

Blood Alley Square/Trounce Alley Redesign



June 2016
Kick-Off Events 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.

A total of **175 people** attended the Kick-off Events and **253 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 June 1 and June 4, 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 in Downtown or the West End (61%), and half were between 20-39 years of age. An additional 39% were 40-59 years old.
- Almost half lived in Gastown, and a significant proportion frequented the area for entertainment (over 60%).

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Summary of Questionnaire Results

The results of the hard-copy and online questionnaire, feedback from conversations at the Kick-off events and meeting with key stakeholders indicates that there is overall support for the redesign project of Blood Alley Square. However it is indicated through the results that there are various issues that people feel strongly about. These results are summarized as:

- Maintain community and gathering spaces to serve the needs of a diverse population
- Maintaining the history and heritage qualities of the Square
- General dislike for the community using the Square for illicit activities; concern for safety and cleanliness
- Integrating the redesign into the Stanley and New Found Hotel redevelopment was important
- Improving the systems for Solid Waste Management

Conserving and highlighting the historical, and green elements of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley were important to respondents. Overall they also valued integration of the redesign into nearby redevelopment.

- Conserving the areas 1970s heritage characteristics were seen as important by the majority of those surveyed. More than three-quarters thought it was important to preserve the cluster globe lamps and granite and brick pavers.
- Almost all respondents thought the conservation of trees and planters on the site were important (92%), though many respondents commented the planters are not important or should be updated.
- Most thought integrating the redesign into the Stanley and New Found Hotel redevelopment was important (84%).

Activities and amenities that emphasized, and facilitated socializing were favoured. Similarly, a key social impact for the redesign was seen to be the provision of community amenities and gathering spaces.

- Respondents prioritized pedestrian activities in the area, much more so than car activities. Between 82% -92% of respondents ranked pedestrian activities among their Top 3 activities for the site.
- The top piece of furniture or amenity desired in the Square were benches, selected by three-quarters of respondents. As well, the majority of respondents are receptive to the idea of public art installations in the space.
- Ensuring the redesign offered community amenity and gathering spaces for the diverse local population, was seen as relatively higher in importance than ensuring that negative impacts to the low income community did not occur (68% vs. 51%).

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In terms of infrastructure, there was support for improved signage and additional lighting, as well as maintaining connections to ground floor retail.

- Almost three-quarters of respondents thought that improved signage in the area would be beneficial.
- Almost all thought that the Square could use additional lighting (92%). The installation of new strands of lights and lanterns were the preferred option (74%).
- Most thought maintaining the connections from the ground floor retail to Blood Alley Square was important (75%).

Waste management was seen as an issue in the Square and Alley, with the desire for City solutions and those that helped the public better manage waste.

- The majority of respondents were dissatisfied with waste management in the Square and Alley (64%).
- To address waste management issues, respondents emphasized frequent clean-up of the area (83%). More than half also thought the provision of public recycling and garbage bins in the area could help improve waste management.

Summary of Kick-off Events

Hosting the Kick-off events in Blood Alley Square was successful in being on site and soliciting a lot of interested parties such as the businesses and residents. It also allowed for some interaction with the DTES community who were on site or walking by to be engaged. It is recommended that future engagement sessions also be on site for these reasons.

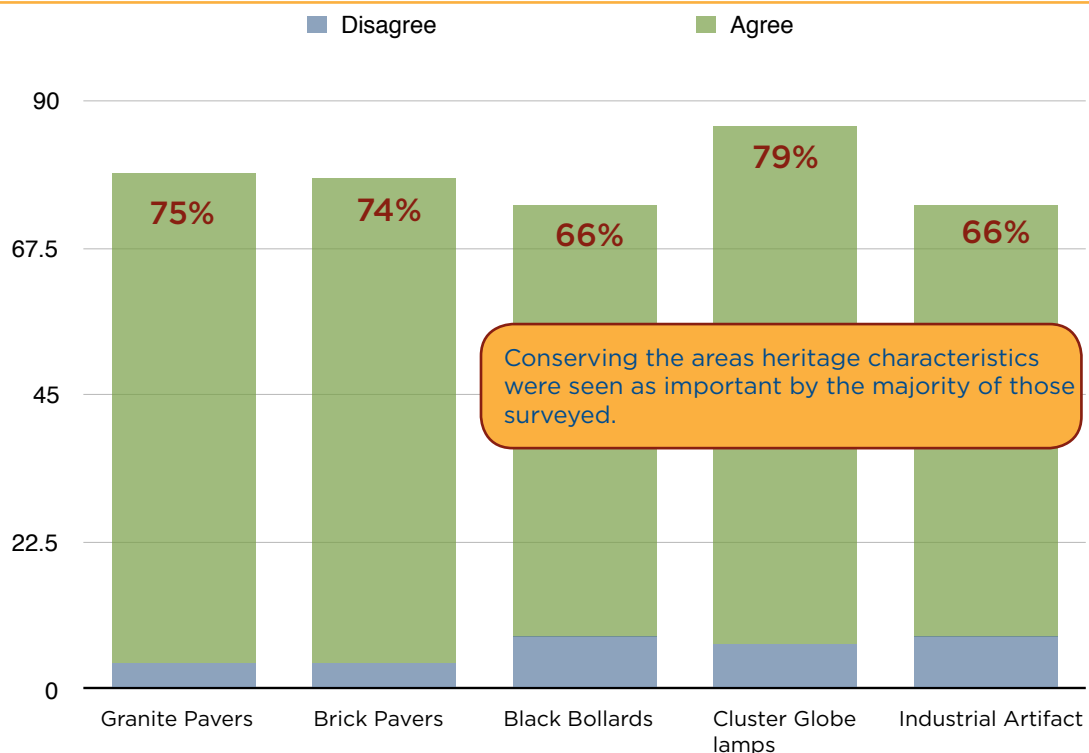
Because of the online format of the questionnaire, it is apparent that some members of the DTES community may not be able to access it and be engaged. We are hoping to find more ways to engage the DTES community through discussions with Community organizations and through the process of the Stewardship Strategy (as it may allow for partnerships with community organizations and local businesses.)

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Question 1:

During the mid 1970s, significant public realm improvements were completed in Gastown as part of a strategy to conserve the area as a historic precinct. The improvements included adding brick and granite pavers and planters and lighting treatment currently found in Blood Alley Square. How important do you think it is to conserve the 1970s heritage characteristics of the Square and Alley. It's important to preserve the:

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 21% of the respondents include:

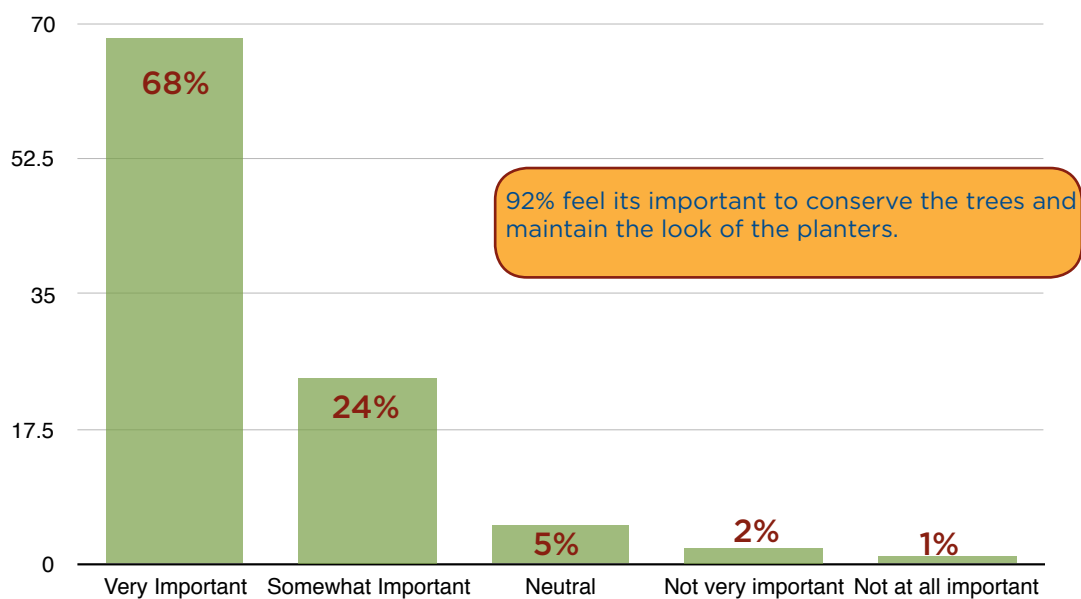
- Maintaining the heritage character but evolving materials to modern standards
- Consider design features and artifacts pre-1970 revitalization as heritage
- Consider methods to retain brick pavers but improving safety for pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- Consider introduction of new material to balance and contrast with existing.
- Design concept that draws from the history rather than new interventions.

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Question 2:

There are currently tall mature trees located in Blood Alley Square. How important is it to conserve the trees and maintain the look of the planters?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 29% of the respondents include:

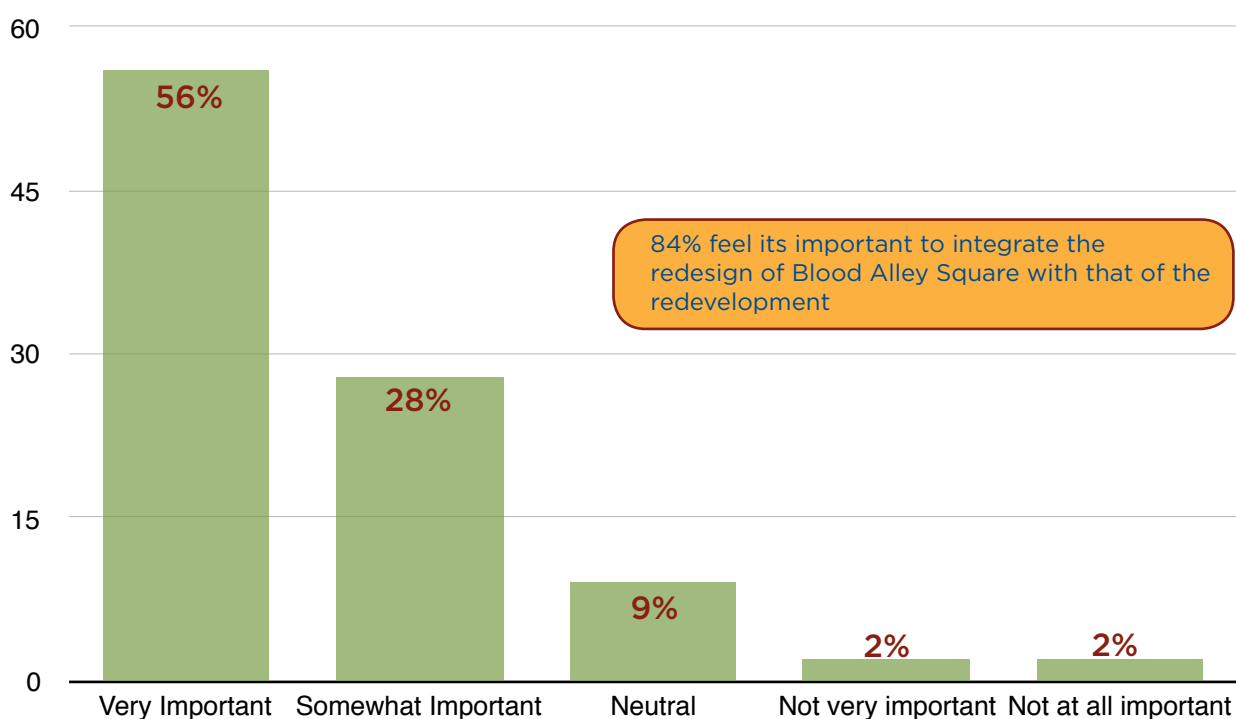
- Conserving the planters is not as important and should be redesigned.
- The location of the trees and planters may be reconsidered.
- Consider adding more vegetation to the Square.

