

# Downtown Neighborhood Transit-Oriented Development Plan

## Community Survey EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

October 2011



Department of  
Planning & Permitting



NATIONAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER INC.

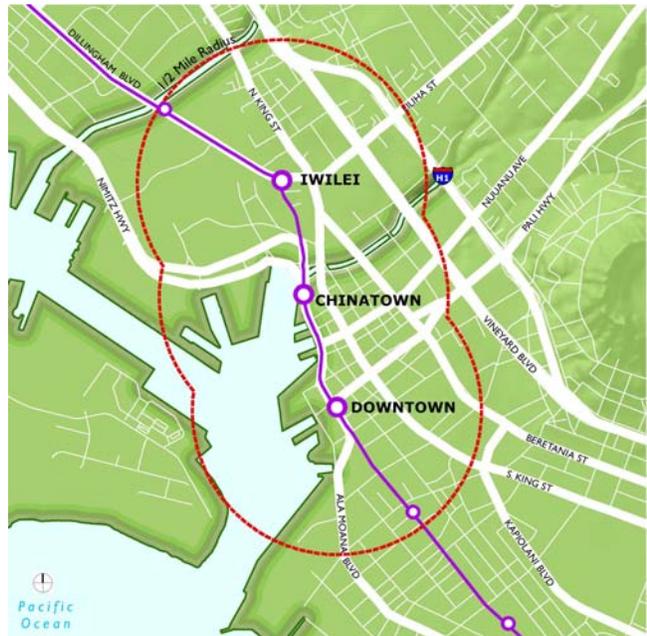
## Survey Background

### Survey Purpose

The Department of Planning and Permitting (DPP) of the City and County of Honolulu sought to capture the perspectives of residents living near the three planned Downtown rail transit stations. National Research Center, Inc. (NRC) assisted the City in conducting a survey to assess residents' perceptions about their neighborhood and opinions about potential transit-oriented development opportunities in these areas. The results of the survey, combined with other sources of community input, will help the DPP make plans to guide future public investment and development around the rail stations.

### Survey Methods

A randomly selected sample of 4,000 households within a half mile of each of the three proposed stations (Iwilei, Chinatown and Downtown stations) was mailed the survey. These 4,000 households were 40% of the total number of households (10,086) estimated to be within a half mile of one of the three proposed stations. Of the 4,000 mailed surveys, 3,846 were delivered to occupied households. A total of 1,088 completed surveys were received (including 20 in Chinese), for a response rate of 28%; this is a strong response rate compared to those that NRC typically sees for surveys in large cities. The margin of error is plus or minus three percentage points around any given percent for the entire sample.



### Survey Reports

This executive summary of survey results highlights key findings across the entire Downtown sample. A full report of survey methods and results, including the survey itself and responses categorized by location, gender and tenure (whether the resident owns or rents their home), can be found online at: [www.honoluluodpp.org/planning](http://www.honoluluodpp.org/planning).

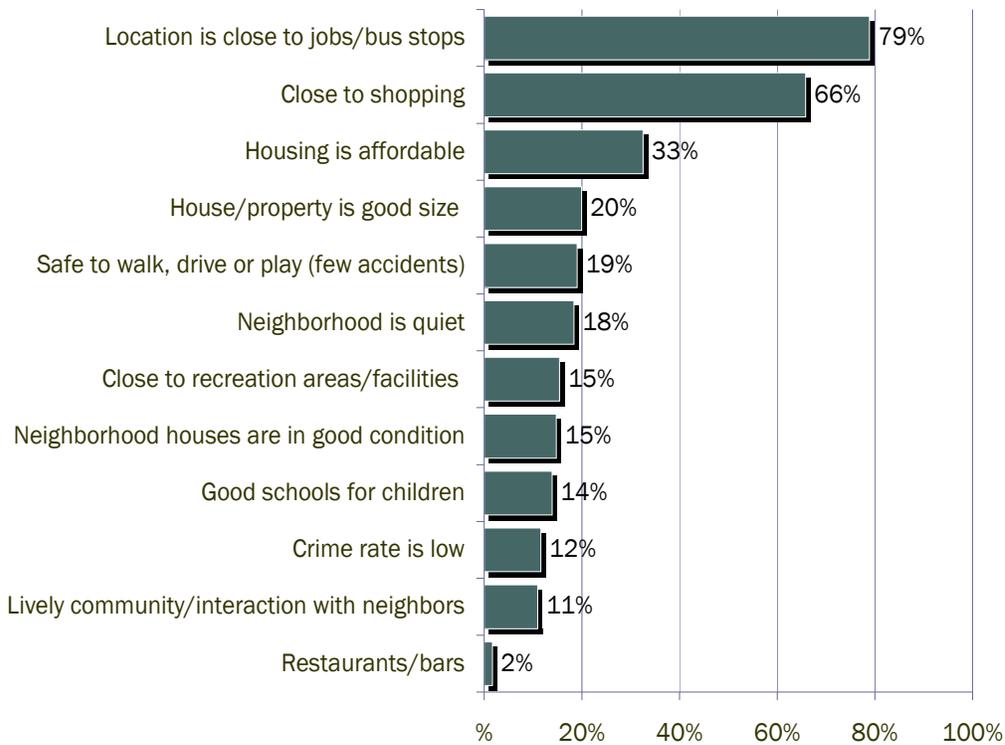
## Survey Findings

### Neighborhood Values

#### *Strong connection to place and high value on convenience among Downtown neighbors*

Only about one resident in five intended to move from the home they lived in at the time of the survey and none of these residents were interested in moving off Oahu. The biggest attractions of the neighborhood were the convenience of the Downtown location to jobs, transit or shopping. The greatest annoyances were crime, noise and the expense of housing.

#### What 3 things do you like most about living in your neighborhood?



Total exceeds 100% as respondents chose three items.

#### *Safety, cleanliness and aesthetics also a high priority for residents*

When asked (in an open-ended format) what one thing resident would do to improve their neighborhood, 25% wanted to address the homeless issue, 20% wanted to reduce crime and increase safety, 11% wanted to clean up the community and improve its appearance.

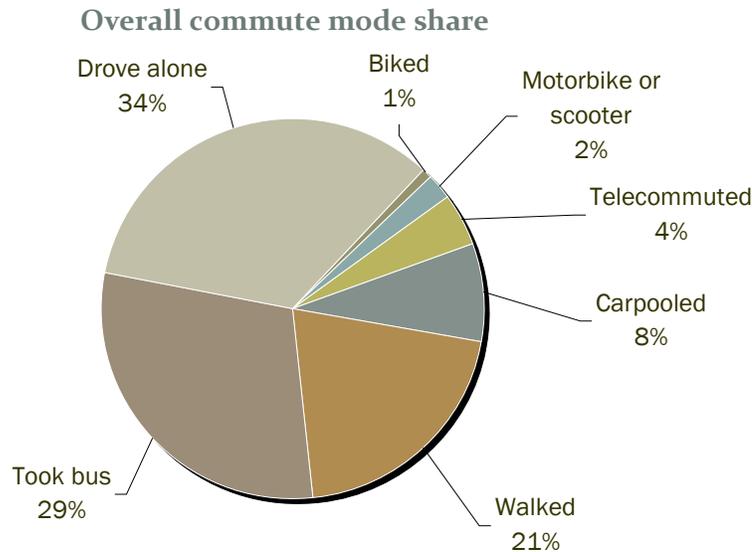
#### *Residents value Chinatown and other historic resources in the community*

When asked what neighborhood landmarks or characteristics were most important to preserve, residents top responses were Chinatown, parks, historic district, buildings and monuments, and markets and small shops.

## Resident Mobility

### *Most Downtown workers and students used alternative modes to get to work or school*

Nearly two thirds of Downtown residents who work or go to school used alternative modes for their commute (carpooled, biked or walked to their destination, or they telecommuted). This is undoubtedly due in part to the fact that 42% of Downtown residents also work or attend school in the area.



### *Travel by bus and on foot rated better than by car and much better than by bicycle*

Walking and bus travel were used more frequently than was bicycling in the Downtown neighborhood, where most residents felt that the number of bike paths and lanes was poor. Though bus travel and walking were rated more positively than bicycling as modes of travel, the condition of bus stops and sidewalks, as well as feelings of safety while waiting for buses or walking, were not viewed so positively. The condition of local streets, traffic flow and the parking availability were thought to be fair or poor by two-thirds or more of residents.

### *Most residents desired improvements to streetscapes on major thoroughfares Downtown*

Every improvement to major Downtown streetscapes (along Nimitz Highway, Dillingham Boulevard and other major Downtown streets) tested in the survey was widely supported by residents. The greatest number of residents supported improving sidewalks, adding street lights and expanding bus service. A smaller number of residents, but still over 80%, supported more on-street parking and bike lanes.

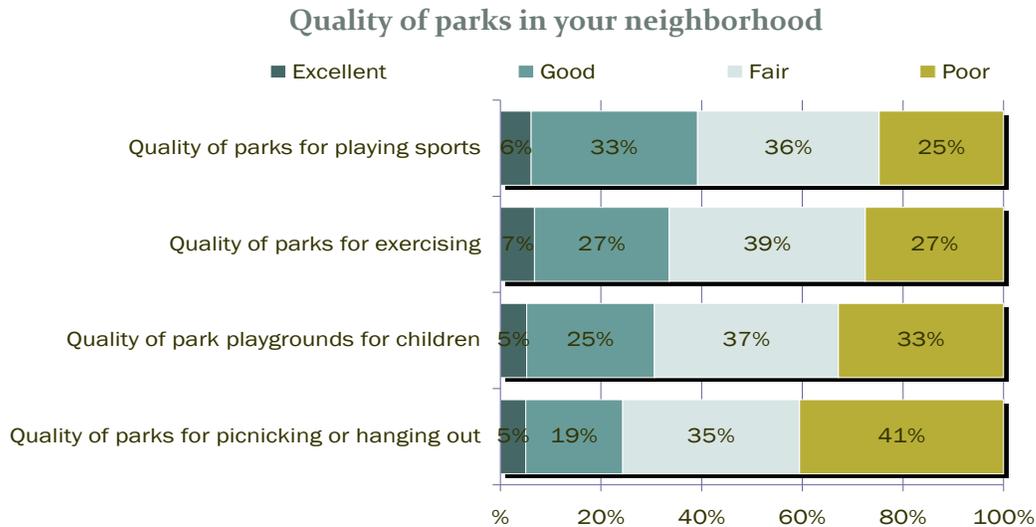
### *Most Downtown residents were aware of plans to build the transit line and planned to use it*

A majority of residents said they or someone in the household would likely use the planned rail transit line for shopping, going to entertainment venues, or visiting recreation areas. On the other hand, a majority of residents did not anticipate using rail transit to get to school or work – likely because their work or school is in the neighborhood or they neither work nor go to school.

## Community Amenities

### *Recreational amenities are valued but could use improvement.*

Only 39% of residents in the Downtown neighborhood used parks a few times a month or more frequently. While most residents said they felt safe in parks during the day, few felt safe at night or when homeless people were present. The majority rated park quality as fair or poor, especially for children and passive park users.



### *Senior and youth centers, family entertainment venues less prevalent Downtown*

Senior centers and youth centers were the public amenities least often identified as present in the neighborhood. The private businesses most prevalent in Downtown were restaurants, grocery stores, and drug stores; establishments for family entertainment were the least often identified.

### *Night clubs not admired like other businesses; Affordable housing rated lower than other public amenities*

The quality of private businesses and public amenities was generally rated by residents as “good” or better, with one exception. Uniquely, bars and night clubs were given quality ratings of fair or poor by a majority of Downtown residents. Libraries, medical clinics, child care and schools were the highest rated public amenities in the neighborhood, and “affordable housing” was the lowest rated.

## Homeless Services

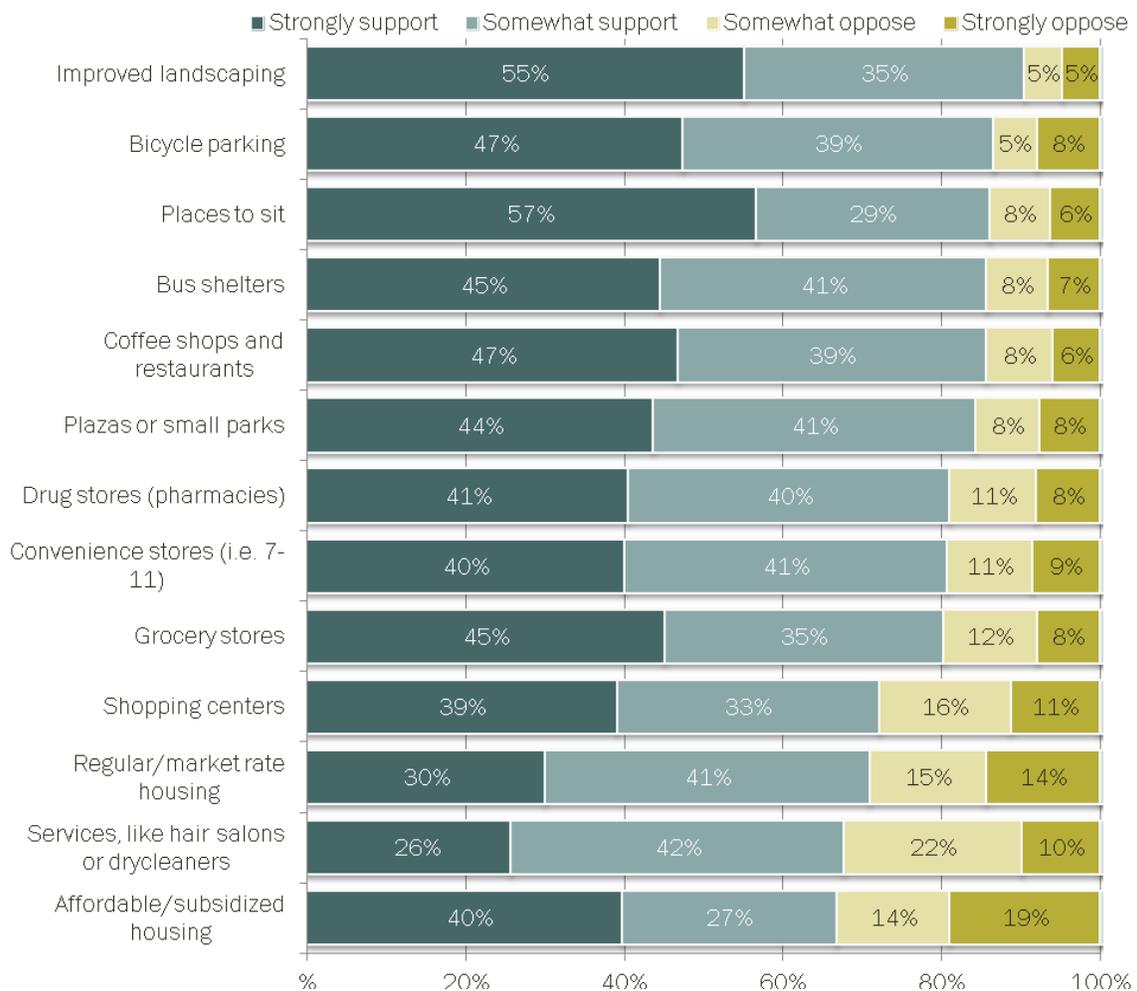
As mentioned previously, homelessness is perceived as a major issue in the Downtown neighborhood. More than 7 in 10 Downtown residents agreed that existing homeless services and facilities in the community should remain and that additional ones should be provided. In order of popularity, services supported include job training, emergency shelter, medical/mental health, transitional shelter, food/meals, and substance abuse. The most popular locations for locating new homeless services include Aala Park (11%), Iwilei (6%), Chinatown (6%), and Sand Island (6%).

## Development Opportunities

### *Mid rise construction and better landscaping most desired improvements*

New development opportunities will arise with the construction of the proposed rail stations. The vast majority of residents supported every mentioned possible improvement with the most support given to improved landscaping, places to sit and bicycle parking. Less support, though still supported by more than two-thirds of residents, was given to new services like hair salons and dry cleaners, market rate housing, shopping centers and subsidized housing. A majority of residents supported buildings of 1 to 8 stories near the proposed rail station. As building heights increased from 1-3 stories to more than 30 stories, support dropped off at each height increment until, at over 30 stories of height, 70% of residents were opposed.

### Support for building the following near your closest proposed rail station



*For more information on the Downtown TOD program and a full report of survey results, please visit [www.honolulu.gov/planning](http://www.honolulu.gov/planning). This report paid for by the taxpayers of the City & County of Honolulu.*