members.
- Although to a lesser extent, a desire to see more green spaces and vegetation also emerged as a priority, as residents expressed desire to make sure that central Kingston is aesthetically pleasing for the community.

## Introduction

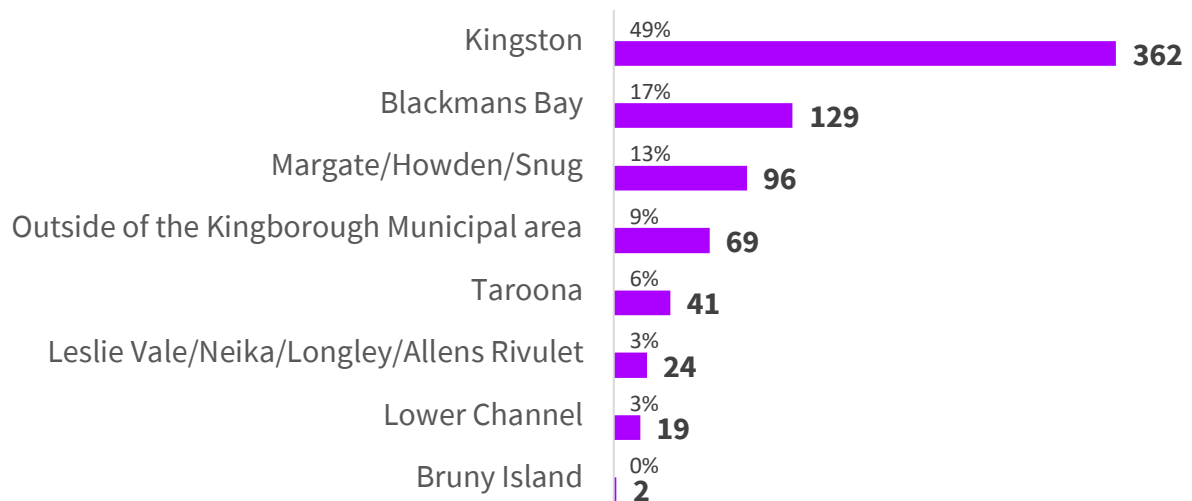
The following report reviews resident input about the Kingborough Council Transform Kingston plan by analyzing a survey designed and deployed by Kingborough Council. The survey received 742 responses from the general public and 14 responses from business-sector stakeholders between December 3, 2021, and January 20, 2022. The survey findings are complemented by an analysis of organic social media discourse.

## Methodology

- The report offers an analysis of data collected from the Council's survey, social media, and news outlets. As such, it reflects the view and sentiment expressed by residents using these data sources.
- The analysis does not include sentiment and opinions expressed on private social media discussion boards and groups, only those expressed in fully public forums.
- The Zencity score looks at the number of interactions, which consists of all social media engagements (posts, tweets, likes, comments, shares, etc.). Therefore, the number of interactions reflects the discourse volume and the level of interest among residents expressing their views online.
- Our machine-learning algorithm classifies large amounts of interactions according to topic and sentiment — positive, negative, or neutral — which indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction levels with particular issues. This model enables us to measure the attention or interest that specific issues attract and understand how community members perceived these issues.

