

# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

## Overview of the Public Process

Successful planning initiatives are built upon a comprehensive and collaborative public involvement process. For this reason, the City utilized a variation of the National Charette Institute's (NCI) Charrette Process. Traditionally, the NCI Charrette process consolidates the majority of the public process into a four to five day session. The first two days are typically focused on community education, data collections, stakeholder meetings and field work. The final two or three days are traditionally devoted to verification of recommendations, community design and public presentation. In order to better accommodate residents and students from SUNY Oswego, the City determined a broader cross section of the community could participate in the process if the multi-day process described above was divided into two distinct sets of meetings.

As described below, the Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan public involvement process, entitled the New Visions Process, included two primary phases, New Visions Initiative, below, and the Collaborative Design Charrette (page 20). Additionally, a Community Survey and College Student Survey was distributed. A summary of the results of each survey begins on pages 23 and 29, respectively. The full results of the surveys are included in Appendix A.

## New Visions Initiative

The New Visions Initiative included two full days of meetings, workshops, presentations and in-field data collections. This process was primarily a listening session for the consultant team. The goal was to learn what stakeholders, including residents, perceive as the issues and opportunities facing the City of Oswego today. During this process, the consultant team met with:

- Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan Steering Committee
- City Council
- High School Class of 2010
- SUNY at Oswego
- Residents at Four Neighborhood Meetings
- Individual Meetings (Port of Oswego, SUNY Oswego, Oswego Health, City Staff, City School District)
- City Staff Meetings
- Stakeholder Meetings

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

Each meeting fostered an open dialogue on topics related to opportunities and constraints within the City of Oswego as well as the organization they represent. Because the Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan is in essence an update to the Vision Plan, it was important to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current document. Therefore, each meeting included a discussion of the Oswego 2020 Vision Plan, how it was perceived, how it is being used and how it could be improved. A summary of information collected below is provided in a linear fashion, allowing the reader to see how information was collected and allowed to evolve over the course of the two day process.

### Steering Committee: SWOT Analysis

The first Steering Committee meeting of the New Visions Initiative focused on identifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the original Vision 2020 Plan.

*Strengths* identified by participants included comprehensiveness, the large amount of public input, and its focus on tourism and encouraging a mixed-use downtown. An additional strength was that the plan included legitimate ideas and real ideas.

*Weaknesses* of the plan included lack of buy-in from the City. The Steering Committee also felt that it may have been too broad, included too much information and too many recommendations. They also felt the plan and available resources needed to be better connected. Steering committee members additionally indicated that progress was not publicized or celebrated, and that better milestones were needed to gauge success.

*Opportunities* exist to more closely monitor and publicize accomplishments and to better identify parties responsible for implementing the priority actions and projects. Steering Committee members suggested that there is also the opportunity to include new topic areas, such as health, wellness and sustainability.

*Threats* identified with the plan include the fear of change at the local level and the lack of regulatory framework to support various recommendations. Lack of local, state, and federal funding may also impede the City's progress. Finally, rapid changes in technology, as well as administrative changes, have the potential to undermine many of the goals.



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

## Individual Meetings

Meetings were held with various community leaders to discuss the challenges, opportunities, and ongoing efforts faced by their organizations and the City of Oswego. Individual meetings were held with the Port of Oswego, Oswego City School District, Oswego Health and SUNY Oswego. Summaries of key points from each meeting are provided below.

### Port of Oswego

Discussion with a representative of the Port focused on its existing operations as well as goals for the future. The identity of the Port is primarily industrial, and is unique from other ports because of specialization in the types of freight handled. Major freight includes agricultural products, aluminum, cement, petroleum, transformers and windmill parts. It is anticipated that windmills and energy generation will be a growing part of the industry. Future goals include introducing cruise ships to expand tourism at the Port, which could be supported by its deep water capacity and the border control certifications held by the Port. In addition, the port intends to increase container port capabilities to enhance long-term sustainability and growth.

### SUNY Oswego

In recent years, the College has experienced an increase in its applicant pool, though enrollment has not increased. This has afforded the institution to be more selective in admittance, and the quality of students has therefore improved. The campus additionally has plans for physical expansion, which will impact viewsheds, transportation, and parking. One challenge the College faces is attracting young faculty due to the quality of housing stock and activities available city-wide. This poses an opportunity for both SUNY Oswego and the City to attract young adults to the region.

TIME		
8:00 – 9:00	Travel	
9:00 – 10:00	High School Workshop	Study Area Tour
10:00 – 11:00	University Student Workshop	
11:00 – 12:00	Youth Government Luncheon	
12:00 – 1:00		
1:00 – 2:00	Individual Meeting: Superintendent	Individual Meeting: Hospital
2:00 – 3:00	Individual Meeting: Port Authority	Individual Meeting: University President
3:00 – 4:00	Meeting with Mayor and City staff	
4:00 – 5:00	Dinner meeting with Steering Committee: Survey Instrument	
5:00 – 6:00		
6:00 – 7:00	BREAK	
7:00 – 8:00	Presentation to City Council	
8:00 – 9:00	Travel	

The table above represents the schedule of meetings facilitated during the first day of the New Visions Initiative.

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

Another challenge identified is the lack of physical connectivity between the campus and downtown, which was echoed by students at the college. Physical connectivity can be enhanced through improved sidewalk networks, consistent streetscaping, access to public transportation and wayfinding components. The lines of communication between the College and the City could be improved, and they should partner to work towards a unified vision for the City. However, over the past several years, communication and collaboration has greatly improved.

### Oswego Health

Oswego Health is a private healthcare network that employs approximately 1,200 people. Expansion goals include improved opportunities for pediatric care and for the underserved. Further evaluation of assisted living care is also considered a priority. Quality schools and healthcare were identified as two important community characteristics that potential residents consider. Oswego Health currently has a New Visions program (not related to the Vision 2020 Plan), which engages students to learn about healthcare by shadowing staff.

Oswego Health faces the challenge of attracting physicians due to the Region's reputation for snow and a perception of limited quality-of-life amenities. Its expansion plans will require it to hire additional lab technicians, nurses and medical imaging professionals. Additionally, the hospital is in the process of developing an in-house Information Technology (IT) system. However it was noted that there are no local IT companies to partner with or utilize their services.

### City Staff

Conversations with City staff indicate that many are not aware of the existing Vision 2020 Plan, and therefore it is not widely utilized. Staff suggested that action items be clearly visible and consolidated into one section to make them easy to identify and use on a regular basis. Staff further identified the need to address areas where large concentrations of rental housing are present.

### Oswego City School District

The City of Oswego School District is experiencing declining enrollment and a large number of students can be considered disadvantaged. This is supported by the percentage of the student population that receives a free or reduced lunch (40



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

percent). In addition, the District is facing a \$1.6 million dollar shortfall in State Aid for the 2010-2011 school year. While the graduation rate has increased from 68 to 72 percent and the dropout rate has declined from 15 percent to 12 percent since 2008-2009, the community noted in the survey instrument and through feedback generated at meetings that the quality of the local educational system is in need of improvement.

The School District continues to have a strong working relationship with the City of Oswego. This relationship includes the shared use of facilities (athletic fields, buildings, etc.) as well as unique partnerships. One such partnership includes the development of a mural program through the school district for at-risk youth. The Springboard Mural Committee consists of representatives from various local agencies and the School District. The School District is also leading the development of a not-for-profit entitled The Port City Education Foundation. The intent of this foundation is to provide scholarship programs for local students.

### College Student Workshop

A workshop was held with a small group of college students during the New Visions Initiative with the main purpose of soliciting feedback regarding the relationship between the college community to the City of Oswego. Although not wholly located within the city limits, the day-to-day operations of the College and its students directly impact the City of Oswego. Likewise, the quality-of-life afforded by the City impacts members of the college community, including their decision to stay following graduation or live within the City limits while employed or enrolled at the school. Several topic areas that were discussed fall under the broader categories of community relations, investment in the community, safety, and student retention.

### Community Relations

Students noted that there is a divide between the campus community and downtown community, which may be partially due to the physical separation (more than one mile) of the campus from the downtown core. Although the Student Association formerly had an off-campus relations officer position, the position has been dissolved. To address these concerns, the College

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

has been proactively working to better campus and community relations. As an example, a Campus City Relations Committee sponsors and promotes activities to bring the college and community together. In addition, students host a community picnic that is open to all community residents. There are ample other opportunities for students to integrate themselves into the local community, and these opportunities should be highlighted to students, including service learning projects, internships with local businesses, and volunteering at local festivals and special events.

### Investment in the Community

Meeting attendees indicated there are some initiatives to encourage investment in downtown businesses, yet opportunity exists to further these efforts. The College currently coordinates with downtown businesses to market those establishments during orientation. In addition, the campus dining plan can be used at limited off-campus establishments. Students suggested expanding this to include more businesses. They also felt that increased advertising of local businesses on campus, such as through the campus newspaper or social networking sites, would help stimulate student interest in visiting downtown. One suggestion included offering on-campus tastings for local restaurants in order to entice students downtown. In addition, students indicated that the lack of investment in the City's housing stock may negatively impact the College's ability to attract graduate students who may be looking for a better off-campus experience.

### Safety

Safety issues were identified as another area of concern for College students. Those present indicated they do not feel safe on campus at night unless they are walking in a well lit area. Interestingly, students do feel safe in downtown Oswego.

### Student Retention

An area of interest for both the College and the City is whether or not students desire to stay in the area following graduation, and the factors that influence that decision. All students present indicated that they had no intention of remaining in the City of Oswego following graduation, and that lack of job opportunities was the primary reason. Other reasons included family ties elsewhere. Participants identified larger cities as their market for employment opportunities including Washington D.C., Albany, Syracuse, and New York City.



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

## Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder meetings were facilitated to bring together representatives from the local community with knowledge pertaining to four main topic areas including economic development, recreation, the waterfront, and sustainability. Comments generated at each of the stakeholder meetings are summarized by topic area below.

### Economic Development

The economic development discussion centered around existing employers within the City of Oswego. Participants identified health care services, tourism and SUNY Oswego as areas of employment that are growing. In addition, the energy sector is beginning to grow, though employment is stable. Some of the challenges the City faces include the downsizing of the manufacturing industry and the difficulty attracting businesses into New York State.

Despite these challenges, opportunities exist. Stakeholders identified that the City has brownfield sites that are well positioned for further study, analysis, and redevelopment. The opportunity exists to continue to attract businesses or firms that support existing industries within the City. Stakeholders identified that growth in healthcare would likely occur in Oswego. In addition, stakeholders identified the need to capitalize on the presence of SUNY Oswego. The College is currently working to better connect graduates to business start-ups, and participants identified that encouraging and expanding internship opportunities would build loyalty with students, possibly increasing retention rates following graduation.

### Recreation

Stakeholders discussed recreational opportunities throughout the City of Oswego, and identified several areas in need of improvement. Ideas for enhancing recreation included establishing a tourism center to boast the area's historic and cultural assets. Additionally, recreational facilities for senior residents are lacking throughout the City, indicating that the area would benefit from a community center. Facility improvements and upgrades that were identified include the need for a designated building for youth hockey, lockers for hockey tournaments, better maintenance of playground infrastructure, and a community arts facility.

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

In addition to facility upgrades, stakeholders cited necessary improvements relating to outdoor recreation and youth development. Such improvements included expanding kayaking and biking opportunities, developing a skateboard park, and expanding healthy living infrastructure. Additional programming that should be provided include working with music venues to host open microphone nights and organizing summer youth park programs.

Stakeholders identified several key improvements made over the course of the past decade. Such improvements include the new campus center, the development of the harbor trail, a new bowling alley, and new soccer fields at the Middle School. Participants identified music events, bowling, fine arts, sports, outdoor recreation, and the Oswego speedway as the major cultural and recreational activities enjoyed throughout the city. One of the greatest challenges cited was the ability to complete needed improvements and maintenance on existing recreational infrastructure.

### Waterfront

Feedback regarding the waterfront focused on the diverse opportunities that exist to use and promote this important resource while also identifying and recognizing financial and technical challenges. Specific challenges include the need to comply with state regulations for any proposed project on the water. In addition, the function of the Port of Oswego has changed and security has greatly increased, though the public continues to have access to the marina.

With these challenges in mind, participants indicated that waterfront development initiatives will need to be closely coordinated between the City and the Port. Ideas included developing an industrial overlook to celebrate the Port's industrial function and further encourage tourism. In addition, stakeholders suggested increased mixed-use development, improving pedestrian access, enhanced landscaping, and evaluating areas to determine where recreational water uses might be feasible.

### Sustainability

Discussion in the sustainability stakeholder meeting focused on how the City could use more renewable energy sources, address stormwater, and encourage urban agriculture and alternative transportation. The need for a city-wide energy audit and transportation study at SUNY Oswego were also identified.



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

Stakeholders indicated the desire to become a “Tree City USA,” which is an Arbor Day Foundation designation. Benefits range from improved public image and citizen pride, to increased opportunities for grant funding for tree planting and street tree programs. To qualify, the City must meet specified criteria, including having a Tree Ordinance and a Tree Board or Department.

Stakeholders also expressed the desire to explore opportunities to manage stormwater using green infrastructure techniques such as bioswales, rain gardens, pervious pavements and rain barrels when feasible. Additionally, the need to consider renewable energy projects in public and private projects was identified. Examples may include the use of solar collection systems on buildings, the use of geothermal to reduce heat and cooling costs and potentially small scale wind energy projects.

To help achieve the City's goals, participants felt developing a benchmarking document comparing Oswego's sustainable practices to other small cities may be valuable. In addition, stakeholders expressed the need to extensively market the sustainability campaign throughout the City and work with community outreach programs such as the Citizens Academy for Sustainability or the Go Green Team community group.

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

### High School Student Workshop

Students at the City's High School were engaged in a visioning activity to gain understanding to what they would like the community to be in the year 2020. Students were asked to both identify aspects of the community that they would like to see remain the same, as well as those that they would like to see change. Each student was then asked to prioritize the characteristics by placing a sticker next to those they felt most strongly about. Feedback from this discussion is summarized below.

#### Characteristics to Stay the Same

The most important characteristic that students identified to remain unchanged is Harborfest. This feeling was echoed elsewhere throughout the planning process. Other recreational outlets were also at the top of the list, including Breitbeck Park, the Waterfront, the bowling alley, speedway, and the City's existing trail system. Students emphasized that they would like local restaurants such as Rudy's, Canale's, and Vona's to prosper.

#### Characteristics to Change

The majority of responses were related to increased programming for youth. Specifically, students indicated a desire for more youth oriented activities at the recreation center and expanded waterfront recreation aimed at youth (i.e. jet ski rentals, kayaks, etc.). Students additionally indicated that the brownfield located near Fort Ontario should be targeted for reuse.

### Neighborhood Meetings

The New Visions Initiative included four neighborhood meetings held at Oswego Middle School, the Education Center, and Oswego High School. The meetings were intended to inform the public regarding the 2020 Vision update and the planning process, as well as to initiate discussion regarding their perceptions of the community. Those who attended the neighborhood meetings were asked to identify various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) that they perceive to be present within the community. Comments were recorded on large pads and then fastened to the walls of each



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

meeting room. Participants were then asked to use stickers to prioritize aspects of the community they felt most strongly about. Attendees of each meeting agreed on many of the issues identified. Results of the SWOT analysis and prioritization exercise are described below.

## Strengths

Strengths identified for the City of Oswego ranged from existing organizations and infrastructure to less tangible aspects of the community, such as feelings of safety. Attendees indicated that the City is a great place to raise a family. The City's

<i>Neighborhood Meeting #1: Oswego Middle School</i>
<u><i>PRIORITY ISSUES:</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Unemployment</i></li><li><i>• Utilizing technology to attract young people</i></li><li><i>• Improve/Occupy downtown buildings</i></li><li><i>• Marketing Oswego</i></li></ul>

<i>Neighborhood Meeting #2: Education Center</i>
<u><i>PRIORITY ISSUES:</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Oswego's heritage/history</i></li><li><i>• Re-use of older structures</i></li><li><i>• Reapportion taxes to support arts and culture</i></li><li><i>• Incubator City for energy efficient technologies</i></li></ul>

<i>Neighborhood Meeting #3: Oswego High School</i>
<u><i>PRIORITY ISSUES:</i></u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>• Declining job market</i></li><li><i>• Waterfront recreation</i></li><li><i>• Arts and culture destination</i></li><li><i>• Declining population and property values</i></li></ul>

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

heritage and history was also identified as one of its greatest strengths. More tangible aspects included the presence of SUNY Oswego and cultural institutions throughout the City. Finally, the waterfront was identified as one of the City's core strengths.

### Weaknesses

Participants identified several areas that they felt were the City's most prominent weaknesses. These included the local economy and lack of jobs, a sentiment that was heard throughout the public outreach process. Also emphasized were decreasing property values and the lack of investment in older housing stock. Finally, population loss was cited as a weakness, with emphasis placed on the difficulty retaining youth or college graduates.

### Opportunities

Building off the lists developed identifying the City's strengths and weaknesses, participants were then asked to identify various opportunities. Many priority opportunities were related to the City's identity and opportunities to market its strengths. These included ideas to make the City an arts and culture destination and to identify the City as an innovative energy location by attracting applied technologies for energy efficiency. Participants noted the opportunity to capitalize on the popularity of social networking sites, such as Facebook, to better market the area to youth and young professionals. Finally, the opportunity for infill development in the City's downtown and to reuse older structures was noted as a priority.

### Threats

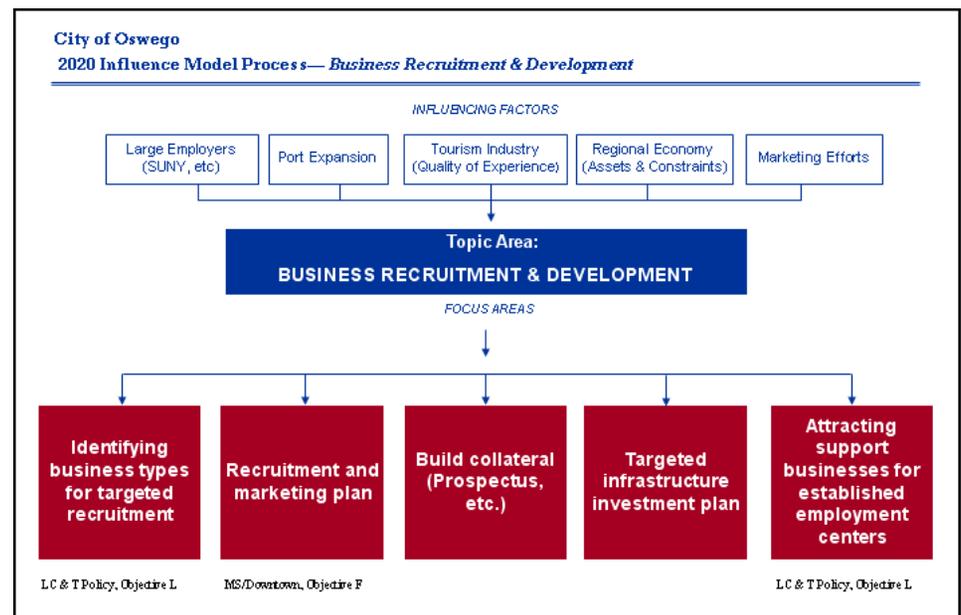
The main threats to the City of Oswego centered around educational attainment, income, and community leadership. Specifically, high unemployment rates and poverty levels were identified as the main threat to the community. Other threats included the perception of increasing high school dropout rates and the inability to keep or attract young residents. Finally, residents identified the lack of vision in local government as a threat to the future of the City.



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

## Steering Committee: Influence Model

The second Steering Committee meeting focused on synthesizing the information from the meetings facilitated during the New Visions Initiative. Using this information, the Steering Committee participated in an influence modeling exercise. In essence, a particular issue in a City may be caused by a complex set of influencing factors. Therefore, in order to accurately define achievable recommendations for inclusion in the Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan, the Steering Committee needed to consider how issues and opportunities identified throughout the process are inter-related and whether a set of consistent topics could be identified for further analysis. In summary, eight topic areas were identified including the waterfront, housing stock, business recruitment and development, connectivity, downtown revitalization, the city's identity, healthy city, and plan utilization. The results of the influence modeling process helped to frame many of the action items described in Chapter 4. A summary of each is provided below. The full results of the influence model are provided in Appendix C.



The Influence Model example above shows how influencing factors were used to identify the Business Recruitment and Development Topic Area and the associated focus areas. Additionally, if a focus area supported a Policy or Objective from the Vision 2020 Plan, it was indicated.

## Waterfront

Steering Committee members identified the opportunities to enhance public access to the waterfront as well as to interconnect regional trails. In addition, opportunity exists to capitalize on historic and cultural assets. Lack of available

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

space to support the various opportunities was identified as a possible constraint. In addition, multiple user groups with different interests may impact waterfront development and usage.

### Housing Stock

Opportunities exist to partner with SUNY Oswego and the City to institute programs to reverse occupancy trends. In addition, members suggested the potential to create housing rehabilitation programs, which could include a homeowner education component and introduce tool libraries. Furthermore, attendees noted that incentives for housing rehabilitation should be developed on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis. Other ideas to encourage home renovations included providing tax breaks for improved homes that utilized local contractors or bought materials locally.

### Business Recruitment & Development

The Steering Committee discussed the opportunity to identify moderate sized businesses and industries that could build upon existing established sectors such as healthcare, education and energy and develop a recruitment strategy. Constraints may include lack of infrastructure, both traditional and technological.

### Connectivity

Members identified routes 104 and 481 as a focus for improving connectivity, suggesting that these corridors should be beautified as gateway corridors. In addition, opportunities exist to implement a targeted tree planting program, to improve pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and to target public space improvements.

### Downtown Revitalization

While there are some areas within Oswego's downtown area with low rent rates, others are high and difficult for small businesses and micro-enterprise to afford. In certain locations, however, rents are too high for smaller businesses or start-up businesses. Downtown is not currently viewed as a shopping destination, and there is no wayfinding or connectivity to the



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

waterfront. Other issues may include fostering the atmosphere to attract and sustain high quality mixed use development as well as consistent marketing of the downtown.

### City Identity

There was consensus among members that a branding campaign needs to be initiated to market the city. Focus should be placed on the City's heritage (i.e. Port) and natural assets to identify the city's unique niche. Residential and commercial structures could be utilized to promote the new "brand" of the city through signage or banners.

### Healthy City

The City of Oswego has the opportunity to build on its existing recreation programs to include senior programming and additional youth programs. In addition, the opportunity exists to market alternative transportation modes, such as walking and biking, as well as waterfront recreation. The water quality of recreational waters may be an obstacle to water related healthy living initiatives.

### Plan Utilization

Members felt the success of the Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan will be contingent on community buy-in and the ability to actively promote successful implementation. This will require elected officials and the city administration to support the short- and long-term goals of the plan and commit to implementation. The opportunity therefore exists to identify responsible parties, and to track the progress of the plan. Plan utilization may be impaired if the document is not user-friendly and if the plan is not promoted to the public.

### New Visions Collaborative Design Charrette

The first phase of the New Visions process primarily focused on establishing a framework and focus for the Oswego 2020 Strategic Plan. Significant time and effort was put into understanding the aspirations of the community, the threats that may impede the realization of Oswego's desired future and potential actions that could be implemented over the next ten years to

## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

better position the City for success. The second phase of the New Visions process focused almost exclusively on potential physical improvements to the community that would help achieve the strategic goals of the community.

The citizens of Oswego were invited to participate in the New Visions Collaborative Design Charrette held on October 13 and October 14, 2010 at the McCrobie Civic Center. Beginning at 8:00 am, the consultant team completed a series of in-field site visits, individual and stakeholder group meetings and a working meeting with the Steering Committee. At 5:00 pm, the public was invited to an open house where they could review draft action recommendations and converse one-on-one with the consultant team. At 6:00 pm, an interactive workshop was facilitated including educational presentations, surveys and roundtable working groups. The workshop focused on four strategic planning topic areas: gateways and corridors, the downtown and waterfront, neighborhoods, parks and recreation. Attendees were asked to provide input on two of the four topic areas over the course of the evening. By 9:30 pm, the public workshop was completed and attendees were asked to come back the next day to see how their ideas were advanced to plan recommendations by the consultant's design team.

### DESIGN WORKSHOP TIMELINES—October 13 & October 14

TIME	Day 1 – October 13 <sup>th</sup>			
9:00 – 10:00	Staff Meeting		Site Visits	
10:00 – 11:00				
11:00 – 12:00	Steering Committee Meeting			
12:00 – 1:00				
1:00 – 2:00	Individual Meetings		Site Visits	
2:00 – 3:00				
3:00 – 4:00	Charrette/Public Meeting Set-Up			
4:00 – 5:00	Dinner			
5:00 – 6:00	Informal Public Involvement and Walking Tour			
6:00 – 7:00	Public Presentation – Introduction, Education, CCS			
7:00 – 9:00	Pencil to Paper Design Session			
	Neighborhoods	Downtown & Waterfront	Gateways & Corridors	Parks & Recreation

TIME	Day 2 – October 14 <sup>th</sup>	
8:00 – 9:00	Product Development	Graphics Development
9:00 – 10:00		
10:00 – 11:00	Steering Committee Meeting	
11:00 – 12:00	Working Team Meeting / Lunch	
12:00 – 1:00		
1:00 – 2:00	Stakeholder Meetings <i>Waterfronts, Economic Development, Sustainability, Recreation</i>	Graphics Development
2:00 – 3:00		
3:00 – 4:00		
4:00 – 5:00	Public Meeting Set-Up	
5:00 – 6:00	Dinner	
6:00 – 8:00	Public Informational Meeting / Charrette Results	
8:00 – 9:00	Steering Committee Wrap-Up	



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

On October 14, the consultant team opened the doors of the McCrobie Civic Center to the public at 8:00 am. By 8:15 two citizens stopped by to add additional input and provide additional guidance to the consultant team. Throughout the course of the day, citizens stopped in to provide additional insight and participate in the plan development process. A series of focus group meetings were facilitated to further refine the recommendations. The consultant team completed additional site visits and drafted graphic representations that described the physical recommendations discussed with the public. At 6:00 pm, the public open house began, allowing attendees to see and comment on the recommended actions generated over the course of the two day charrette.

The results of the charrette are included in Chapter 4, Implementation.



*City of Oswego citizens participate in a two-day interactive Design Workshop.*

# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

## Community Survey

### Overview and Methodology

In June 2010, the City of Oswego conducted a community survey to obtain input on a wide range of issues, ranging from community values and needs to shopping and employment patterns. The survey was one method of obtaining community input regarding the effectiveness and relevance of the 2003 Vision 2020 Plan, as well as to focus and direct the Comprehensive Plan update. The survey was made available to the public through a web-based survey tool and publicized through the City of Oswego's website, the Palladium Times, and on OswegoCountyToday.com.

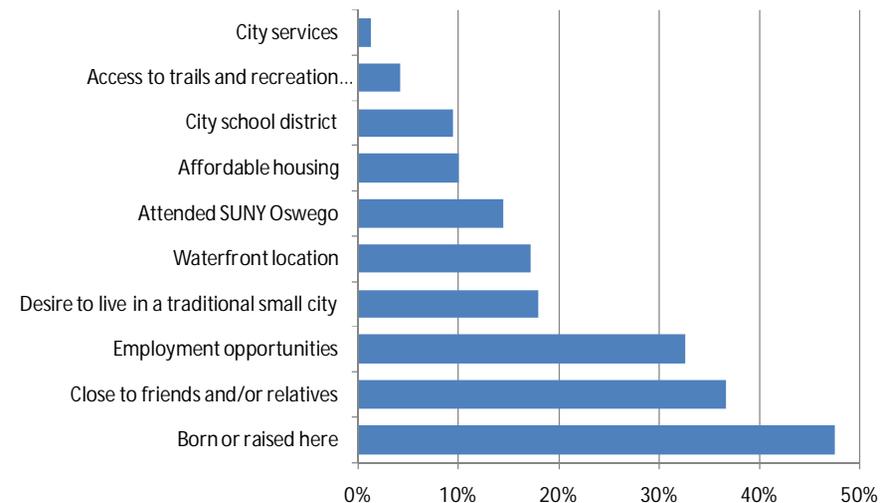
The survey was broken into six sections that consisted of questions relating to Community Values, Community Needs, Shopping Patterns, Employment Characteristics, the 2020 Vision Plan, and Respondent Information. A total of 502 residents completed the online survey.

Questions included multiple choice and open ended responses. Although many questions were answered by all participants, there were a few questions that were skipped. Therefore, the number of responses varies for some questions. The following sections summarize the findings from the 2010 Community Survey by topic area. The complete survey and response summaries are included in Appendix A.

### Topic Area 1: Community Values

Community values relate to the ideology that we share responsibility for one another and therefore must work collectively to uphold the common good. Ideally, this sentiment will translate into policies that reflect the community's core values.

Which are the two most influential factors in your decision to live in Oswego?



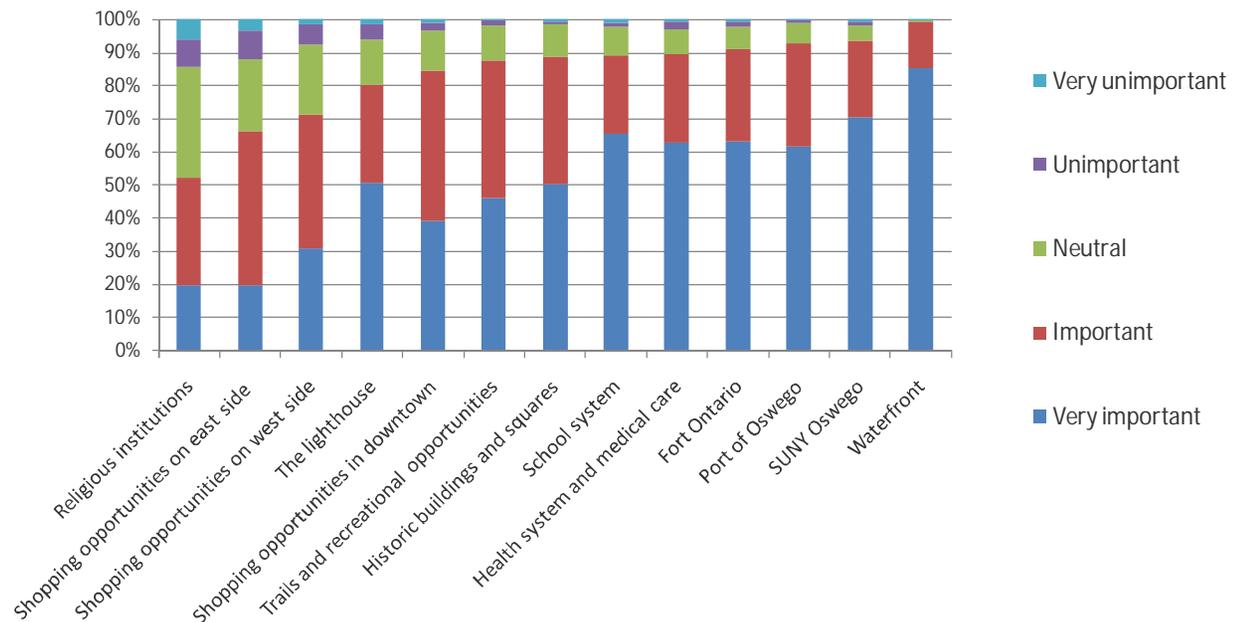
## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

The 2020 Survey was designed with questions to help respondents identify the importance of a variety of factors that influence the quality of life and their decision to reside in the City of Oswego.

The majority of respondents indicated that their decision to live in Oswego was influenced by being born or raised in the City (47.5 percent), and because it is close to friends or relatives (36.7 percent). Other factors, including employment opportunities, also proved influential. Open ended responses indicate that feelings of safety and the low crime rate made Oswego an appealing place to live and raise a family. Factors such as affordable housing, availability of parks and recreation, and the city school district were not as significant.

The survey asked respondents to identify the types of development or regulations that the City should more actively encourage or enforce. Residents indicated strong support for the City to protect natural resources (67.8 percent), to encourage redevelopment of dilapidated or deteriorating housing (61 percent), to protect and preserve historic sites and structures (58.7 percent). The most opposition was for expanded industrial use of the Port, which was expressed by 18.3 percent of respondents. However, residents may not understand the positive implications associated with expanded industrial use of the port, such as more jobs and an increased tax base. A small portion of respondents indicated no opinion for enforcement of existing design standards (18.6 percent) and encouraging upper story residential and mixed uses in the downtown (16.1 percent), signifying that these issues may not be well understood.

How important do you think the following aspects of the community are to the character of Oswego?



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

Respondents were asked to rank aspects of the city that they felt were most important to its character. The waterfront and SUNY Oswego were rated as the most important (85.5 percent and 70.7 percent, respectively), while religious institutions and existing shopping opportunities were identified as less important to community character.

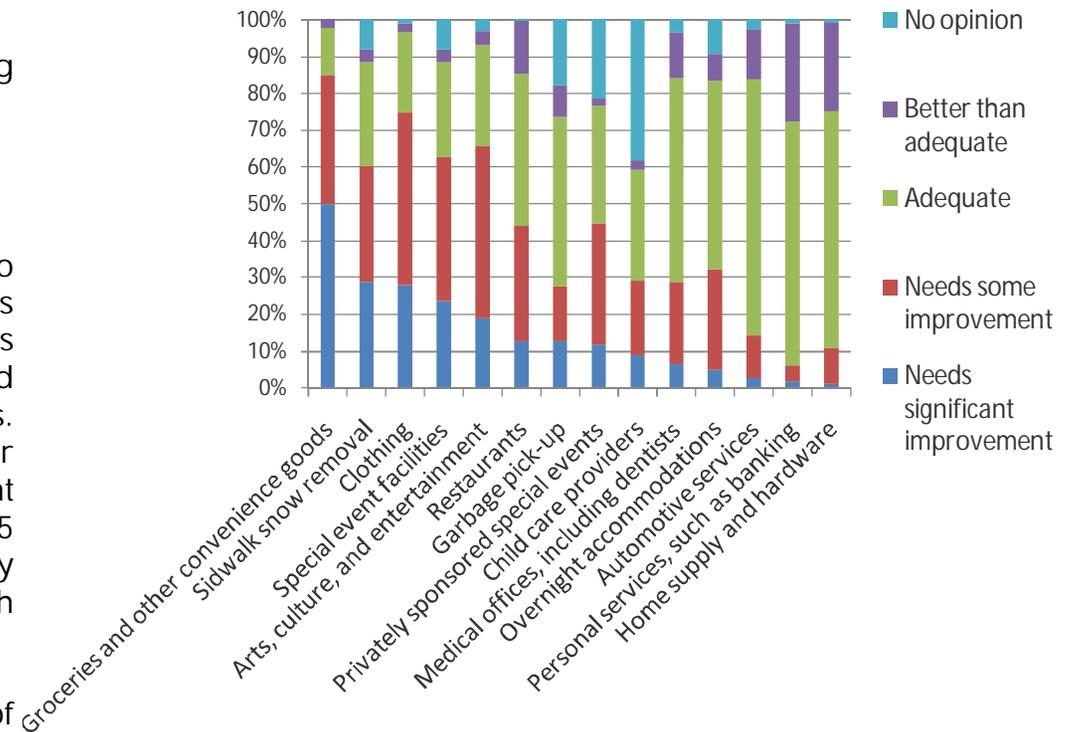
More than half of respondents (52.5 percent) indicated that more tax dollars should be allocated towards attracting commercial and retail development. Most also agreed that tax dollars should be allocated towards attracting additional employers to the City of Oswego (71.9 percent). Other areas of importance that were not listed but identified in open response included improving Bridge Street to be a Main Street that supports a diversity of retail and food establishments, historic preservation, pursuing renewable energy, and promoting and increasing programming on the waterfront.

### Topic Area 2: Community Needs Assessment

The Community Needs Assessment was intended to identify residents' satisfaction with various resources and services in the City of Oswego. Residents generally agreed that there is enough parkland located within the City to meet recreational needs. However, responses were split regarding whether or not there are enough trails, with 42.7 percent indicating the number of trails is adequate and 37.5 percent indicating the need for more. Many respondents indicated that there are not enough recreational outlets for youth (64 percent).

Respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of various municipal services or facilities. Of the 14

Please rate the effectiveness of the private sector services or facilities listed below as in need of significant improvement, some improvement, adequate, better than adequate, or no opinion.



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

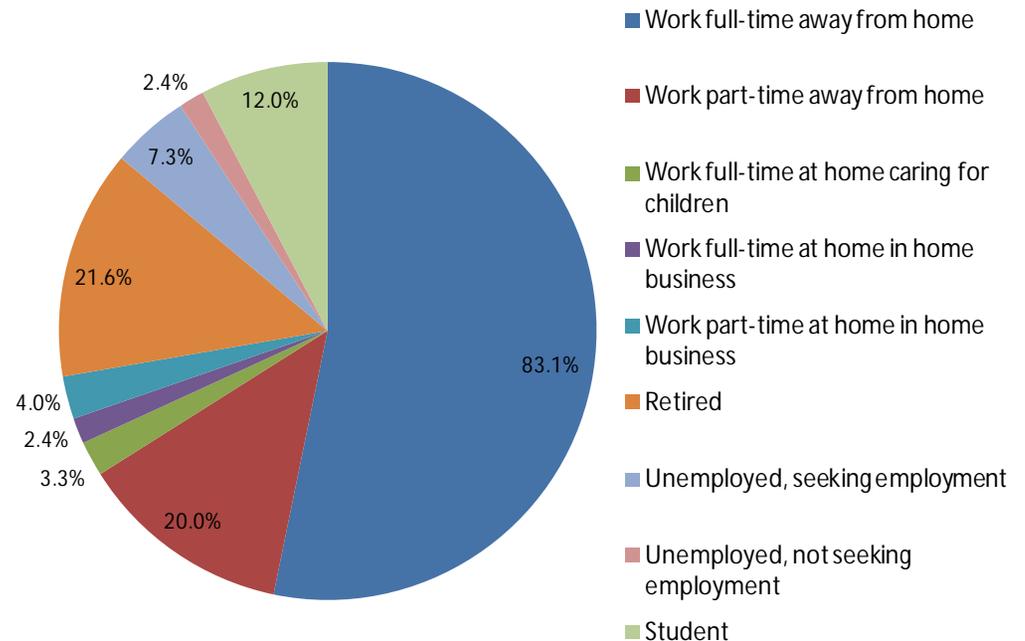
listed, residents indicated that economic development, city government and community beautification were most in need of improvement. Residents were most satisfied with the library (85.4 percent), fire protection (83.4 percent) and seasonal brush removal (76.5 percent).

Residents were additionally questioned about private sector goods and services. They identified groceries and convenience goods (84.9 percent), clothing (74.7 percent), and arts and culture (65.9 percent) as most in need of improvement throughout the City. Residents are generally satisfied with automotive services, personal services, and home supply hardware. Many respondents had no opinion regarding child care providers (37.9 percent) and privately sponsored special events (21.5 percent), which may indicate that these are not utilized, understood, or well advertised throughout the community.

### Topic Area 3: Shopping Patterns

The majority of residents do their shopping within the City of Oswego (65.6 percent) as opposed to elsewhere. The majority of goods or services purchased outside of the City include clothing, shoes and accessories, and automotive parts and services. Goods and services primarily purchased locally include home supply and hardware, personal hygiene, and drinks (bars and taverns). Residents cited the unavailability of desired goods and services as the primary reason for not shopping locally (78.3 percent). In open ended responses, this included a larger variety of foods (ethnic, vegan, organic etc.), more grocery store options, and larger clothing retailers. Respondents additionally indicated that specific stores were not locally available (i.e. Target), causing the need to travel elsewhere. Opportunities exist to attract these types of establishments to the City of Oswego.

For all adults over the age of 18 in your household, please check all that apply as related to employment status



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

### Topic Area 4: Employment Characteristics

Residents were asked to indicate the location of employment for all working adults within the household. The majority of respondents indicated that they are employed within the City of Oswego (66.5 percent). Additional adult family members are also primarily employed within the City of Oswego, though many also have employment in the Town of Oswego, the Town of Scriba, or the City of Syracuse. Open ended responses indicated that several respondents were currently unemployed, though actively looking for work.

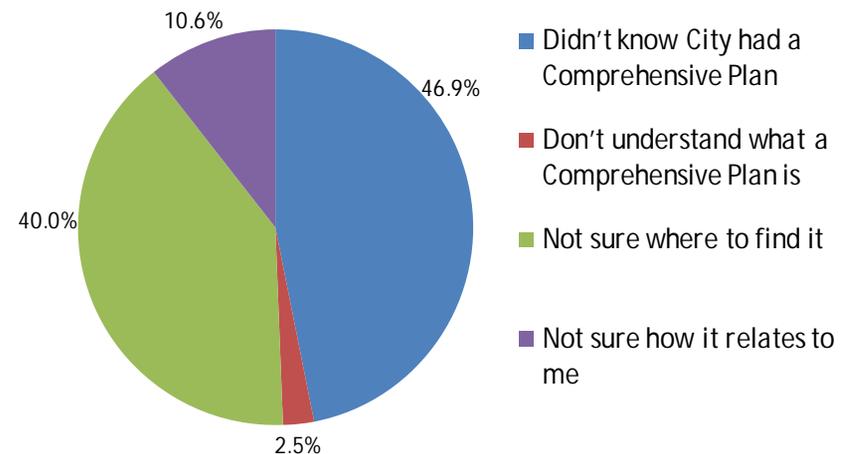
The majority of residents are employed full-time and away from home (83.1 percent). Many of the respondents were also retired (21.6 percent) or worked part-time (20 percent). Approximately 9.7 percent indicated that they were currently unemployed, the majority of whom are actively seeking employment (7.3 percent). These responses relate to all individuals residing with respondents, the total of which is unknown, and therefore do not total 100 percent.

### Topic Area 5: 2020 Vision Plan

Residents were asked about their familiarity with the current Vision 2020 Plan. Only 24.2 percent indicated that they had reviewed the existing plan. Of those who hadn't reviewed the plan, most indicated that they were unaware that the City had a Comprehensive Plan (46.9 percent), or they did not know where to find the plan (40 percent). Some indicated uncertainty to how the plan would relate to them (10.6 percent), while others (2.5 percent) did not have a clear understanding what a Comprehensive Plan is and the planning process.

Respondents who were familiar with the plan were fairly split regarding whether it accurately reflects the vision for the City of Oswego. Approximately 55.8 percent felt that the document did, while 44.2 percent indicated that it did not. In open ended responses, many indicated that the document was accurate at the time but in need of revision. Some residents also felt as though it was a pie in the sky approach and not based on the economic realities of the City.

If you have not reviewed the plan, why not?



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

Residents were asked what improvements should be made to the document to make it more user-friendly. Some noted that the document wasn't readily available and therefore it's difficult to track the priorities and implementation. Many noted that the document could be more concise and better organized. Respondents additionally requested follow-up documents to describe what goals have been met and which are being pursued.

### Topic Area 6: Respondent Information

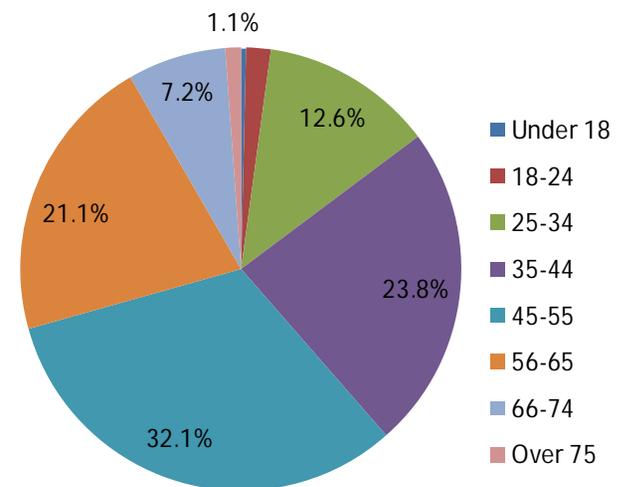
In addition to questions regarding the status of the community and Vision 2020 plan, residents were asked questions about themselves to obtain the demographic characteristics of respondents. The majority of those who responded to the survey are long-term residents of the City of Oswego, having lived there for more than 20 years (50.2 percent). Several respondents were residents of Oswego County outside of the City (17.4 percent), and 4.9 percent indicated they were not City residents. The majority were also year-round residents (96.3 percent).

Respondents primarily live in single-family homes (88 percent). The average household size of those surveyed is approximately 2.9 persons. Most respondents own their homes (89.8 percent), while a smaller portion currently rent (10.2 percent).

The age of those surveyed was generally between 35 and 65 years of age, with fewer seniors (8.3 percent) and young professionals, ages 25 to 34, responding (12.6 percent). Access to the online survey may have inhibited older residents who may not have access to the internet.

The majority of respondents reported annual household earnings between \$50,000 and \$99,000, (44 percent). Approximately 32.9 percent reported earning a combined salary over \$100,000. Fewer residents indicated earning between \$30,000 and \$49,000 (16.3 percent), and only 6.4 percent of residents had household incomes less than \$30,000. It should be noted, however, that the survey was not intended to be statistically significant and therefore may not accurately reflect city-wide earnings in each category.

Which best describes your age?



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

## College Survey

### Overview and Methodology

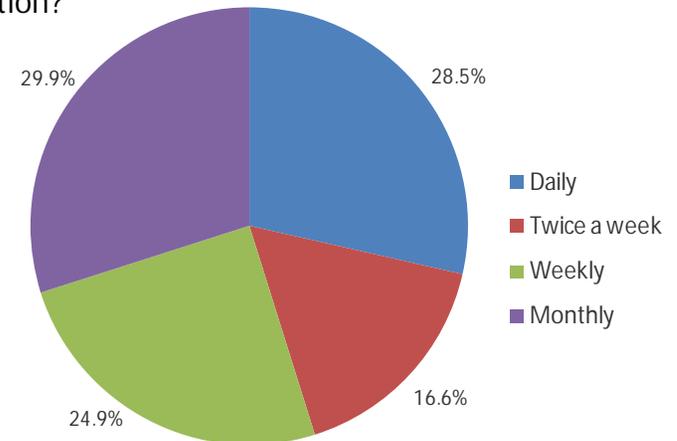
Over the course of two weeks in June 2010, the City of Oswego administered a survey for students at SUNY Oswego. Similar to the community survey, the survey was conducted through an online survey tool. Information regarding accessing the survey was made available through the City of Oswego's website as well as an e-mail distributed to all students. A total of 432 students responded. The survey asked questions related to goods and services used by students, and sought to gain an understanding of how students spend their time on and off campus. The survey also sought to gain insight into students' perception of both the College and the surrounding community. Feedback obtained through the survey is summarized below.

### Goods and Services

Most students who responded indicated on-campus residence (51.4 percent). One-third of all respondents live off-campus, within the City limits. The remaining answered that they reside either in the Town of Oswego or outside the City and Town of Oswego, indicating that they are likely commuters.

Students were asked where they obtain the majority of their goods and services. Many indicated within a short five to ten minute drive from campus (61.1 percent). Others most frequently obtained goods and services on-campus (19.9 percent), while only 6.3 percent indicated that they access these resources within walking distance to campus. Pedestrian access by foot off-campus may be complicated because of traffic patterns, lack of walkability, or because goods and services are not available within a short distance.

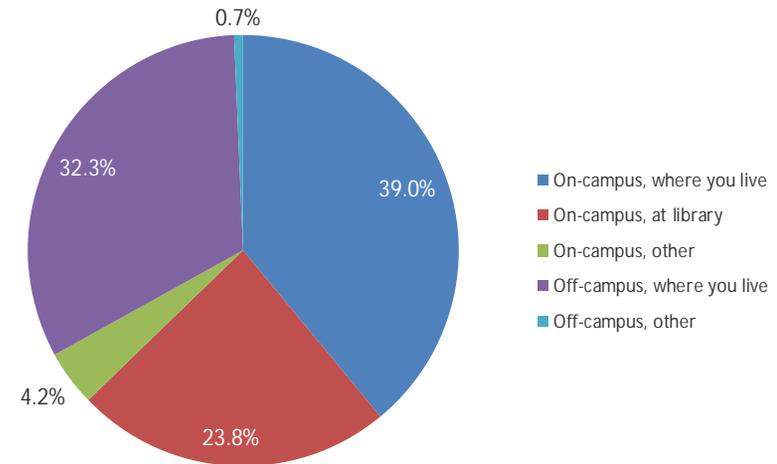
How often do you walk off-campus for goods, services, or recreation?



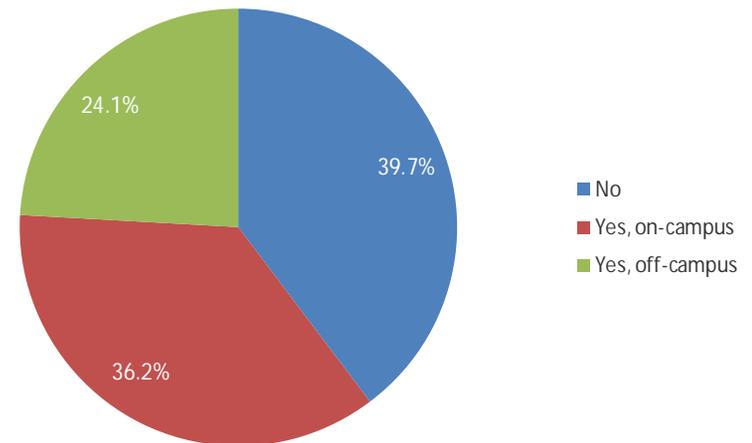
# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

Students were also asked how frequently they walk off-campus for goods, services or recreation. Approximately 28.5 percent of students indicated that they walk off-campus for goods, services or recreation on a daily basis, while the remainder do a few times a week or once a month. Although students are going off-campus, 41.4 percent indicated that they spend less than \$25 dollars per week at off-campus businesses. Many respondents cited Wal-Mart as the location where they do the majority of their business, most likely due to the variety of goods they can obtain at more affordable prices.

Where do you spend the majority of your time studying?



Are you currently employed?



# Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

## Use of Time

Students were asked where they spend most of their time studying and the majority indicated they studied at their place of residence. Of those who study at home, 39 percent live on-campus and 32.3 percent live off-campus. Only 23.8 percent of respondents utilize the library for studying. The remainder of respondents study at different venues either on-campus or off-campus.

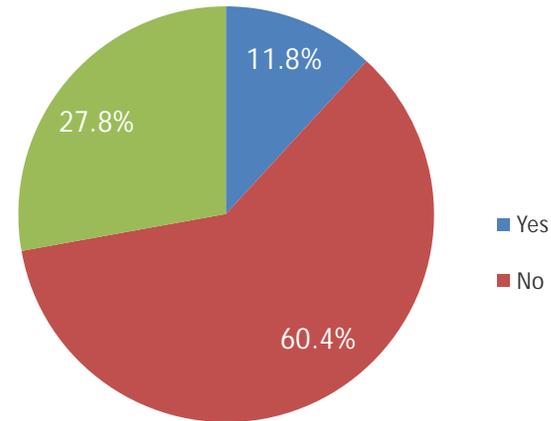
The majority of respondents indicated that they are not employed (38.7 percent), while 36.2 percent indicated employment on-campus. Most of those who do have jobs work less than five hours per week (25.6 percent) or between six to ten hours per week (23.7 percent).

Students were also asked they types of services they would like to see available on-campus or within the surrounding community. Many responded that additional businesses on the Plus Plan, SUNY Oswego's meal plan, would encourage students to do more shopping downtown. Similar to residents, students also indicated they would like to have more diverse grocery stores accessible to campus, and that students would benefit from having more things to do (i.e. entertainment, outdoor recreation, etc.).

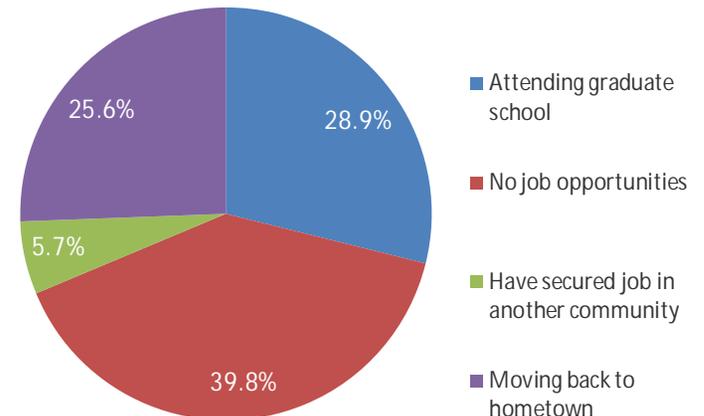
Only 38.4 percent of students indicate involvement in volunteer work as an extra-curricular activity. Those who responded most commonly indicated that youth mentoring and community beautification volunteer opportunities would be of interest.

Many students additionally indicated the lack of activities available to students throughout the City. It will be important to identify the types of activities and cultural amenities desired by this portion of the population to increase their involvement in off-campus venues and events.

Do you plan to remain in the City of Oswego, or surrounding communities, following graduation?



If no, why are you choosing to leave the area?



## Chapter 2: Overview of Public Involvement

---

### College and Community

In addition to identifying how students spend their time and the types of businesses they frequent, a series of questions were aimed to identify how they felt about their campus and surrounding community. Only 26 percent of respondents responded that the City of Oswego “feels like home away from home.” The remainder felt somewhat connected to the City/Town (46.6 percent) while 21.6 percent did not feel connected at all. This sentiment emphasizes issues that may stem from the lack of physical connection with the downtown core. Several community workshops also identified this as an issue, as well as the need for the College and City to work more closely together.

Most respondents indicated they did not have plans to remain in the area following graduation (60.4 percent). The majority cited lack of job opportunities as the primary reason (39.8 percent), while others indicated plans to attend graduate school elsewhere (28.9 percent). Although many plan to leave the area, 28.7 percent indicated they were undecided regarding future plans. This cohort presents an opportunity for the College and the City to promote the City to encourage students to stay.

Overall, 75.7 percent rated their experience in the City of Oswego as “good” or “excellent,” while approximately 26.4 percent indicated their experience as “fair” or “poor.” Most of those identified that restaurant diversity, better job opportunities, improved housing, city beautification, and improved sidewalks and roadways would all serve to enhance the quality of life within the City of Oswego.

Both survey results underscored the importance of addressing town—gown issues through better community partnerships. The expression “town—gown” has been used to distinguish a campus community (*gown*) from the larger town or community in which it resides (*town*). Historically, campus functioned separately from the community, often creating tensions due to lack of unified goals. The College and City have the opportunity to use several existing models to enhance their relationship, strengthen both communities, and encourage student retention. Examples of community partnerships are further identified in the City Profile section.