



Oshawa Strategic Plan What We Heard Core Elements Report

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Prepared by LURA Consulting
Prepared for the City of Oshawa

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Section 1: Introduction

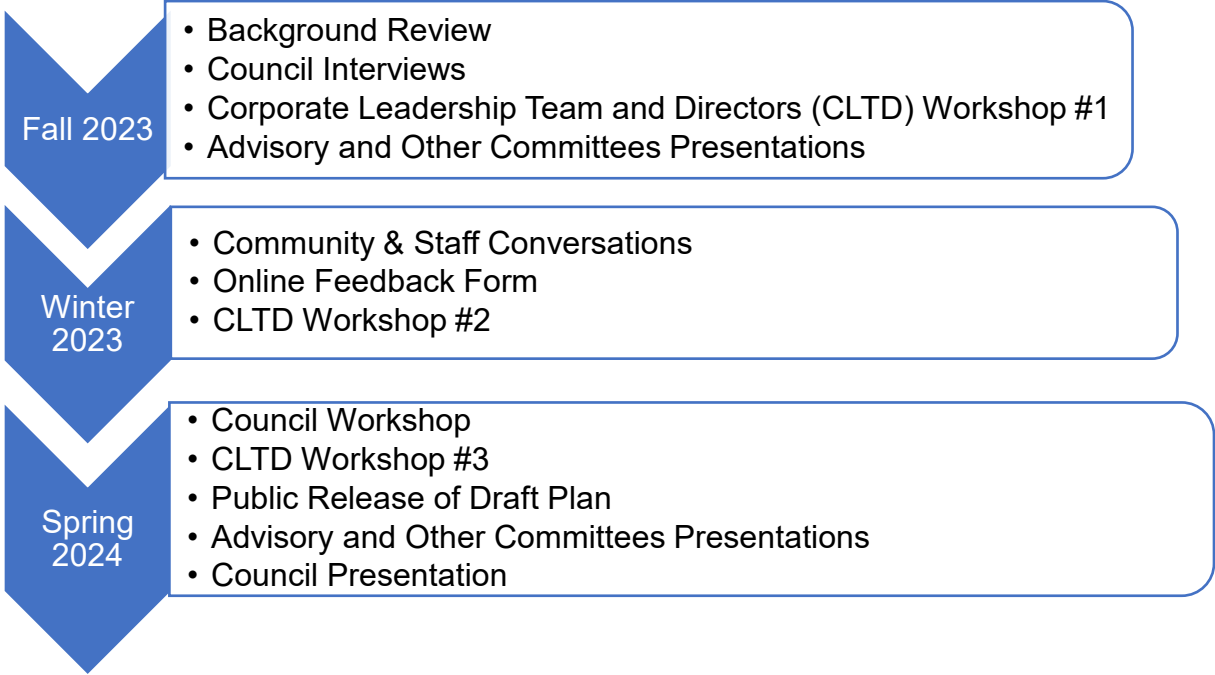
The City of Oshawa is developing a new Oshawa Strategic Plan (OSP) informed by City Council, staff, community partners, businesses, residents, and visitors to serve the local community today and into the future. The new OSP considers the strategic directions from other concurrent city plans, including the Customer Service Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy, and the Plan 20Thirty Downtown Revitalization Action Plan. A review of existing city-wide plans and input from the City's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) advisors will be included.

LURA Consulting worked with the leadership of City staff to implement an engagement and communication process to inform the development of the new Strategic Plan. The engagement aimed to:

- Share information about the Oshawa Strategic Plan process and the importance of the plan for Oshawa residents.
- Inform the development of the new Oshawa Strategic Plan and set a path forward for Oshawa services, projects, programs, and initiatives.
- Gather insights to help shape the vision, mission, and priorities specific to Oshawa.