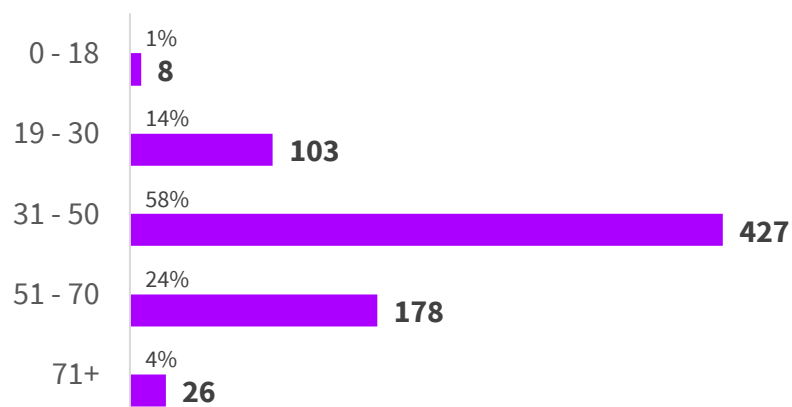
# General Public

## Residency

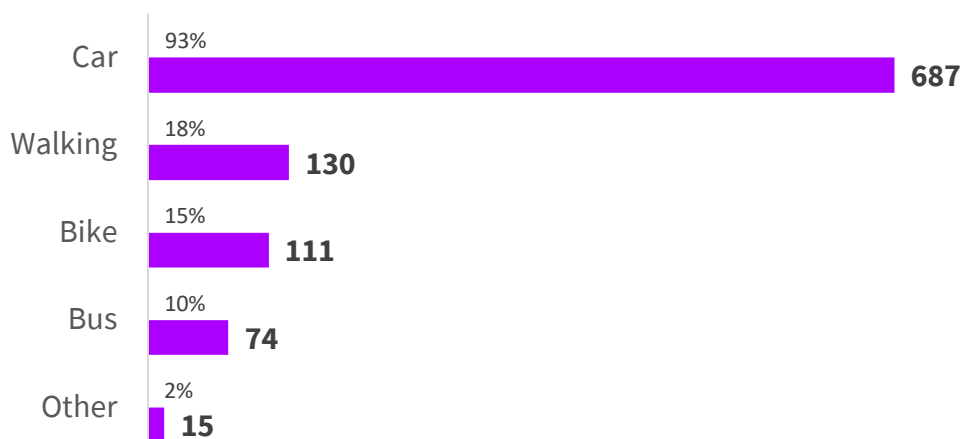


At 49%, nearly half of all respondents lived in Kingston. Other leading municipalities included Blackmans Bay (17%), and Margate, Howden, and Snug (13%).

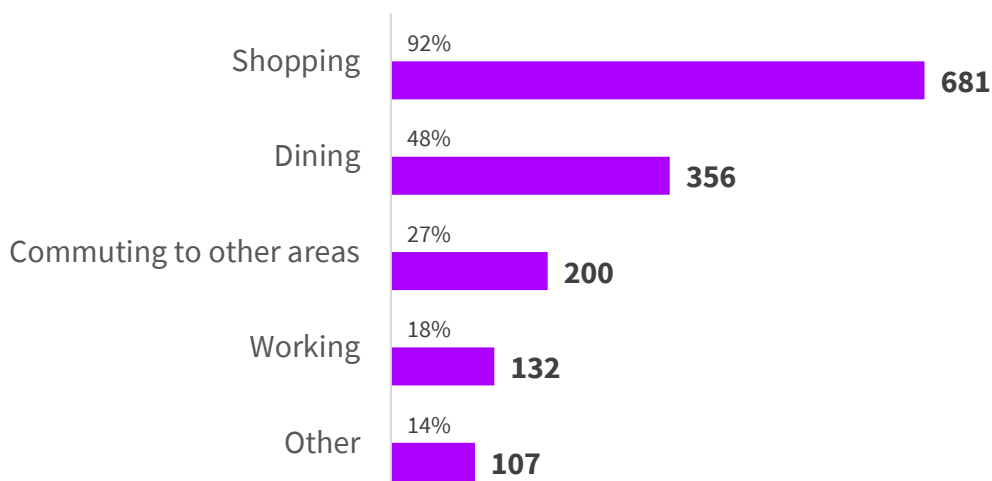
## Age



More than half (58%) of respondents were between 31 and 50. Overall, nearly three-quarters (73%) of respondents were 50 or younger.

**Q1. How do you usually travel to Kingston CBD? (select all that apply)**

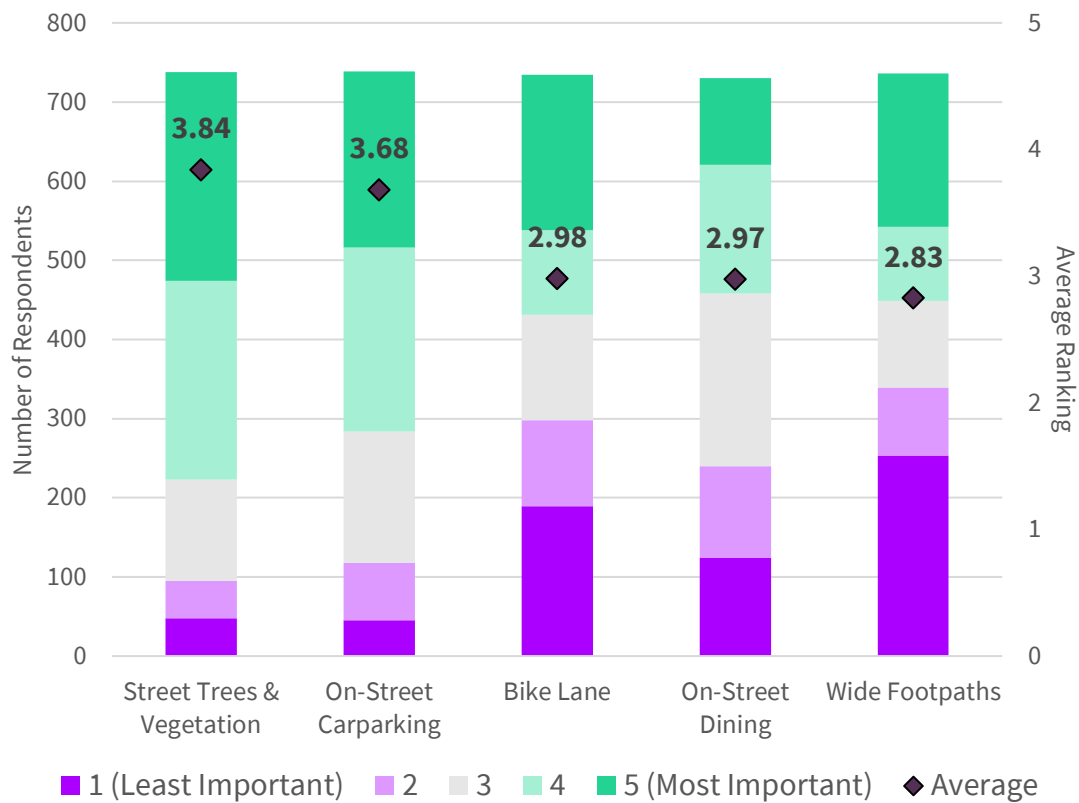
Almost all (93%) respondents usually travel to the CBD using a car. Less than a fifth of all respondents chose walking (18%) and biking (15%). Notably, almost a third of the respondents who chose “Other” that they would bike if the local cycling infrastructure was better.

**Q2. What are your main reasons for visiting Kingston CBD? (select all that apply)**

Shopping was the main reason for visiting the CBD for 92% of respondents. Almost half (48%) also visit the CBD for dining. Among the 14% who chose “Other,” some of the most popular reasons included medical appointments, fitness and exercise, bringing kids to playgrounds and parks, and visiting the library.



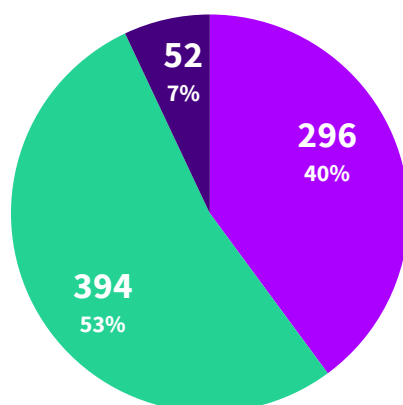
Q3. How important are the following features to you in the upgrade of Kingston's Main Street?



