

DATE: January 12, 2026

TO: Eva Kelly, Ambur Cameron; City of Hollister

FROM: Greg Goodfellow and Zixuan Liu

SUBJECT: Downtown Objective Design Standards: Community Survey Results

Introduction

This memorandum summarizes the results of a virtual public survey conducted as part of the outreach process for the Downtown Hollister Objective Design Standards (ODS) project. The survey collected community input on preferences related to design elements and amenities for new housing projects in Downtown Hollister. A total of 72 valid responses were received during the survey period. All responders identified as residents of San Benito County. While responders represent a wide range of tenure in the County, there was slightly higher participation among those who have lived in San Benito County for 4–10 years, 20–30 years, and more than 40 years.

This summary includes community feedback regarding topics that will not be directly addressed by ODS, including parking requirements, roadway/sidewalk paving and street tree maintenance.

Results Summary

Survey results indicate residents' desire for a walkable, green downtown with engaging entryways and storefronts, and where historic character is preserved.

Most responders supported walkable street designs and well-maintained sidewalks that accommodate all ages and abilities. Responders expressed a preference for new development to incorporate architectural elements consistent with existing downtown styles, with particular attention to maintaining cohesive physical design. Respondents generally supported the inclusion of green spaces and outdoor seating areas to enhance storefront activity and visual interest.

Feedback on landscaping and street trees was mixed, with some responders expressing concern about the need for long-term maintenance and upkeep. Parking was also a common concern, with many responders noting issues related to parking availability and enforcement. Overall, responders supported increasing parking availability and emphasized that parking structures should be designed to complement adjacent buildings and be screened from visibility along main streets.

Individual Question Results

Detailed question data is provided below, including bar charts that summarize the number of responses for each option. Because the survey design allowed responders to “select all that apply” for each question, the percentage result of each option on the bar chart reflects the percentage of responders that selected the option.

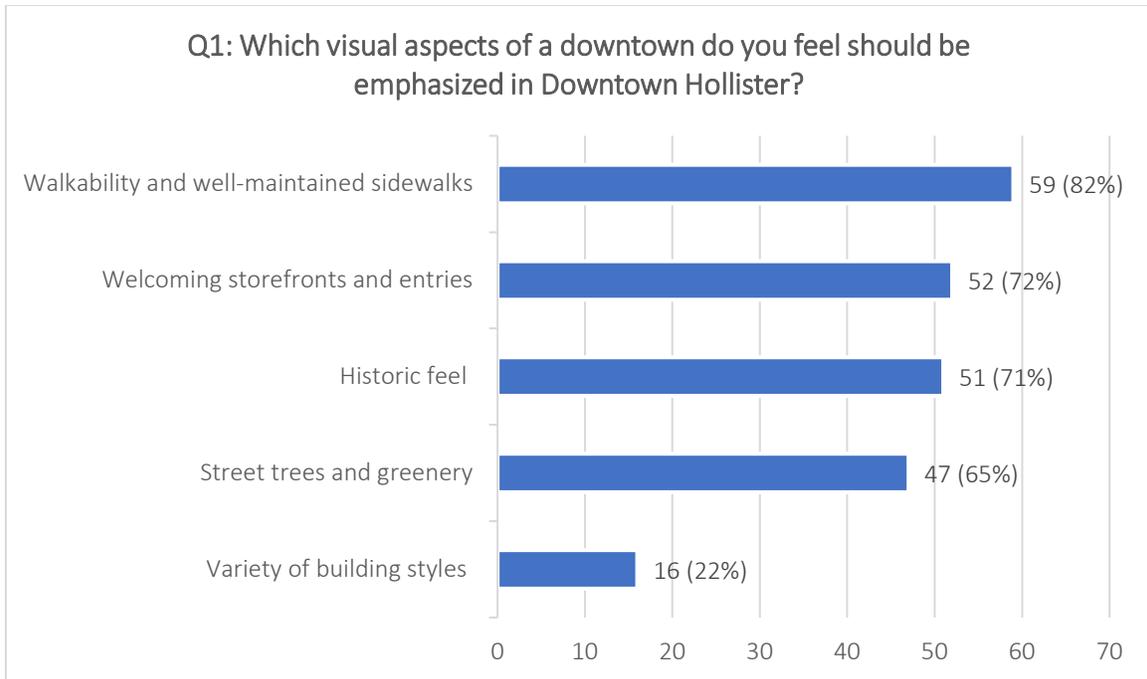


Figure 1. Visual Aspects

Over 70 percent of all responders identified “walkability and well-maintained sidewalks,” “welcoming storefronts and entries,” and “historic feel” as important visual aspects of Downtown Hollister. 59 responders selected “walkability and well-maintained sidewalks,” making it the most supported visual aspect. 47 responders also selected “Street trees and greenery,” although some responders stated that street trees require extensive maintenance. In addition, several responders left comments about the need to repave and maintain existing sidewalks, particularly San Benito Street.