Section 2: Engagement and Communication Process

Engagement and Communication Timeline



Summary of Engagement Activities

Engagement Activity	Audience	Dates	Number of Events	Number of Participants
Council Interviews	Council Members	October 3 to 12, 2023	9	9
CLTD Workshop #1	Corporate Leadership Team and Directors	October 18, 2023	1	21
Advisory and Other Committees Presentation Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heritage Oshawa ▪ Active Transportation ▪ Environmental ▪ Accessibility ▪ CDEIC <p><i>Note: Unable to present to Animal Care Advisory Committee due to meeting cancellation but information was received through Agenda package</i></p>	October 24 to November 29, 2023	6	50
Staff Sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corporate and Finance Services ▪ Office of the CAO ▪ Community and Operations Services ▪ Safety and Facilities Services ▪ Economic and Development Services 	November 17 to December 7, 2023	9	308
Oshawa Generals Game Pop-Up	Public	November 19, 2023	1	5,726
OSCC55+ Seniors Dance Pop-Up (Fabulous 4th Fridays)	Public	November 24, 2023	1	153
Online Feedback Form	Public	November 10 to December 8, 2023	1	635
Community Partners Session	Community Partners	December 12, 2023	1	18
Total Number of Direct Engagements			29	6,920

Summary of Communication Activities

City staff led an extensive communication program to promote and advertise the OSP. This included:

- Direct mail campaign
- Paid and organic social media
- Digital display signs inside and outside City facilities
- Print signs inside City facilities
- Updated Strategic Plan webpage on www.oshawa.ca
- Homepage feature on www.oshawa.ca
- Email to City Advisory and Other Committees through staff liaison
- Share kit distributed to community partners
- City News notice distributed to local media, community partners and subscribers
- eNewsletters sent to the City's Downtown Oshawa, Inside Oshawa, Connect Oshawa Recreation and Culture subscribers
- Digital ads
- Roadside signs throughout the city and in front of City facility entrances
- Seat stuffers in every other seat at the Nov. 19 Oshawa Generals game

Additional Exposure				
Engagement Activity	Audience	Dates	Number of Events	Number of Participants
Bright and Merry Market Pop-Up	Public	November 16, 2023	1	4,000
Santa Claus Parade Pop-Up	Public	November 24, 2023	1	10,000
Total Number of Additional Exposure				14,000

Section 3: What We Heard

The following provides a high-level overview of the feedback received from engagement activities. The list of inputs for the vision, mission and priorities is presented as a draft list and is informed by a collaborative and inclusive process involving various stakeholders. This draft list has been shaped by input from City Council and staff, residents, visitors and community partners through an online feedback form and strategic planning sessions. This approach ensures that the feedback outlined here reflects a collective effort to address the needs and aspirations of Oshawa communities.

Oshawa's Most Valued Aspects Today

The public feedback form asked what respondents value most about Oshawa today. The input received from respondents highlights key factors that should be considered when crafting Oshawa's vision to ensure alignment between core values today and the

vision statement to guide tomorrow. Table 1 provides an overview of the top five most valued aspects today.

Table 1: Key Insights from Public Feedback: What Oshawa Values Most Today (n=635)

	Top 5 Most Valued Aspects Today	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1.	Access to shopping, restaurants, and entertainment	249	10%
2.	Location within the GTA	223	9%
3.	Quality and number of green spaces and parks	219	9%
4.	Waterfront parks and trails	214	8%
5.	Active transportation (e.g. walking, rolling, biking) and connectivity (e.g. trails, sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.)	196	8%

Inputs for the Vision Statement

Participants from the strategic planning engagement sessions and the public feedback form were asked to provide three words to describe their ideal future for Oshawa. The following section provides a quantified overview of the keywords from the feedback. In total, 954 participants responded to this question.

Safety

- **Safe/Safety** (385 mentions): The most frequently mentioned word, indicating an utmost desire to prioritize a sense of safety.

Economic Growth and Living Conditions

- **Affordable/Affordability** (195 mentions): A significant focus on affordability, especially in the context of housing and living costs.
- **Prosperous** (53 mentions): Aspirations for economic growth and innovation.

Environmentally Sustainable

- **Clean** (176 mentions): A strong emphasis on cleanliness related to both environmental health and urban maintenance.
- **Green** (79 mentions): Reflects a commitment to environmental stewardship and green living.
- **Sustainable/Sustainability** (37 mentions): Responsible use of resources and ensuring current needs are met without compromising the ability of future generations.

Social and Cultural Inclusivity

- **Inclusive/Inclusiveness** (144 mentions): A strong desire for an inclusive community that embraces diversity.
- **Diverse/Diversity** (78 mentions): Highlights the value of cultural diversity and varied social experiences.
- **Welcoming** (50 mentions): Complements the theme of inclusivity, suggesting a community that is friendly and open.
- **Accessible/Accessibility** (43 mentions): Suggests a focus on inclusivity and ease of access for all residents, regardless of physical ability or other factors.

Vibrant and Thriving Community

- **Community** (73 mentions): Signifies the importance of a cohesive and supportive community structure.
- **Vibrant** (55 mentions): Suggests aspirations for a lively city full of cultural and social activities.
- **Thriving** (38 mentions): Suggests aspirations for a successful city characterized by growth, prosperity, and a high quality of life.

Innovative and Progressive

- **Innovative/Innovation** (60 mentions): Points to a future that values creativity, technological advancement, and forward-thinking.
- **Modern** (38 mentions): Indicates a desire for contemporary design, technology, and ideas, reflecting a progressive community.
- **Progressive** (36 mentions): Suggests continuous improvement and embracing change that leads to positive development.

Level of Satisfaction of Services

Participants from the public feedback form were asked about their level of satisfaction with the quality of the City of Oshawa services today. Figure 1 shows that most respondents (78%) indicated that they are very or somewhat satisfied with the quality of City of Oshawa services today, while others (22%) indicated that they are dissatisfied.

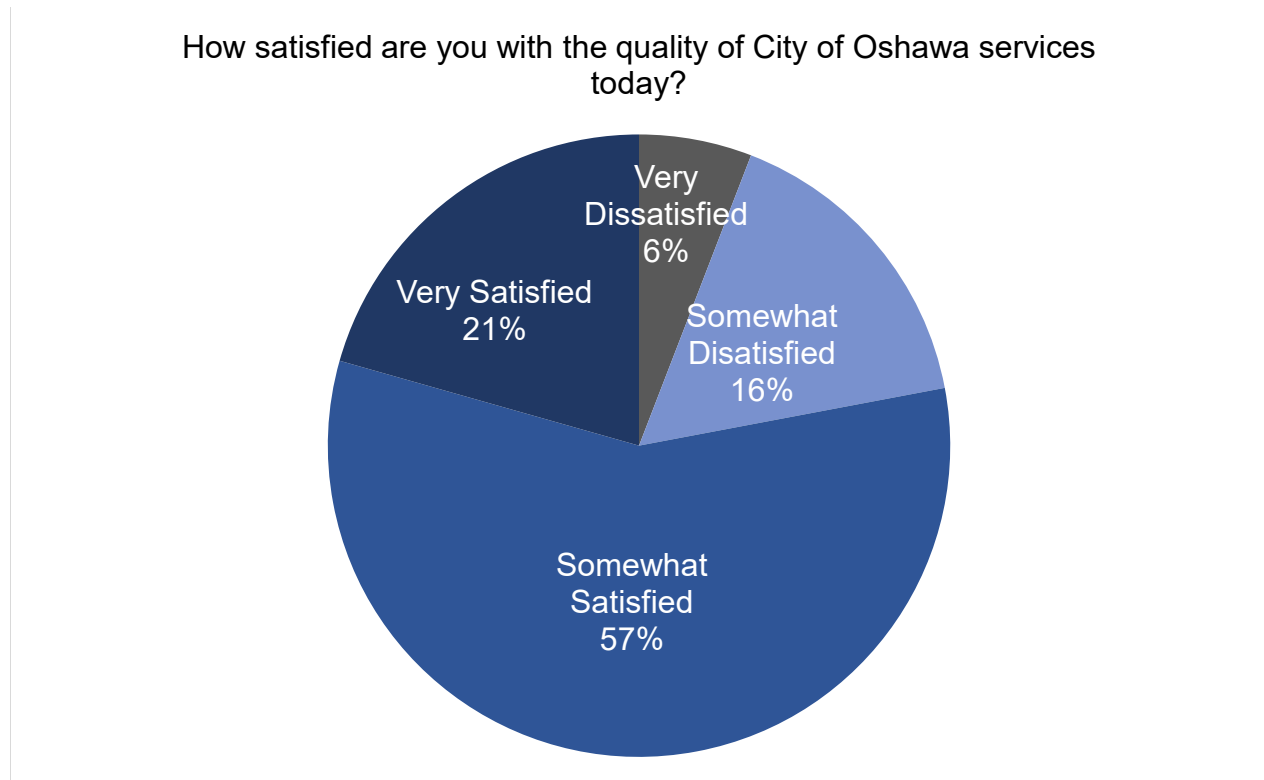


Figure 1: Summary of public feedback on the level of satisfaction with the quality of City of Oshawa services today. (n=631)

Inputs for the Mission Statement

The majority of participants from the strategic planning engagement sessions were generally satisfied with the mission statement from the Oshawa Strategic Plan 2020-2023, while some suggested that the statement does not fully encapsulate the City's mission. The following section summarizes the suggestions and considerations received when participants were asked if the current mission statement 'dedicated to serving our community' reflects what the City does, for whom, and why. In total, 290 participants responded to this question.

Specificity and Clarity

- Many participants find the statement too generic or vague.
- A more precise statement that clearly defines the City's objectives was suggested.

Focus on Diverse Communities

- Some participants highlighted the importance of having a statement that is community-focused.
- It was suggested that the statement should better represent the many diverse communities in Oshawa.

Functional vs. Aspirational

- Some participants highlighted that the statement is functional but not inspiring.
- There is a desire for the statement to be more visionary or aspirational.

Comprehensive Representation of City Roles

- Some participants indicated that the statement does not fully represent the City's role or objectives.

Service Excellence

- It was suggested to emphasize staff's dedication and commitment to working with the community and focus on customer service delivery.
- Several participants highlighted a need for the mission statement to clarify the "why" and place greater emphasis on "who" it is for.

Suggestions and Considerations for the Mission and Vision Statements

The following summarizes the suggestions and considerations received when participants were asked what makes a good vision and mission statement. This feedback served as valuable guidance for crafting strong mission and vision statements that align with Oshawa's priorities.

The top three considerations for the vision statement are as follows:

- Keep it short, concise, clear, and catchy for easy recall.
- Avoid jargon to ensure understandability.
- Balance being aspirational with being realistic, meaningful, and achievable.

In addition to the top three considerations, the following were also noted:

- Community collaboration is crucial, and their support and belief are essential.
- It should be impactful, inclusive, inspiring, purposeful, and engaging.
- Include specific elements and consider geographic relevance.
- Ensure that it is relatable to both the community and the corporation.
- Incorporate innovation and a sense of purpose.
- It should provide guidance and a high-level description of purpose, direction, and culture.

Current Challenges

During one-on-one interviews with Oshawa Councillors and workshops, the following were noted as the biggest challenges facing Oshawa today:

- Perception about Oshawa's image, particularly the downtown area.
- Housing, including affordability and the need for various housing options.
- Support for people experiencing homelessness.
- Social issues such as substance use (including opioids) and mental health.
- Managing growth, infrastructure, and redevelopment of existing neighbourhoods.
- Aging infrastructure, maintenance, safety, and accessibility concerns.
- Geographic challenges related to expansion, service provision, and connectivity.
- Tax concerns and ensuring fiscal sustainability.
- The need for active transportation and multi-use paths.
- Expansion of affordable services along with service improvements.

The public feedback form also asked what respondents think are the biggest challenges facing Oshawa today. The following provides an overview of the top ten themes that emerged.

	Top 10 Challenges Facing Oshawa Today	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
1.	Homelessness and poverty	441	16%
2.	Rise of social issues (e. g. crime, opioids, mental health crisis)	343	12%
3.	Affordability of housing	321	12%
4.	Affordability of taxes and fees	290	11%
5.	Perception about Oshawa's image/reputation	227	8%
6.	Perceived lack of safety	188	7%
7.	Affordability of goods and services	176	6%
8.	Economic development (e.g. jobs, business diversity and investments, tourism, etc.)	126	5%
9.	Traffic and congestion	106	4%
10.	Neighbourhood redevelopment and growth	93	3%

Inputs for Strategic Priorities

Participants from the strategic planning engagement sessions and public feedback form were presented with potential strategic priority areas that the City could focus on over the next two to three years. The potential strategic priority areas are listed as follows:

Environmental Leadership and Climate Action

- Parks, greenspace, sustainable design, climate adaptation and mitigation, etc.

Governance and Service Excellence

- Service delivery, customer excellence, accountability, accessibility, community engagement, leadership, etc.

Inclusive and Healthy Communities

- Growth management, community building, sense of belonging, diversity, wellness, active transportation, recreation, etc.

Vibrant Economy

- Jobs, culture, art, tourism, business diversity, etc.

Participants from the public feedback form and the strategic planning engagement sessions were asked if they think the list of priority areas is right for Oshawa. Most respondents (87%) indicated that they agree or somewhat agree with the list of priority areas, with some respondents (43%) indicating that they would change a few things. A small number of participants (10%) indicated that they do not agree with the list of priorities, and some (3%) indicated that they are unsure.

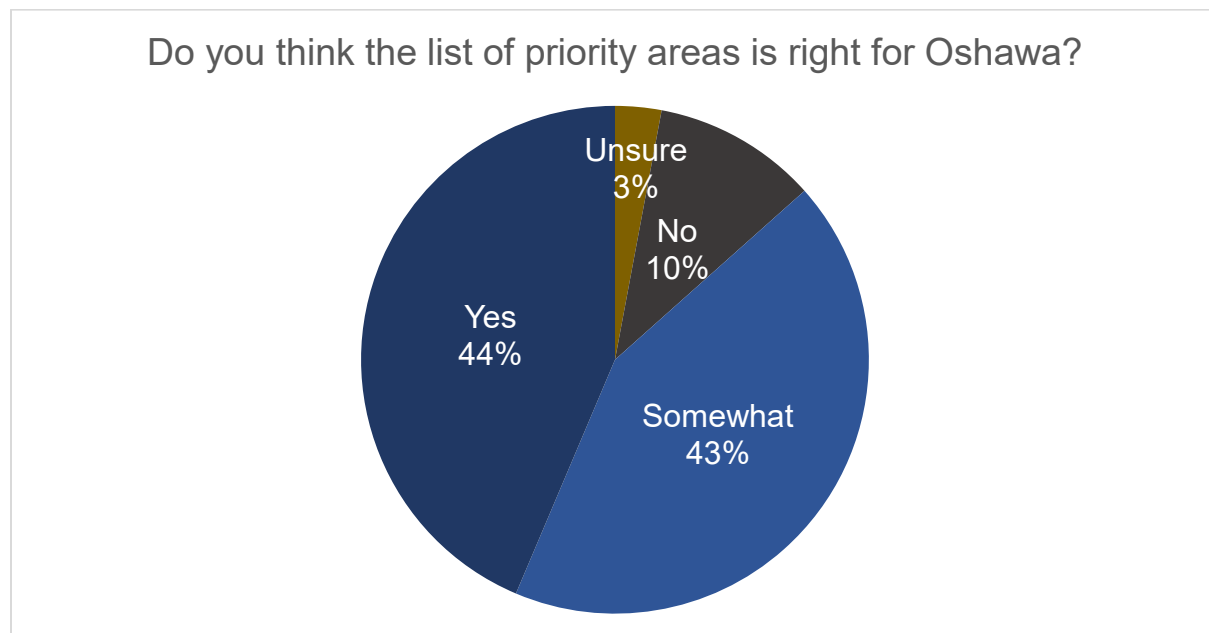


Figure 3: Summary of survey respondents' level of agreement with the list of priority areas for Oshawa. (n=917)

Participants from the public feedback form and strategic planning engagement sessions were generally satisfied with the list of potential strategic priority areas. The following summarizes the suggestions and considerations received when participants were asked if anything was missing from the draft priorities list or if anything should be changed. In total, 643 participants responded to this question.

Safety

- There was a significant emphasis on safety, particularly in the downtown area.
- Homelessness and substance use were noted as concerns in downtown.
- Suggestions include enhancing police presence, emergency services, or safety infrastructure to improve perceptions of safety.
- There were suggestions to include reduced speed limits in certain areas, longer crosswalk lights, and creating quiet zones around sensitive areas like hospitals.

Urban Development

- Many participants mentioned "downtown" and highlighted a focus on the redevelopment and revitalization of the downtown area.
- Several participants expressed concerns about transportation infrastructure, including the need for road expansion and improvements.
- There's a need for new and improved infrastructure to accommodate the growing population, including the addition of grocery stores, apartments, stores, and businesses.
- There's a desire for focused development and revitalization of urban areas and neighbourhoods, including greenspace development.

Diverse Communities

- Many participants mentioned "community", indicating a desire for community-focused initiatives.
- Participants mentioned the importance of inclusivity, diversity, and a sense of belonging and noted a perceived separation between different parts of the city.
- Participants suggested more diverse and equitable services, especially for people with disabilities or members of marginalized communities.
- There were suggestions to focus on arts, cultural, and community events to provide hope and pride for residents, particularly for youth in Oshawa.

Advocate for Housing and Affordability

- Many participants highlighted concerns about affordability of housing and living costs.
- Participants expressed concerns about the general lack of affordable housing options, particularly for those at the lower end of the income spectrum, as well as addressing homelessness and poverty.
- Some suggestions included rent control, affordable housing policies, and increased housing supply or more diverse range of housing options.

- Participants expressed concerns about the rising costs and taxes in the city, comparing Oshawa unfavourably with other areas in terms of services and affordability.

Health Services and Mental Health

- There is a desire for better access to healthcare facilities and mental health support.
- Participants expressed a need for better access to hospitals, walk-in clinics, and other healthcare services, including mental health.
- There was a strong focus on the link between homelessness, mental health, and substance use, calling for actions to address these pressing issues in Oshawa.

Recommendations

During the strategic planning staff engagement sessions, participants were asked what their one big idea is for Oshawa that they believe should be included in the plan. The input received is an initial source of inspiration for recommended ideas for potential actions or strategies to consider. The following provides an overview of the top elements that emerged. In total, 169 participants responded to this question.

Downtown and Community Development

- Emphasis on enhancing the community aspects of Oshawa.
- Suggestions to include more community-focused initiatives and activities.
- Specific mentions of "downtown" and "waterfront" indicate specific interest in these areas.

Sustainable and Safe Transportation

- Numerous responses highlight the need for sustainable transportation solutions.
- Safe modes of transportation are also a recurring theme, suggesting a desire for improved public transit and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

Affordable Housing

- Concerns about affordable housing and variety in housing options.
- A need for policies or plans that address housing affordability and accessibility.

Economic Growth Opportunities

- Interest in fostering economic development, particularly in downtown Oshawa.
- Attracting new businesses, especially in manufacturing industry.
- A focus on job creation and supporting local businesses.

Safety and Security

- Addressing concerns for the sense of safety and security within the city.

A Destination

- Creating a destination or destinations within the city.
- Developing attractions or promoting Oshawa as a tourist destination.

Inclusivity

- A desire for a plan that accommodates all diverse community members.

The public feedback form asked respondents if there is anything else they would like to share as the Oshawa Strategic Plan is being developed. The following provides an overview of the suggestions and recommendations that emerged. In total, 377 participants responded to this question.

- The need for more affordable housing options was greatly emphasized.
- There were suggestions to find innovative ways to revitalize the city, taking inspiration from other cities that have improved community safety and business relations by making areas more pedestrian-friendly.
- Respondents suggested improving infrastructure and promoting better connectivity to Toronto and the airport.
- Participants were concerned with high taxes and suggested tax breaks or additional support for seniors highlighting the financial burden on certain demographics.
- There were concerns about traffic issues, suggesting a need for better traffic management or infrastructure improvements, including improved public transportation options or routes.
- There is a desire for enhanced local facilities to address the lack of social infrastructure or activities available.

Section 4: Next Steps

The City of Oshawa will review the feedback received and use it as one of many inputs to inform the initial draft for the Oshawa Strategic Plan.

Appendix A: Public Feedback Form Demographics

Age of Respondents



Figure A-1: Respondents' answer to "How old are you?" n=622

Legend	Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
n	17 years old and under	2	0%
n	18 to 24 years old	29	5%
n	25 to 34 years old	100	16%
n	35 to 44 years old	152	24%
n	45 to 54 years old	123	20%
n	55 to 64 years old	108	17%
n	65 to 74 years old	84	14%
n	75 years old and above	24	4%

Relationship to Oshawa

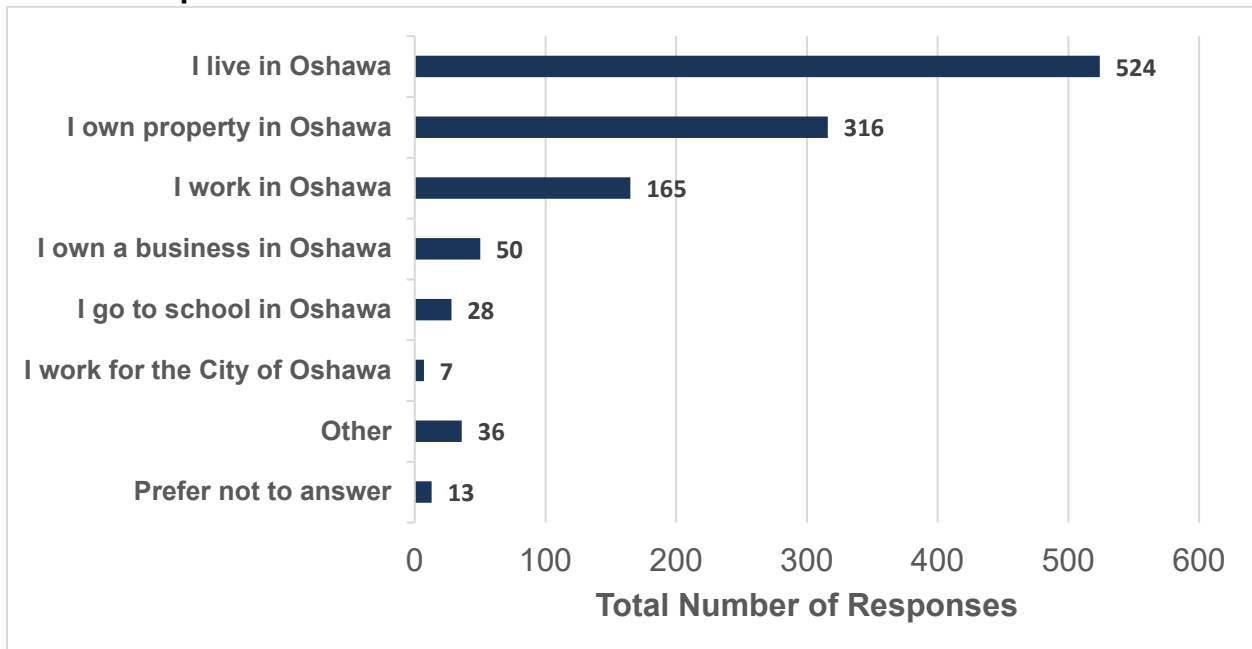


Figure A-2: Summary of survey respondents' relationship to Oshawa. n=1139

Ward Location

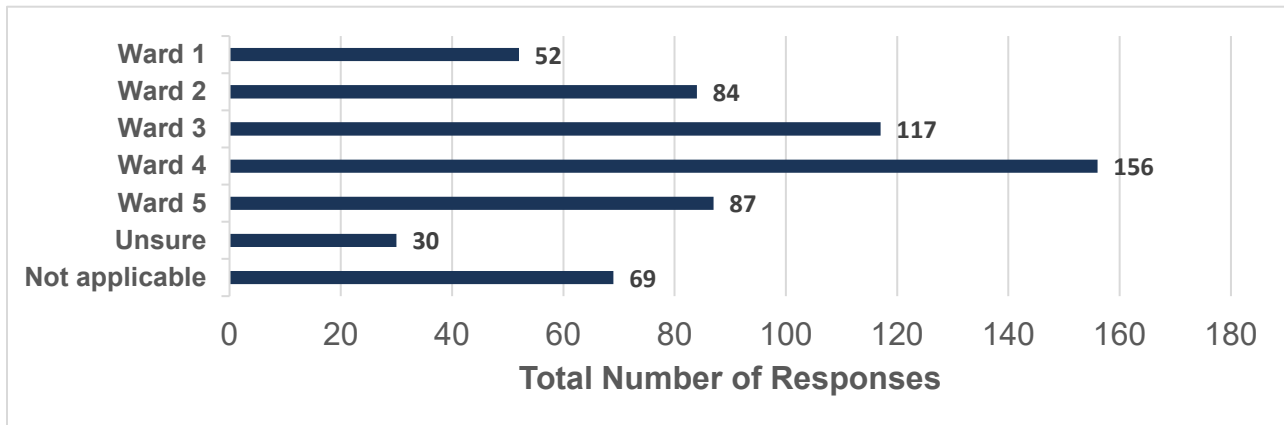


Figure A-3: Respondents' answer to "If you live or own a business or property in Oshawa, what ward is your home, property or business located in?" n=595

How Respondents Found the Public Feedback Form

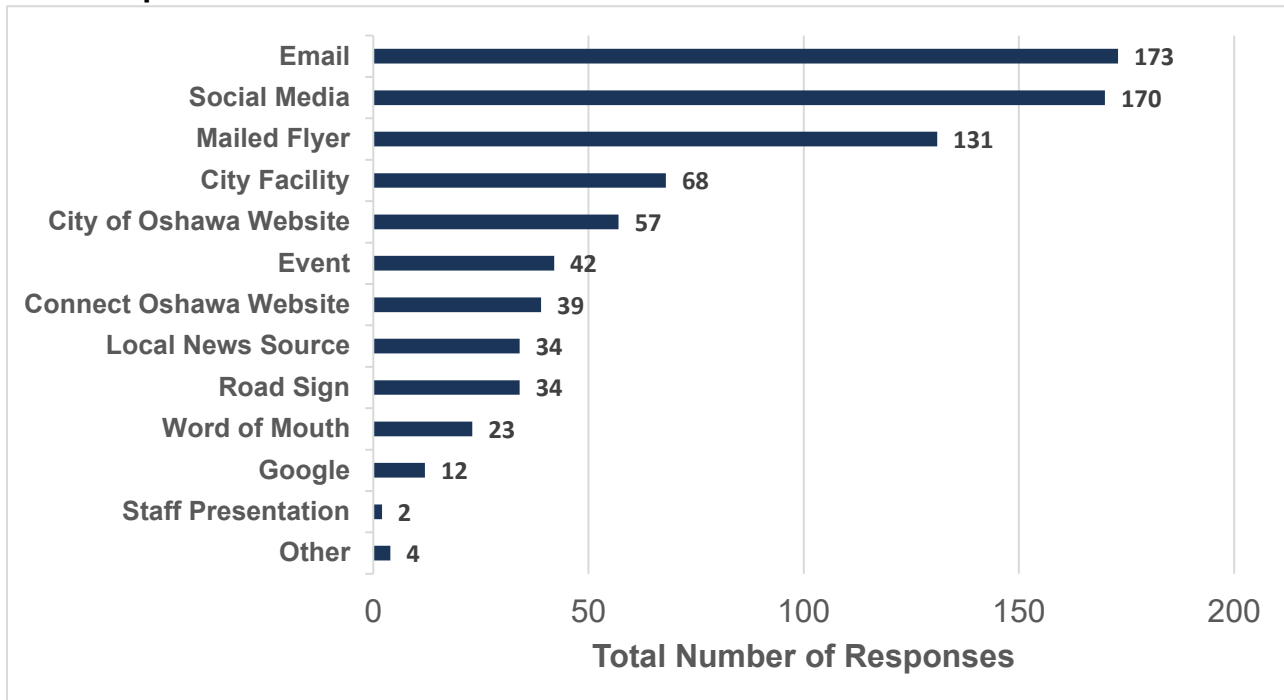


Figure A-4: Respondents' answer to "How did you learn about this community engagement opportunity?" n=789

- Those who selected 'Event' indicated that they found the Public Feedback Form during the Bright & Merry Market, Fabulous 4th Fridays or Oshawa Generals Game.
- Those who selected 'Other' indicated that they found the Public Feedback Form through the Nextdoor App or the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce.