



WCE WINDSOR CIVIC ESPLANADE

City of Windsor What We Heard Report

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Overview

This document is a summary of everything heard from the community through the course of the public engagement process for the Windsor Civic Esplanade project, conducted December 2020 – February 2021.

Engagement is about making connections and providing space for everyone to share input about what they envision for the project. The feedback should be used to direct the design of the project and help weigh priorities as the design and planning develop. Staff from Glos Arch + Eng and FORREC met with various departments of the City of Windsor, as well as community stakeholder groups to gather information critical to the project's design. The list below comprises the engagement activities to date:

1) Online Engagement

www.windsorcivicesplanade.ca

Website acts as a one-stop portal for all project information, updates, and engagement tools for the life of the project.

Current Documents Publicly Available:

- Project Brief
- Project Overview
- Benchmarking Study

Engagement Tools:

- Interactive Map (62)
- Idea-Sharing Bulletin Board (43)
- Survey #1 (313)
- Email registration for updates
- Direct email to Project Team

2) Project Awareness Campaign

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube

Graphic content and captions provided to City of Windsor Communications Department for circulation and promotion at the appropriate times

3) Focus Groups (Internal)

City of Windsor – Parks Development & Operations

City of Windsor – Information Technology

City of Windsor – Culture, Recreation & Special Events

City of Windsor – Environmental Sustainability

City of Windsor – Facilities

4) Focus Groups (External)

Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative (DWCC)

All Saints Church

Downtown Windsor Business Improvement Area (DWBIA)

Art Gallery of Windsor

WindsorEats

St. Clair College

University of Windsor

Windsor International Film Festival (WIFF)

Association des Communautés Francophones de l'Ontario Windsor Essex

Chatham Kent (ACFO WECK)

Ontario Tourism Windsor

Walpole Island First Nation

Black Council Windsor-Essex

Essex County Black History Research Society

Through our engagement process our team learned that the desire, support and enthusiasm for a connective, meaningful, flexible and useful space in Windsor's downtown is tremendous. We heard businesses, community groups, institutions and individuals overflow with tangible ideas of how the Civic Esplanade could capture all that downtown Windsor is, has been, and could be. We heard immense desire for partnership in keeping this place alive and full of people.

We learned that the Esplanade, as a series of existing spaces, is **a space that many people don't know exists**. We learned that those that are aware of it, would struggle to find reasons to spend time there.

And yet, we also heard overwhelming need and desire to connect the pieces of our downtown. We heard overwhelming need for small and mid-sized gathering space. We heard a desperate cry for more green space and more trees. We heard overwhelming desire to establish a meaningful and Windsor-specific sense of place. We heard enthusiastic hunger for a comfortable space that pulled together a cohesive vision of all that this City has to be proud of.

As an indicator of the opportunity this project presents as a **catalyst for renewal** in the downtown, the results of our engagement process could not be more compelling.

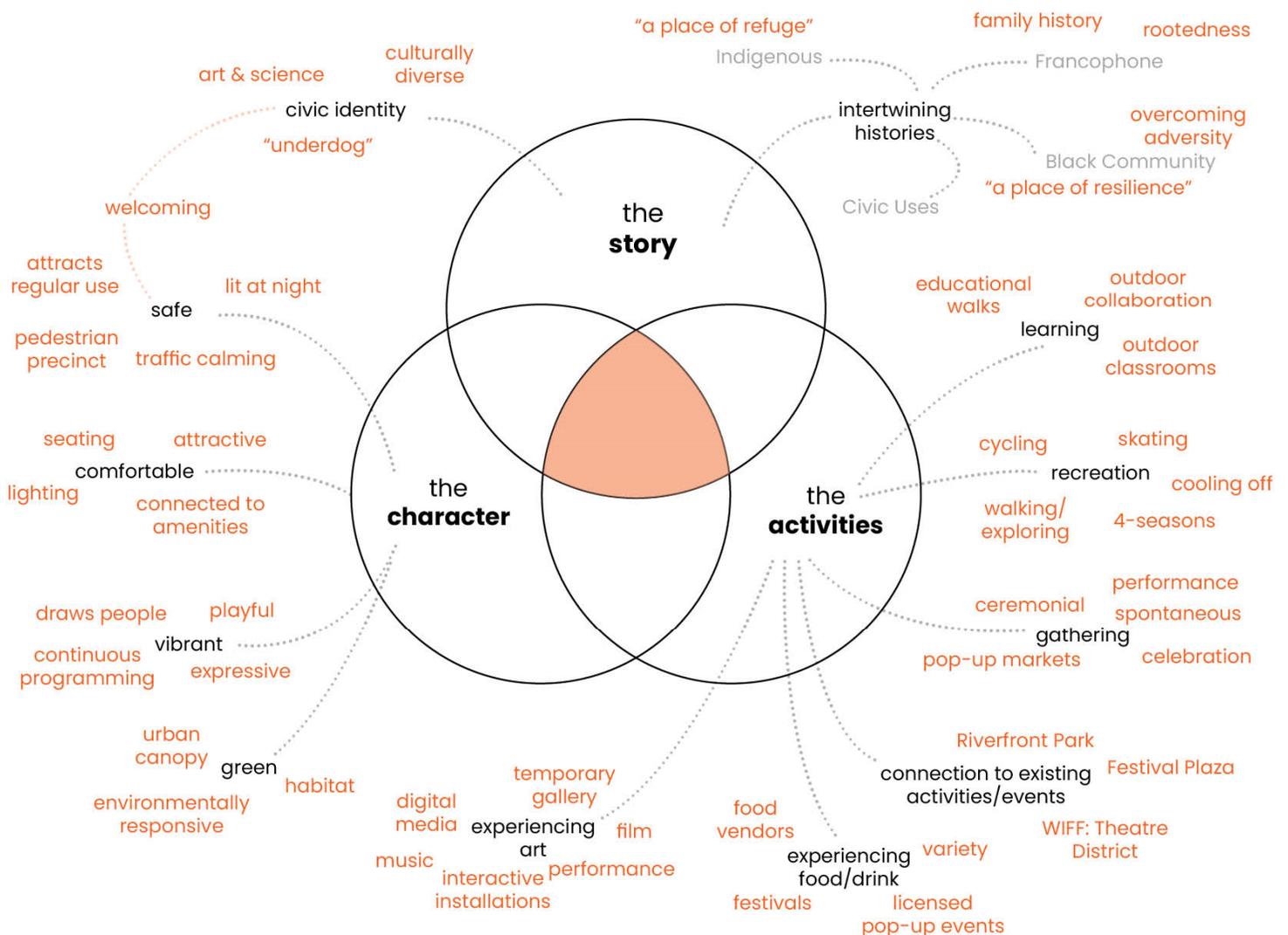
We listened to hundreds of interwoven stories of what this place means to the community and how that might be reflected in how the space comes to life. The depths of the public engagement, including focus groups, online engagement tools and survey data is captured in the pages to follow.

