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# North Battleford Downtown Survey and Interview Report

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## ***Executive Summary***

The City of North Battleford contracted Nuguru to gather information for the development of a downtown strategy created through two separate projects. Project One focused on interviews with downtown business and Project Two focused on surveys of residents within North Battleford.

## ***Methodology***

An interview guide was developed in conjunction with the City of North Battleford using Business Retention and Expansion principles. Using the City database, approximately 100 retail and service businesses (see Appendix) were identified in downtown. Businesses with the greatest economic impact and the most leadership in the community were designated as primary interviews. All other businesses were designated as secondary interviews. Primary interviews were allocated to Christopher Doll, President and CEO of Nuguru. Secondary interviews were allocated to a local Commerce student. This approach was used to reduce time and cost for the interview project. A copy of the full interview guide is appended electronically to this document.

The survey template was developed in conjunction with the City of North Battleford using closed and open ended questions. People were invited to participate through promotion at local merchants, newspaper articles, and websites. The survey and data was hosted on SurveyMonkey.com. Residents were given an approximately 2 week window to complete the survey. A copy of the survey and data is appended electronically to this document.

## **Results**

### **Project One – Merchant Interviews**

About 1/3 of selected downtown merchants responded to interviews with retail businesses most interested in participating. No Professional Services (accountants, doctors and lawyers) responded to requests for interviews. This is not unusual given the fact that their participation would cost them billable hours and indicates fairly robust demand for their services.

Participants consistently identified the following advantages of being downtown:

- Ownership of building
- Lower taxes (compared to other locations)
- Lower leases (compared to other locations)
- Traffic (especially 100<sup>th</sup> street)
- Proximity to some customer base
- Established destination location (for some long term businesses)

Participants consistently identified the following disadvantages of being downtown:

- Lack of traffic (101st Street)
- Lack of cleanliness (especially snow and ice issues), beautification
- Undesirables on street
- Lack of other traffic drawing businesses
- Too many pawn shops/second hand stores/bingo hall

***Results indicate that the public does not differentiate between 2nd hand stores and pawn shops and use them interchangeably.***

- Empty buildings
- Parking

Downtown merchants expressed a general desire to see more retail venues downtown to encourage customers to stay longer and spend more. Most customers tend to go directly to their target store, conduct business, and leave. Although parking overall may not be a significant issue, customers may find parking in front of their chosen store difficult. In order to increase downtown traffic, merchants suggested the following businesses:

- Jewelry Stores
- Women's Clothing Shops
- Coffee Shop/Restaurants
- Book Stores
- Art Galleries/Hobby Shops

Merchants identified some events and strategies to attract more people downtown including:

- Music and Children's Festivals
- Shop downtown events
- Co advertising and promotion
- Cruise Nights

Half of merchants interviewed are interested in co-promotion activities and a business improvement district, but are extremely time restricted due to other activities in the community or are hesitant to participate without a long term plan and support from the City.

### ***Project Two – Resident Surveys***

There were a total of 254 respondents who accessed the survey on SurveyMonkey.com or through manual input of paper responses. Of those responding approximately 60% percent were female with the majority of respondents of working age. The survey

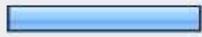
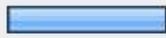
responses are broken into two different groups: multiple choice questions and open ended questions. The multiple choice questions are shown below in their original format.

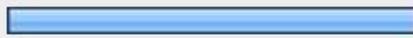
## North Battleford Downtown Survey

1. What is your approximate age?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
under 21 	1.6%	4
21-34 	28.3%	72
35-49 	33.9%	86
50-64 	29.5%	75
65+ 	6.7%	17
	<i>answered question</i>	254
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

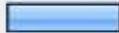
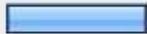
2. What is your gender?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Female 	61.0%	155
Male 	39.0%	99
	<i>answered question</i>	254
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

3. Do you live within walking distance of downtown (15 minutes)?		
	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes 	53.4%	133
No 	46.6%	116
	<i>answered question</i>	249
	<i>skipped question</i>	5

4. Which area of North Battleford do you live in?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Area 1 - Riverview - South of Railway Avenue		4.4%	11
Area 2 - South of 13th Ave between 95th Street and Territorial Drive		5.6%	14
Area 3 - West of 100th Street, South of Territorial, North of 13th Ave		29.8%	75
Area 4 - East of 100th Street, South of Territorial, North of 13th Ave		24.2%	61
Area 5 - Killdeer Park and Fairview Heights		12.7%	32
Area 6 - Battleford		11.9%	30
Area 7 - Outside the Battlefords		11.5%	29
		<i>answered question</i>	252
		<i>skipped question</i>	2

5. Do you work in the Downtown Area?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Yes		36.4%	92
No		63.6%	161
If you work downtown, are there specific stores or services that you would like to see downtown?			66
		<i>answered question</i>	253
		<i>skipped question</i>	1

6. Do you shop downtown?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Daily		2.0%	5
Weekly		15.4%	39
Monthly		19.3%	49
Rarely		53.9%	137
Never		9.4%	24
<i>answered question</i>			254
<i>skipped question</i>			0

7. What days are you typically downtown?			
		Response Percent	Response Count
Everyday		17.1%	43
Monday		23.4%	59
Tuesday		21.0%	53
Wednesday		22.2%	56
Thursday		26.2%	66
Friday		28.6%	72
Saturday		13.9%	35
Sunday		3.2%	8
Rarely		38.9%	98
Never		2.0%	5
<i>answered question</i>			252
<i>skipped question</i>			2

**8. What time of day are you most likely to be downtown?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Morning	32.8%	82
Afternoon	57.6%	144
Evening	9.6%	24
<i>answered question</i>		250
<i>skipped question</i>		4

**9. How many of the storefronts in the area, in general, do you consider to be well maintained and appealing?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
All	0.0%	0
Most	15.1%	38
Very Few	79.0%	199
None	6.0%	15
<i>answered question</i>		252
<i>skipped question</i>		2

**10. What is your overall opinion of the current appearance of the downtown area?**

	Response Percent	Response Count
Poor	76.5%	192
Fair	22.3%	56
Good	1.2%	3
<i>answered question</i>		251
<i>skipped question</i>		3

11. What is your most frequent destination(s) when downtown?

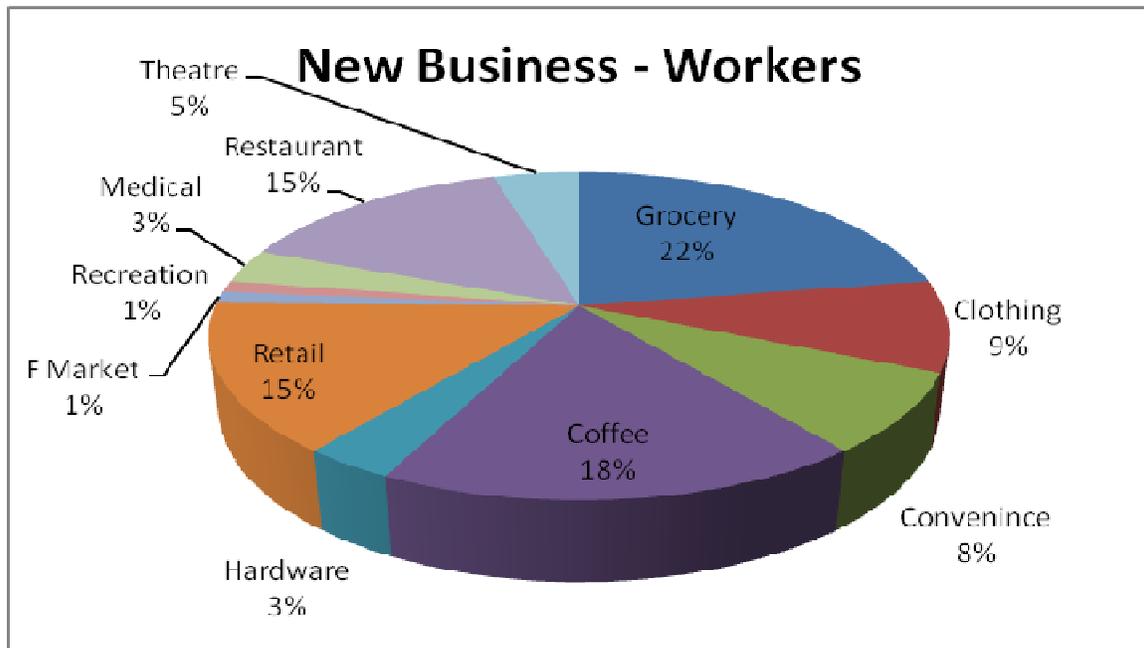
		Response Percent	Response Count
Bank		88.4%	221
Liquor Store		39.2%	98
Bus Depot		0.0%	0
Shopping		18.0%	45
Restaurant/Bar		16.4%	41
Recreation/Entertainment		3.2%	8
Professional Office (i.e. Lawyer, Financial, Medical, Accountant)		19.6%	49
Parks/Open Space		4.0%	10
Library		29.6%	74
	Other (please specify)		34
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>250</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>4</b>

12. How easy is it to find parking in the area?

		Response Percent	Response Count
Easy		26.9%	66
Fair		49.4%	121
Difficult		23.7%	58
	Other (please specify)		27
	<i>answered question</i>		<b>245</b>
	<i>skipped question</i>		<b>9</b>

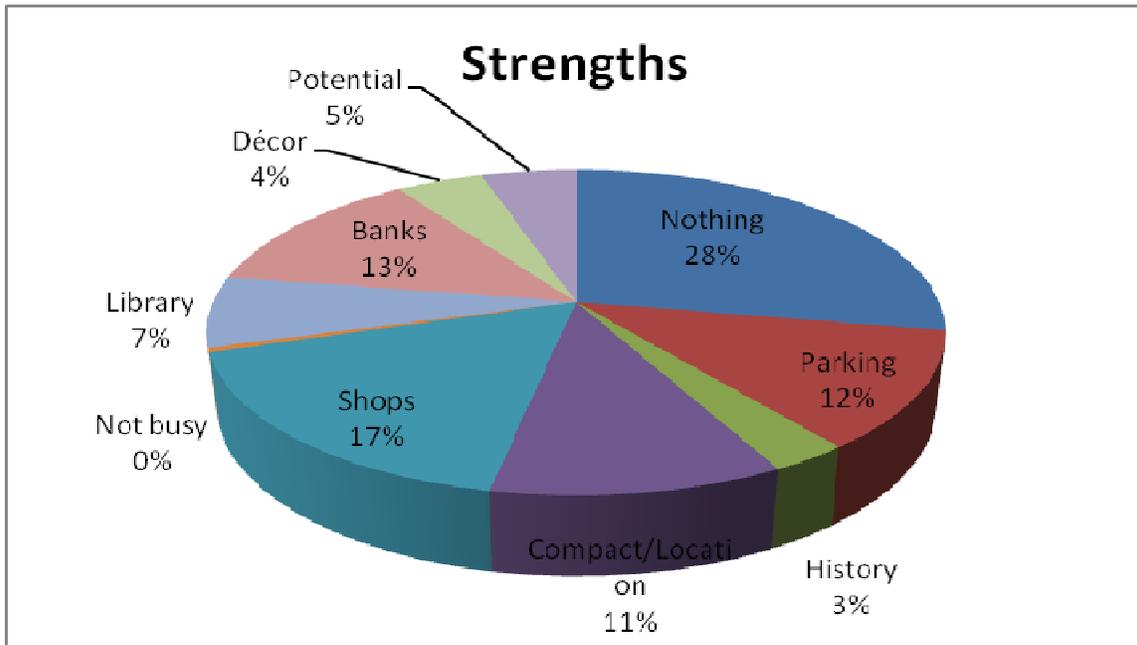
The open-ended questions required reformatting into excel and grouping of responses to allow further analysis. Open ended questions were used on potentially contentious issues to avoid leading respondents. One set of responses was merged with the preceding questions when respondents provided similar input to each question. The reformatted questions and responses are shown below:

**If you work downtown, are there specific stores or services that you would like to see downtown?**



Downtown workers (65 respondents) indicated that their priorities included Grocery (22%), Coffee Shop (18%), Restaurants (15%), Retail – General (15%), Clothing Stores – mostly women’s (9%), and a Convenience Store (8%). Cross tabulations indicate that this group of respondents is primarily women.

### What do you like most about downtown?



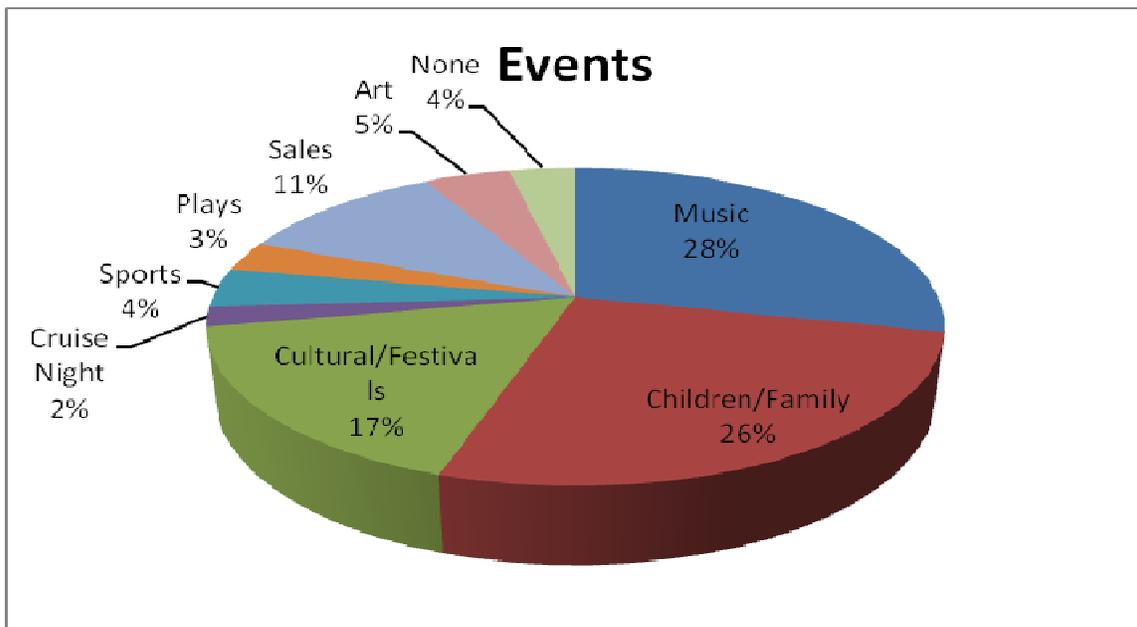
A very strong negative response from a “positive” question indicates a serious issue. This question had 210 respondents with 28% indicating that they liked nothing about downtown. Shops, Banks, Parking, and Location and Compactness were mentioned by more than 10% of respondents.

**What services/businesses would you like to see added downtown in the next 3 years?**



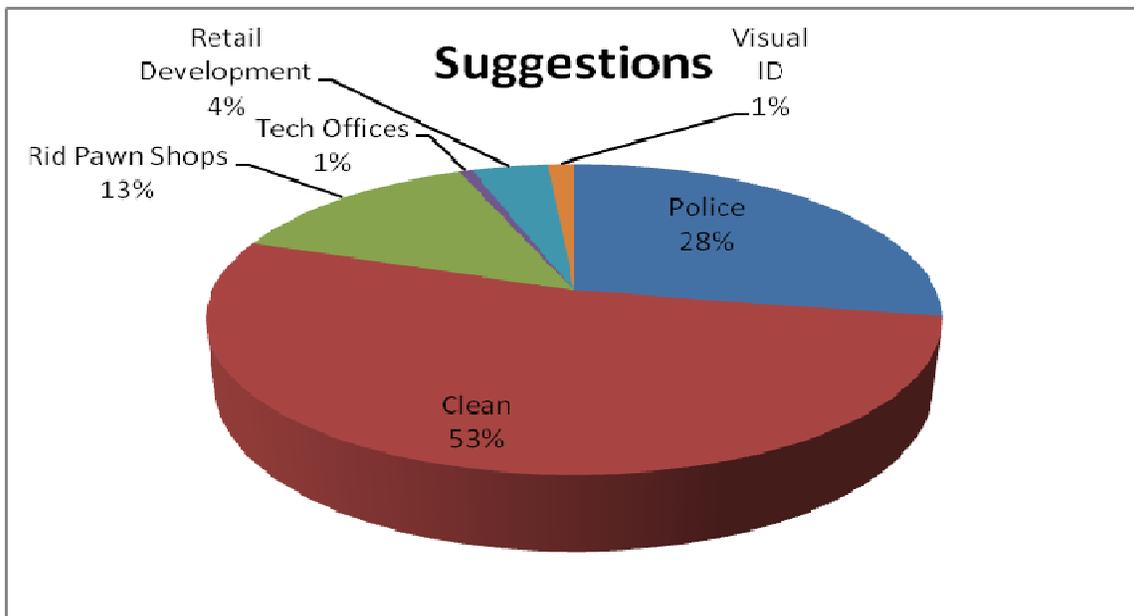
There were 200 respondents to this question with four responses, Mall/Retail (23%), Grocery (20%), Clothing Stores (19%), and Theatre (13%) garnering the most support.

**What events would you like to see downtown and in Central Park?**



This question proved most difficult to categorize as many people combined music, culture, and children/family events. There were 155 respondents with Music (28%), Children/Family (26%), and Cultural/Festivals (17%) and Sales (11%) supported by more than 10% of respondents. In general there appears to be a strong appetite for downtown events with many respondents noting previous events that left positive impressions. ***It is clear that the public still identify with downtown as part of community and as a cultural hub.***

**Any further comments you would like to add about downtown North Battleford?**



There were 173 respondents to this question with a majority (53%) focused on increased efforts to clean downtown. 28% of respondents noted policing as an issue and 13% wanted to see pawn shops and bingos moved from downtown. ***There were a number of uncategorized secondary responses showing general support for downtown (41.04%) and redevelopment and others suggesting that redevelopment was not a practical and cost effective initiative (6.94%).***

Appendix – Merchant Interview Guide and Community Survey Guide

**North Battleford Downtown Revitalization – Merchant Survey  
General Interview Guide**

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Town \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

WEBSITE ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON INTERVIEWED: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Downtown Revitalization**

### ***Background***

- I. This survey is sponsored by the City of North Battleford.
- II. The objectives of the program are as follows:
  - (1) To determine future needs of existing merchants
  - (2) To determine impediments to growth
  - (3) To identify potential for new businesses to locate downtown
- III. Confidentiality – Your individual answers to this survey are confidential and will not be released. Your response will be summarized with those of others to form an overall result in percentages or averages.
- IV. Copy of the Final Report – Copies of the summary will be provided to all businesses that participate in this survey and wish to have a copy; the summary will be available in September 2009.

## Profile

1. What primary activity is conducted at this business? (Circle one)
  - (a) agriculture
  - (b) health
  - (c) construction/contractor
  - (d) manufacturing/processing
  - (e) transportation
  - (f) public utilities
  - (g) other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (g) wholesale/distribution
  - (h) retail
  - (i) finance, insurance, and real estate
  - (j) services
  - (k) education
  - (l) Hotel/Restaurant
  
2. What are the main products and services offered at this business?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Why did you choose your current location?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Is this establishment a branch, a satellite, or a franchise?
  1. YES                      NO(If yes, where are the headquarters?) \_\_\_\_\_
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How many years has this business been operating in this community?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. What are your company's plans for the year 2010?
  - (a) Remain in current location at current size
  - (b) Expand on site
  - (c) Expand at another location (Where?)
  - (d) Relocate (Where?)
  - (e) Downsize
  - (f) Discontinue Business

7. Are there any other changes in business plans for the next three years? (circle all that may apply)

- (g) No change in operations
- (h) Change in mix of goods/services
- (i) Additions or subtractions of product lines
- (j) Change production technology

8. In what ways, if any, could the City of North Battleford help your business?

9. When is your peak season?

- (a) spring
- (b) summer
- (c) fall
- (d) winter

10. Which are your peak business days? (circle up to two)

- (a) Sunday
- (b) Monday
- (c) Tuesday
- (d) Wednesday
- (e) Thursday
- (f) Friday
- (g) Saturday
- (h) Business does not peak

11. Which are your peak business hours? (circle up to two)

- (a) morning (8:00-12:00)
- (b) lunch (11:30-1:30)
- (c) afternoon (1:30-6:00)
- (d) evening (6:00-9:00)
- (e) night (9:00 on)
- (f) business does not peak

12. Do you share the advertising expense with other retailers for the promotion of your entire shopping area?

- (a) NO If no, would you be willing to explore this? YES NO
- (b) YES If yes, circle all of the following efforts you would support:
  - i. cooperative advertising
  - ii. cooperative coupons
  - iii. other

13. Select from the list below the items that best describe your uses of the internet

- b. Email
- c. Research
- d. Web Page
- e. On-line Inventory
- f. Order Processing
- g. On-line Credit Card Processing
- h. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

14. Geographically, what percentage of your market is in the following areas?

Percentage

- (a) Within North Battleford \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Within 50 kms of North Battleford \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Within 100 kms of North Battleford \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) Within the rest of Saskatchewan \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) Within the rest of Western Canada \_\_\_\_\_
- (f) Within the rest of Canada \_\_\_\_\_
- (g) International \_\_\_\_\_

15. Does tourism have an economic impact on your business?

- Yes
- No

16. If downtown tourism events were to be developed, would it have an economic impact on your business?

- Yes
- No

17. Have you ever worked with other businesses or sponsors to develop “packages” to attract visitors?

- Yes
- No

18. Would you like information about developing packages to attract visitors?

- Yes
- No

19. What tourism products could the community of North Battleford further develop in order to maximize tourism potential?

20. Are there any types of businesses that you would like to see locate in North Battleford and specifically downtown that might increase your sales or make it less expensive for you to operate?

21. Check the three most critically needed improvements for the North Battleford downtown business community in order to retain and/or expand businesses.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) Downtown beautification
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) additional businesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) special events or promotions in the shopping area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) more competitive prices.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (e) increased hours.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (f) better quality of merchandise.

22. What are the top three advantages of owning a business in downtown?

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23. What are the top three disadvantages of owning a business in downtown?

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24. Are you interested in starting or joining a downtown business improvement district?

Yes                      No