With an average ranking of 3.84 out of 5, street trees and vegetation were the most important feature for Kingborough Council residents in upgrading Kingston's Main Street. On-street parking came in second, with an average ranking 23% higher than the average ranking for bike lanes (3.68 and 2.98, respectively).

#### Q4. Which of the two Design Concepts would be the most attractive and engaging for you?

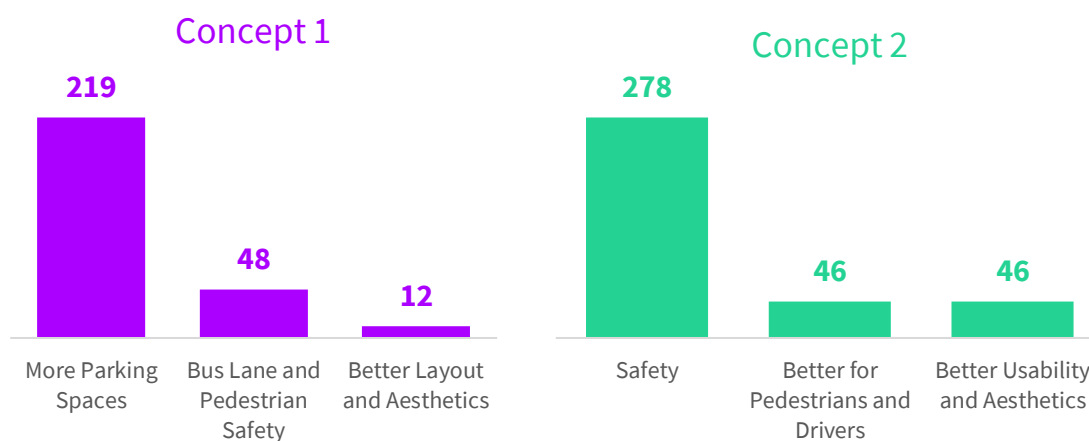
- ⇒ **Concept 1 - The uphill bike lane is located on the outside of the allocated parking space and bus zone. There are 19 parking spaces.**
- ⇒ **Concept 2 - The uphill bike lane is protected, running on the inside of the bus stop. There are 10 parking spaces.**



■ Concept 1 ■ Concept 2 ■ No Response

At 53%, a slight majority preferred Concept 2 and having a bike lane on the inside of the bus stop but fewer parking spots — 13 percentage points more than those who preferred having an uphill bike lane on the outside of the parking space and bus zone but with more parking spots. Another 7% did not respond to this question.

##### Q4.1 Why is this your preferred option?



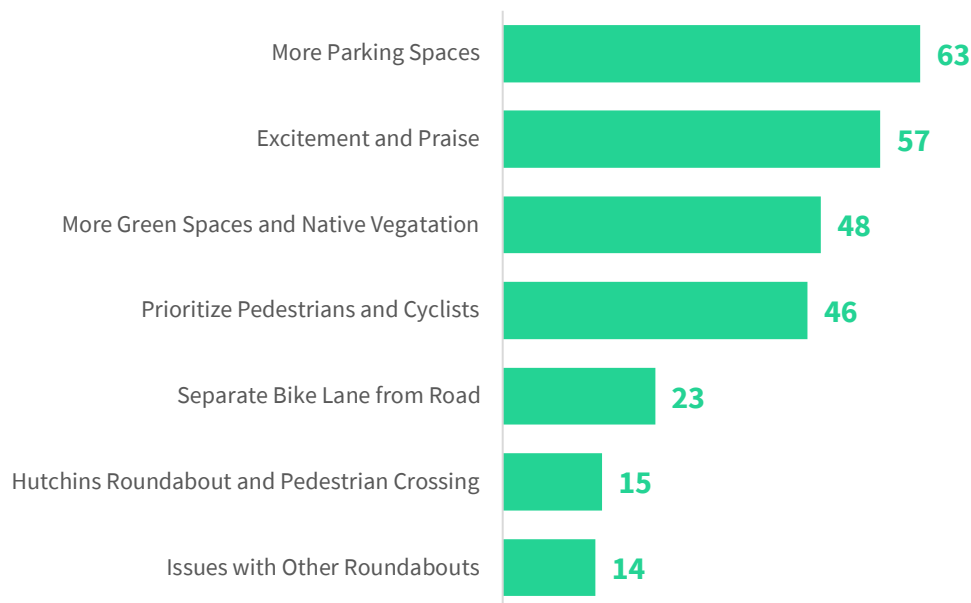
Among the 296 respondents in Q4 who preferred Concept 1, [276 shared their rationale through free-text responses](#), among which the most prominent justifications included:

- 🕒 **More Parking Spaces ([219 responses](#))**: More than three-quarters (79%) of free-text responses supporting Concept 1 cited the advantage of having nine extra on-street parking spaces.
- 🕒 **Bus Lane and Pedestrian Safety ([48 responses](#))**: Another 17% argued that the plan provides better visibility for everyone — bus drivers, people getting off buses, cyclists, and pedestrians, and especially the elderly and disabled — to know where everyone is and to be aware of each other.
- 🕒 **Better Layout and Aesthetics ([12 responses](#))**: Finally, a small cohort preferred Concept 1 because they felt it had a more functional layout and was more aesthetically pleasing.

The majority in Q4 who chose Concept 2 also shared their input through [378 free-text responses](#):

- 🕒 **Safety ([278 responses](#))**: Almost three-quarters (74%) of responses shared that Concept 2 would be safer for all, especially cyclists, who would benefit from a protected bike lane.
- 🕒 **Better for Pedestrians and Drivers ([46 responses](#))**: Although to a lesser extent, some also believed that Concept 2 was equally beneficial for pedestrians (because of the extra space and fewer parking spaces) and drivers (who would be safely separated from cyclists).
- 🕒 **Better Usability and Aesthetics ([46 responses](#))**: An equal number also supported Concept 2 because they believed it would be more attractive, usable, and family-friendly for the community.



**Q5. Are there any other comments you would like to add?**

Among the [372 responses](#) to this question, nearly three-quarters (72%) came from the following seven themes:

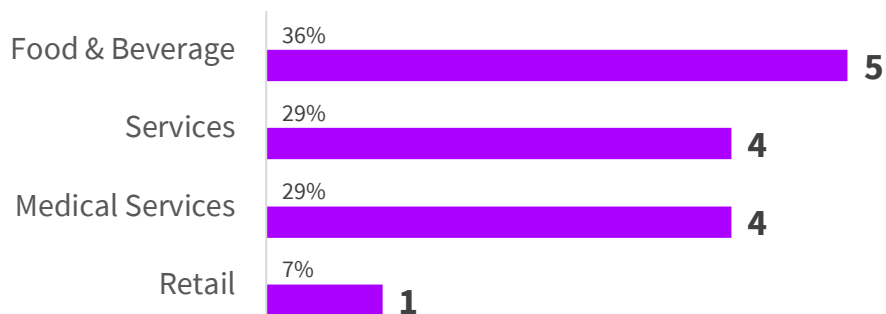
- 🔄 **More Parking Spaces ([63 responses](#))**: Almost a fifth (17%) of respondents stressed the need to have ample availability of parking spaces. Some specifically mentioned the car park on John St. that serves local businesses in the area.
- 🔄 **Excitement and Praise ([57 responses](#))**: Many others expressed a general excitement for the Transform Kingston plan and praised Council leadership for spearheading the development.
- 🔄 **More Green Spaces and Native Vegetation ([48 responses](#))**: Others argued that there should be more trees, greenery, and native vegetation in the area.
- 🔄 **Prioritize Pedestrians and Cyclists ([46 responses](#))**: Some expressed approval of the proposed measures to improve footpaths and pave more bike lanes. Additionally, some proposed implementing measures to reduce driving cars and create car-free zones for pedestrians only.
- 🔄 **Separate Bike Lane from Road ([23 responses](#))**: Respondents emphasized the need to separate the bike lane from the road using buffers such as trees or other physical barriers. Some of these responses also proposed that there should be another bike lane on the other side of the street as part of the development plan.

- 🔄 **Hutchins Roundabout and Pedestrian Crossing ([15 responses](#))**: Although most of these respondents approved of the roundabout on Hutchins St., some said the pedestrian crossing is too close to the roundabout, causes more traffic, and is a safety hazard.
- 🔄 **Issues with Other Roundabouts ([14 responses](#))**: Finally, a small cohort suggested improvements that could be made to existing roundabouts and complained that there are too many roundabouts in the area.

In addition to the themes outlined above, another 18% of responses came from the following more respondents who: argued for more bike lanes across Kingborough Council ([10 responses](#)), called to improve overall pedestrian safety ([10 responses](#)), lamented local traffic congestion ([10 responses](#)), expressed general support for Concept 2 ([9 responses](#)), called for wider footpaths ([9 responses](#)), disliked both Concept 1 and 2 ([7 responses](#)), requested more bus stops and shelters ([5 responses](#)), argued that there are too many pedestrian crossings ([4 responses](#)), and supported more seating, lighting, and shade installations on Kingston streets ([4 responses](#)).

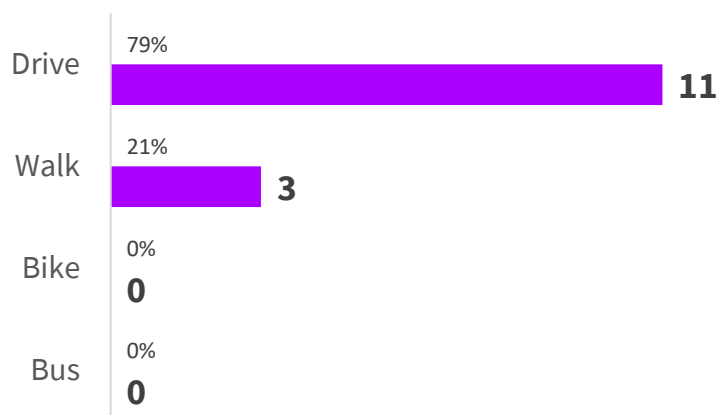
# Business Sector

## Q1. What area is your business involved in?



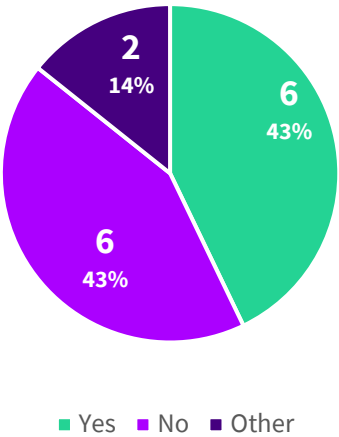
Just over a third (36%) of business-sector respondents were involved in the food and beverage industry. Another 29% each came from the services and medical services sectors.

## Q2. How do you think the majority of your customers get to your premises?



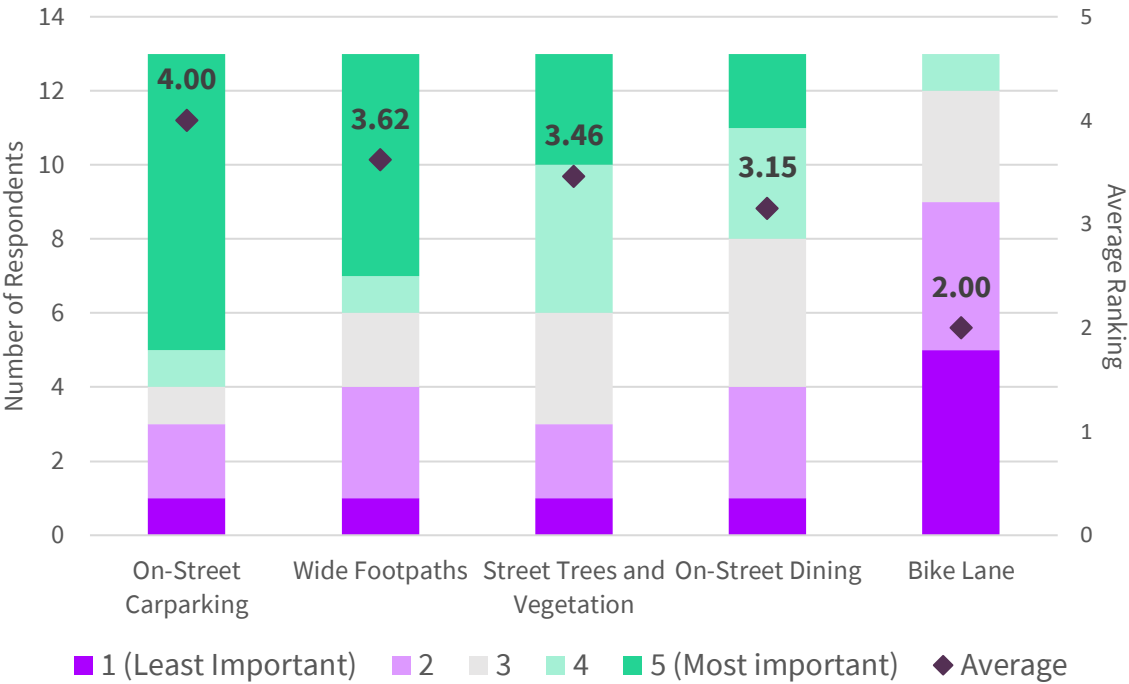
More than three-quarters (79%) of business-sector respondents believed that the majority of their customers get to their establishment by driving — slightly less than the 93% who said they usually travel to Kingston CBD by car in Q1 of responses from the general public (see p. 5).

Q3. Will your business be impacted by removal of on street parking in Kingston?



Removal of street parking in Kingston appeared to have an equally positive and negative effect on the business sector, as six respondents each chose “Yes” and “No” to this question. One respondent who chose “Other” said they were unsure, while the other said the more parking available, the better.

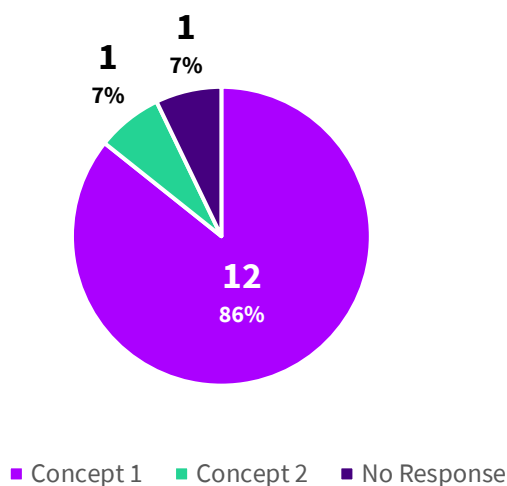
Q4. How important are the following features to you in the upgrade of Kingston’s Main Street?



On-street parking was, by far, the most important feature for business-sector respondents as it relates to the upgrade of Kingston's Main Street. Conversely, bike lanes were the least important consideration, with no respondents assigning the highest priority level to this feature.

### Q5. Which of the two Design Concepts would be the most attractive and engaging for you?

- ⇒ **Concept 1 - The uphill bike lane is located on the outside of the allocated parking space and bus zone. There are 19 parking spaces.**
- ⇒ **Concept 2 - The uphill bike lane is protected, running on the inside of the bus stop. There are 10 parking spaces.**



Unlike the general public, nearly all (86%) business-sector respondents preferred Concept 1, which allowed for more parking spaces.

#### Q5.1 Why is this your preferred option?

Virtually all business stakeholders cited the availability of more parking spaces for customers as their main reason for supporting Concept 1. One respondent preferred Concept 2 because it includes more trees and would be safer for bike riders.

**Q6. Are there any other comments you would like to add?**

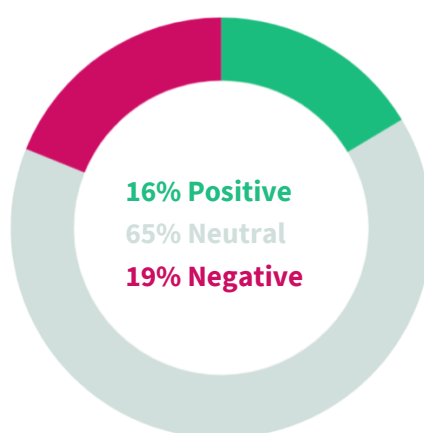
Of the four respondents who shared other comments, two said that parking in the CBD is often a struggle, even for business owners and employees. Another said that it would be unfair to prioritize bike infrastructure for the average cyclist above the needs of the more common need for parking space.



# Social Media Discourse

Between September 2021 and January 2022, online conversations about the [Transform Kingston project and the Kingston CBD](#) amassed 3K interactions, accounting for approximately 4% of the Council's discourse during the five months. At 84%, the overwhelming majority of interactions took place on the Council's Facebook page.

## Sentiment Overview: Transform Kingston



As depicted in the graph above, during the entire five months, negative sentiment in the discourse slightly outweighed positive sentiment (19% and 16%, respectively). However, resident satisfaction with the enacted and proposed changes to the area has lessened over time.

When the Council installed a temporary roundabout in central Kingston in September, positive sentiment measured nearly 3x negative sentiment (31% and 11%, respectively). Overall, residents [welcomed the roundabout](#) and believed it would be a beneficial addition to improving road safety in the community.

In January, when the Council solicited residents' responses for the Transform Kingston survey, the ratio flipped, as negative sentiment nearly tripled positive sentiment (26% and 9%, respectively). In the past month, resident dissatisfaction stemmed primarily from commenters expressing worry about the removal of parking spaces (especially the John St. carpark) and criticizing the Council's spending priorities.

## Conclusion and Takeaways

- ➊ More of the general public supported Concept 2 — which would include a protected bike lane at the expense of more parking spaces — but the opposite was true for the business sector. Whereas supporters of Concept 2 cited the benefits of enhanced safety, supporters of Concept 1 preferred having more parking spaces in the CBD.
- ➋ Concerns about limited parking also manifested online and were the leading driver of negative sentiment in conversations about Transform Kingston in the past month.
- ➌ Locals use cars to get to the Kingston CBD far more than bikes, indicating that the driving and parking infrastructure impacts a greater number of community members.
- ➍ The importance of parking availability was also reflected in responses to the closed-ended questions, as on-street parking was the most important feature for business-sector respondents and the second-most important for the general public. Conversely, on-street dining availability was far less important for both groups.
- ➎ Although to a lesser extent, a desire to see more green spaces and vegetation also emerged as a priority in the public's responses to closed-ended and open-ended questions. Both supporters of Concept 1 and 2 expressed a desire to make sure that central Kingston is aesthetically pleasing for the community.
- ➏ Finally, some used their free-text responses to advocate for an improved pedestrian, biking, and driving infrastructure throughout the Council — not just in the Kingston CBD.

