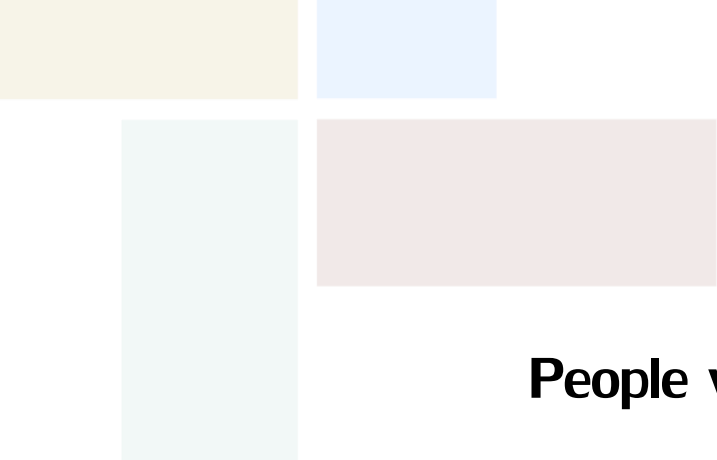




First Impressions Community Exchange

Presented by: City of Brockville

Facilitated by: Ministry of Rural Affairs



People who visit your community for the first time can offer a fresh perspective and unique insight into your services, transportation, accommodations and tourist attractions.

Through the First Impressions Community Exchange program, our two communities were able to tap into these insights.

Online Presence Ranking:





Community Entrances

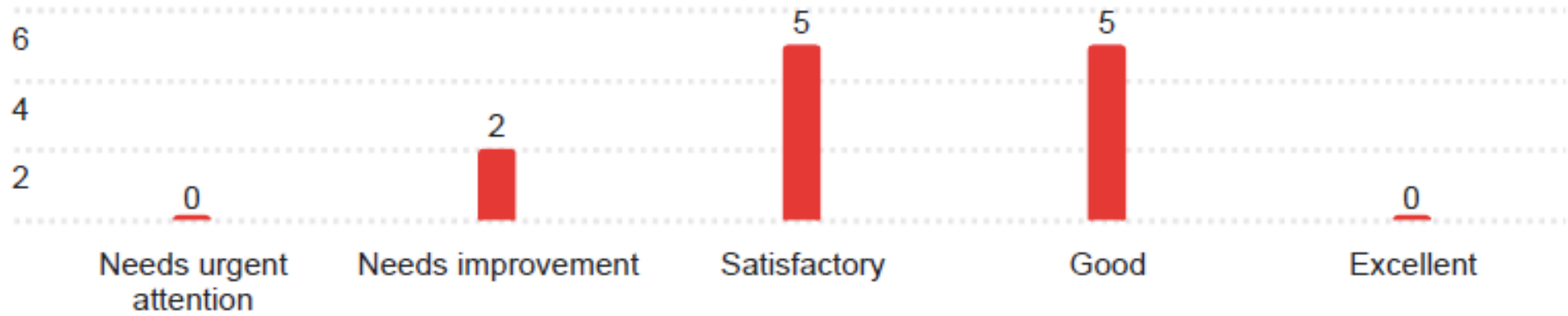
Highlights:

- *Clean and well maintained*
- *Community is looked after and cared for*

Opportunities:

- *401 TODS Area Profile signs to highlight the community's best features*
- *Stronger branding when you enter the town*
- *Strengthen alignment between town branding and downtown*

Community Entrances Ranking:





Housing and Residential Areas

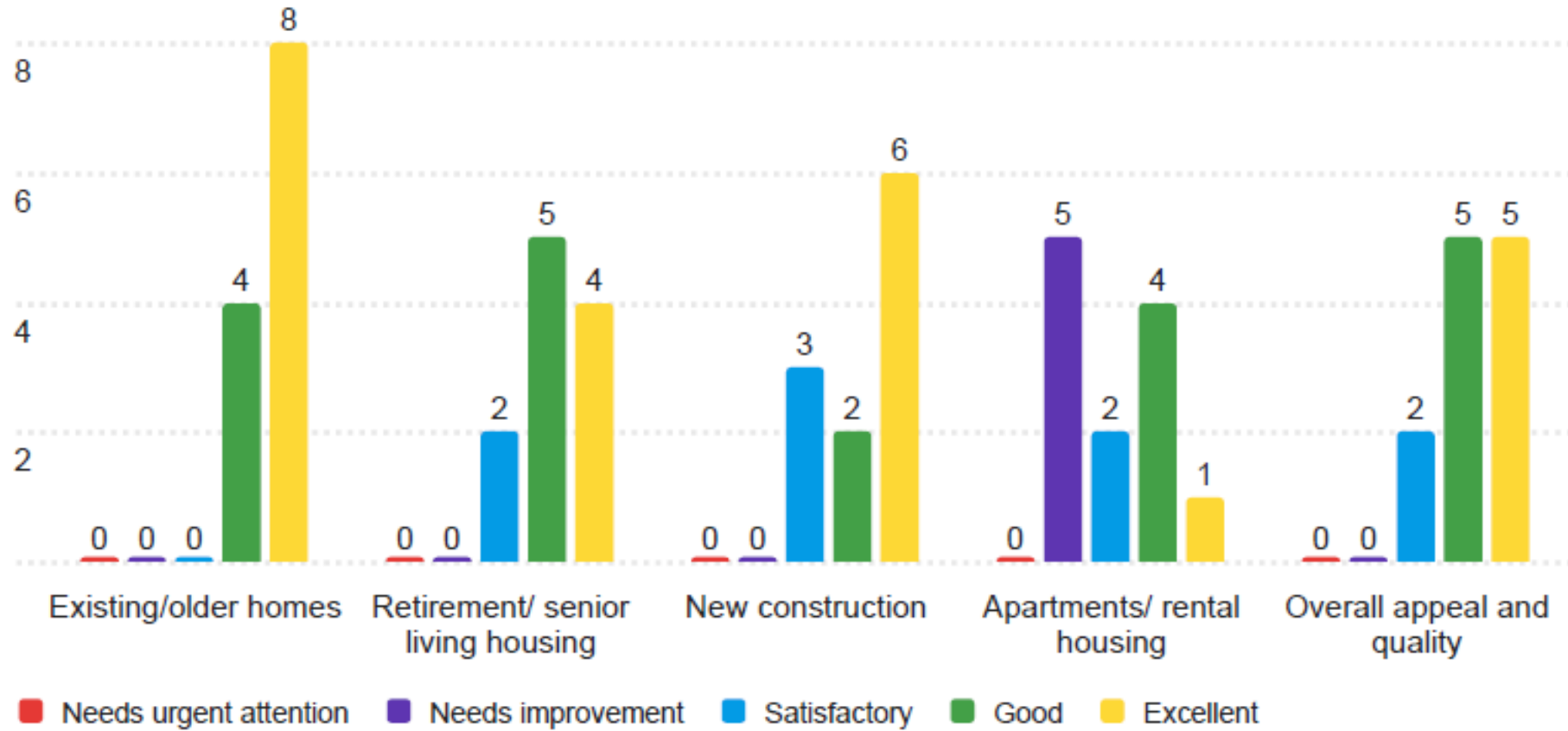
Highlights:

- *Beautifully maintained homes*
- *Evidence of new development and growth*
- *Condos downtown that can be seen from the boardwalk add to the beauty of downtown*

Opportunities:

- *Increase trails and parkland*
- *Increase affordable housing options*
- *Improve bike lanes*

Housing and Residential Area Ranking:





Local Government Services

Highlights:

- *Friendly and informed municipal staff*

Opportunities:

- *Signage to better orient the visitor to find staff and information*
- *Signage inviting you to enter Victoria Hall*
- *New resident welcome kit*

Education, Health, and Community

Services

Highlights:

- *Modern Community Centre that matches and serves the needs of the*
- *Plentiful programming for retirees that are popular and well-utilized*
- *Retail health services cluster*
- *Schools are well placed to serve neighbourhoods throughout the town*
- *Large hospital that was easy to locate*
- *Victoria Hall programming*



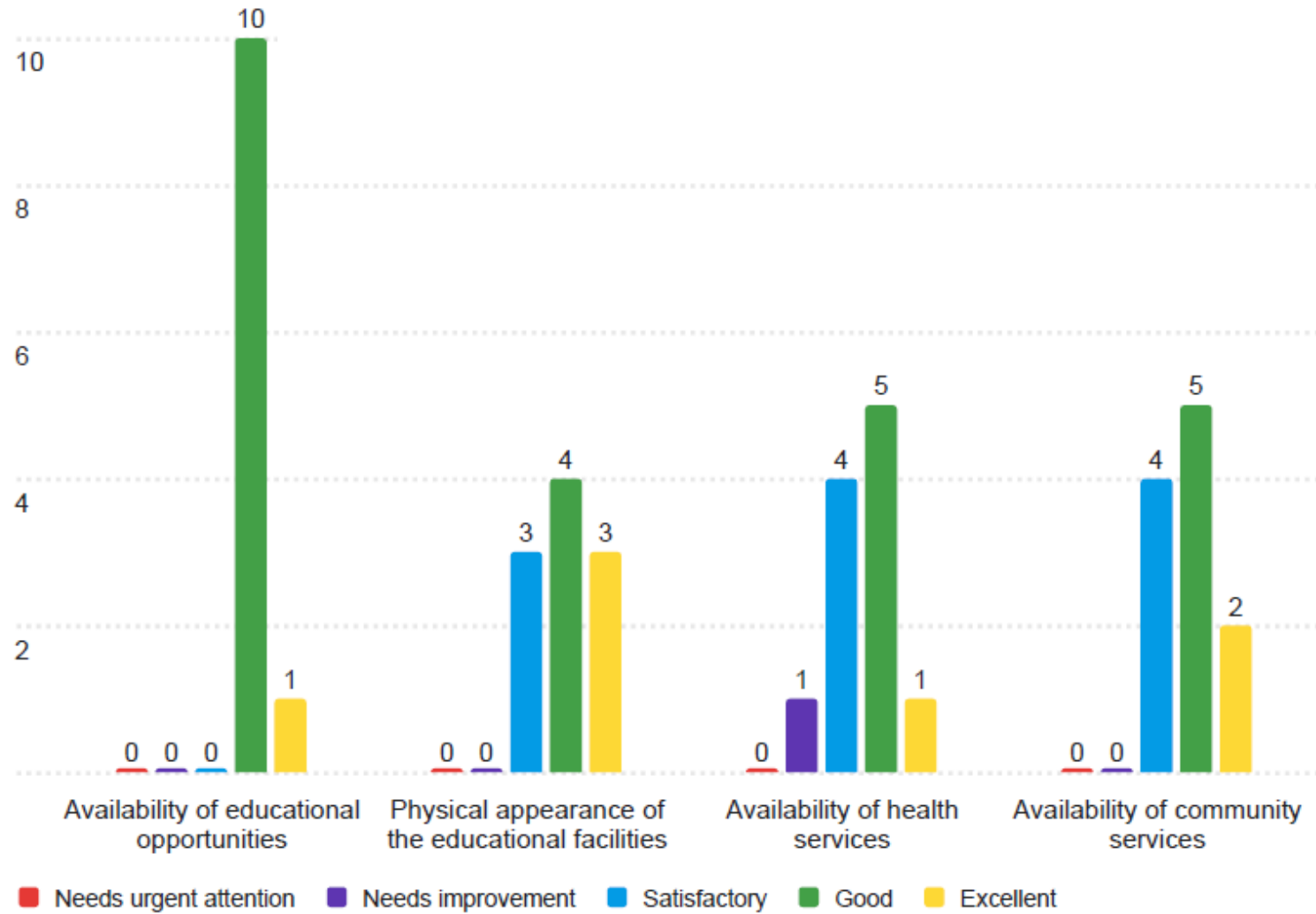


Education, Health, and Community Services

Opportunities:

- *Grocery store within walkable downtown area*
- *More health care*
- *Recreational programming for teens and young professionals*

Education, Health, and Community Services Ranking:





Downtown

Highlights:

- *Curb appeal and beautification efforts*
- *Charming downtown core*
- *Lush flower baskets and flower beds everywhere*
- *Beach and boardwalk*
- *Victoria Hall*



Downtown

Opportunities:

- *Courtesy crosswalks*
- *Dedicated Accessible Parking Spaces*
- *Cycle route analysis and Active Transportation Plan*
- *Align Downtown Cobourg and Town of Cobourg brands*

Downtown Overall Impression Ranking:





Business and Industry

Highlights:

- *Excellent customer service*
- *Business owners are proud of, and excited by, their community*
- *Variety of businesses to serve the community*
- *Strong café culture creates places for the community to connect and*
- *Venture13*



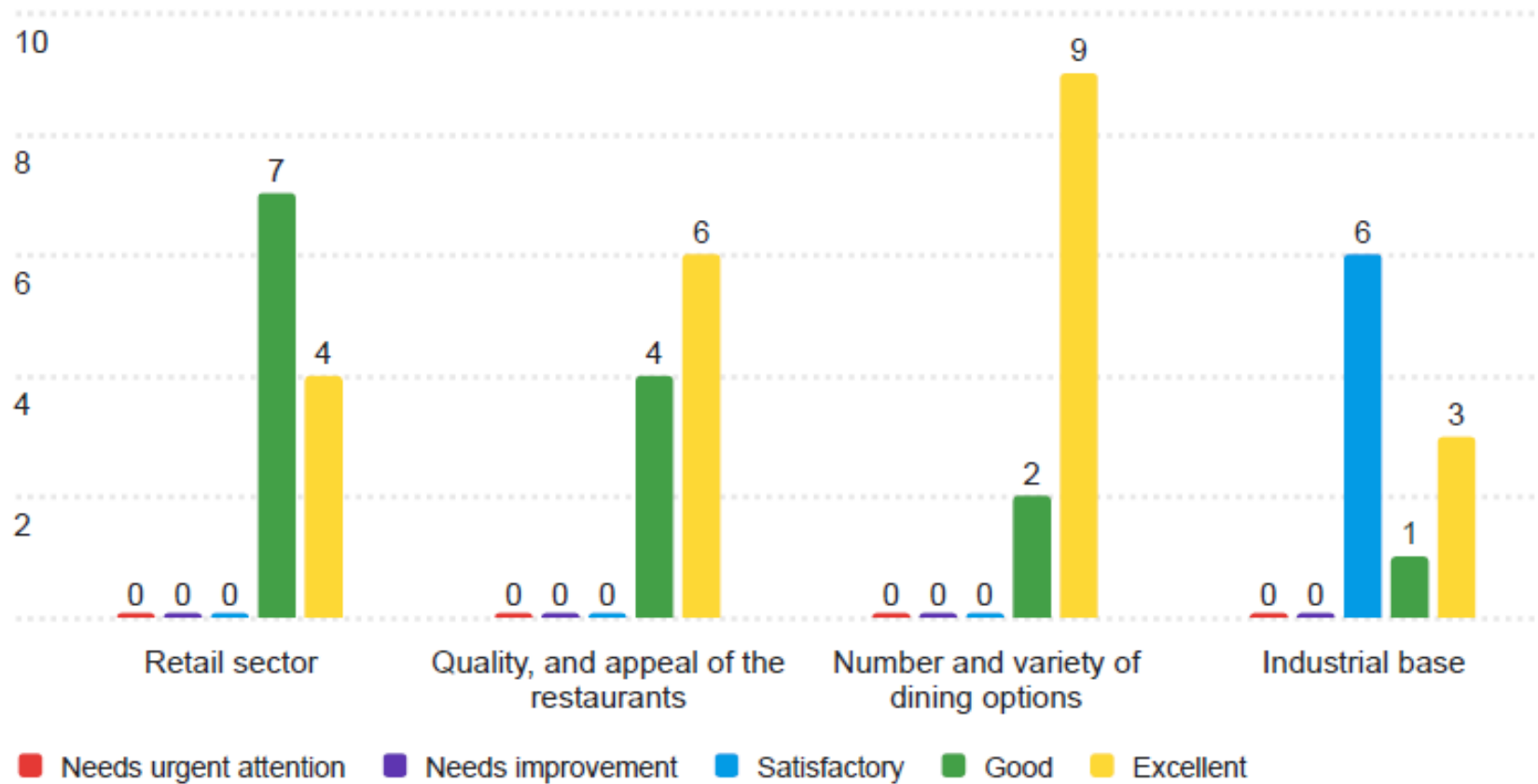


Business and Industry

Opportunities:

- *Promotion of available commercial spaces for lease*
- *Promotion and clarity of the leading industries in Cobourg*
- *Waterfront restaurant potential*
- *Rainbow Registered program*
- *Promotion of Cobourg's largest employers and industries*

Business and Industry Ranking:





Tourism, Recreation, and Culture

Highlights:

- *Beach and boardwalk*
- *Victoria Hall*
- *“Instagrammable” downtown and*
- *Public washroom availability*
- *Community Centre*
- *Fountain/outdoor skating rink*
- *Public Art*
- *Recreational programs for seniors*
- *“Move here for...” call outs in the*



Tourism, Recreation, and Culture

Opportunities:

- *Kayak and SUP rental potential*
- *Beautification of the beach access point*
- *Capitalize on Instagram potential of the lifeguard huts*
- *Location indicators (signage) for visitor information*
- *Streamline the visitor guide*
- *Waterfront hotel potential*
- *Tourism product development to increase length of stay*

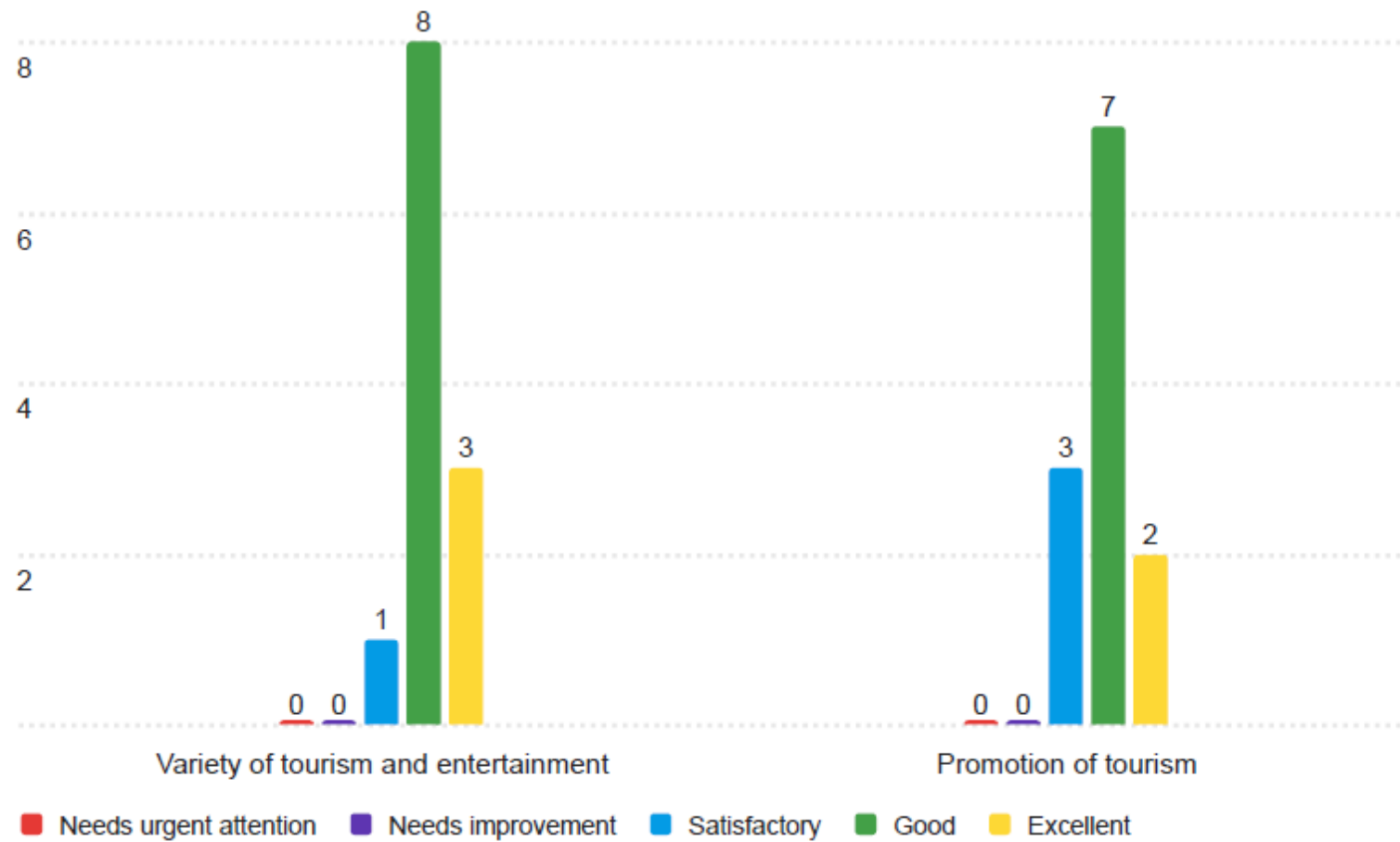


Tourism, Recreation, and Culture

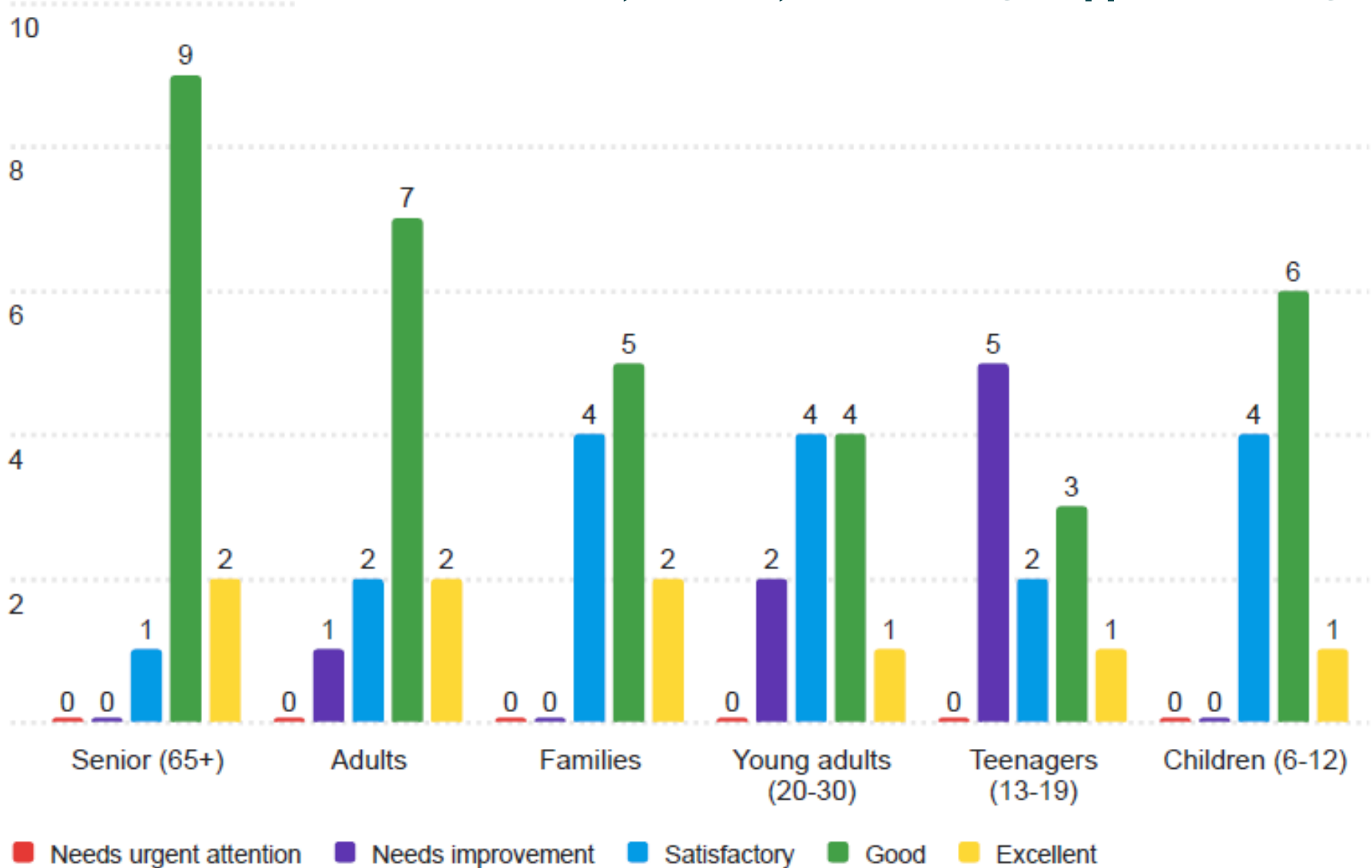
Opportunities (continued):

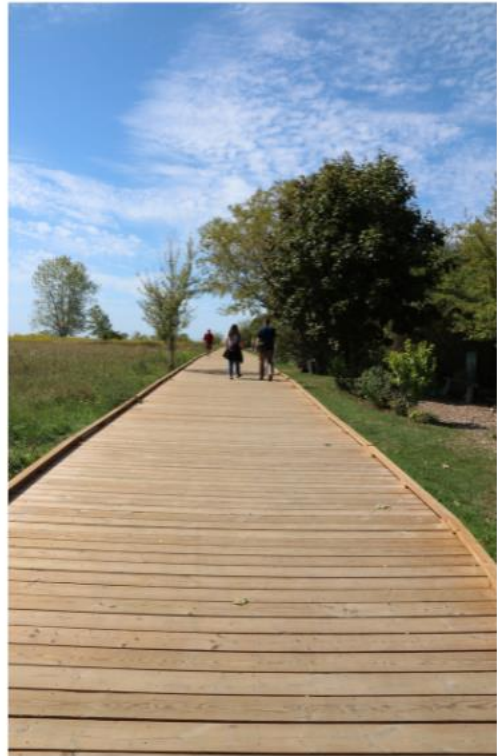
- *Improve bike lanes*
- *Cobourg-branded merchandise*
- *Market to communities to the east of Cobourg*
- *Historical walking tours*
- *Increase recreational programming adults and teens*

Tourism Appeal Ranking:



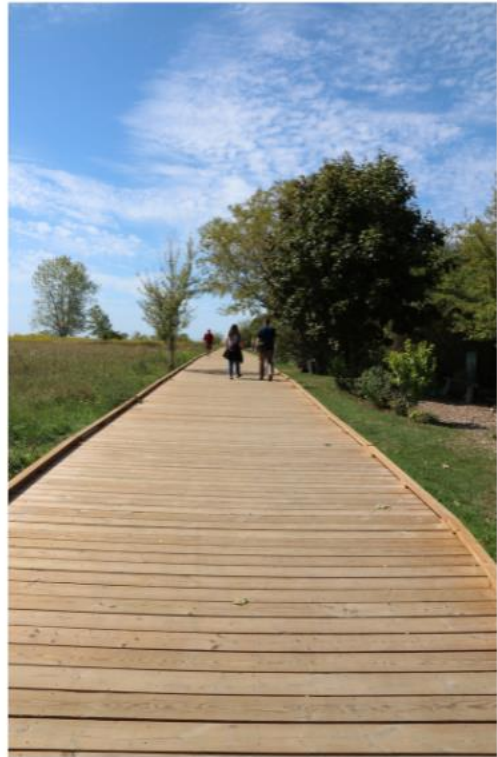
Recreation, Culture, and Heritage Appeal Rankings:





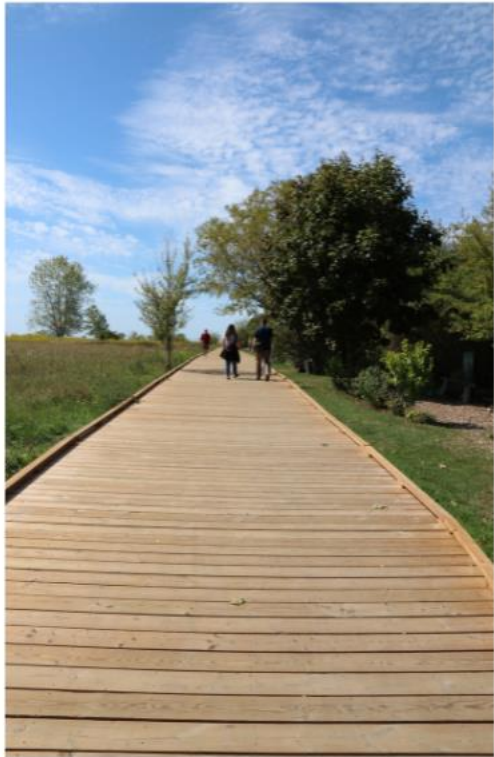
What did the community taste like?

Fresh, coffee, baked goods, flavourful brussels sprouts at “The EL”, blueberry scones and tea in a shop by the bookstore, fine dining, freshly prepared local food, Italian, brownie and pink latte from “The Pink Café”, “a gourmand’s playground”.



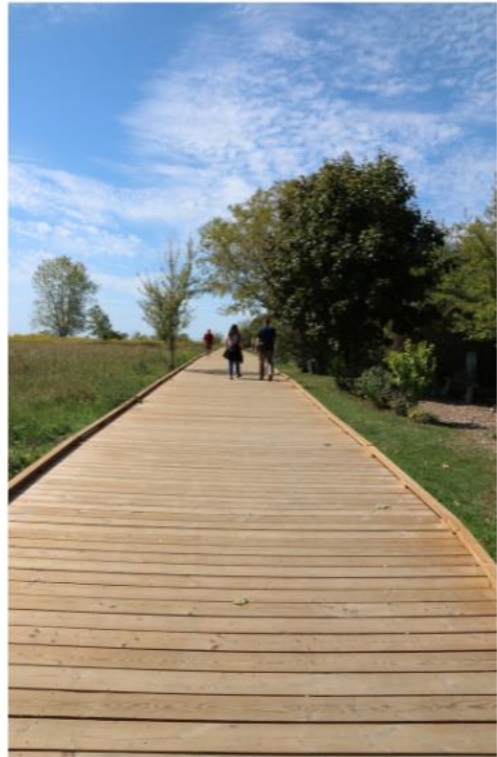
What did the community smell like?

Flowers, fresh, some minimal stale water smell, good food, water, coffee, fresh lake air, fresh seafood, lake-marina smell, neutral but clean.



What sounds did we hear?

Quiet, peaceful, surprising amount of vehicle traffic downtown, (reasonable for a thriving community), fairly quiet even with most patios full, birds, hustle and bustle, waves from the lake, wind, conversation and chatter, some seagulls on the beach.



What did the community feel like?

Felt like “coming home”, friendly, happy, well-kept and lovely, charming, I could live there, vibrant, prideful, safe, peaceful, homey, a cup of tea, relaxing, close by, comfortable, inviting, warm, bright.



Information from residents:

Highlights:

- *Friendly and welcoming community*
- *Residents feel safe living in the community*
- *Most people love where they live!*

Information from residents:

Residents' Concerns:

- *Lack of professional employment opportunities – directed to surrounding*
- *Seasonal town - Significant increase in traffic in the summer, retailers and restaurants face challenges if they do have an established loyal client base. in the quieter seasons)*
- *Not as many activities in the winter/off months*
- *Cost of living, homelessness, aging*
- *Not enough amenities for younger families*
- *Some people weren't happy with congestion from visitors*

Quick Wins:

- **Add a customized TODS Area Profile sign on the 401 with a hero photo to sell your community**
- **Use of information question mark “?” signs at Victoria Hall and the Marina**
- **Eliminate advertising on the lifeguard huts**
- **Freshen up entry point from the waterfront parking lot to the beach**
- **Indicate to passersby at the marina that cruiser bicycles are available for rent by the hour inside**
- **Refresh “courtesy crosswalks” along King Street**
- **Dedicated Accessible Parking spaces on King Street, and improved information about parking**

Opportunities:

- Invest in an Active Transportation Analysis and Strategy, particularly around bike lanes and trails
 - Update wayfinding signage plan and design
 - Kayak and Stand-Up Paddleboard rentals at the waterfront
 - Waterfront dining at a restaurant overlooking the lake
 - Encourage businesses through a targeted campaign to become “Rainbow Registered”
<https://cglcc.ca/programs/rainbow-registered/>
- Marketing to communities east of Cobourg
 - Create a welcome kit for new residents, especially for new Canadians
 - Enhance winter activities



Conclusion:

Getting people to visit for the first time is the ultimate challenge: once you visit, you will want to return.