Engagement Summary

In the pages to follow, you will see that the feedback we received was thorough and broad. To begin to translate this feedback into meaningful action items for the design team, it's helpful to cluster ideas into ideas that contribute to 3 focus areas:

- 1) the **story** of the place: its history & its meaning, past, present & future
- 2) the **character** of the place: how it should feel; what the "mood" should be
- 3) the **activities**: what do people do here?

It is in the convergence of these 3 areas where a responsive design will emerge.



These discussions focused on Programme Elements included in the Project Charter that has been pre-approved by council as part of the scope of the project, and also weighed priorities for **possible** or **optional** features, gathering ideas for additional needs, considerations and desires.

General

- urgent need to attract people downtown (improve business & sense of safety)
- urgent need to connect the assets that already exist in and around the downtown (BIA businesses, Riverside park, theatres, schools, services, etc.)
- urgent need to make pedestrian and cyclist travel feel safer, more connected, and fully accessible
- high priority on removing barriers for user groups to ensure regular activation of the space; consideration of permitting process and potential for “Community Programming Partners”
- high priority on North-South connection between separate blocks (for safety, connectivity and spatial impact)

- high priority on flexible spaces that foster spontaneous gathering and passive programming
- high priority on flexible event space with electrical service, AV & water
- high priority on inclusive space; “a space for all”: fully accessible, all-ages, all races & ethnic groups, consideration for sensory needs, and non-discriminatory of gender identity or sexual orientation
- high priority on ease of maintenance and operations
- high priority on story-telling and place-making given the site’s significance, history, and presence of public art, landmark and memorials

- strong desire for ample greenspace and urban canopy; shade
- strong desire for something for adult population, young professionals, etc. who typically rely on stateside entertainment
- strong desire for temporary/pop-up vendors
- strong desire for the space to strengthen sense of civic pride
- desire for the space to feel both playful & ceremonial
- desire for features that encourage 4-season use (warming/cooling features)

When prompted “When I think about the possibility of transforming the Esplanade to a vibrant public space, I am most excited about:”

80% selected “Enjoying local Windsor food vendors”

66% selected “Having a vibrant open space to meet up with a friend and explore”

66% selected “Enjoying performances (music, theatre, art)”

(Survey #1, Question 15)

The Story

Cultural History

- strong desire to honor interwoven histories and cultures that are represented on the site and in its history (specifically Indigenous, Black & Francophone)
- strong desire for historical expression to not be “stuck in the past” but connecting past, present & future
- strong desire for bilingual signs of at least French & English, but potentially also to include other languages common in newcomers, such as Arabic.
- strong desire to relocate French monument to be connected to gathering, celebration & flag raising space; also visibly connected to primary public circulation
- symbols, stories & materials identified as meaningful by the **Indigenous community**, as represented by members of Walpole Island First Nation, for consideration in the design:

“Windsor is and has been a place of refuge.”

- Three Fires, representing the three-fires confederacy: Ojibwe, Odawa, Potawatomi
- Story of A Dish with One Spoon, expressing the need for many to share the resources of a place
- integration of historical ecology, determining what plants used to be here, and returning the site in some way back toward its historic ecology
- Story of the Grandfather Stone
- Recognition of Treaties that remain in place
- Talking circles
- 5 ecologies (Coastal waterways, Wetlands, Tallgrass prairies, Oak Savannas, Carolinian Forests)

- symbols, stories & materials identified as meaningful by the **Black community**, as represented by the Black Council of Windsor and the Essex County Black Historical Research Society, for consideration in the design:

"We want to see history through the lens of the oppressed not the oppressor"

- stories of resilience, and overcoming
- local Black artists
- opportunities for pop-up vendors to share culture through food
- showcase history of Black community and thriving businesses that used to occupy the site
- celebration of African heritage
- space for dance & music

- symbols, stories & materials identified as meaningful by the **Francophone community**, as represented by ACFO WECK, for consideration in the design:

- Jesuit Pear Trees
- Bilingual Signage
- Franco-Ontarian Flag
- Green & White
- Fleur de Lis & Trillium
- Water features (symbolizing arrival by boat & canoe and dependence on water for agriculture and fishing)

Landmarks / Monument / Sculpture

Existing

- Memorial Cenotaph
- Senator David A. Croll Park
- Inuksuk
- All Saints Church
- French Monument (strong desire for relocation for gathering & flag raising)
- Micah 6:8 wall inscription
- Freedom Tower (underground railway commemorative monument)
- Curved Wall (currently in storage)
- **this is not a complete list**

Opportunities

- strong desire for recognizable landmark
- strong desire for a photo-worthy beacon or space
- desire for playful public art
- desire for interactive public art
- desire for collaboration with the arts, theatre, music and digital media programs at University of Windsor and St. Clair College
- desire to better express indigenous history of the site (focus group required)



The Character

Look & Feel

- existing site is very windy, desire to mitigate
- existing site gets very hot (concrete + no shade), desire to mitigate, particularly to make space inviting for all ages
- existing site feels bare & alienating, desire to mitigate
- strong desire to foster spontaneous gathering and ongoing activity
- strong desire for intuitive landmarks & a strong visual sense of place
- strong desire for ample vegetation & trees
- desire to spark civic pride & sense of identity/vision
- desire to create a "culture of the space" of show/play/wander/watch
- desire for expressive murals, bright colors and public art

"That site, in relation to the downtown, is like the back terrace of a restaurant.
You didn't even realize it's there but it's actually pretty great."

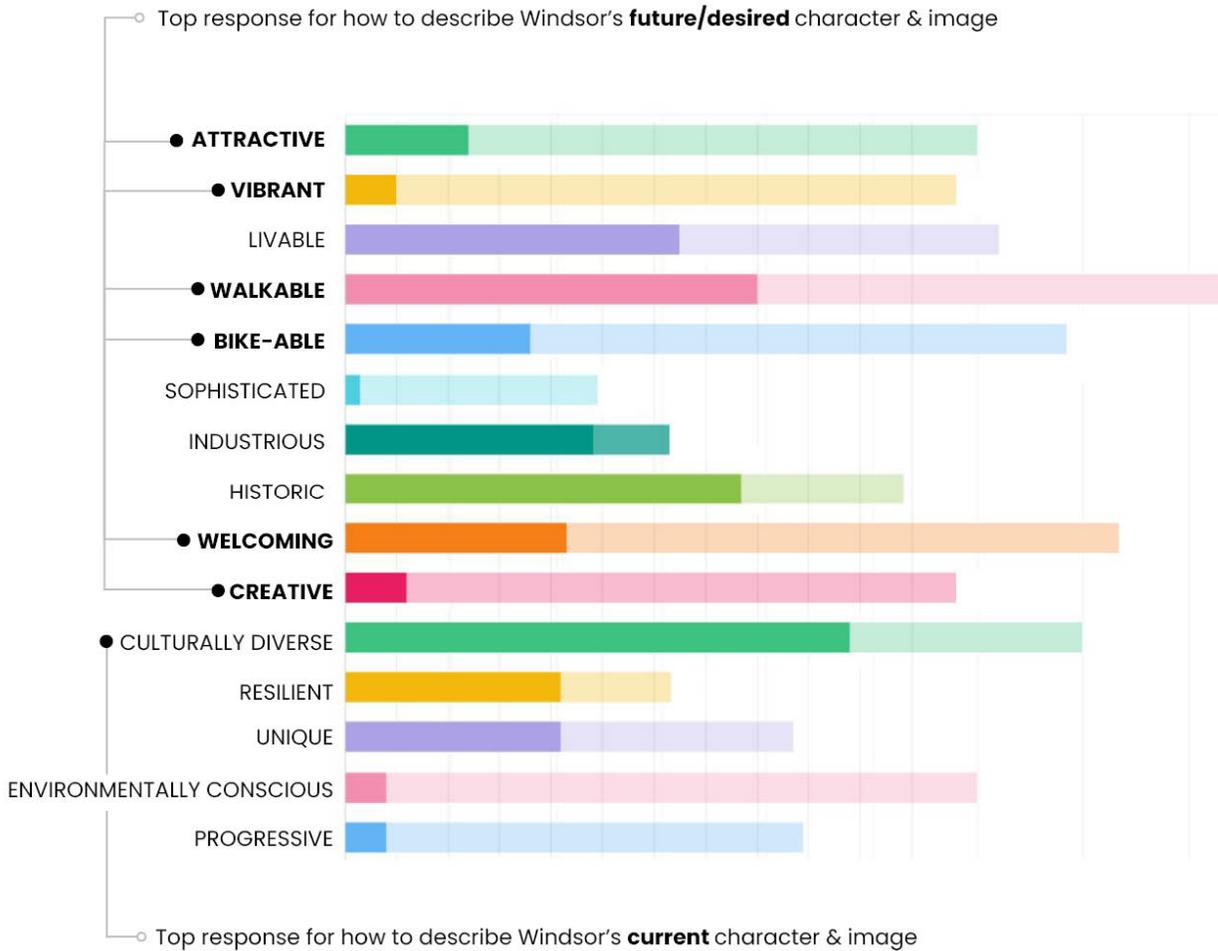
"Downtown Windsor feels like a parking lot.
We want to make downtown feel magical."
(focus group participants)

Civic Character & Image

- many spoke with a strong desire to bolster positive self-image & portrayal of what the city has to offer
- strong desire to showcase Windsor as a nexus of art & science
- strong sense of pride in Windsor's cultural diversity
- strong desire to make downtown Windsor feel more welcoming & inviting
- strong desire to showcase Windsor's unique character as an "underdog"
- strong desire to have a strong identifiable landmark that people associate with downtown Windsor

The chart below illustrates the survey data from 2 questions: *(Survey #1, Questions 6 & 7)*

- 1) When you think of Windsor's **current** civic character & image, what comes to mind?
(shown in solid colors)
- 2) When you think of Windsor's **future** civic character & image, what comes to mind?
(shown as faint colors)



Connectivity

Pedestrian

- difficulty connecting pedestrian traffic from Riverside Trail to the rest of downtown is having economic implications on downtown businesses; Riverside feels like a barrier.
- existing crossings at University, Chatham, Pitt, & Riverside do not feel pedestrian-friendly, strong desire to have pedestrian movement prioritized
- strong community desire for “pedestrian precinct”

Cycling

- difficulty in connecting cycling traffic from Riverside Trail to the rest of downtown
- existing conditions of downtown Windsor do not feel safe and continuous for cyclists (especially moving N-S), strong desire to mitigate
- strong desire to connect the Esplanade (running N-S) to Riverside Trail (running E-W) to connect safe cyclist network into core.
- strong desire for secure bike racks and/or bike lockers (potential for partnership with local artists)
- strong desire for continuous, protected bike path
- some desire for bike & scooter rentals

“The safest way to get around on your bike is along the riverside, but that shouldn’t be the only way to get around – it doesn’t connect to anything.”

(focus group participants)

Transit

- consideration for how this site connects to transit routes

Cars

- urgent need to prioritize pedestrian movement to ensure safety and continuity
- strong consideration for how some E-W roads could be temporarily closed for special events
- need for safe drop-off at University
- strong desire for more parking, and free parking; consideration of overall parking needs for new programming

Environmental Stewardship

- Sustainability, resilience and climate change mitigation are priorities for the space. Where possible, these features should be visible and integrated into the design.

86% of survey respondents agree that the Esplanade should be **environmentally conscious**

Flood Mitigation

- existing site is prone to flooding; design must mitigate
- prioritize permeability and stormwater management
- consideration of low-impact development principles for stormwater management (to be balanced with maintenance objectives)

Thermal Comfort

- Windsor has 100 days over 30°C; surface temperatures get high
- space will get more used if shade & thermal comfort are prioritized

Energy Conservation

- desire to use heat-recovery to harness heat loss from rink equipment (either to run ice-melting or heat concession building)
- desire to calculate lifecycle carbon footprint as part of project costing
- consideration for targeting net zero embodied energy

On-Site Renewable Energy

- integration of on-site solar and/or wind energy
- lighting
- bus stops
- sculpture/art (solar trees, microturbines, etc)

Transportation

- e-scooter & e-bike charging & rentals
- secure bike parking
- EV car charging
- prioritizing safe & continuous cycling routes to encourage cycling connectivity throughout the downtown

Vegetation

- strong desire for ample greenspace & trees
- strong desire for greenspace to set the tone of the space, rather than hardscape
- desire for Indigenous species, and reliance on historical ecology

**86% of survey respondents agree that
the Esplanade should
prioritize greenspace & trees**

(Survey #1, Question 13)

Existing

- Heritage Garden (decommissioned fountains & plantings)
- Senator David Croll Park (significant canopy)
- Civic Green at Freedom Tower (formal landscaping)
- shallow soil (12-18") over parking garage in block between Chatham & Pitt

Plantings

- City desire for low-maintenance vegetation
- desire for 4-season plantings
- desire for "rewilding" or consideration for restoring habitats
- opportunity to integrate vegetation strategy with storm water management
- desire for "garden look" and a return of significant greenspace
- desire to convert Charles Clark Square into passive greenspace after decommissioning of existing rink
- consideration for pollinator garden and/or sensory garden

Trees

- strong priority on high-caliper, long-life trees to provide significant shade, wind protection & urban canopy
- consideration of significant sub-surface infrastructure (eg. SilvaCells) to support more mature, long-life trees
- Environmental Department to provide insight on what species of trees should no longer be planted
- consideration for tree bosque / alley
- Jesuit Pear trees considered meaningful to Francophone community as 12 were originally gifted and planted symbolizing the apostles
- desire for blooming trees such as magnolias

Infrastructure

Lighting

- strong desire for site to be lit at night
- desire for lighting to be warm and not clear-white to be inviting

90% of survey respondents agree that
the Esplanade should be
well lit at night

(Survey #1, Question 22)

Site Furnishings & Fixtures

- tables & chairs (preference for moveable furniture balanced with concerns about being tamper-proof)
- benches
- bike racks (opportunity to partner with local artists)

Rink Infrastructure

- existing rink is end-of-life and is to be decommissioned
- mechanical room is too small
- underground pipes are difficult to maintain & repair, consideration for service trenches
- consideration for boards: do we need them at all? If we have them, ensure they can be easily carried by 2 people & stored nearby
- Zamboni storage required
- Snow storage with infrastructure for melting (especially snow from Zamboni)
- Vendor space

Parking

- current parking feels inadequate and unclear
- desire to reimagine councillor parking
- desire for EV charging stations

IT / AV

- significant AV support required for events & gatherings to maximize flexible use options and programmability
- consideration of Smart City features to support “Campus Concept” (lighting, audio, wifi, signage, wayfinding, information), only if it can be pursued without any proprietary systems or contracts (exploration of what is working in other Ontario cities would be helpful)
- strong priority for any technology to be generic and independent of a service contract with a particular provider.
- Front-end users of Audio/Visual equipment will need to be coordinated by the City. This is not the role of the IT Department and further discussion of how this can happen is required.

Maintenance

- snow clearing currently relies on haul-away service since there is no room for snow storage and no on-site melting
- strong consideration for on-site ice melting
- equipment for maintenance and snow clearing are kept on site; we do not need to capture them in our programming
- strong desire to avoid custom or internationally-sourced parts wherever possible, as well as prioritization of local workforce to support installation and repairs
- strong prioritization of easy maintenance, repair & parts-replacement
- strong desire for materials that reduce ongoing maintenance:
 - stainless steel for hardware & misc. metals
 - stamped concrete or groundcover with concrete base, rather than interlocking pavers (heaving)
 - LED lighting
 - furnishings that can't be tampered with

Socioeconomic Considerations

Support for Public Safety

- recognition that the site is adjacent to the Windsor Police Headquarters, and may be the best possible place for things like skateboarding amenities or peaceful protests, as there is built-in visibility to our city's safekeepers

Citizens Experiencing Homelessness

- desire to balance concerns about vandalism, security, and feeling safe with social responsibility to make this space serve all citizens
- discussion of existing uses of spaces by citizens experiencing homelessness (water features for bathing and cooling, for example)

"Right Sizing It" for Windsor

- desire to balance a desire to make a significant urban/civic asset with realistic expectations about Windsor's size and population
- desire to "right size" amenities
- strong consideration for how this area can connect & leverage other well-loved areas and events in Windsor rather than competing with them and ultimately diluting impact (Riverfront Park/Trail, Downtown, Walkerville, etc.)

Policies Impacting Catalyst Potential

- consideration of policies and economic development model to support more small businesses on the ground level of adjacent buildings
- consideration of policies to support more temporary vendors
- consideration of internal support offered by City staff to facilitate use of space and infrastructure/technology

Activities

Day to Day

- strong need for programming that attracts people into the space

- existing site is well used by employees of the nearby buildings who walk the area on their lunch break; strong desire to support & expand this use by drawing more people out into the public space from nearby employers

- existing site is well used by adjacent church; desire to support this use

- existing site is adjacent to many downtown programs of both St. Clair College and University of Windsor, but the space currently lacks programming or food vendors to draw the students to use the space; strong desire to partner with both institutions to facilitate regular use by their arts, music, theatre & culinary programs, as well as to encourage day-to-day use by their students

- strong desire for food carts, food trucks or pop-up/temporary vendors; desire to develop plan that uses temporary vendors to draw more people into downtown & supports other local business

- strong desire for areas to sit / conversation spaces that are inward-facing

- strong desire for areas of rest, repose & reflection

- strong desire for service stubs to facilitate spontaneous “jam sessions”, church gatherings, public speaking, phone charging, etc.

- desire to facilitate street performance / buskers

- desire for heating/cooling zones to encourage more consistent use through Windsor’s extended “shoulder seasons”

- desire for regular exhibition of temporary art (via Art Gallery of Windsor)

- desire to support pet-owners with heating/cooling zones, water stations for animals, and waste disposal stations

- desire for interactive and playful elements, games, recreational areas

- desire for some passive interactive elements to be embedded in the hardscape (eg. Labyrinth, games, etc.)

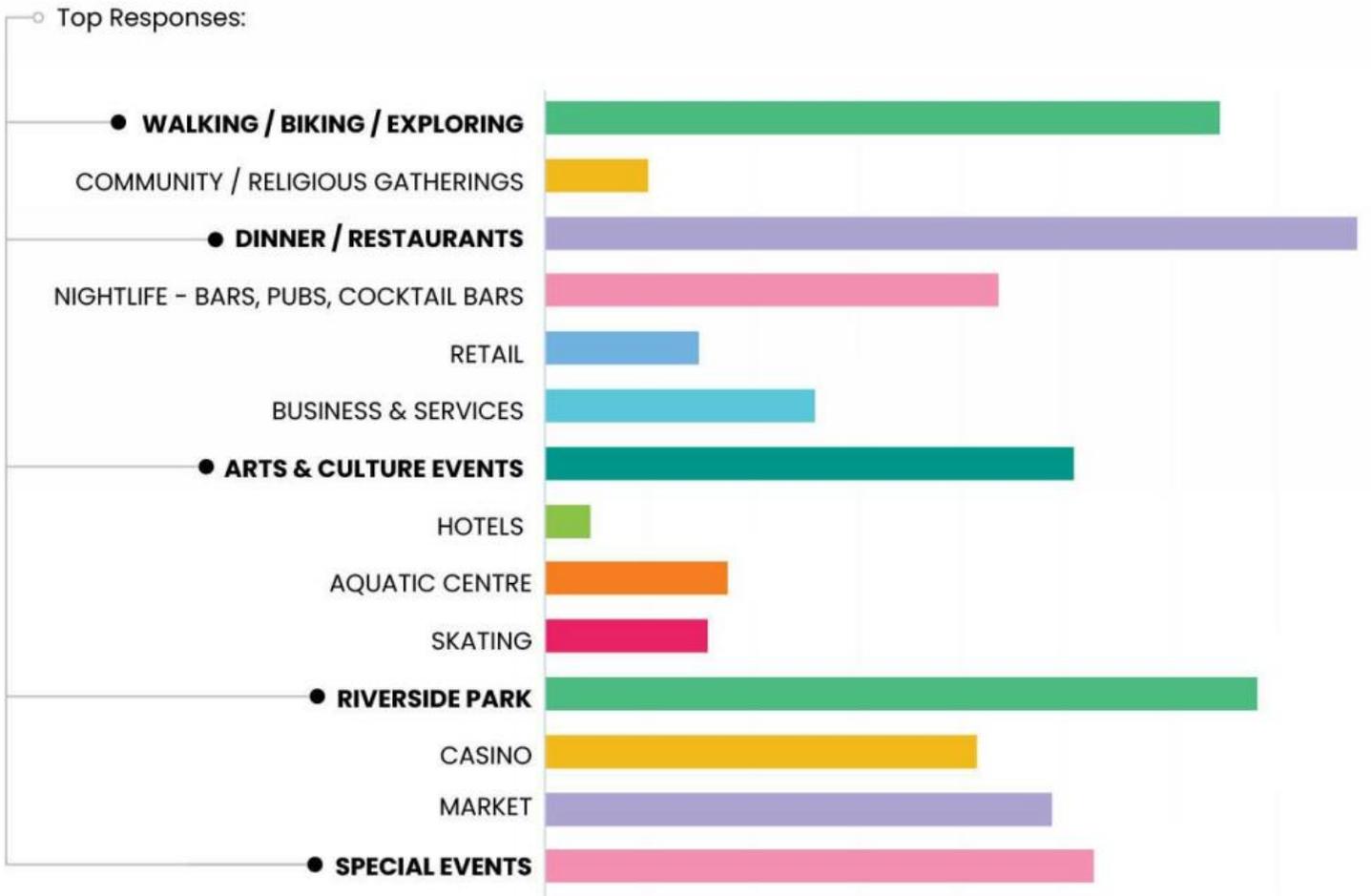
“We want a space that makes it easy to gather people spontaneously, intuitively, just to play.”

“We want to foster a culture of the space that is ‘show, play, wander and watch’.

We want to remove barriers to participation.”

(focus group participants)

What currently brings you downtown Windsor the most?



(Survey #1, Question 11)

Special Events

- strong desire for space for events
 - target mid-sized gatherings, 200-400 ppl
 - AV support for screens, music, speakers, lighting
 - stub-up electrical service
 - infrastructure for securing temporary structures
 - design to support current gatherings:
 - ceremonies
 - open air church services
 - peaceful protests, flag raises, demonstrations, vigils
 - local small/mid-sized events
 - weddings (at City Hall and All Saints Church)
 - design to support projected gatherings:
 - "speakers' corner" / informal gathering space
 - musical performance (smaller scale compared to Riverfront Festival Plaza)
 - food truck market
 - summer market / kiosk infrastructure
 - winter market to support skating rink
 - extension of local festivals
 - outdoor screen for movies and events
 - pavilion for birthday parties, family reunions, etc.
- opportunity to partner with WIFF to strengthen their "Theatre District" initiative
- strong consideration for how to alleviate permitting process to encourage regular use and eliminate barriers to regular use by community groups

Most Well-Loved Special Events in Windsor

(based on survey data – January 2021)

Fireworks Night

Open Streets

Carousel of Nations

Bright Lights

Concerts at the Casino

Art in the Park

Ribfest

Riverfront Carnival

Windsor International Film Festival

Buskers

Windsor Pride Fest

Beer Festival / Whiskey Festival

Current Community Event Needs

All Saints Church

- Open Streets (church hosts full service and choir on the plaza)
- Jazz Nights
- Skate Lending Program
- Open Skate Event & Community Meal
- Weddings

Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative (DWCC)

- Recreational Equipment Lending Sheds

Art Gallery of Windsor

- Temporary Outdoor Gallery
- Temporary Artwork Installations
- Film Screenings

Windsor International Film Festival

- Film Screenings (both at festival and year-round)
- Reinforcement of "theatre district" connecting Chrysler, Capitol & Armories

St. Clair College

- Concerts (small to mid-sized)
- Art shows (grad show, fashion show, musical theatre shows)
- Busker-style performance events
- Student BBQs / food days
- Downtown Scavenger Hunts
- Volunteer Fairs / Job Fairs
- Outdoor Campus Festivals (venue with shade, table, electrical & water)
- Orientation Events (outdoor information pop-ups)

WindsorEats

- Pop-Up Food Experiences/Events
- Bicycle Tours

University of Windsor

- Student Events
- Outdoor Classrooms (groups of 20-30)

ACKFO

- Educational Tours for students
- Citizenship Ceremonies, Canada Day
- St. Jean Baptiste Day
- World Refugee Day
- National Francophone Immigrant Week (November)
- Festival de la Poutine

Food & Beverage / Retail

- consistent recognition that any activation of the site will require more food vendors than currently exist at/near this site
- recognition of the need to find more opportunities for small food vendors
- considerations for market-style vendors:
 - grommets to secure tents to
 - stub-up services for electrical
 - water supply for handwashing (especially post-Covid)
 - consider ease of enclosing a space for licensed or ticketed events
 - desire for some on-site storage for ease of use
- consideration of food truck vendors; City would need to reassess current bylaws
- desire to develop plan that uses temporary vendors to draw more people into downtown & supports other local business
- strong desire for pop-up food vendor events (5000 people)
- strong desire for food event space to relate to greenspace
- strong desire for patios and patio-like conditions
- strong desire for more variety & “grab & go” options

“There’s nowhere to buy a coffee after 6pm”

“Our favorite way to share the cultural diversity of our community is through food.”

(focus group participants)



Rink

- existing rink is end-of-life and is to be decommissioned
- strong desire to treat rink as public art / focal point
- strong desire for rink to be lit at night in a creative/expressive way
- strong design consideration for irregular shape or loop
- strong desire to deter hockey (as an ongoing cause of damage), thus strong consideration for:
 - irregular shape
 - seating, art, or Christmas tree in the centre
 - skating loop or path
- consider relationship to All Saints Church, as they provide free skate lending
- strong desire for a warming area for putting on skates
- strong desire for complementary programming (winter market, film-screening, etc.)
- shade in existing rink location has helped maintain ice, and extend use
- consideration for maximizing useable season in a warmer city, as existing rink is losing weeks off of its operational season due to moderate temperatures through winter and multiple freeze-thaw cycles
- consideration for closing rink off to public when skating conditions are unsafe (related to moderate temperatures noted above)



Water Feature

- water feature is anticipated to be a significant draw to new visitors, especially if supported with complementary programming, F&B, parking, etc.
- strong desire for rink to be lit at night in a creative/expressive way
- strong desire for a reflective pool with interactive splash features integrated into the design rather than inserting a child-focused splashpad
- some desire for a fountain
- consideration for pets; is there a way to include a pet-friendly portion for cooling?
- consideration of the needs of citizens experiencing homelessness; is there a way to provide an outdoor shower in an appropriate location to discourage using the public feature for that purpose?

"This city has so many splash pads – we don't need another one. Can this be different? Can it be not so kiddie?"

(focus group participants)



Other Amenities / Attractions / Activities

- strong desire for walking circuit; consideration for path with distance markers
- playful components for all-ages (eg. swings, interactive features, slides) was heavily preferred to play structures intended only for children
- strong desire to supplement the Glengarry neighborhood's loss of Waterworld; recognition that this community lacks recreation space
- strong desire for markets of all varieties – food markets, art markets, winter markets
- strong desire for digital media show / interactive digital media
- some community interest in skateboard area (whether tricks area, skatepark or pump track)
- desire for shade structures/canopies
- desire for variety of seating areas, conversation spaces, outdoor work spaces, etc.
- desire for outdoor games
- public washrooms required
 - consideration for sizing them appropriately for outdoor licensed festivals
 - consideration for how the public washrooms also serve the needs of citizens experiencing homelessness

Physical Fitness

- Survey results indicate that walking and biking are by far the most desired physical activities this space could support.
- Survey results indicate that while skating, skateboarding, group fitness classes etc., could play a role in activating the space with different user groups and programming, the majority of respondents want to prioritize biking and walking



Notable Takeaways

Our engagement process shed light on some significant opportunities, desires and pressure-points for a project as impactful as this one is primed to be. Noted below are three significant conversations that emerged again and again in a wide variety of interest groups.

Connection to the Riverfront

Almost every single focus group called attention to the possible connection between this project and the Riverfront Park, Trail and Festival Plaza. Independent citizens spoke of how magnetic the Riverfront is, and how they desired better connectivity to the downtown. Cyclists spoke of the Riverfront trail being the best cyclist artery in the City, and how it desperately needs a North-South connection into the core of the City's amenities. Business owners, and event organizers spoke of how challenging it is to draw patronage up from the events on the Riverfront, even when they try to deliberately incentivize it.

Some went as far as suggesting that inverting the entire project's sense of directionality – seeing this space as “Riverfront inward” rather than “City Hall outward”, could radically change the experience of our City's core.

“This space has huge potential to be a tentacle reaching into the heart
of the city from the Riverfront.”

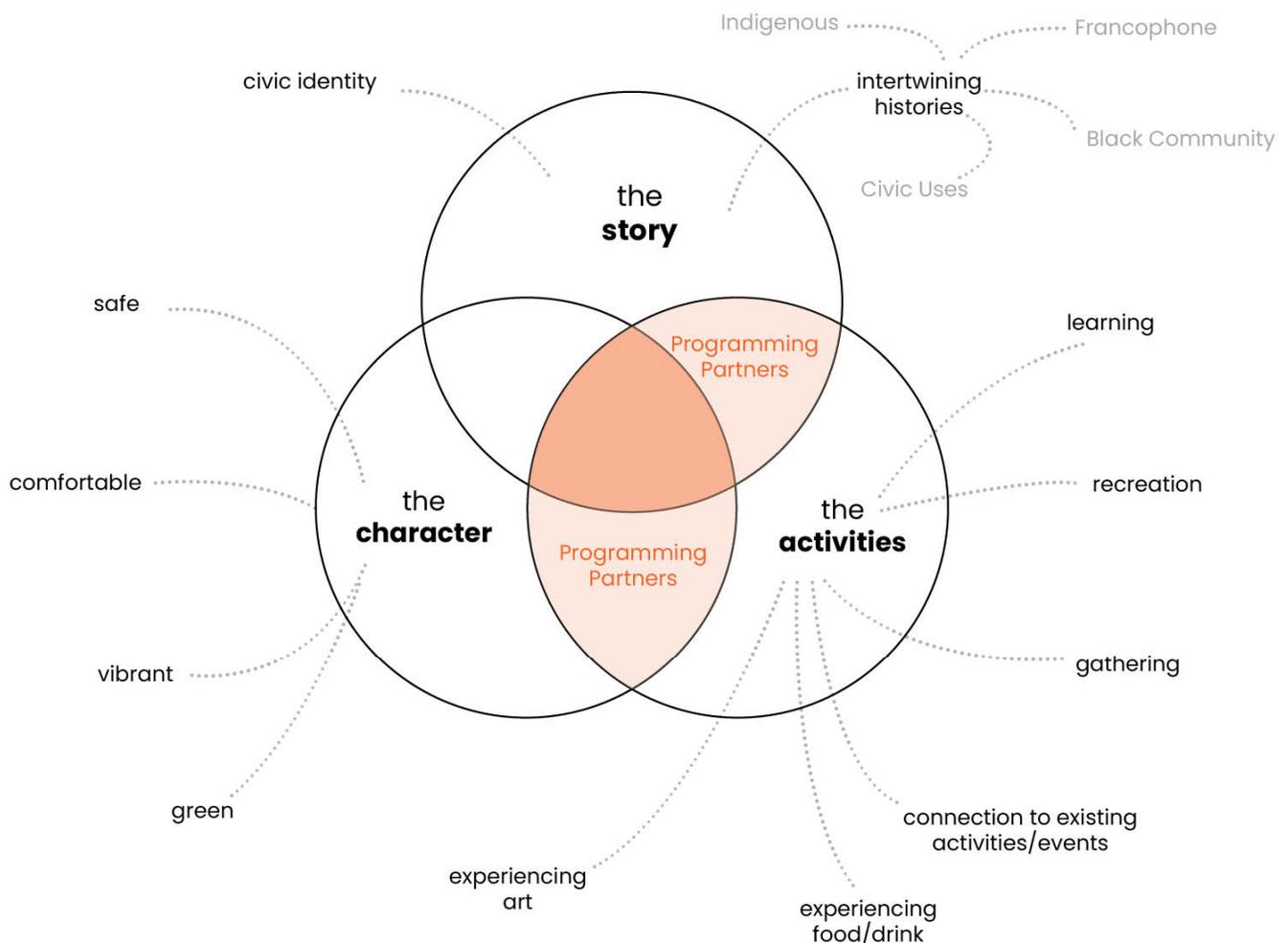
(focus group participants)

Continuous Pedestrian Priority

The contradiction we discussed many times in various groups, was that the opportunity of this site is deeply connective, and yet the current experience of the site is disconnected. The community's desire that emerged again and again through this conversation was to prioritize pedestrian movement to create continuity, a sense of safety and ease of movement, and to create a cohesive sense of place that extends beyond each individual block.

Active Programming Partners

Our engagement process shed light on the need to connect the design of this physical space to the robust network of engaged community groups who have regular need and desire to use it. We recognize that the project’s ongoing vibrancy may hinge on connecting it **operationally** to the enthusiasm and commitment of those in our community who have not only the intrinsic need to use it, but also the motivation and desire to continue to reimagine new ways of activating it and leveraging it as an asset to serve the evolving needs of our community.



Potential Active Programming Partners

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| St. Clair College | Windsor International Film Festival |
| University of Windsor | Downtown Windsor Community Collaborative |
| Art Gallery of Windsor | WindsorEats |

Many community stakeholders – whether businesses, charitable organizations or institutions – asked again and again, “How easy is it to book space here?”. We spoke at length with various community leaders and organizers about how to eliminate administrative barriers to ensure this space is used to its full potential, which in turn will contribute to its ongoing sense of vitality.

Two things became very clear:

- 1) This project is backed by enthusiastic community leaders who have incredible, tangible, realistic ideas for how they would want to use the space on a regular basis, and
- 2) We need to develop a process with interested community partners, so that they have easy access to provide community led programming

This gave rise to the concept of **Active Programming Partners** – a contracted partnership between the City and key top-level stakeholders who have an ongoing need for spaces offered as part of the Windsor Civic Esplanade.

The specific structure of this partnership is unclear at this time, but the goal is to create a model that mutually benefits the City, the community stakeholders and the space itself – by keeping the space activated regularly and diversely, and contributing to a sense of life and energy in the downtown.