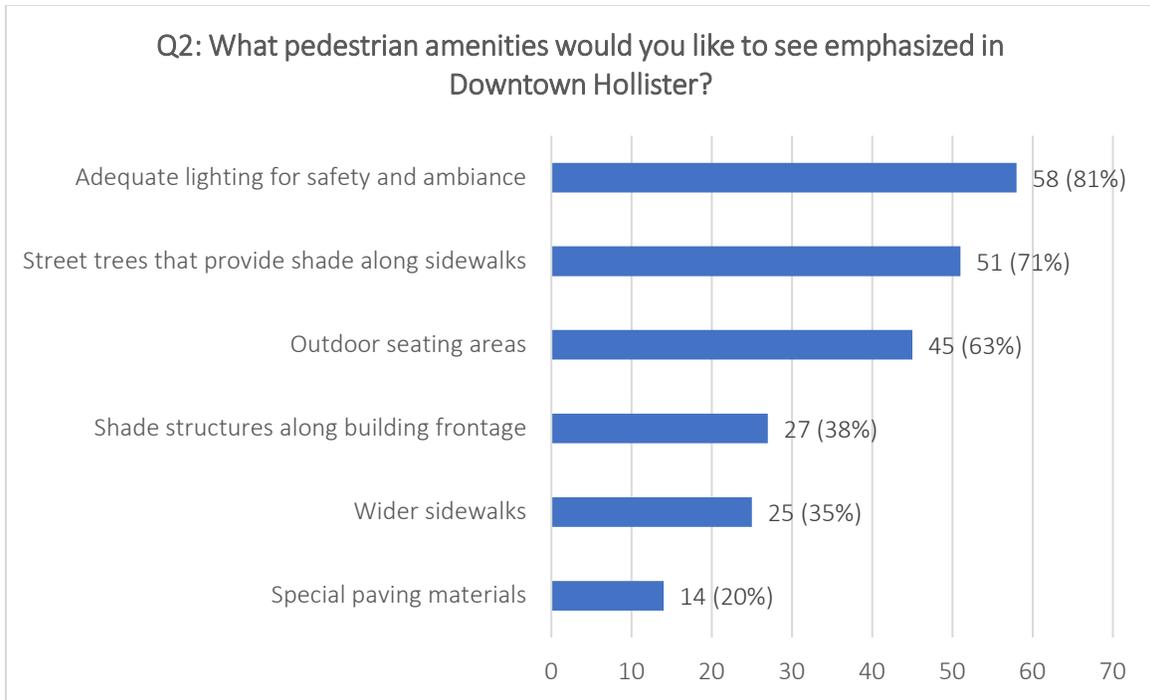


Figure 2. Pedestrian Amenities

Most responders supported prioritizing adequate lighting for safety and ambiance, street trees that provide shade along sidewalks, and outdoor seating areas. More than 80 percent of responders selected “adequate lighting for safety and ambiance.” These amenities were viewed as important for creating a welcoming, comfortable, and accessible pedestrian environment. There was also moderate support for shade structures along building frontages and wider sidewalks. In open comments, one respondent raised concerns about the safety and accessibility of special paving materials, emphasizing the need for smooth, even sidewalk surfaces that accommodate individuals with disabilities, including users of wheelchairs, walkers, and canes.

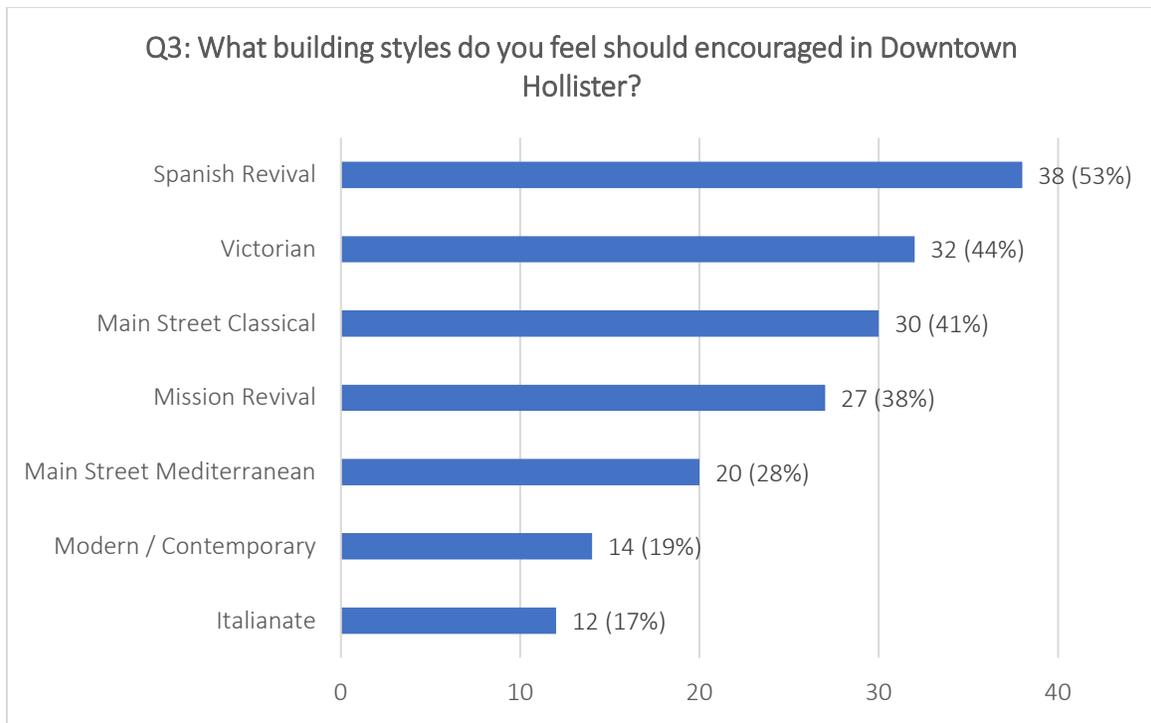


Figure 3. Architectural Styles

There was generally similar support for Spanish Revival, Victorian, Main Street Classical, and Mission Revival architectural styles, in that order. This aligns with the general preference to preserve historical character of the area. There was some support for Main Street Mediterranean, Modern/Contemporary, and Italianate.

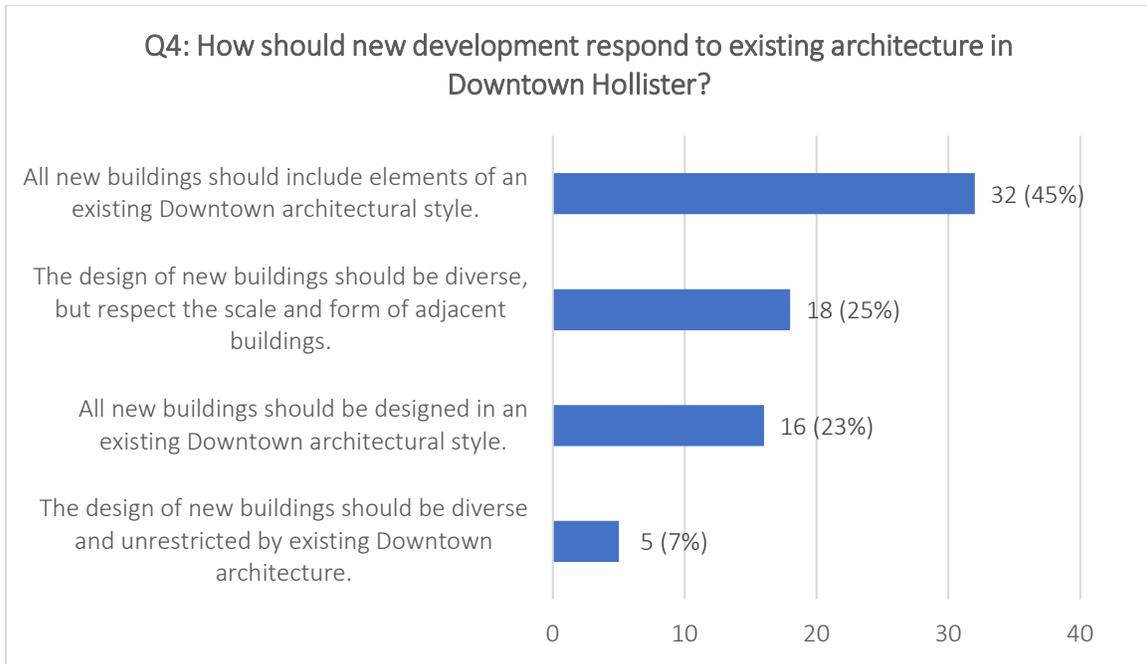


Figure 4. New Development and Existing Architecture

Responders supported the idea of requiring new development to include elements of existing architectural style into project design. If combined with the results of the previous question, the ODS could identify defining elements of each preferred style and allow applicants to select one or more of those elements for project inclusion.

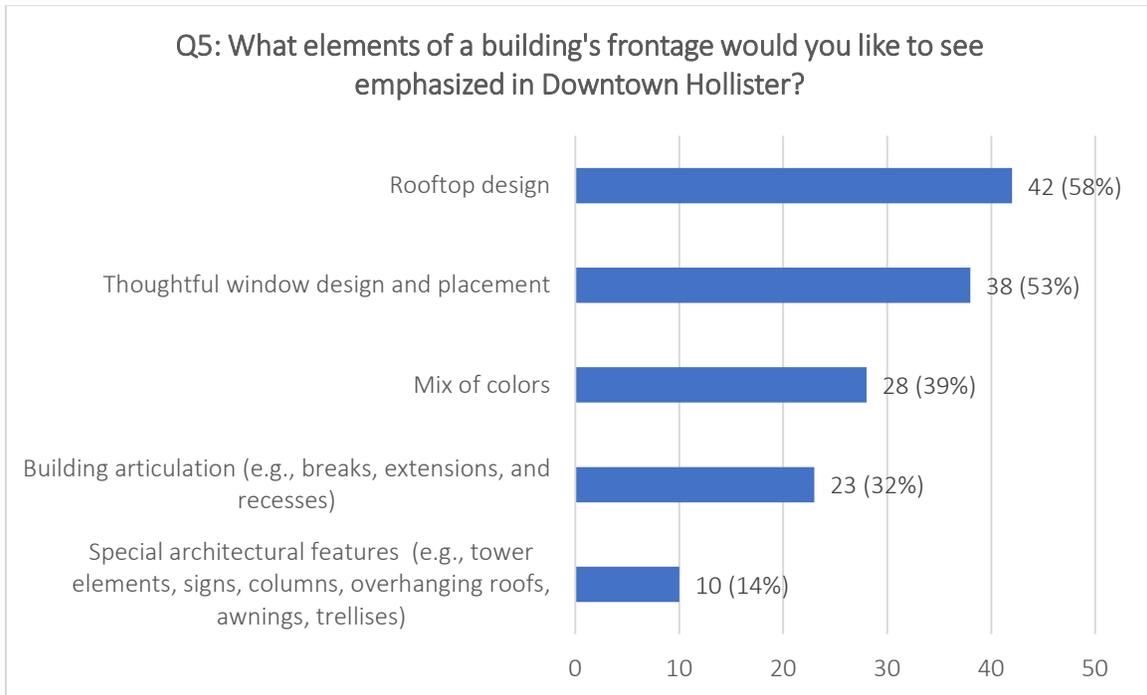


Figure 5. Building Frontage

Responders identified rooftop form and window design as integral to high quality frontages. There was moderate support for mix of colors and building articulation. However, several responders expressed concern for any extensive use of mixed colors, instead preferring visual cohesiveness.

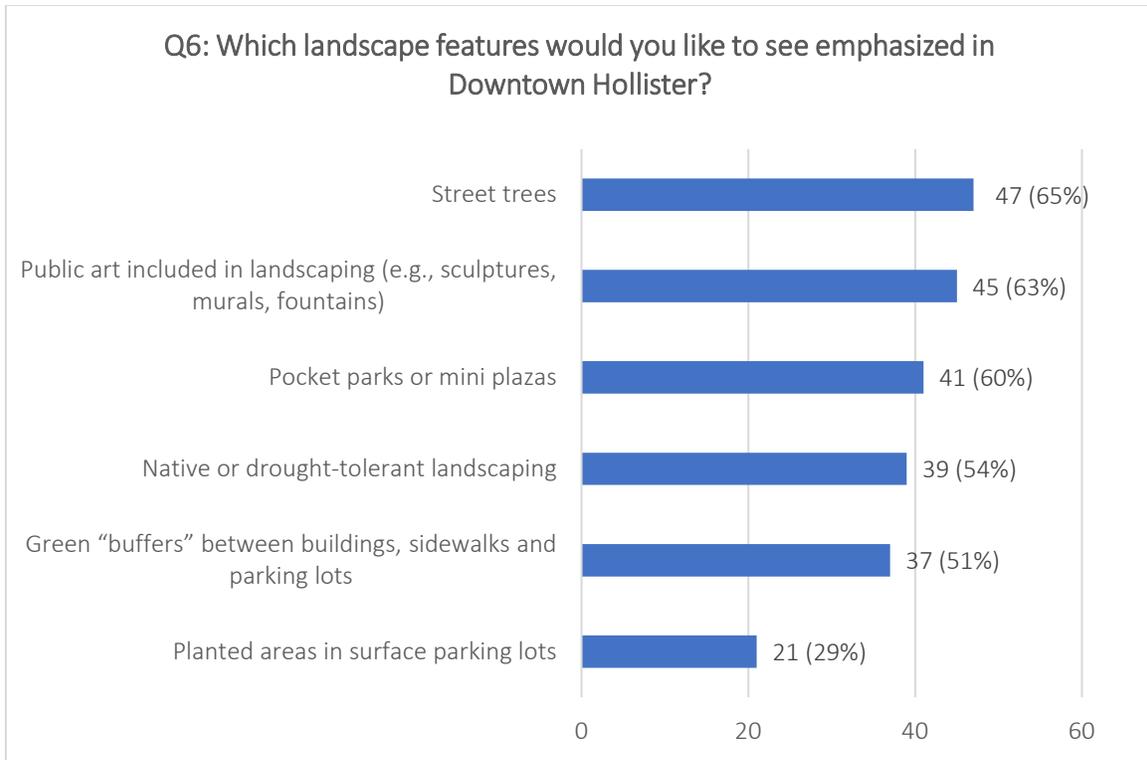


Figure 6. Landscape Features

Responses to this question indicate a wide swath of support across nearly all landscape features. Over 60 percent of responders supported street trees, public art, and pocket parks as landscape features. Over 50 percent of the responders also supported native or drought-tolerant landscaping and the use of green buffers. However, some responders were concerned about maintenance required for street trees and greenery and whether the City has the capacity for maintenance. Finally, a few responders were opposed to pocket parks, writing that they may impede emergency vehicle access and are difficult to maintain.

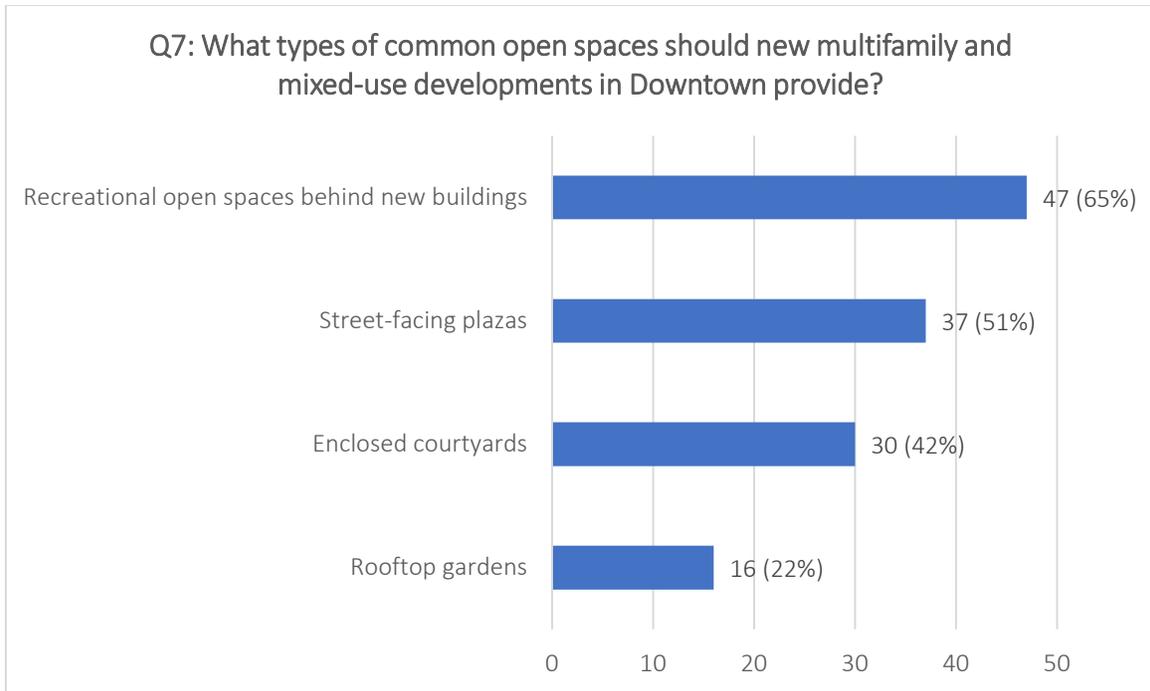


Figure 7. Common Open Spaces for New Multifamily and Mixed-Use Developments

About 65 percent of responders supported recreational open spaces behind buildings for multifamily and mixed-use developments. There was also broad support for street-facing plazas and enclosed courtyards.

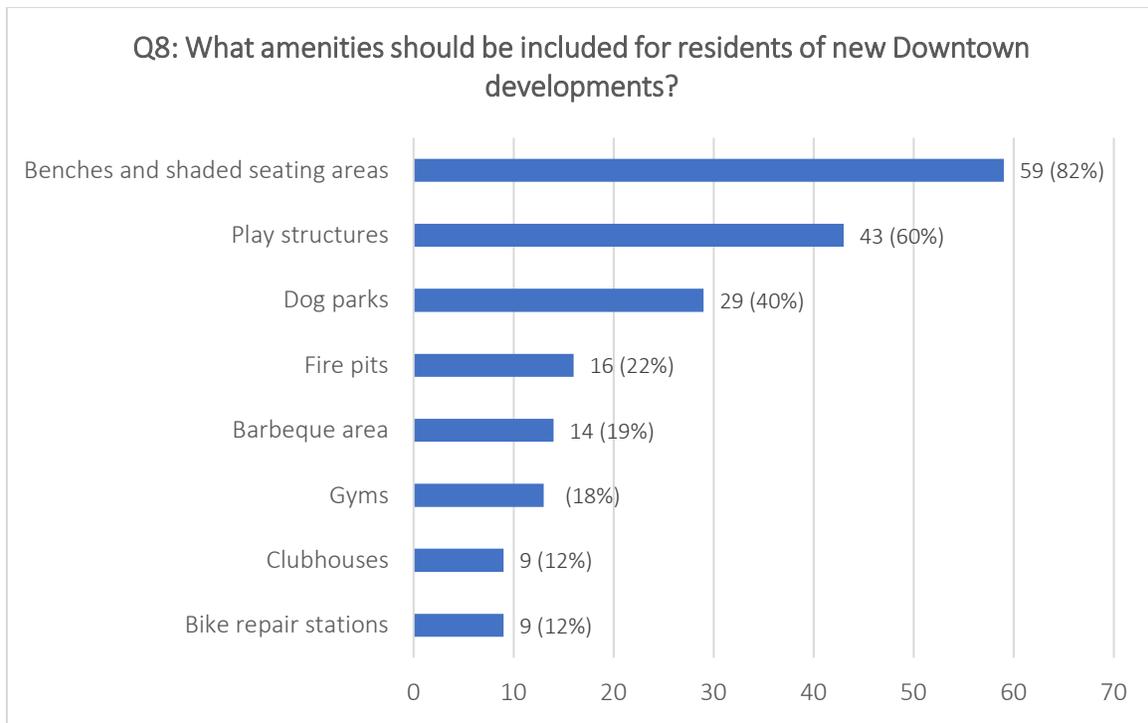


Figure 8. Amenities for New Downtown Developments

There was overwhelming support for benches and shaded seating areas for new developments. There was also support for play structures and dog parks. Other amenities responders identified in their comments include libraries, water fountains for children, and recreation sites catered to families.