

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign



August 2016
Concept Designs Questionnaire
and Engagement Summary

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign

Background

- The City of Vancouver is redesigning Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley, important public spaces in the heart of Gastown, which is a designated heritage area and a National Historic Site.
- In 2010 the City met with local residents and business to identify their priorities and developed concepts for the square. For the current square redesign, the previous preliminary designs were a stepping off point . The public were asked to share their thoughts on these and other preliminary concepts.
- From June 2 to June 18, 2016, members of the public were able to provide their input on the kick-off events.
- From August 24 to September 24, 2016, members of the public were able to provide their input on the concept designs.

A total **232 people** attended the August Concept Design Open Houses and **187 respondents** provided feedback on the Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley redesign by completing a questionnaire accessible in the following ways:

- Open house events held on August 24 and August 27, 2016 (please see the following page for a summary of the open house events);
- Open invitation to the general public via the Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley Redesign page on the City of Vancouver website;
- and email invitation sent to Talk Vancouver panel members.

Who did we hear from?

- The majority of respondents lived Downtown (64%), and 52% were between 20-39 years of age. An additional 40% were 40-59 years old.
- 34% live in the neighbourhood of Gastown, 26% work in the area and a significant proportion frequented the area for entertainment (61%).

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Summary of Questionnaire Results

The results of the hard-copy and online questionnaire, feedback from conversations at the Concept Design open houses indicated that there is support for both concepts presented. The percentage results of the questionnaire do not show significant favour for one concept over the other. Instead there are some suggestions made through comments which include:

- Work on lighting, signage, public art opportunities as concepts are developed.
- That the next steps suggest ideas for programming
- Keeping the unique 'gritty' character of Gastown in Blood Alley Square.

Summary of Concept Design Open Houses

Hosting the open houses in Blood Alley Square was successful again in being on site and soliciting a lot of interested parties such as the businesses and residents. Many were aware of the project and the open houses and have been keenly following the progress. We were further able to engage with the DTES community who were on site or walking by.

As indicated in the summary of the kick-off events, the consultant team has been engaging with more members of the DTES community through meetings, presentations and workshops. The team will be continuing to meet with stakeholders to solicit feedback and comments. As well, the team has participated in Advisory Committee meetings with the Vancouver Heritage Commission, combined workshop with Urban Design Panel and Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee and will be reporting to City Council.

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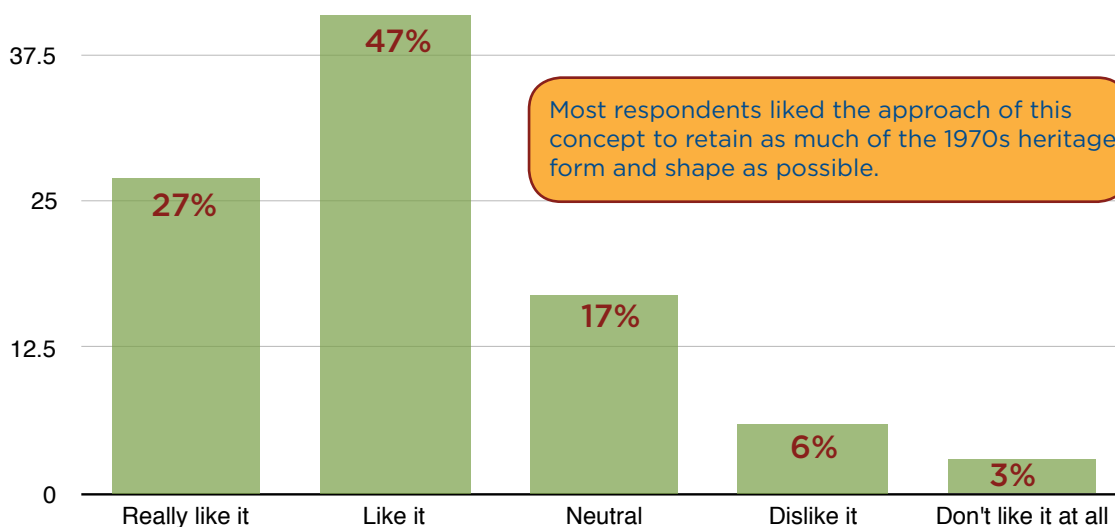
Question 1:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

Concept 1 proposes to retain much of the 1970s heritage form and shape as possible. For instance, the cobble, red brick bands and tree planters are in a similar location as they are today.

What do you think of this approach?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 43% of the respondents include:

- That the design does not retain enough of the history.
- That the 1970s heritage is irrelevant
- Consider other methods to emphasizing heritage other than the triangular brick pattern.
- Consider how the concept can be made more relevant to the historic character.

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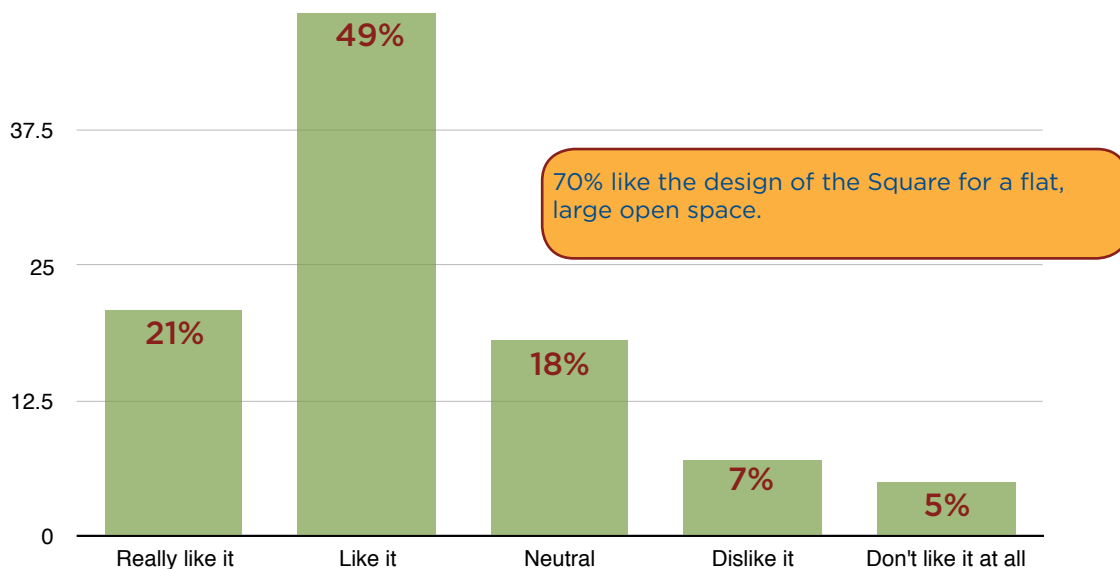
Question 2:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

In concept 1, the Square is a flat, large open space suitable for larger gatherings and special events and performances.

What do you think of the Square being designed in this way?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 43% of the respondents include:

- Consider more animation and programming to the site such as restaurant patio seating, garden and events
- That the open space concept will encourage too many events and large performances.
- Consideration for noise pollution.
- That a lot of programming will be required to make Square appealing.

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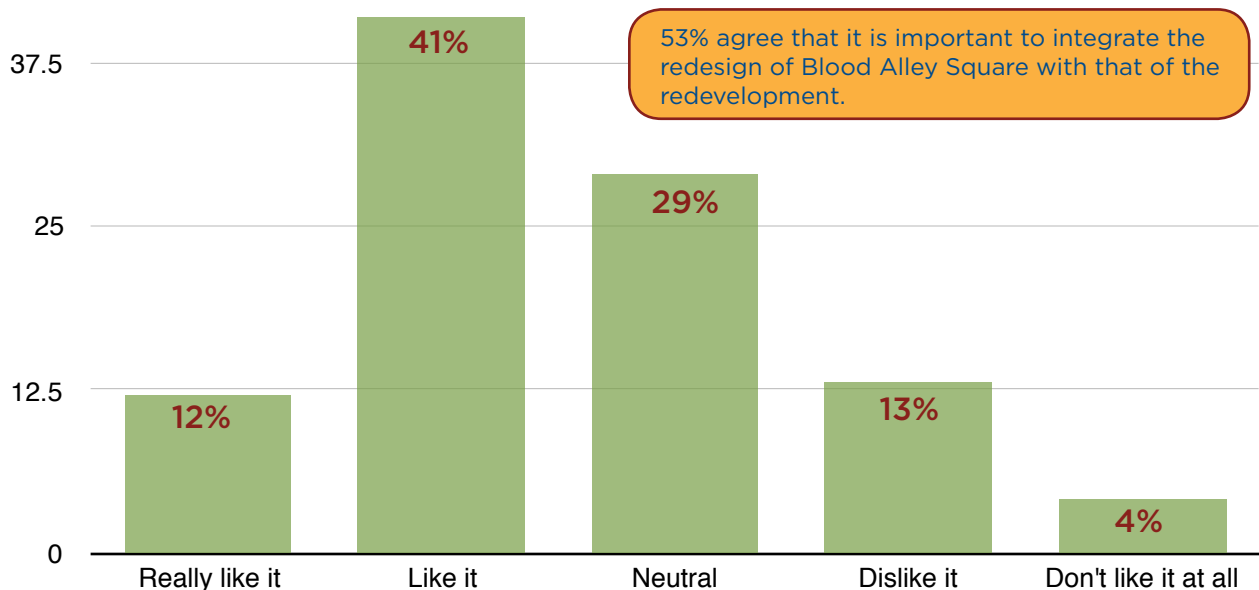
Question 3:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

In concept 1, the Square is integrated into the 33 W Cordova development by a single flight of stairs (approximately 1.2 metre high) for access between the Square and the development. There will be guardrails in some locations.

What do you think of this approach to integrating the Square with 33 W Cordova?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 43% of the respondents include:

- That the steps are imposing.
- That a ramp would be better for accessibility.
- Consider how more pedestrians will move from Water Street, through Gaoler's Mews to Blood Alley Square and onto Cordova Street.

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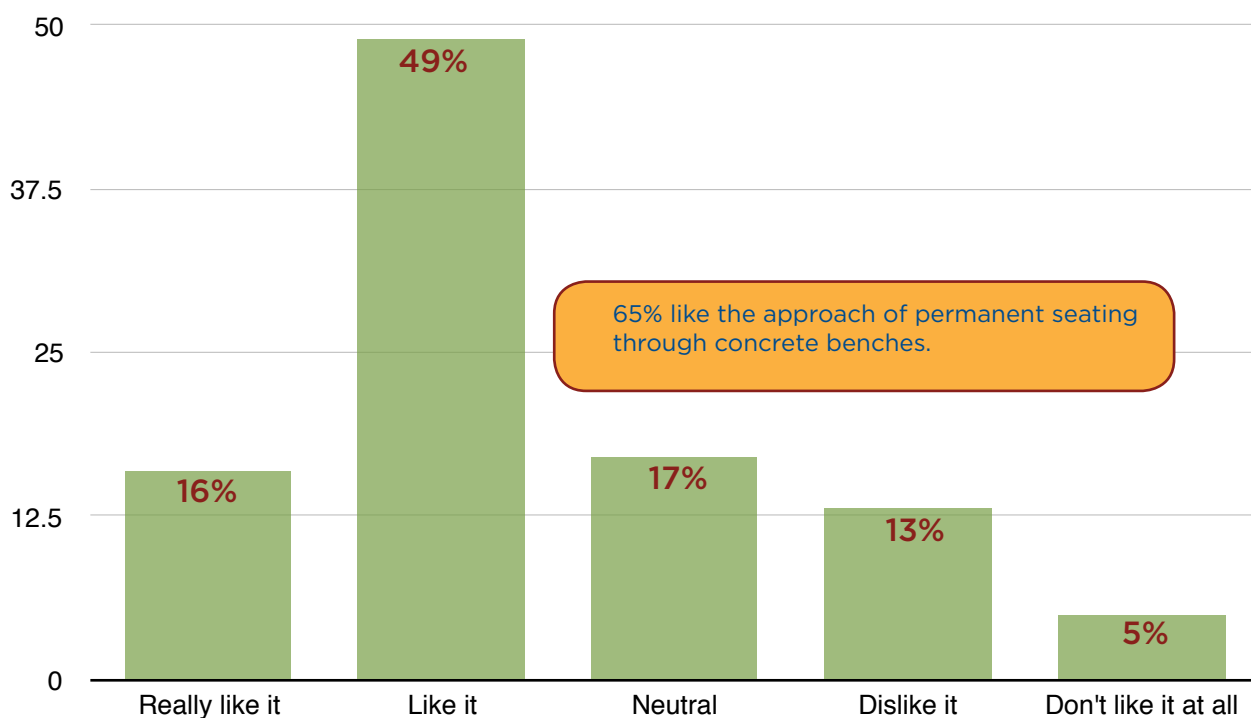
Question 4:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

In this concept, permanent seating is provided through concrete benches between Trounce Alley and the Square.

What do you think of this approach to providing seating in the Square?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 43% respondents include:

- Benches made of concrete will not be comfortable.

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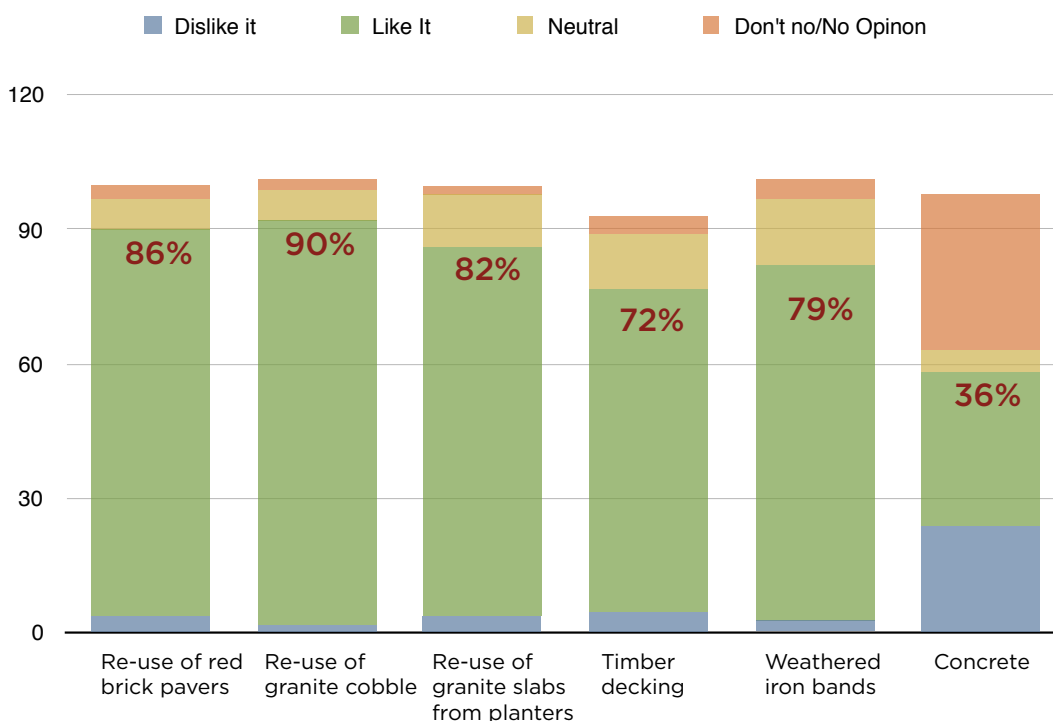
Question 5:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

As a goal of the redesign, both concepts look to re-use existing materials as well as integrate new materials into the Square.

What do you think of the use materials proposed for concept 1?

Results:



There is support for re-use of existing materials and new materials such as timber decking and weathered iron bands. There is not much support for use of concrete.

Other suggestions provided by 43% of respondents include:

- Use existing and new materials in the same palette.
- Need to see lighting incorporated.

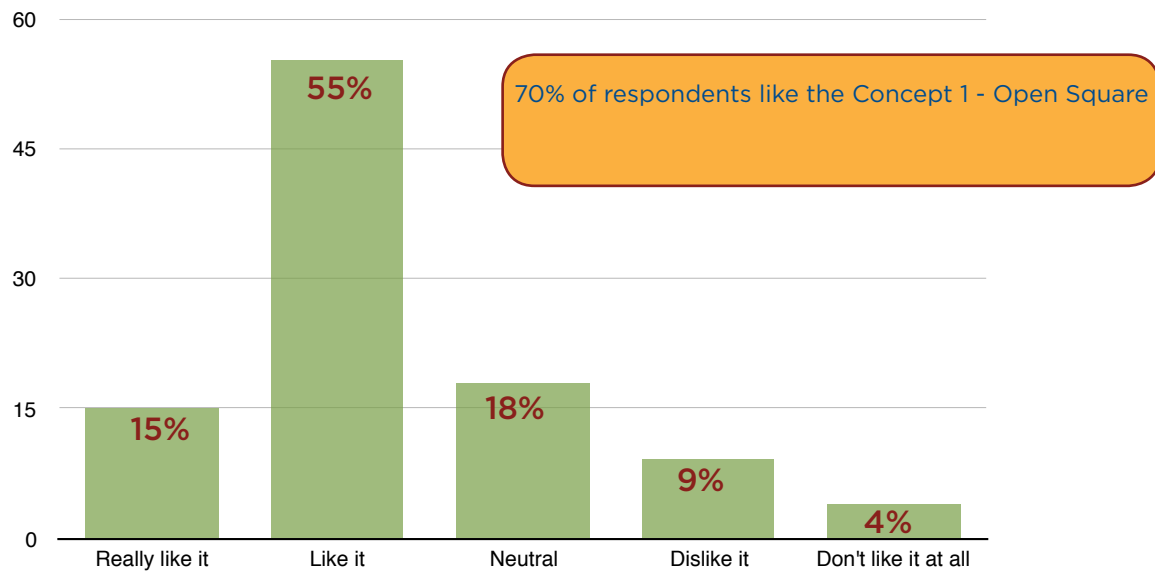
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Question 6:

CONCEPT 1 - OPEN SQUARE

What is your overall opinion of concept 1 - Open Square?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 43% of respondents include:

- That the design is boring, too sterile and does not have the Gastown “feel”.
- That more options should be explored.
- That the design will not draw people into the Square.

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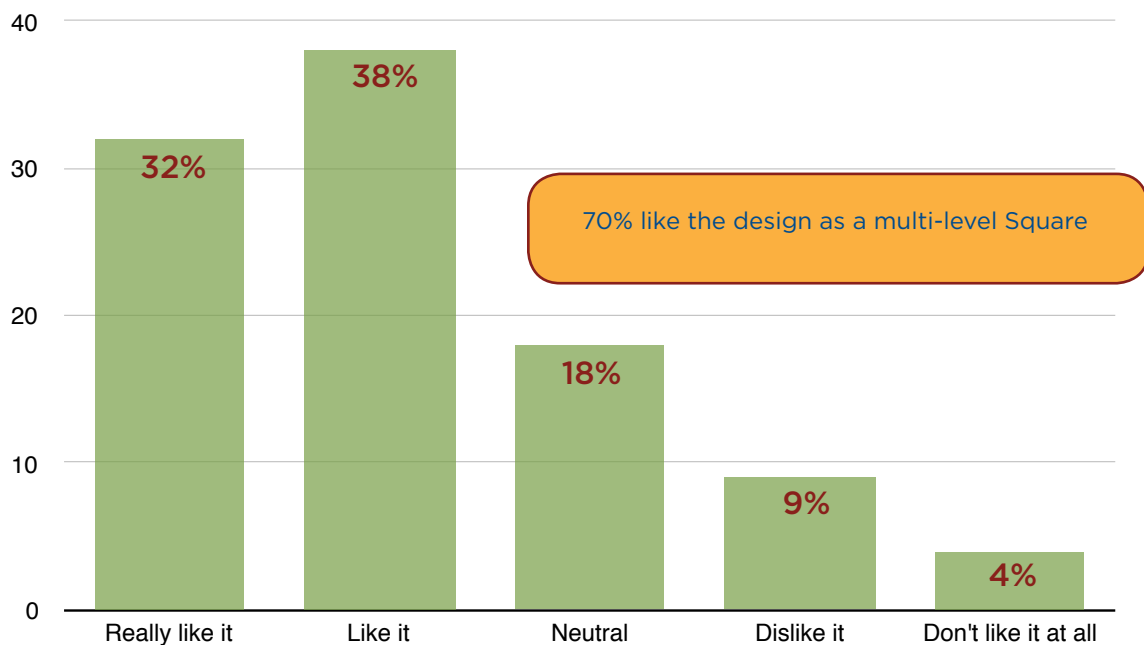
Question 1:

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

Concept 2 proposes a multi-level form and shape for the Square.

What do you think of the Square designed in this way?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 41% of respondents include:

- That the design is more unique and dynamic.
- That is design is more visually interesting.
- That the design may impede visibility.
- That the design has more greenery as compared to Concept 1, which is beneficial.

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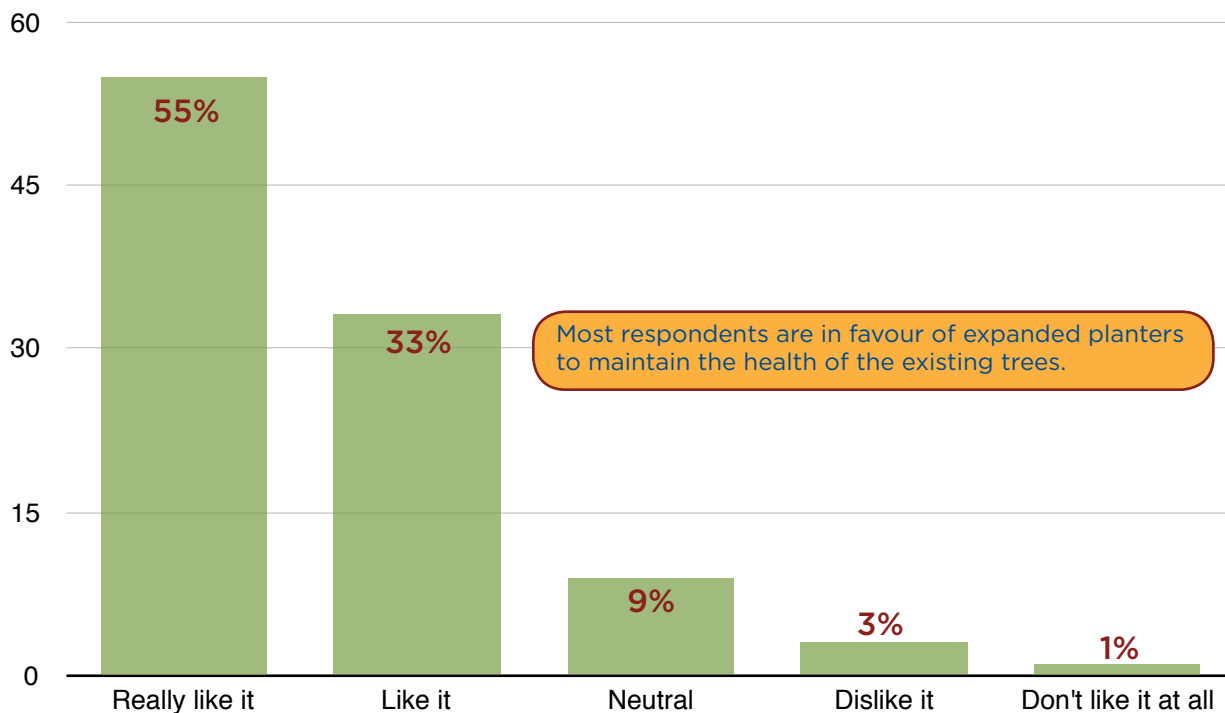
Question 2:

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

The planters are expanded to maintain health of existing trees.

What do you think about this approach?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 41% of respondents include::

- Integrate expanded planters into Concept 1.
- That the additional greenery is good

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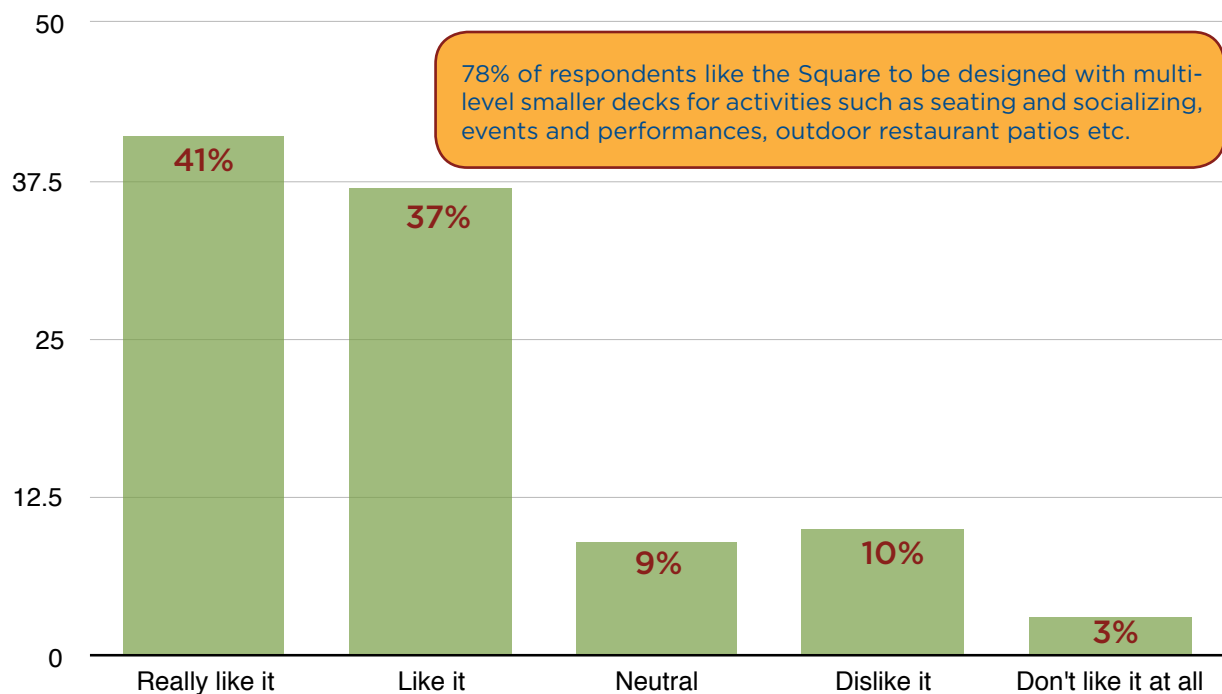
Question 3:

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

In concept 2, the Square is designed to have two (2) multi-level smaller decks for activities such as seating and socializing, events and performances, outdoor restaurant patios etc.

What do you think of the Square designed in this way?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 41% of the respondents include:

- Square should be used a large amphitheatre as required.
- That the space should be dedicated to restuarant patio use.
- That there should be more spaces for performances and events.

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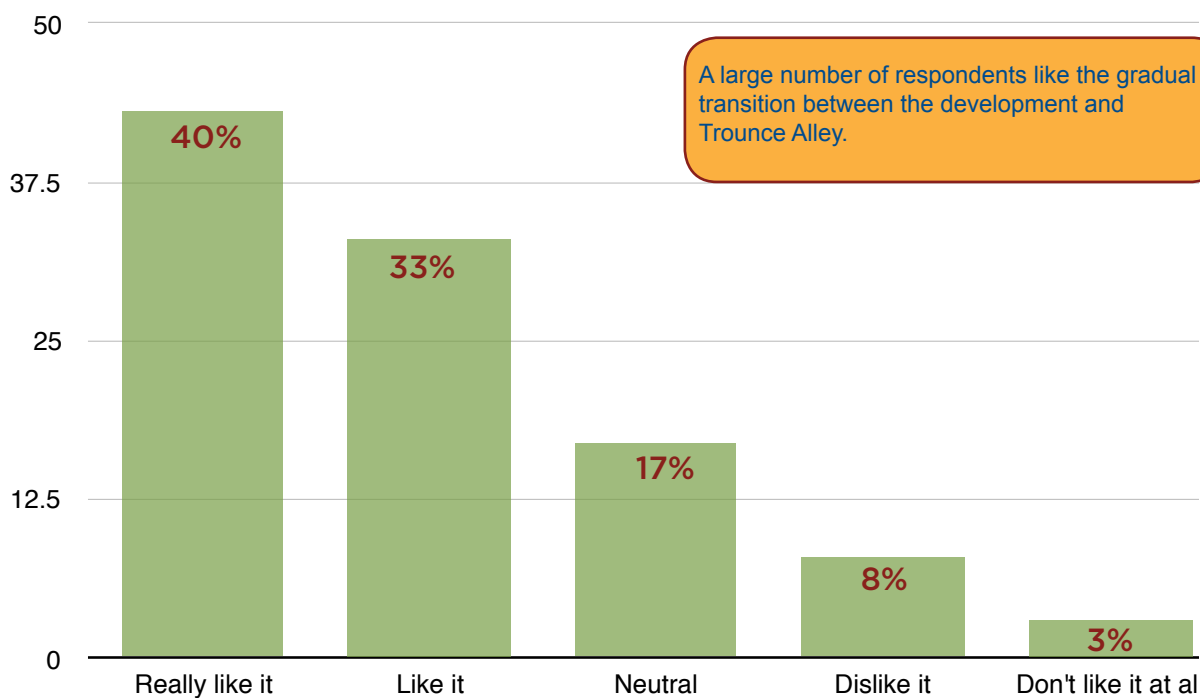
Question 4:

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

In concept 2, the grade difference between 33 W Cordova and Trounce Alley is broken up by two smaller flights of steps (as opposed to one single flight of stairs in Concept 1). This approach creates a gradual transition between the development and Trounce Alley and eliminates the need for guard rails and railings.

What do you think of the Square designed in this way?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 41% of respondents include:

- Lighting to enhance accessibility for visually impaired or requiring mobility devices

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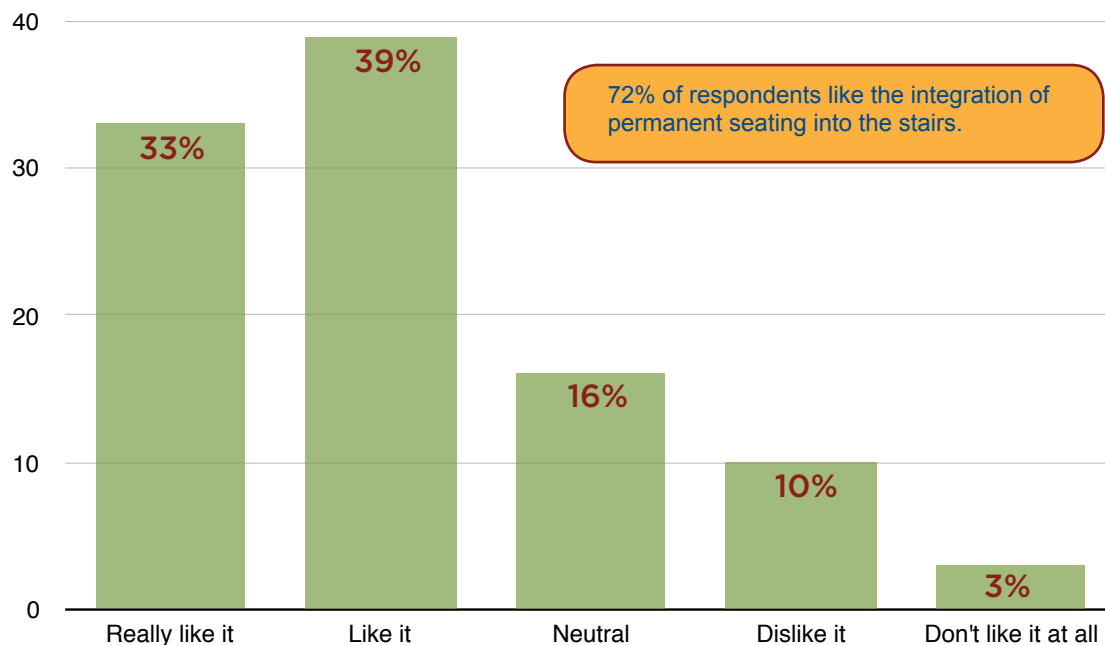
Question 5:

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

In concept 2, permanent seating is integrated into the stairs which have expanded width and height to accommodate seating.

What do you think of this approach to providing seating in the Square?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 41% of respondents include:

- That the integrated seating is visually appealing.
- Seating should not be permanent.
- That the use of steps as seating is versatile and casual.
- That the steps in Concept 1 should integrate seating.

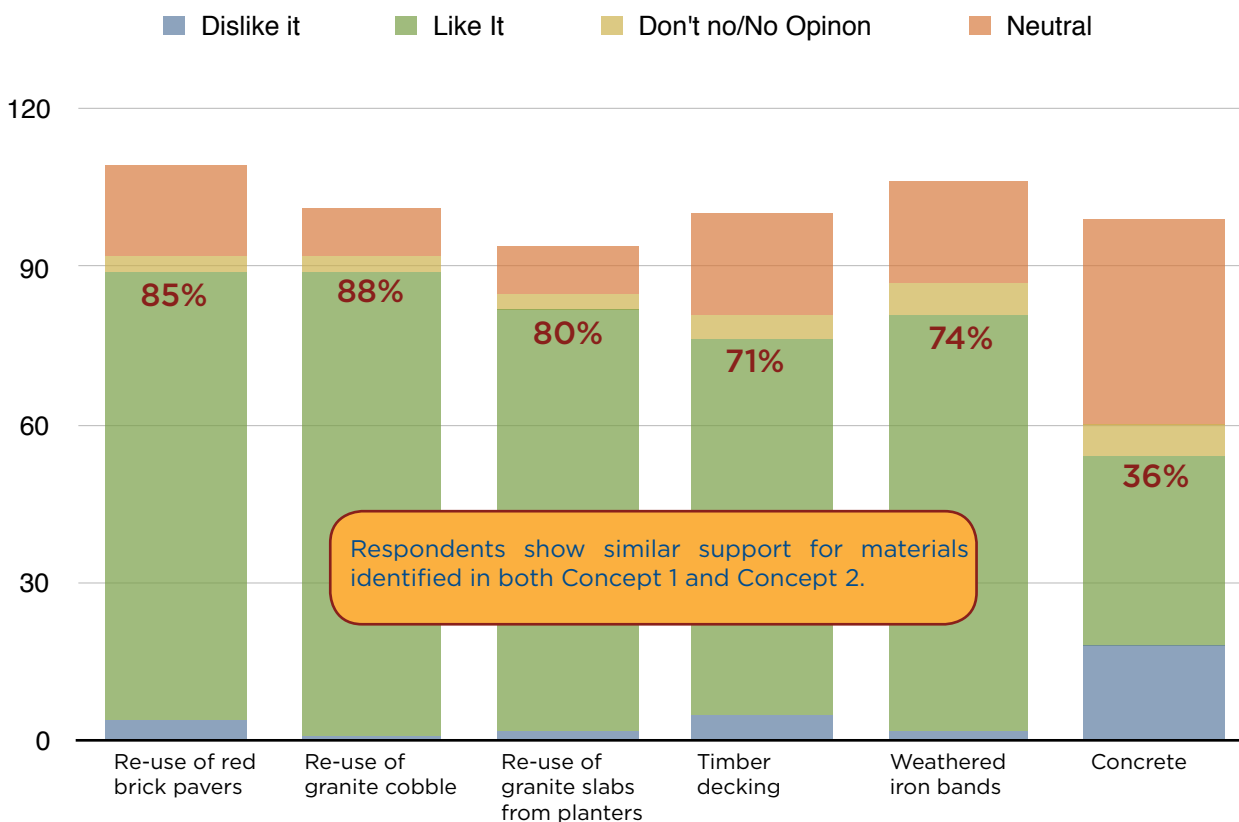
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Question 6: CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

As a goal of the redesign, both concepts look to re-use existing materials as well as integrate new materials into the Square.

What do you think of the use materials proposed for concept 2?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by 41% of respondents include:

- That reusing the cobble and brick is not high priority.
- That the walls/facades around the Square should be animated; suggestions of glass, art, murals etc.

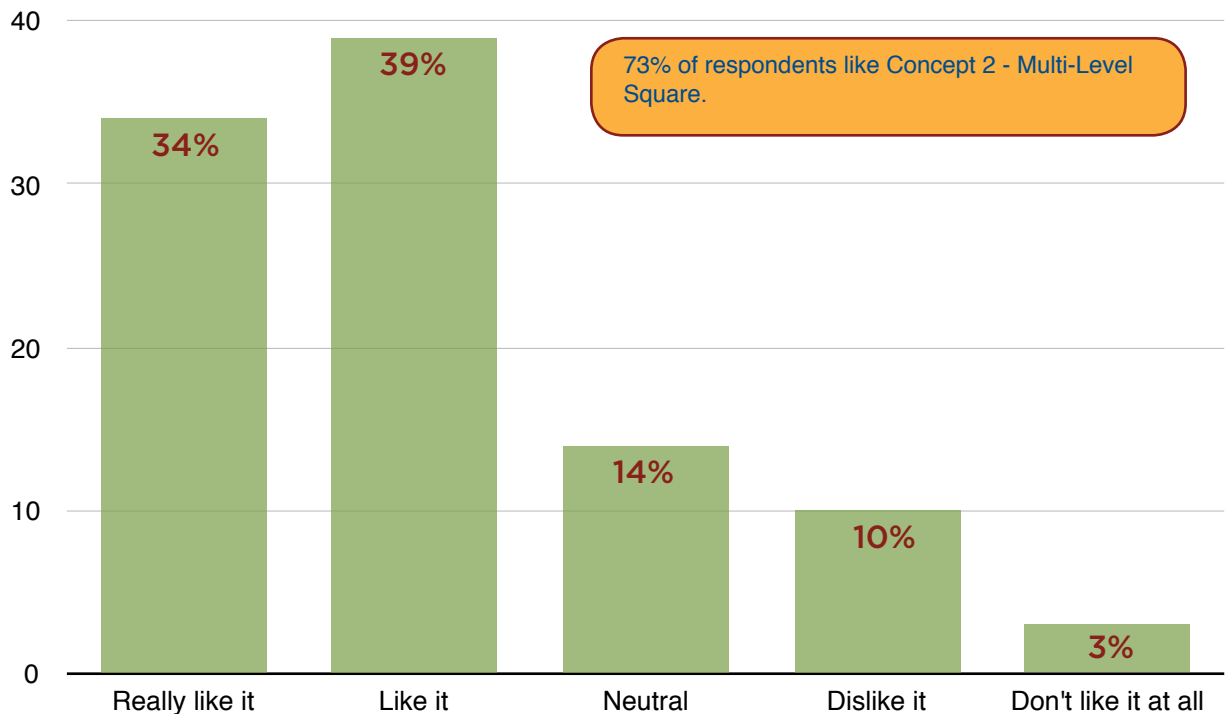
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Question 7

CONCEPT 2 - MULTI-LEVEL SQUARE

What is your overall opinion of concept 2 - Multi-level Square?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by 41% of respondents include:

- Retain more of the unique character of the space
- That there should be rain cover.
- That there should be a public washroom.
- That the design provides too many opportunities for skateboarding.

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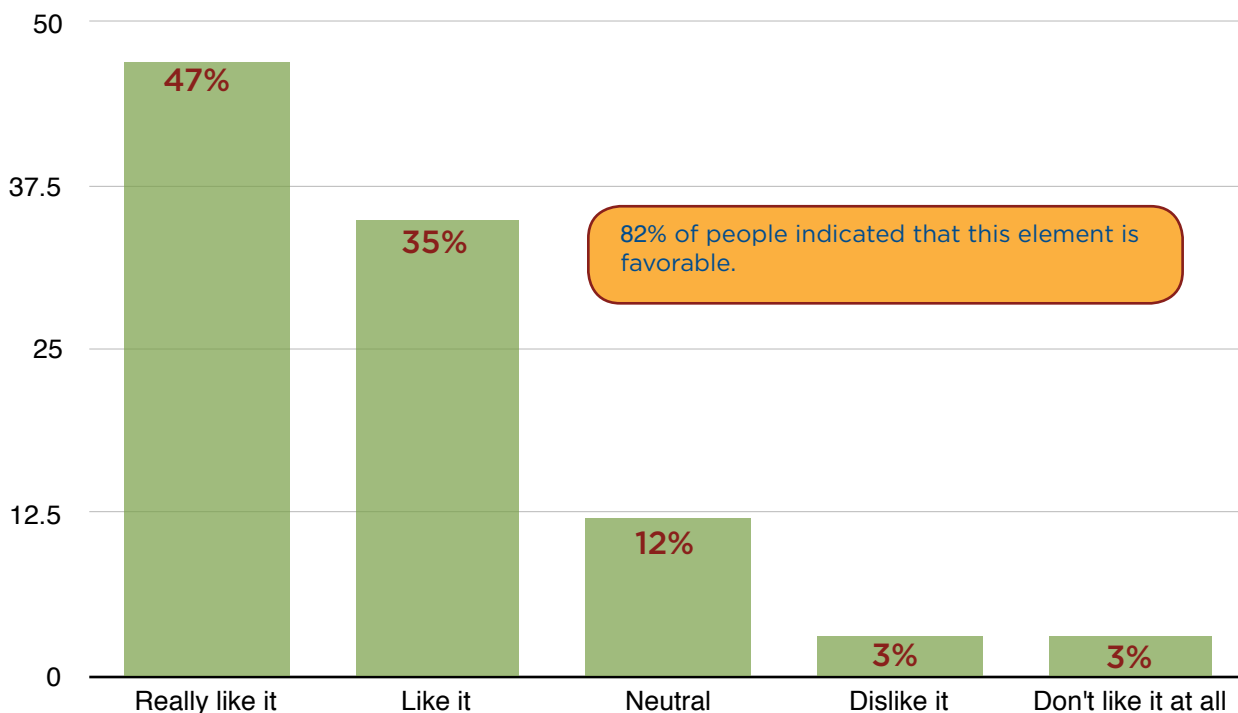
Question 1

BOTH CONCEPTS

Both concepts propose raising the lane on Trounce Alley along the length of the Square to slow traffic. This creates an opportunity to use Trounce Alley together with Blood Alley Square for special events.

What do you think of this element as part of the design?

Results:



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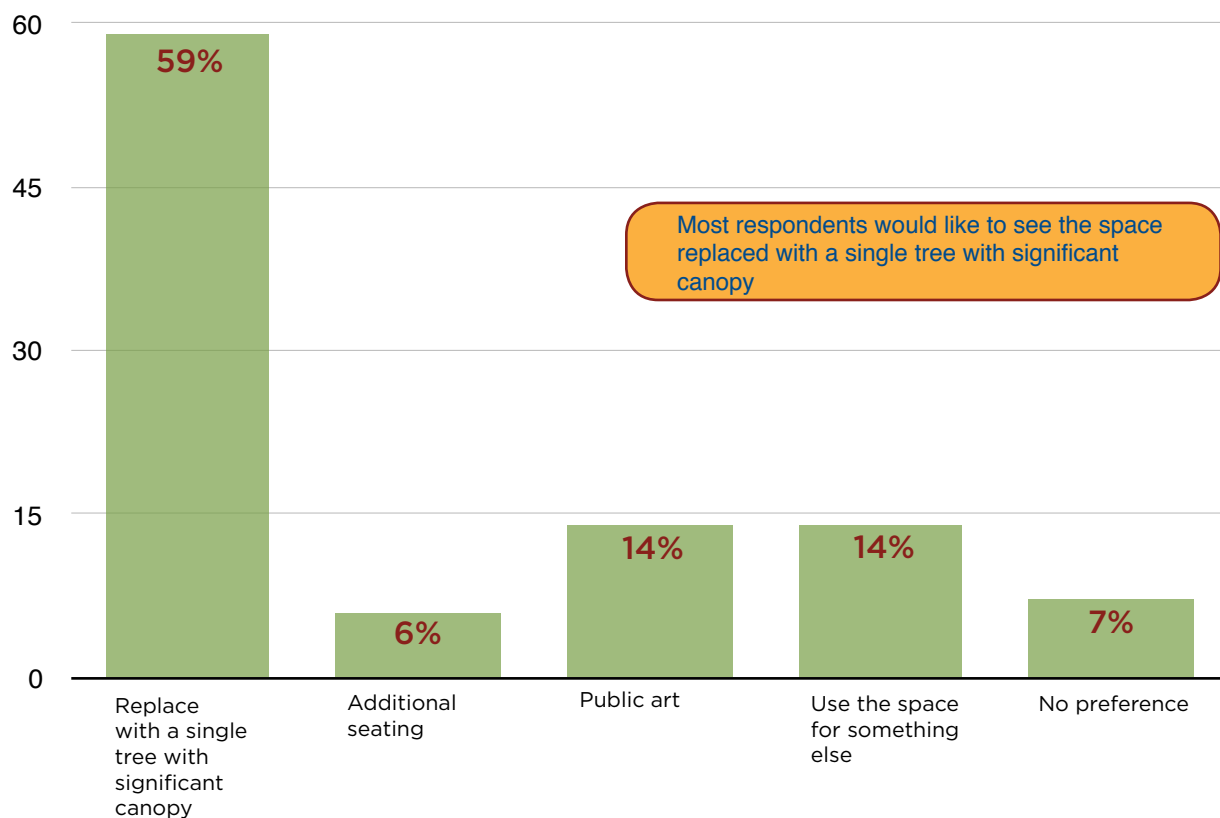
Question 1

TREE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

There are nine (9) trees; four (4) are in poor health. Although every effort will be made to protect the health of the trees, the locust trees may need to be removed because they will not survive through construction and other associated impacts (root compaction, soil disruption and increased shade).

If the trees are removed how should the space where the trees are located be used?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by respondents include:

- Not to remove trees at all
- Replace with same number of trees
- Replace with an evergreen tree species
- Incorporate a large table as well as seating.
- Use space as a stage, restaurant patio, or just open space.

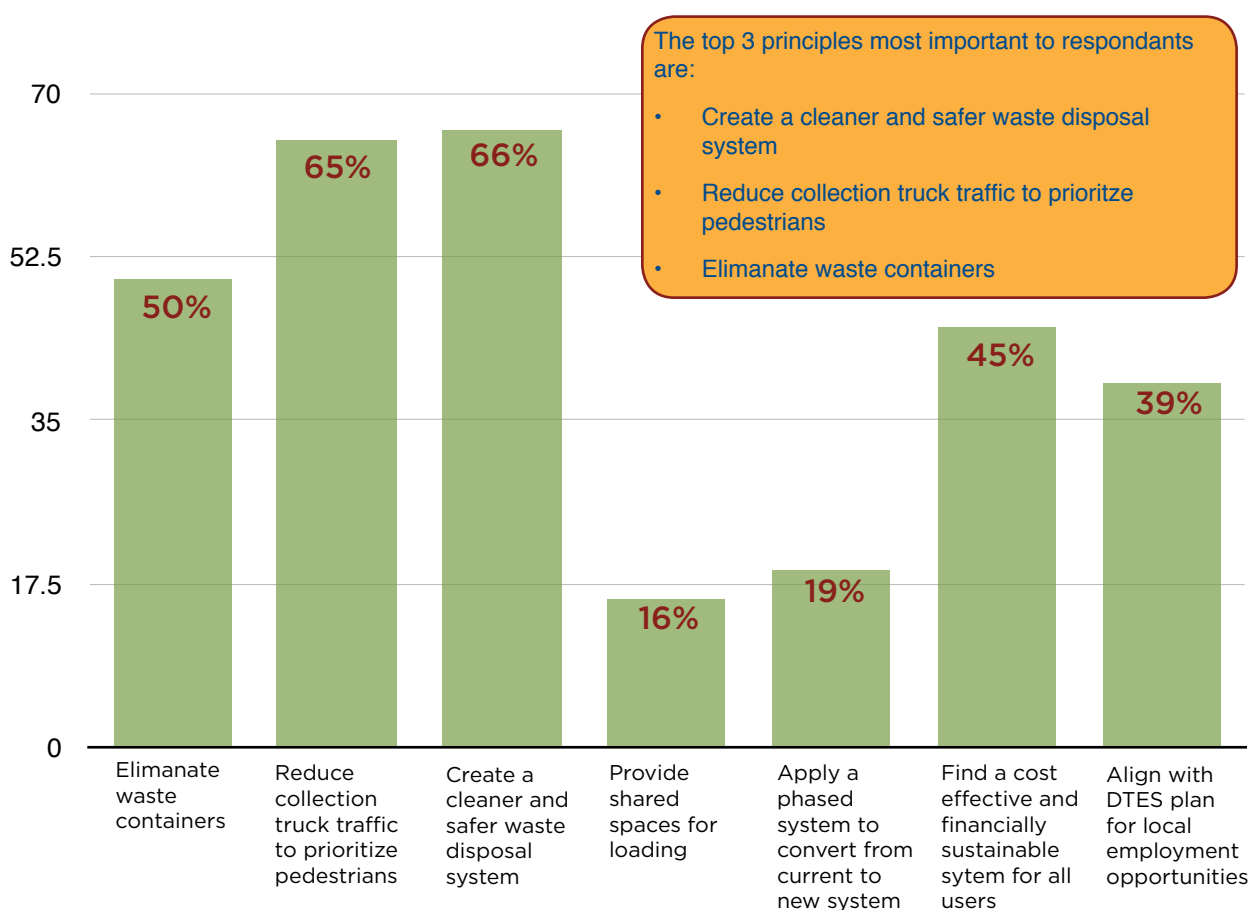
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Question 1

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Solid Waste Management principles have been developed to guide redesign on the site in this area. Referring to the Solid Waste Management principles on Board 13, tell us what principles are most important to you. Please select your top 3.

Results:



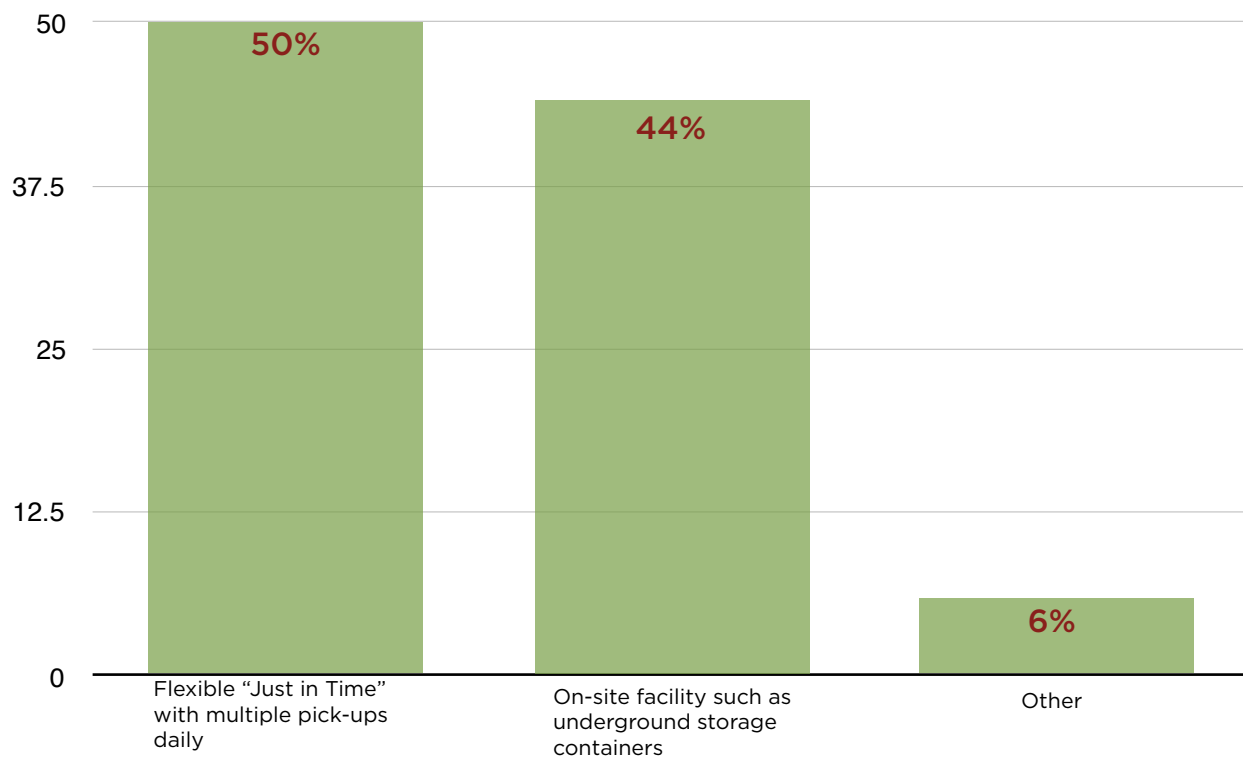
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Question 2

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

What strategies should be explored further for solid waste management on the site?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by respondents include:

- Integrate public waste receptacles in to the Square
- Include sharps collection boxes.

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Question 3

SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Do you have other suggestions not seen here for Solid Waste Management strategies?

Results:

- The Solid Waste Management Strategy should integrate all of the community's needs.
- Pedestrian activities should be prioritized.
- Local employment opportunities are important.
- Case Study 1 is more suitable to the neighbourhood for both waste and employment.
- Case Study 2 will impede on the quality of urban space in the Square.
- Case Study 2 could be more attractive than dumpsters.
- Consider an on-site recycle/re-use program.

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The following are some examples of respondents' general comments about the redesign:

"It looks a bit bland. It's a hidden spot that people don't necessarily stumble upon, so it would need to have a lot of good programming to create a draw." (Concept 1)

"I would like to see a design that could interpret the history of the alley while still paying homage to the 60s/70s beautification treatment."

"I like how seating is integrated with the different levels of the plaza. It also makes it more visually interesting." (Concept 2)

One thing I love about Blood Alley (scuzzy as it is) is that it feels intimate and out of the way, like you have decided to go underground for a bit from all the traffic and overwhelming stimulation of other streets."

"Don't turn Gastown into Yaletown please. The historic aspect is what makes Gastown special & unique"

"Would like to see more green in the space, more trees, plants, green walls and more space for art..." (Concept 1)

"I like that it is not a parking lot."

...many 'binners' in this area. Why not make suitable bike trailers available to them and pay them to transport solid waste to a central collection point nearby?

"SO HAPPY not to see Public art taking up space in the square!!!"

"It feels like the concept (1) is retaining some of the awkward geometry for the sake of heritage when I have to question if it really has heritage value. Reusing materials or using new materials that are in the same palette may makes sense from a heritage point of view."

"Raised levels provides good opportunities for people-watching and activation." (Concept 2)

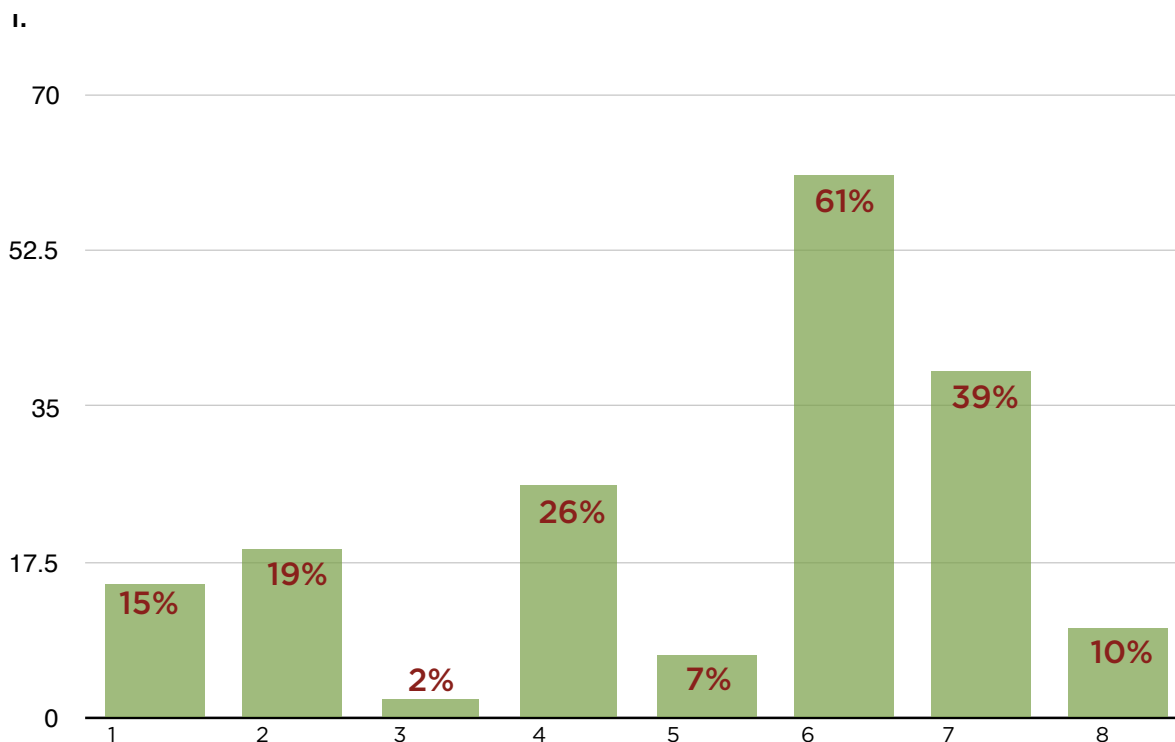
"Garbage/waste should be handled by one supplier/contractor."

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Demographics

What is your connection to Gastown?

Results:



1. Rent in the neighbourhood
2. Own a home and live in the neighbourhood
3. Own a home in the neighbourhood but live elsewhere
4. Work in the neighbourhood
5. Own a business in the neighbourhood
6. Frequent the neighbourhood for restaurants and entertainment
7. Live outside the neighbourhood
8. Other

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Demographics

Which age group do you fall under?

Results:

