



CNYSpeaks is just getting started, and the conversation we hope to spark about downtown Syracuse is still in its infancy. But we've already had the opportunity to hear from more than 100 citizens, through a survey and interviews. Speaking of the survey, hit [blog.syracuse.com/cny-speaks](http://blog.syracuse.com/cny-speaks) and take it yourself!

The interviews and the survey focused on three questions: What do you like best about downtown? What keeps you from enjoying and visiting downtown more? What would you like to see more of downtown?

— Greg Munno, civic engagement editor

**Below, we've captured some of the responses from the first 118 surveys filled out, and from about 30 one-on-one interviews.**

## WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT DOWNTOWN?

The way to a citizen's heart must be through the stomach! More than one-third of survey respondents said the restaurant scene downtown was the best part of the city center, followed closely by people who praised the festivals, the ice skating rink and people-watching.



Jennifer Meyers/The Post-Standard

The Syracuse Symphony Orchestra, led by conductor Daniel Hege, performs outdoors in Armory Square.

"See live music," Krista, 27, Clay.

"Festivals, farmers market, little eateries," Kathy, 43, Baldwinsville.

"Walk around with friends, bar hop," Laura, 23, Solvay.

"Party in the plaza and restaurants," anonymous, 63, Liverpool.

"It's nice because it's centralized and there's a lot going on. You can walk places downtown like the farmers market and other lunch places rather than getting in your car and driving. The parking does get expensive, though. It adds up," Monica Shaw, 26, Sedgwick.

"See all the tall buildings," anonymous, 13, Liverpool.

"Going to restaurants with outdoor seating," anonymous, 32, Liverpool.

"Visit the cute little shops," anonymous, 19, Syracuse.

"Ice skate, eat at DBQ, festivals," anonymous, 24, Liverpool, hitting on several of the more popular themes from the survey.

"Friendly people and events need more events in winter," anonymous, 57, Syracuse.

"It's a city on the rise. ... Armory Square seems to be booming. I am into micro-

brews and wines, so the Empire and Blue Tusk have been a draw. It's good to see people making stuff locally and having it available. I love Middle Ages," Ursula Rutledge, 26, Parish, who sells organic breads and baked goods at the Syracuse farmers market on Tuesday.

"Downtown has been good to me. I've been selling at the farmers market for 40 years. The people are wonderful," Lena Caltabiano, 77, Fulton.

"I really like the energy of downtown. Compared to Rochester or Buffalo, it's so much easier to walk around. Armory Square, Clinton Square, Hanover Square, Columbus Circle — those are great centers of activity, all within walking distance," Jennifer Klemenz, 32, Liverpool, who works at Syracuse University's School of Architecture in Armory Square.



Jennifer Meyers/The Post-Standard

Jen Copeland, of Syracuse, welcomes customers to the store Razzbarry in Armory Square on a Saturday evening.

## WHAT KEEPS YOU FROM VISITING DOWNTOWN MORE?

Whether they're having trouble finding a spot, don't like paying or find downtown's garages unnerving, it's clear that people have concerns about parking downtown. Fifty of the first 118 survey respondents said parking was a leading reason for not coming downtown more often.

"People asking you for change. It's a turn off. When you see someone coming that you know is going to ask you for money, it makes you not want to walk on that street," Adrienne Mabey, 28, Canastota.



come downtown to do anything because all the little shops are closed," Taleasha Bellamy, 19, who lives on Syracuse's South Side and works at Carousel Center mall.

"One-way streets," anonymous, Skaneateles.

"The good-old days," anonymous, 83, Auburn.

"The street people," Carol, 50, Oswego, one of 15 survey respondents who said they encountered people whom they considered undesirable. Teens, drunks, panhandlers and crowds were all cited at least once.

"South Salina Street is rundown. Clean it up. Walton Street is the way it should be," anonymous, 23, Lyncourt.

"Traffic lights should be timed more consistently," anonymous, 26, Liverpool.

"Not enough to do besides eat and drink," anonymous, 29, Syracuse.

"Cost of stuff," Katie, 16, Syracuse.

"There probably isn't much that could draw me downtown more because I am so busy with my kids, but the Centro Common Center (on Salina Street) should really be moved. The riders need an enclosed shelter, and I think it would help attract a different mix of businesses to that street." Dan Fletcher, 47, Onondaga.

"Large groups of teens," anonymous, 63, Liverpool.

"Parking sucks!!!" anonymous, 36, Liverpool.

"I always worry about finding parking downtown, but I admit that I always find a space without a problem," Mary, 55, Strathmore.

"It's a little dirty, but that doesn't really bother me. The thing that bothers me is that everything closes at 6, right when you get off work, and I can't really

## WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF DOWNTOWN?

Variety is the spice of life, baby, and our survey respondents know it. They want more ethnic restaurants, more family-friendly restaurants, more festivals, more events during the winter and some anchor retail on Salina Street to complement boutique shopping in the Armory.

"Commuter rail," Andrew, 28, Clay.

"Ethnic restaurants and late-night eateries," Arnold, 48, Eastwood.

"Mexican and Middle Eastern restaurant and good Chinese," anonymous, 46, Lyncourt.

"Bike path, wine festival, more social spots to sit with friends," Megan, 23, Syracuse.

"Have more gay-friendly activities," anonymous, 41, Syracuse.

"Bike/jogging path," Ken, 54, Strathmore, speaking for 11 others who also desired paths.

"More security and shopping," anonymous, 65, Liverpool.

"Mexican food, a park, more entertainment," anonymous, 32, Liverpool.

"More Italian restaurants with vodka sauce and pasta," Samantha, 17, Liverpool.

"Should have more places for adults 50s and 60s, not 20s and 30s," anonymous, 51, Syracuse.

"There's not much for teens to do downtown. More shopping that we can afford, and bigger stores with more variety would bring us here more often," Jaleesa Potts, 17, Syracuse.



"A higher concentration of businesses would draw me down more during my leisure time. The mall took some of those businesses. They are making a conscious effort to get housing downtown, and I think that is good. Now maybe incentives for retail." Bob Krupa, 40, Westvale.

"An electronics store ... and more restaurants that are nice, where you can take a date, but that you don't have to be a lawyer to afford. I also think they need more police downtown, especially when the kids get off school. You shouldn't have to call 911 if you see a fight. The police should be downtown all the time," Al Appleton, Syracuse.