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Question 3:

The Stanley and New Fountain Hotel at 33 W Cordova Street will be applying for redevelopment. How important do you think it is to integrate the redesign of Blood Alley Square with that of the redevelopment?

Results:



Another suggestion provided by the respondents include:

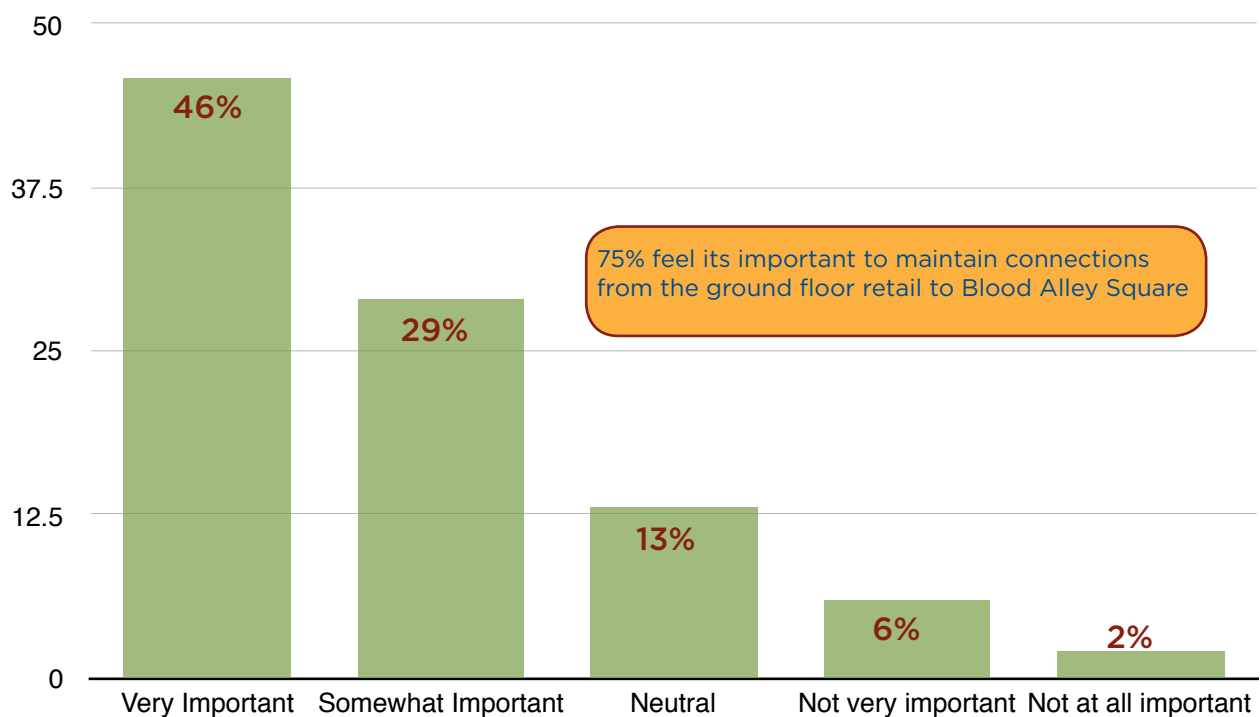
- That the redesign of the Square inform the redevelopment

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Question 4:

The ground on Cordova Street is at a higher level than Blood Alley Square, and currently three staircases connect them. There will be a difference in height between the ground floor retail of the proposed future redevelopment at 33 W Cordova and the Square. How important do you think it is to maintain connections (stairs and/or ramps) from the ground floor retail to Blood Alley Square.

Results:



Other suggestions provided by respondents include:

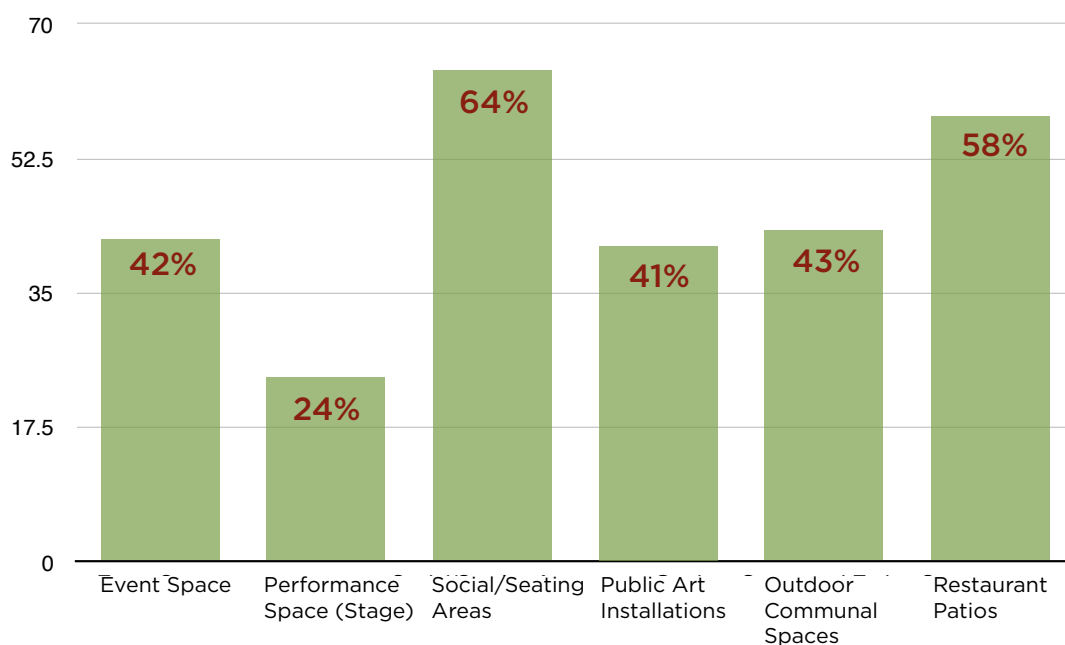
- That there are more connections between the Square and the redevelopment
- Accommodate the grade difference internally (in the redevelopment)
- Public walkway to Cordova not needed
- Raise sunken part of Blood Alley Square

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Question 5:

The redesign will revitalize the Square and provide opportunities for a range of activities and events. Please let us know what types of activities you would like to see by selecting your Top 3 from the list below.

Results:



A review of other suggested activities and events offered the following (in no particular order):

- mini splash park
- seasonal farmer's/craft/flower market
- basketball courts/workout course
- space for DTES residents
- food trucks
- community gardening space

Other suggested considerations include:

- Be mindful of noise for residential units

Top 3 types of activities people would like to see are:

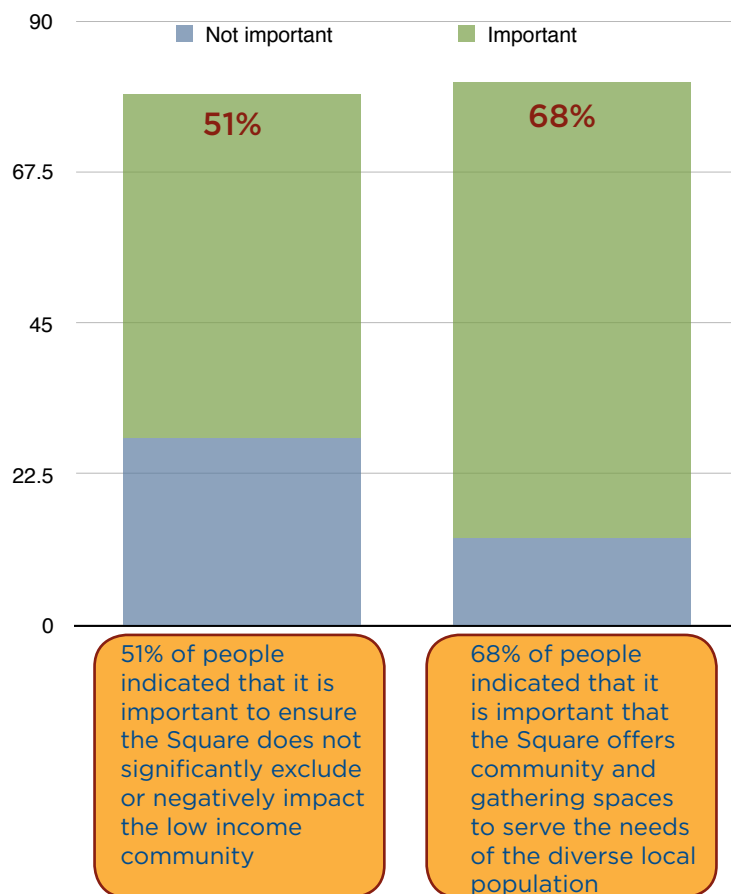
- Social/Seating areas
- Restaurant patios
- Outdoor communal eating space

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Question 6:

As part of the Downtown Eastside Plan, there are nine social impact objectives that will be incorporated into the redesign of Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley. Please indicate the importance of ensuring that the Square does not significantly exclude or negatively impact the low-income community and offers a community amenity and gathering spaces to serve the needs of the diverse local population.

Results:



Other suggestions provided by respondents include:

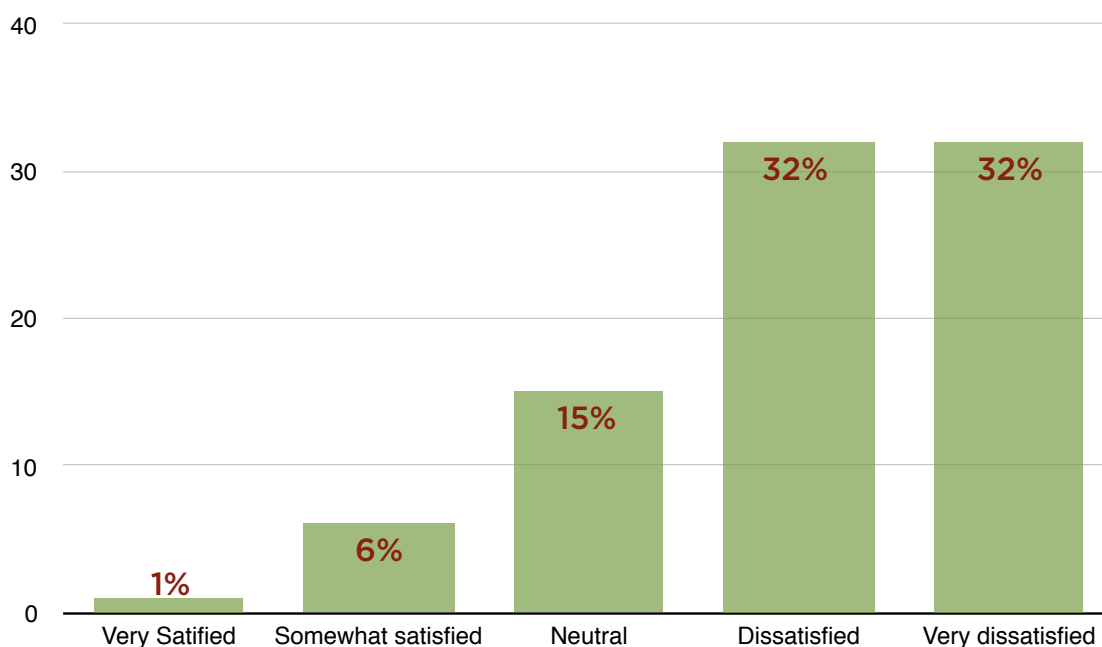
- The space belongs to the DTES community
- That the space does not require goods to be purchased in order to be used.
- That the redesign is not just for the DTES community

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Question 7:

As part of the redesign, there will be some alternatives suggested to better manage the commercial waste containers and recycling in the area. Are you satisfied with the existing waste management system in Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley?

Results:



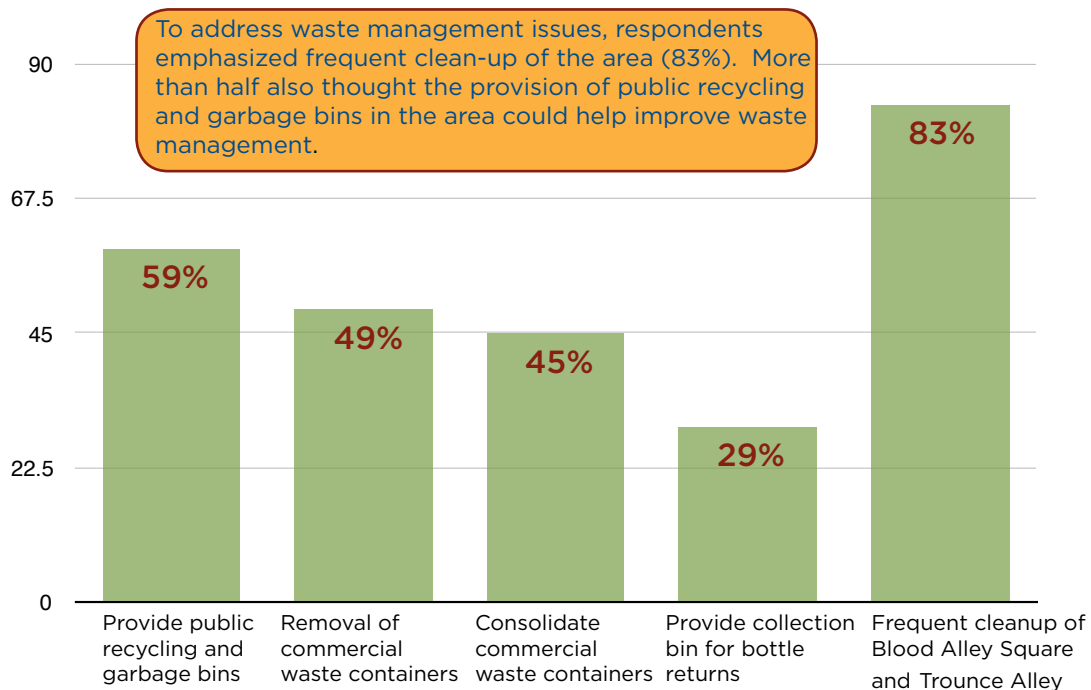
64% of people indicated that they are not satisfied with the existing waste management system in Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley.

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Question 8:

In your opinion what could be done to improve the solid waste management in Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley? Please check all that apply.

Results:



Other suggestions provided by respondents include::

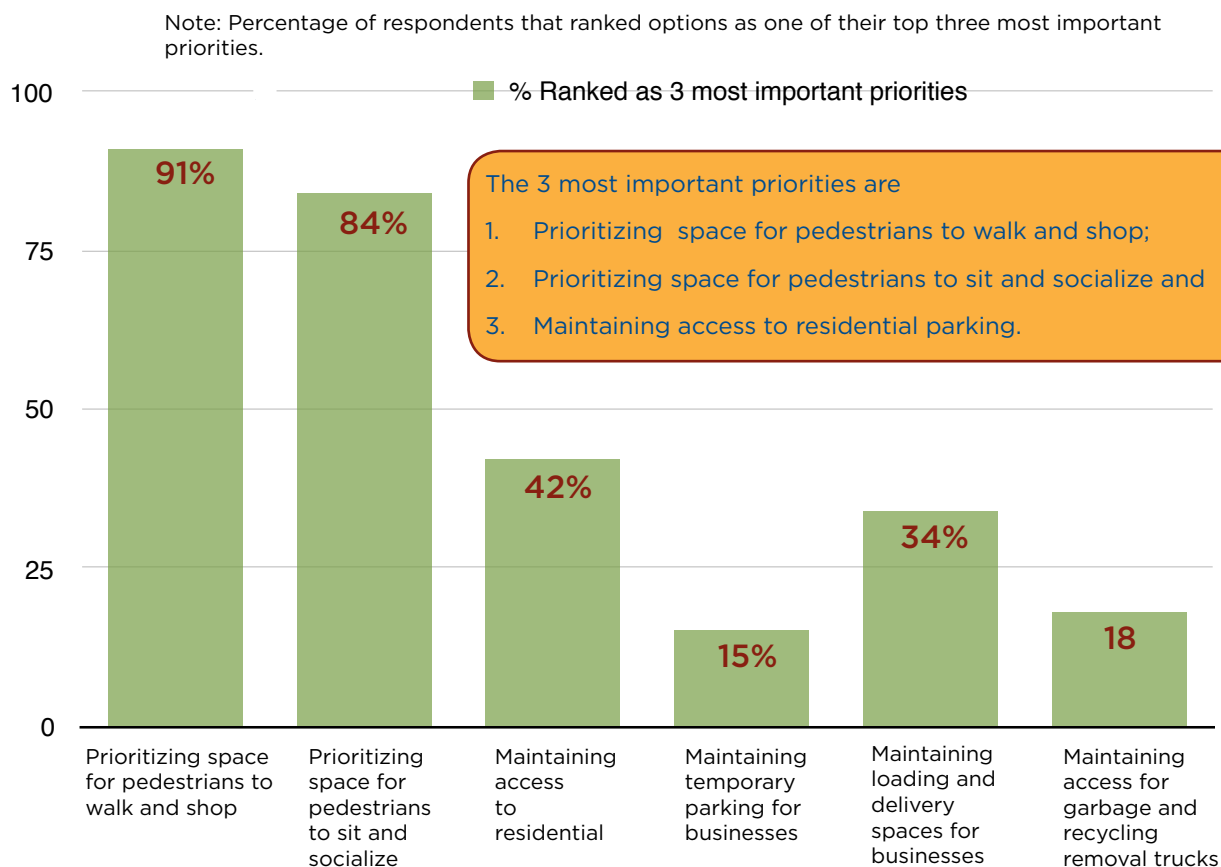
- Install sharps box
- Add collection for large items such as furniture
- Decrease noise from waste management haulers
- Provide underground space for commercial waste containers
- More frequent pick-ups from smaller hauler trucks

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Question 9:

Blood Alley Square and Trounce Alley are shared by both pedestrians, bikes and cars. Please rank the importance of the following with 1 as the most important and 7 is the least important.

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 51% of the respondents include:

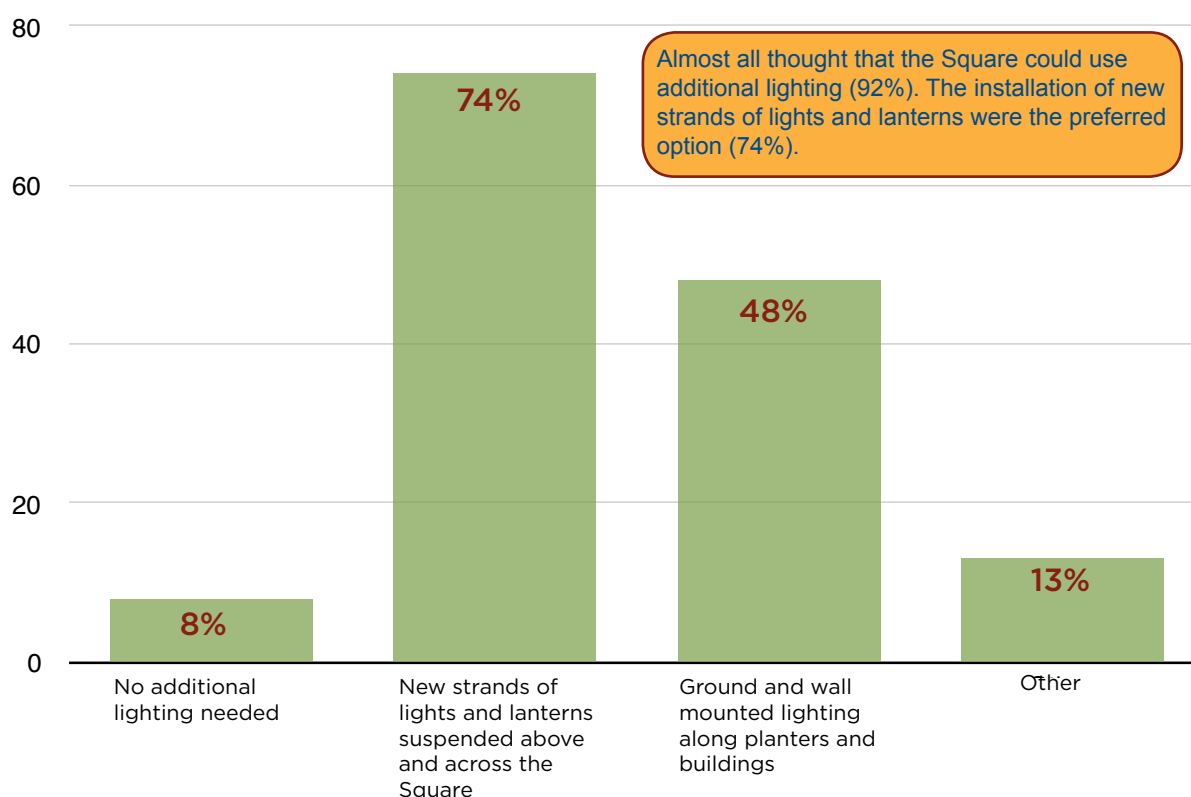
- The space belongs to the DTES community while others cited that the redesign is not just for the DTES community.
- That the space does not require goods to be purchased in order to be used.

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Question 10:

The Square is currently illuminated with cluster globe street lamps. What do you think of providing additional lighting, especially in the east and west ends of the Square. What type of lighting would you like to see? Please check all that apply.

Results:



Other suggestions provided by respondents include:

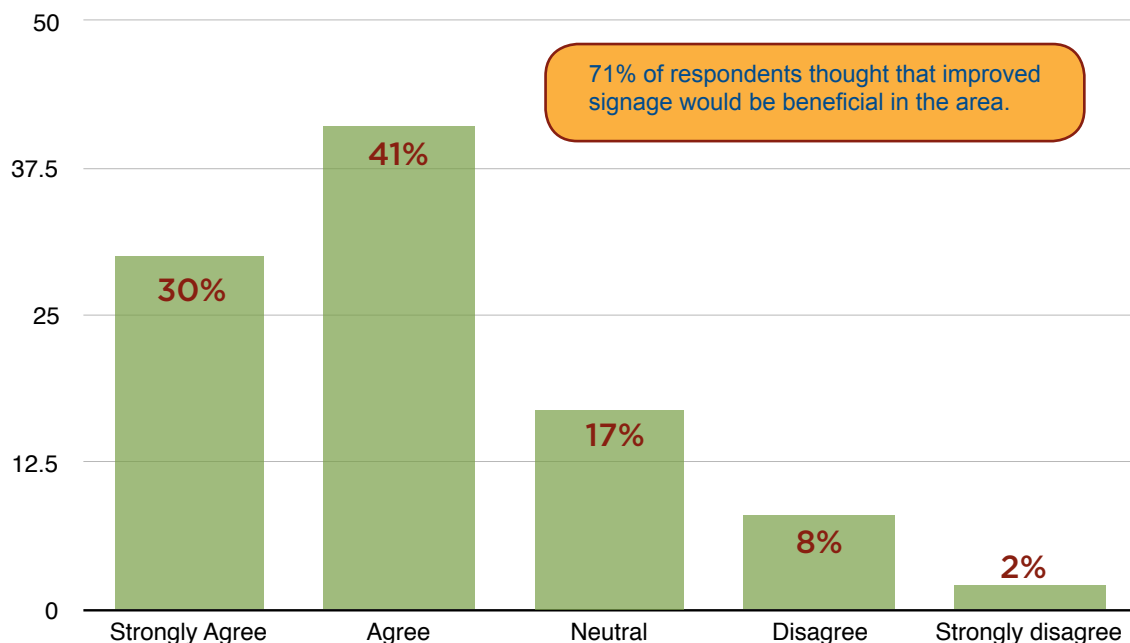
- Lighting to enhance accessibility for visually impaired or requiring mobility devices
- Discreet ground level lighting
- Incorporate lighting in art install
- Consider light pollution for residential units
- Lighting to preserve historical character
- Consider LED or solar powered, but not vibrant LED lights.

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Question 11:

Signage enhances the distinct identity of the historic area's laneways as inviting pedestrian spaces, such as heritages alleys in Chinatown. Do you agree or disagree that way-finding (directional), business and interpretive signage would be an asset to the site?

Results:



Other suggestions provided by 20% of respondents include:

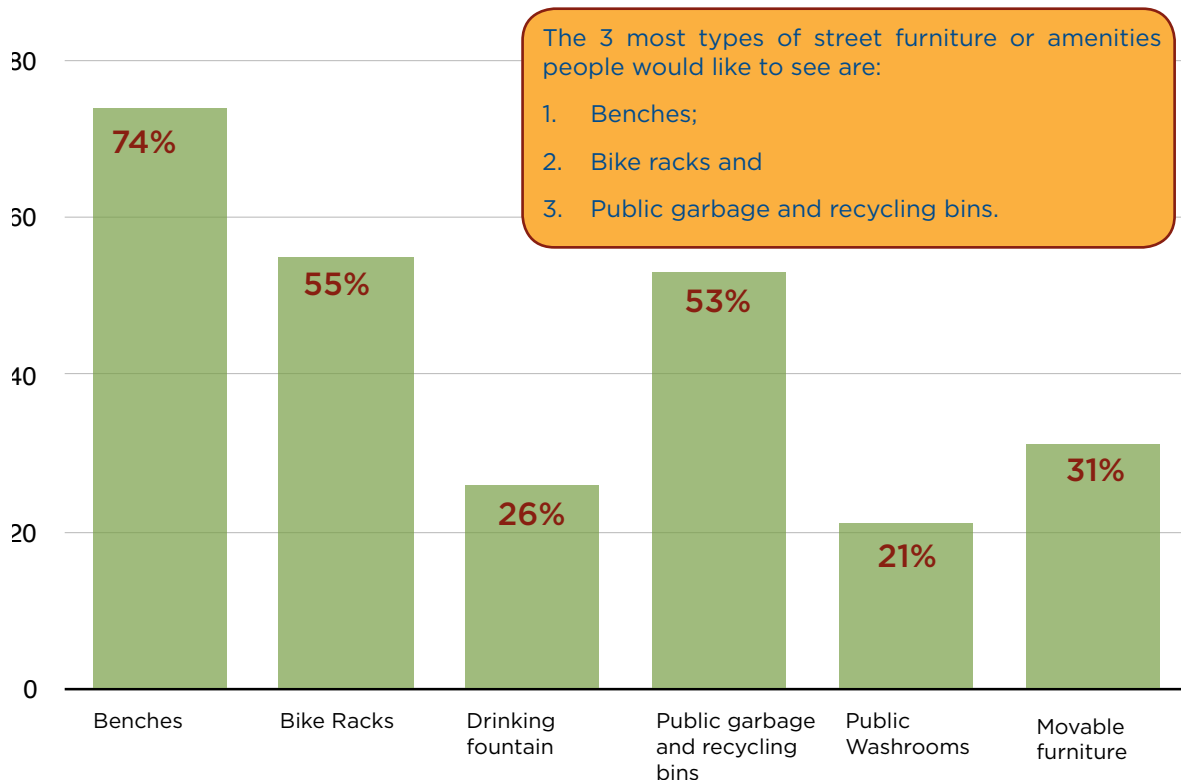
- Signage is not necessary or should be kept minimal, area should be discovered.
- Signage focuses on businesses and tourists too much, space should be kept for the community.
- Signage should reflect heritage style of Gastown and to display the history of the area.

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Question 12:

A diverse range of site furniture can be integrated into Blood Alley Square to facilitate activities. What street furniture or amenity would you like to see?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by respondents include:

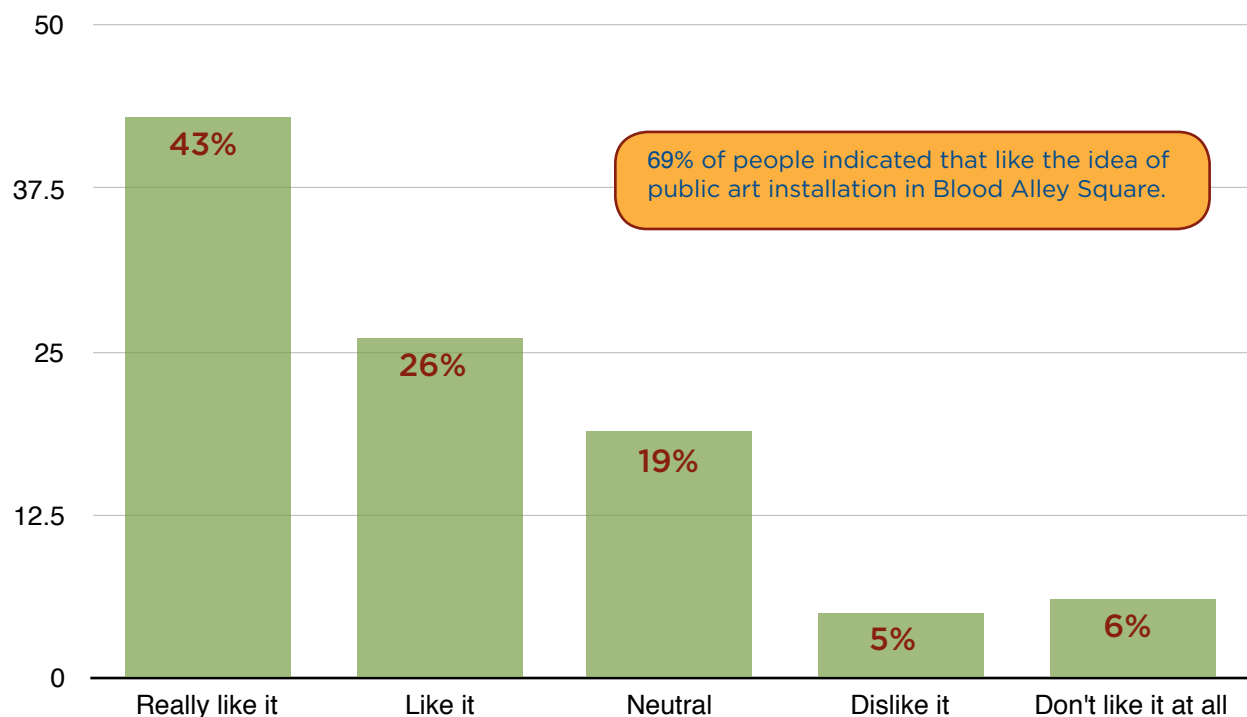
- Non-movable furniture to deter theft
- Water feature
- Removable stage
- Drinking fountain and public washrooms to be maintained regularly, or be located outside of Blood Alley Square
- Benches that would not be amenable to sleeping
- Benches that would be amenable to sleeping

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Question 13

The City of Vancouver has an on-going policy to add public art to parks and open spaces. Do you like the idea of a public art installation in Blood Alley Square?

Results:



Other suggestions offered by respondents include:

- Rotating installations and/or events
- No public art as it would deter from the area's historical significance

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

"Important to maintain the historical character of the space to fit in with the Gastown vibe. It is currently a very safe space, even at night, and should not be redesigned too differently"

"Make space friendly, welcoming and clear to all that don't need to purchase anything in stores, cafes, restaurants to enjoy space; make it family friendly to animate space and make it safer for everyone - perception is that it's not safe especially when dusk, dark"

"Blood Alley is a very important space for Vancouver, it has the potential to be a very human-scale laneway. It could fundamentally change many people's concepts of what an alley is, that its not just for 'garbage' and crime. Cities all over the world have and use alleys as a main space where people live and interact."

"DON'T TAKE THE RESIDENTS AND COMMUNITY OUT OF THIS SPACE. The space belongs to the DTES community"

"Clean up and security are most needed space can look great but if people do not feel comfortable in it they will continue to stay away."

"As long as is tasteful and of relevance to the neighborhood - weaving historical and contemporary culture together"

"...many residential units back on to the alley so designs and plans should encourage quiet activities...this is a very urban area that is significantly lacking in green space, please focus on making this area a beautiful green space where pedestrians can walk and socialize rather than an event space to attract masses of people."

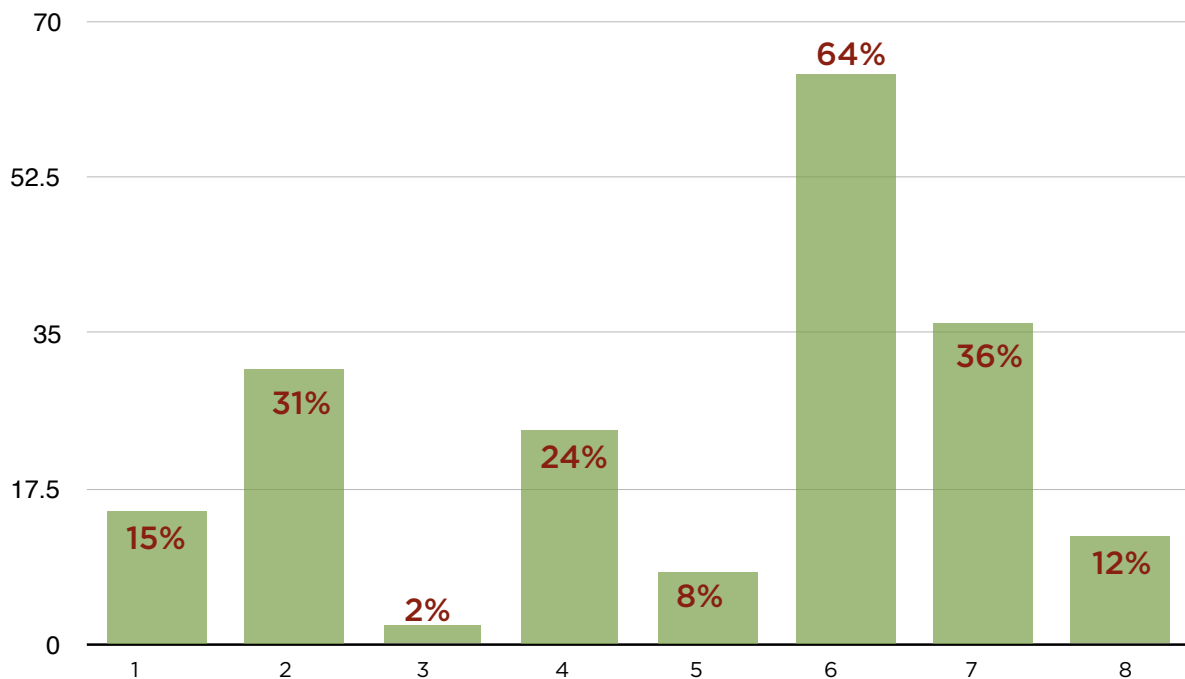
"The dumpsters provide hiding place attract bad activities behind them, it's safety and health issues. They must be removed."

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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:

