

# AMAZING RACE: TO DOWNTOWN

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## DOWNTOWN PROGRAMMING

# WHO WE ARE



Rachel Jicha is from Torrance, CA, a suburb of Los Angeles. She is a Senior PPPM student with a city planning emphasis. When she's not in class she enjoys exploring new coffee shops, and restaurants in Eugene. When she's at home she enjoys the sunshine, and the beach. Her favorite part of Real World Eugene was learning more about Downtown, and discovering the hidden gems in the community.

Shea Northfield is a Senior PPPM student with an emphasis in city planning. She is from Portland, OR. In her free time she likes to spend time outdoors hiking, biking, skiing and playing tennis. Her favorite part of Real World Eugene is getting to learn in an applied setting and participate in the greater Eugene community beyond the campus bubble.



Mindy Schlitt is a senior at the University of Oregon studying Planning, Public Policy and Management with an emphasis in nonprofit administration. In her free time, she enjoys anything that has to do with being outside, including hiking, camping, backpacking and surfing.

Kinsey Vittetoe is a current senior at the University of Oregon. She is majoring in Planning, Public Policy and Management major with an emphasis in social and health policy, and is minoring in Anthropology. Her fields of study are reflective of her aspirations in the global health and development sector. She recently studied abroad in Ghana, where she interned at a nonprofit that focused on environmental education for children.



Bristol Garcia is a senior at the University of Oregon studying Planning, Public Policy and Management with an emphasis in economic development. She is from Pasadena, California and on her spare time she enjoys running and playing the cello.

# PLACEMAKING

By common definition, placemaking is an all-around approach to the planning, urban design and management of public spaces.

Placemaking capitalizes on the established assets of a community with the intention of improving and building upon those assets to promote health, happiness and well-being of its community members. Much of the literature surrounding the topic of placemaking has to do with public spaces. In Jay Walljasper's book "The Great Neighborhood Book: A Do-It-Yourself Guide to Placemaking," the author lays out samples of improvements and efforts that can be made to create engaging places in a community.

A few suggestions Walljasper recommends while creating sense of place is: creating a strong sense of community, taming traffic in neighborhoods, developing new activities, introducing new kinds of park activities, and championing the local hangout by making it a "Third Place" (Walljasper 21). One particular point that gave inspiration for our project was a section titled "Bring new kinds of people downtown with creative campaigns that deliver social and economic benefits for these critical core neighborhoods" (Walljasper 21). We strived to create an event to bring new kinds of people, particularly college students, to downtown. It was our hope during the planning process to bring social and economic benefits to the businesses we partnered with in a creative way, while also showcasing the efforts the city has made to bring a sense of place to downtown.



# INTRODUCTION

Throughout this past term, the Downtown Programming group in Planning, Public Policy and Management course, Real World Eugene, made efforts to expand the work done in 2016, regarding University of Oregon student involvement in Eugene's downtown.

In 2016, an extensive report was done to expand the understanding of students' experiences, and reasons why they did and did not go downtown. With this information in mind, we decided to develop a tangible event in response to this data. This report included data tied to the student downtown relationship, including student perceptions of downtown Eugene, and their modes of transportation.

With this information in mind, the 2017 Downtown Programming group developed a tangible event that built off the data done by the previous class, based off the research question: "Would an event, such as an Amazing Race, encourage students to engage with downtown more often?" We gathered pre and post survey data to see if the Amazing Race shifted student perspectives of downtown Eugene. We had 18 participants, of which 83% were students. We found that student perceptions were changed after completing the event positively, and that we as a group would recommend having another Amazing Race event again to increase student engagement with downtown Eugene.

Currently, the state of Eugene's downtown area and its public spaces have been described as unclean and unsafe by community members. These insights come from several sources, including results from the summer 2017 monitoring report and the Real World 2016 Student Experience Downtown report.

The city of Eugene has made continuous investment in improving downtown, to create a sense of place and move toward their ultimate goal of making it a safe, welcoming and vibrant heart of the city. For the purpose of this project, we kept in mind the many dimensions of this goal and aimed to use data from the past, as well as relevant literature on the aspects of placemaking as a way to guide our work.

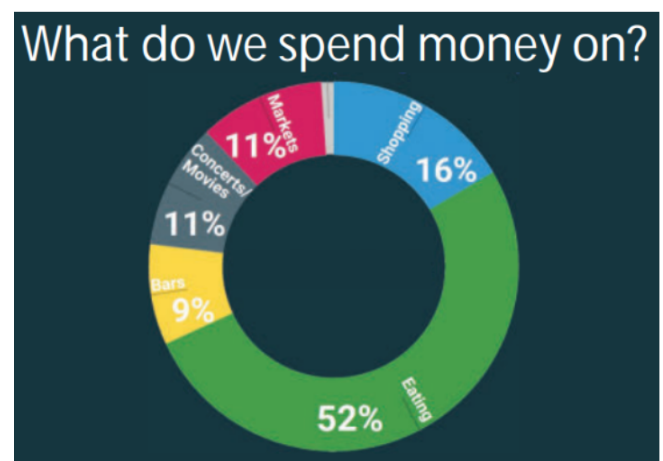
# RESEARCH QUESTION

For these reasons, we decided putting on an event would be the best way to find out if projects concerning student engagement really change perceptions; thus, our research question was born. We kept our research question simple, and based off what we really wanted to find out:

“Would an event, such as an Amazing Race, encourage students to engage with downtown more often?”

We wanted to find out if an engaging event, such as an Amazing Race to downtown, would change students’ perceptions. We developed this research question with the hope that students would go downtown more often after completing the event.

When creating our project, we looked to what had been found last year. Real World Eugene 2016 survey results showed the top two deterrents for spending time downtown, holding 17% and 16% of the responses respectively were “lack of things to do” and “transportation/distance.” Additionally, last year’s team surveyed what students liked to do in their free time downtown. 52% indicating they spend their money on eating, 16% spend their money on shopping, with smaller percentages indicating market, concerts/movies and bars (Real World Eugene, 2016). Our research question works to address some of these results.



(Real World Eugene, 2016).

# WHY AN AMAZING RACE?

Last year's data showed that the two main barriers for students were:

1. lack of things to do downtown
2. the distance from campus to downtown Eugene

How could we break these misconceptions? With these challenges in mind, this is how we came to the consensus to have our scavenger hunt type of event.

## AMAZING RACE: TO DOWNTOWN

**WHEN: FRIDAY NOV. 17**

**WHAT: EXPLORE DOWNTOWN BY FOOT, BUS, BIKE, OR CAR!**

**TIME: 3 PM**

**START: EMU AMPHITHEATER**

**END: SIZZLE PIE**

**\*\*FREE SIZZLE PIE AT 5PM AND PRIZES FOR TOP WINNERS\*\***

**LOOK OUR EVENT UP ON FACEBOOK**

**ENDORSED BY PPPM AND CITY OF EUGENE**

Our scavenger hunt would force students to explore businesses downtown, through answering the challenges. This would show them how many unique shops, and restaurants they can visit. Breaking the "lack of things to do downtown" misconception.

We also gave participants the option to use any type of transportation to go downtown and start the scavenger hunt. Some people used their car, walked used the Emx, or biked. We wanted participants to use whatever transportation method they thought would be easiest, to hopefully demonstrate that downtown was not very far away from our campus starting point. Breaking the "distance from campus to downtown Eugene" misconception.

# WHAT IS AN AMAZING RACE?

Our Amazing Race was a scavenger hunt to Downtown Eugene. The people who participated met us at the Erb Memorial Center (EMU), at the heart of campus. Once they arrived, they filled out a pre-survey, which gauged their perceptions of downtown before exploring businesses. After they completed the survey, they were able to start the event, which meant using any transportation of their choosing to get downtown.



**PASSPORT TO DOWNTOWN**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**COMPLETE AT LEAST 3 LOCATIONS. IF YOU FINISH MORE, THE MORE YOUR NAME WILL BE ENTERED INTO THE RAFFLE! IN EACH BOX, EITHER GET A INITIAL, STAMP, OR WRITE THE ANSWER.**

The passport participants received.

**URBAN WAXX**

1. What is the best post wax serum urban waxx uses?
2. How much is an eye brow wax?
3. How many locations does Urban Waxx have?

**GILT AND GOSSAMER**

1. What is the event that G&G is hosting tomorrow?
2. How many yellow dresses are there?
3. What is one of the mannequins wearing in front of the store?

**MOSAIC FAIR TRADE COLLECTION**

1. How many languages are on the blue banner on the wall?
2. What's the mission statement of mosaic?
3. Look in the "Lost in Translation" book on one of the tables. Look for the "mangata" page and write down the definition.

**THE BARN LIGHT**

1. Write down what you think looks best on the menu?
2. Barn light is both a coffee shop and a \_\_\_\_\_
3. Venture into the common space, beyond the coffee shop. What is the object hanging on the ceiling?

A portion of the challenges participants received.  
Full list of challenges refer to page 19.

They were given a "Challenges" sheet which gave them tasks to complete in each business and a "Passport" to write down all answers to the challenges. They were required to complete at least 3 locations, but the more places they went the more times they were entered into our raffle.

The Amazing Race started at 3pm and participants had until 5pm to complete as many challenges as they could before meeting at Sizzle Pie for our raffle. At Sizzle Pie all the participants who completed the Amazing Race filled out a post event survey to see if perceptions had changed.



# BUSINESS OUTREACH AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Business outreach took place a month before the Amazing Race. The outreach occurred in several stages: Stage one was an initial business letter that introduced the event and gave opportunity for dialog between Real World group members and downtown businesses. The businesses were chosen based on group knowledge, one on one visits, proximity, popularity, and recommendations.

Stage two included dividing the businesses amongst group members and communicating with the business via visits, email, and phone calls. Visits also included creating challenges for the scavenger hunt.

Challenges were created based on business visits, interactions with employees and recommendations. Business donations were based off offerings and donation requests.

Business participation included gift cards, percentages off purchases, small gifts and a location for the scavenger hunt challenges to be completed. Donations were important for to the success of our event, since the raffle incentivized participation.

Stage three included a location for the end of our event. After the participants completed their challenges for the scavenger hunt, they were to meet at Sizzle Pie to return their completed challenges sheet. They were then entered into a concluding raffle. The raffle included over \$300 in contributions from local downtown businesses.

# EVENT DATA AND RESULTS

## Participant Data--Who was There?

12 Females and 6 Males filled out the Pre-event survey

84% of those who filled out the Pre survey were University of Oregon students

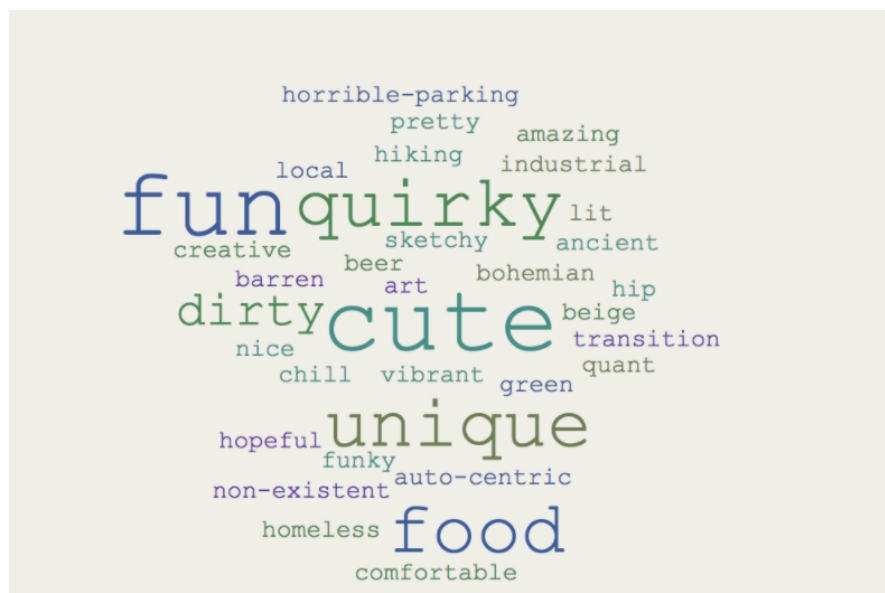
Of those who completed the Pre-event survey 83% completed the Post survey. Since Post surveys were completed upon the completion of the event, 83% of participants carried out the full event start to finish and met at the ending location-Sizzle Pie

## Pre-Survey Data

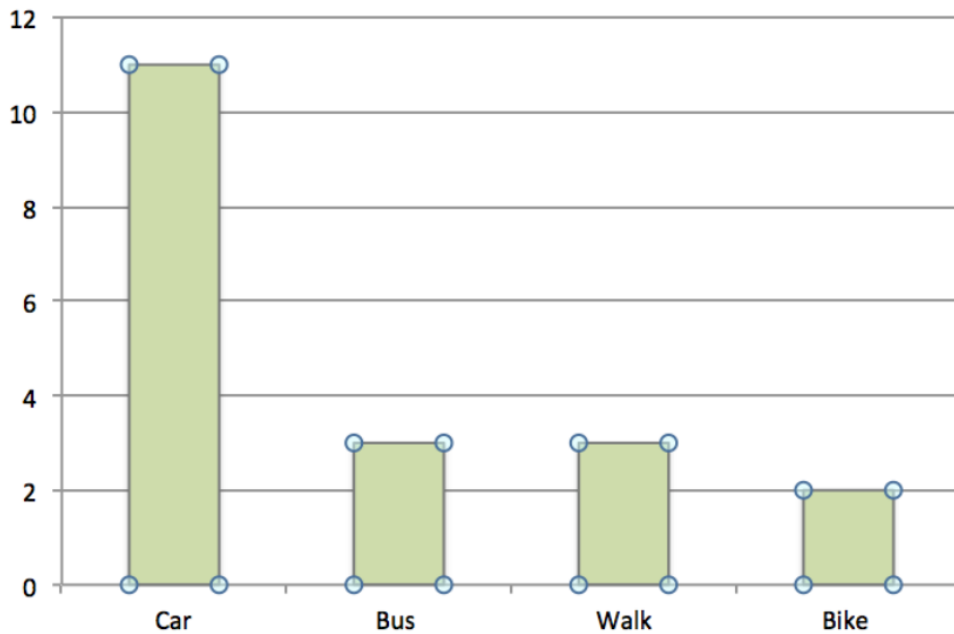
(full list of pre survey questions page 20)

One of our open ended questions was "What three words would you use to describe downtown Eugene?"

This question seeks to understand participants perceptions of downtown Eugene before completing the event. The wording of this question matches exactly with the wording of a question on the City of Eugene's survey to provide continuity with prior research.

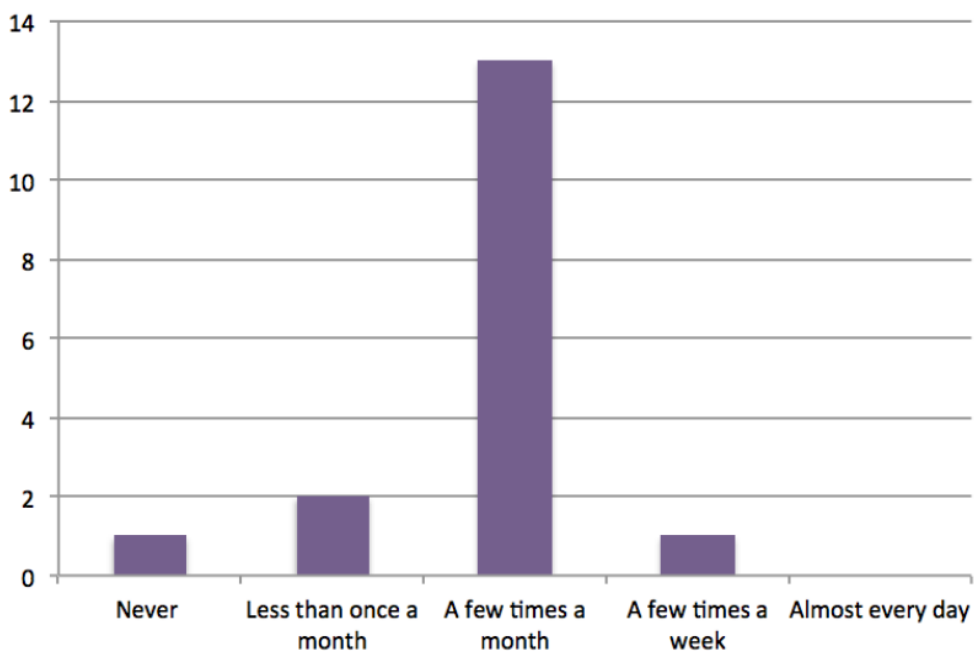


## What transportation do you use most often to go downtown?



The results of this Pre-survey question reflect that prior to the event, the majority reported that the transportation used to get downtown mode most often was car.

## How often do you go downtown during the school year?

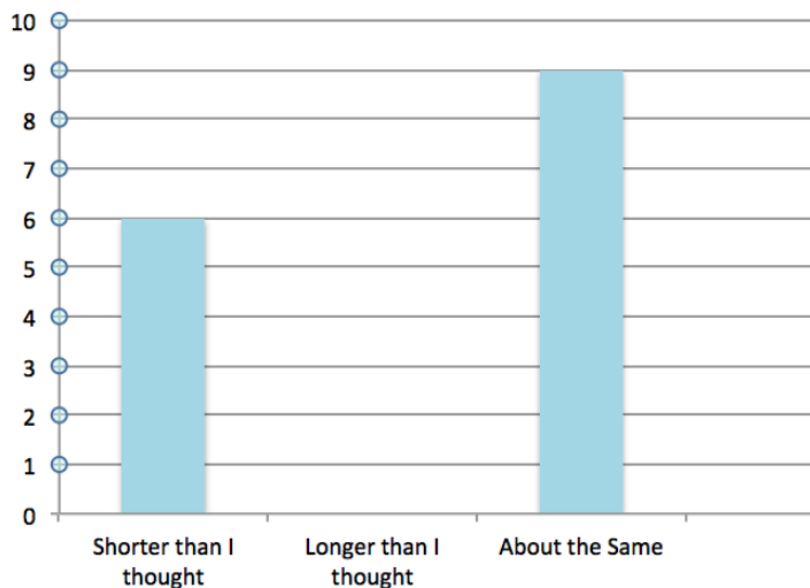


The majority of the participants reported prior to the event going to downtown a few times a month.

## Post-Survey Data

(full list of post-survey questions page 21)

How long did it take to get downtown (in comparison to what was predicted)



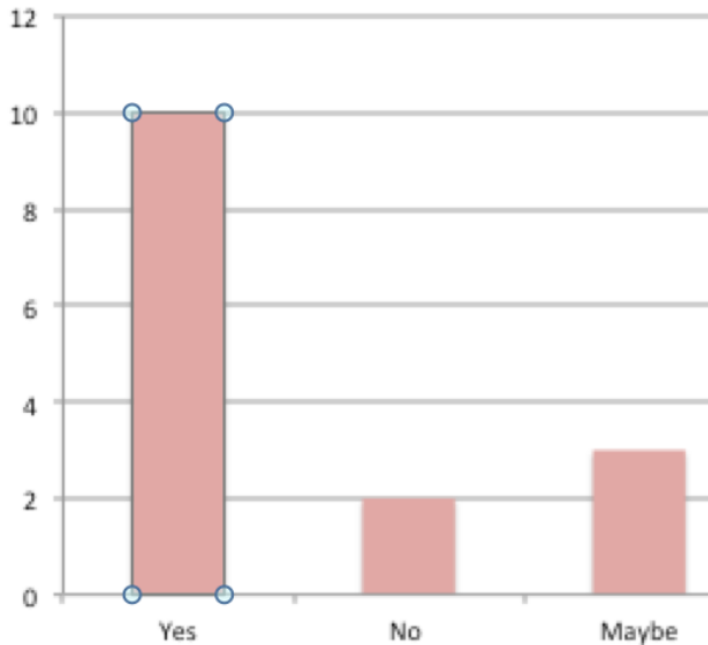
The Pre-survey asked participants, “how long do you anticipate it taking to go downtown today.” As such, the left most column reflects participants whose perceptions changed regarding time needed to get downtown from campus.

What three words would you use to describe downtown Eugene?



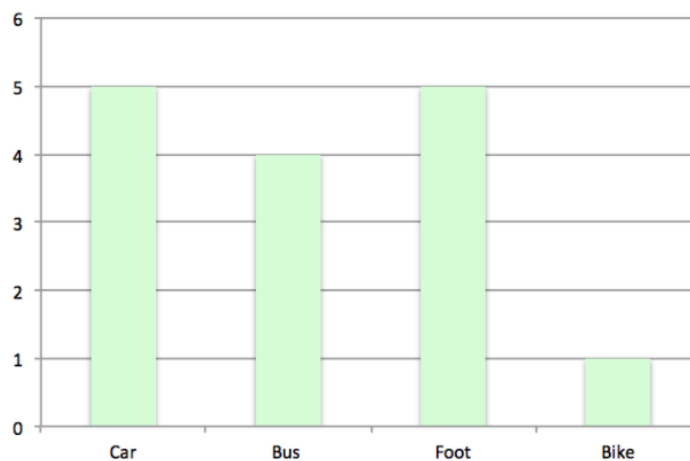
This Post-survey mirrors the Pre-survey to represent the changes in perceptions and perspectives of downtown for participants. While there are many of the same words, many new words reflect the experiences of participants throughout the event. A few examples of this are “vibrant, hidden gems, diverse shops, decorative, and variance”

## After exploring downtown, do you think you will go there more often?



This question sought to answer our main research question by determining if participants would spend more time after participating in our event. The majority of participants said that they would go downtown more often in the future.

## What mode of transportation are you most likely to take in the future?



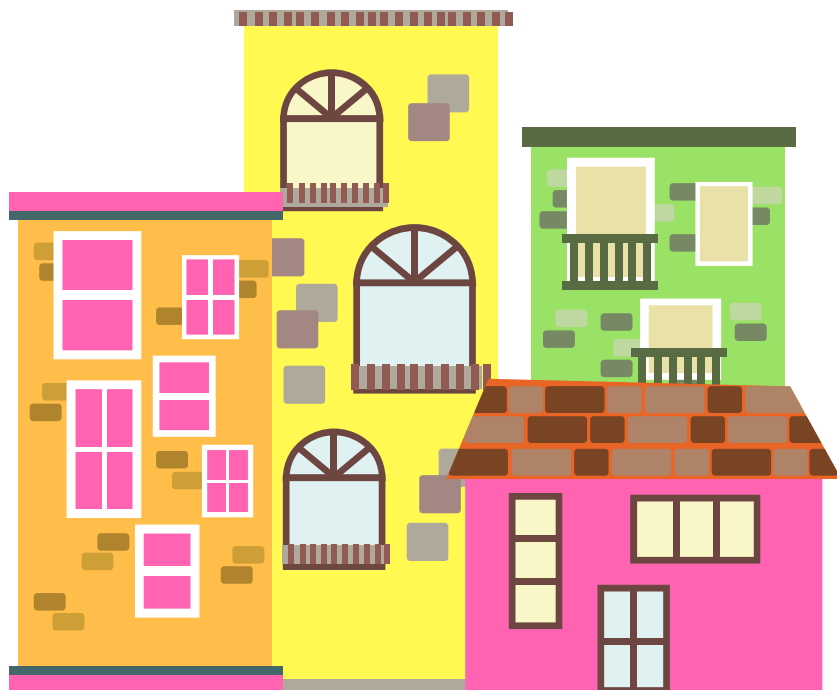
This question saw a mode shift from the types of answers on the Pre-survey. While in the Pre-survey, the majority of participants said they use a car to get downtown, in the Post-survey, the responses were much more evenly split between car, bus, foot.

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# LIMITATIONS

Our Amazing Race consisted of 18 participants, a relatively small event. However, with this being the first event like this, it was about the size we envisioned. Of the 18 people who filled out the pre-survey, and 15 people were able to fill out the the post-survey at Sizzle Pie. Our group was satisfied with the high percentage of people who were able to complete the full event and participate in the raffle at Sizzle Pie; however, since not every participant was able to fill out post-survey analysis means that our data is not perfect .

Of the people who did participate, most of them were friends, and people within our Real World Eugene class. Individuals who are in the Planning, Public Policy, and Management major are somewhat more predisposed to engage in the community, and want to participate in this kind of event. Therefore, we are unable to confirm if our data is representative of the typical University of Oregon student.



# PARTICIPANT PERCEPTIONS OF DOWNTOWN

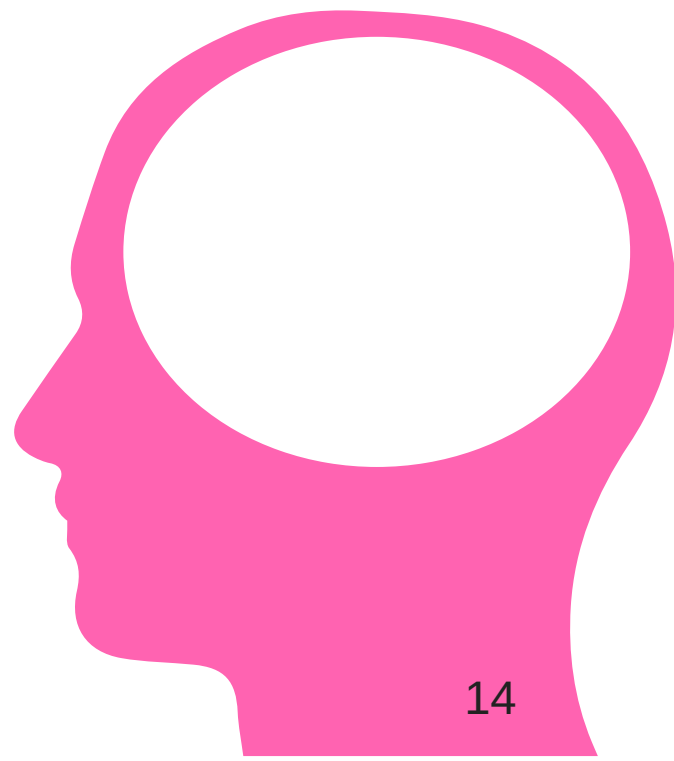
The after survey included two open-ended questions about perceptions of downtown. We asked participants;

**“Was there anything you noticed today that makes you want return to downtown?”**

- Great shopping and restaurants
- Art and good food/drinks
- Good vibe
- Shopping/holiday shopping opportunities
- Creative local businesses
- Nighttime crowd

**“Was there anything you noticed today that makes you NOT want to return to downtown?”**

- Difficult parking situation
- Do not see their demographic in the area
- Large homeless population
- Stores are expensive



# PARTICIPANT RECOMMENDATIONS

After completion of our event, we gained insight from our participants about their recommendations for the future. These recommendations came from our after survey question that asked:

**“What do you think needs to be improved about downtown?”**

- More affordable housing in downtown Eugene
- More resources to help homeless population
- Added parking
- Accommodations for people under the age of 21
- Outdoor heaters outside of businesses
- New businesses and more restaurants
- More public spaces and public art



**WHAT  
ABOUT...?**



# GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

From the participant data, since many of the participants answered the question “What transportation do you use to go downtown?” with “car”, but a complaint in both the question “What three words would you use to describe downtown?” and “What could be improved about downtown?” was that downtown had difficult parking. We thought that adding wayfinding signs for cyclists and pedestrians would create some awareness of the close proximity of downtown from the University of Oregon campus, and would discourage so many drivers.

Through our our research, talking to students on campus many people at University of Oregon strongly identify with the school, but not necessarily being a Eugene resident. I think this reflects in how most students leave Eugene after graduating. If downtown businesses bridged a connection, and tried to identify with the students more, then there may be more success. A step in this direction could be adding a Duck Store location downtown. This could encourage people visiting campus for the first time, or during parents weekend, to go a Duck Store downtown, and discover shops and businesses while they are downtown.

A descriptor in our question “What three word would you use to describe downtown Eugene?” was “expensive.” By implementing a or a permanent student discount, or an event such as a “student discount Friday” could make students feel like they can afford to shop and eat downtown, and that they are welcomed, and their business is desired as these locations.

# LET'S DO IT AGAIN!

From the feedback we heard from participants we recognize that many people enjoyed our event, and would be interested in doing it again. Because of this, we recommend repeating this event for increased success.

Our main recommendation is to make this a reoccurring event, to add this to the Week of Welcome, IntroDUCKtion, and Freshman Interest Groups (FIGs). All of these events are geared toward new UO students and freshman. Therefore, having this event with no misconceptions about downtown would help new students get to know the area, and become more predisposed to visit it in the future, if they found a place they enjoyed. During IntroDUCKtion and Week of Welcome there are many events they can participate in, and an Amazing Race to Downtown could be a fun addition. FIGs usually have bonding events for the people involved, so they could easily do this event as a group.

Another option would be to do the Amazing Race exactly we did, as an event for anyone to participate in. However, we would add many improvements. Our event had to be put on eight weeks into the term, so we only had about two weeks to advertise and reach out to related student groups. If student organizations partnered with future groups who put on the Amazing Race in the future, then they would be more inclined to participate rather than if they saw a poster or Facebook event. We also would recommend trying to collaborate with Northern Christian University, and Lane Community College. We only advertised to University of Oregon students, and missed an opportunity to engage students from all institutions.

Reaching out to media outlets like Register Guard and the Daily Emerald would also be helpful. Their support from media outlets would add legitimacy to our event, and help engage a broader range of people. We hope that this event happens again next year!

# WORKS CITED

Toledo, F., Woodbury, H., Nava-Castales, K., & Lightsey Walker, A. (2016). *Student Experience Downtown*. University of Oregon, School of Planning, Public Policy and Management.

Walljasper, J. (2010). *The great neighborhood book: a do-it-yourself guide to placemaking*. Gabriola Island: New Society.

# A) SCAVENGER HUNT

## CHALLENGES

### CHEBA HUT

"Find your first clue in the clouds... your goal at Cheba Hut is to get a sticker from the hidden lockbox"

### LOVAKAVA KAVA BAR

1. What do you drink Kava out of?
2. What types of Kava are offered?
3. True or False: Before drinking Kava, traditionally you exclaim "Bula!"

### SIZZLE PIE

1. How many skateboards are on the wall?
2. What are the flavors of house made infused liquors?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Vodka, \_\_\_\_\_ Vodka, \_\_\_\_\_ Gin, \_\_\_\_\_ Tequila,  
\_\_\_\_\_ Bourbon
3. What does the big red letters above the bar say?

### HERITAGE DRY GOODS

1. Ask Nicole about the backstory of the front desk.
2. Count how many things on the wall have "Oregon" on them.
3. Ask Nicole what the DEM stands for, and what event is going on tonight!

### FOOTWISE

1. How many Birkenstocks are on the wall?
2. One group member has to try on a pair of Birkenstocks and take a picture, then show the picture to a Footwise employee to get their initials

### PUBLIC SPACES

1. Look at the wall above the Funk/Lewis & Associates building on the corner of Oak and Broadway. What do you see?
2. What instruments are the turtles on the corner of Broadway and Oak playing?
3. Park blocks (where Sat. Market is, 8th and oak):  
How many polka dots are on each side of the cross walk?

### COW FISH

1. How many cowfish are in the aquarium behind the bar?
2. true or false: there is a twerking panda to the right of a TV?
3. What is the one arcade game in cowfish?

### VOODOO

1. How many donuts are above bigfoot on the brick wall?
2. What's the title of the tape painting utility tape art work in the hallway?
3. How many nutcrackers are on the wall?
4. What's the center arcade game?

### URBAN WAXX

1. What is the best post wax serum urban waxx uses?
2. How much is an eye brow wax?
3. How many locations does Urban Waxx have?

### GILT AND GOSSAMER

1. What is the event that G&G is hosting tomorrow?
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1. Write down what you think looks best on the menu?
2. Barn light is both a coffee shop and a \_\_\_\_\_
3. Venture into the common space, beyond the coffee shop. What is the object hanging on the ceiling?

# B) PRE SURVEY

1. How often do you go downtown?

Never                      Few times a month  
Few times a week        Almost Everyday

2. When you go, what do you like to do there? (Circle all that apply)

Eat/Coffee              Work  
Study                      Shop  
Bars                      Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What transportation do you use to go downtown?

Car              Bus  
Walk              Bike  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

How long do you think it's going to take you to get downtown?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What are the barriers keeping you from going downtown? (Circle all that apply)

Distance              Nothing to do  
Safety                      Other \_\_\_\_\_

What needs to be improved about downtown?

\_\_\_\_\_

# C) POST SURVEY

1. What three words would you use to describe downtown Eugene?

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2. How long did it take you to get downtown? Circle the best answer.

- Longer than I thought
- Shorter than I thought
- About the same

3. What transportation mode will you use to get back to campus, and why? Was it different than what you used to get here?

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4. Was there anything you noticed today that makes you want return to downtown?

Nothing I just came for the event

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

5. Was there anything you noticed today that makes you NOT want to return to downtown?

Nothing, I live for downtown

Yes, \_\_\_\_\_

6. After exploring downtown, do you think you will go there more often? Circle the best answer.

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

7. What mode of transportation are you most likely to use in the future to go downtown? Circle the best answer.

- Car
- Bus
- Bus
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Foot

8. What, if any, businesses downtown appeal to you that you saw? List their names.

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9. What do you think needs to be improved about downtown?

Nothing, it's perfect the way it is

Yes, this is my idea: \_\_\_\_\_