Diverse Downtowns

75 of the region's downtowns were analyzed, and each were assigned a Diversity Score and a Pandemic Impact Score on scales of 1—100, with one being the most diverse and least impacted.

This effort found that more diverse downtowns were generally less impacted by the economic shutdown related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

All 75 of the downtowns that were analyzed are listed, along with their Pandemic Impact Scores, in order from most to least diverse.

DELAWARE VALLEY dvrpc REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Disclaimer:
This is an analysis of visits to and trade areas of the region's downtowns. However, it is not an economic impact analysis. Retail sales were not part of this body of work.

Princeton	33
West Chester Borough	34
Norristown Borough	37
Burlington City	46
Collingswood Borough	45
Upper Darby Township	32
Lower Merion Township (Ardmore)	38
Glassboro Borough	39
Phoenixville Borough	44
Haddonfield Borough	35
Woodbury City	43
Lansdowne Borough	49
Trenton (State Street)	58
Bristol Borough	26
Lansdale Borough	54
Doylestown Borough	29
Bordentown City	52
Riverside Township	59
Mount Holly Township	48
Kennett Square Borough	48
Chester City (Avenue of the States)	41
New Hope Borough	14
Swarthmore Borough	60
Media Borough	40
Gloucester City	50

Pottstown Borough	39
Coatesville City	56
Moorestown Township	54
Paulsboro Borough	58
Swedesboro Borough	43
Pitman Borough	50
Lower Merion Township (Bryn Mawr)	54
Quakertown Borough	35
Philadelphia (52nd Street)	33
Radnor Township (Wayne)	50
Ambler Borough	61
Palmyra Borough	47
Marcus Hook Borough	57
Malvern Borough	45
Narberth Borough	59
Downingtown Borough	42
Haddon Township (Westmont)	38
Merchantville Borough	52
Pennsauken Township	49
Camden City (Federal Street)	42
Sellersville Borough	75
Darby Borough	55
Maple Shade Township	58
Harrison Township (Mullica Hill)	27
Langhorne Borough	52

Newtown Borough	42
Berlin Borough	61
Norwood Borough	67
Hightstown Borough	55
Haddon Heights Borough	58
Hatboro Borough	47
Ridley Park Borough	69
Perkasie Borough	53
Audubon Borough (Merchant St.)	58
Pine Hill Borough	59
Jenkintown Borough	52
Lower Merion Township (Haverford)	75
Riverton Borough	70
Cheltenham Township (Glenside)	55
Yardley Borough	49
Souderton Borough	73
Haverford Township (Oakmont)	59
Morrisville Borough	60
Telford Borough	59
Westville Borough	64
Wenonah Borough	58
Barrington Borough	74
Haverford Township (Brookline)	66
East Lansdowne Borough	60
Laurel Springs Borough	81

Characteristics that reduced the pandemic's impact:

Downtowns with the following characteristics were generally less impacted by the pandemic than their peers.

Development

Recent mixed-use, residential, and retail developments within the downtowns increased diversity as well as resiliency.

Diversity

Downtowns with diverse built environments, demographics, local economies, mix of uses, and transportation options, were less impacted.

People

Diverse and permanent residential populations located within the downtowns provided retailers with customers even as people stayed close to home.

Trails

Existing Circuit Trails connected downtowns with open space and enabled alternative modes of transportation.

Walkability

Historic downtowns with more pedestrian-friendly built environments had greater resiliency.

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Characteristics that exacerbated the pandemic's impact:

Downtowns that lacked the characteristics found to reduce the pandemic's impact, or that were more greatly defined by the following characteristics, were generally more impacted by the pandemic than their peers.

Cars

Auto-oriented downtowns with lower Walk Scores and more cars per household were more impacted by the pandemic.

Colleges

Downtowns that are overly-reliant on these anchor institutions were less resilient during the pandemic.

Goods & Services

As the share of Neighborhood Goods & Services (NGS) retailers increased in a downtown, so did the pandemic's impact.

Transit

The pandemic significantly reduced transit ridership, and this impact had a ripple effect in transit-oriented downtowns.

Vacancy

The pandemic had a greater impact as downtown vacancy rates increased.

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Diverse Downtowns | Princeton, NJ

For the 75 downtowns analyzed, each were assigned a Diversity Score and a Pandemic Impact Score on scales of 1—100, with one being the most diverse and least impacted. The more diverse downtowns were generally less impacted by the pandemic.

Princeton's downtown has one of the largest and most diverse populations, and it is also one of the most walkable downtowns in the region. It has a number of cultural and office uses in the downtown, as well as a healthy mix of retail types. As a result, Princeton was determined to be the most diverse of the downtowns, and it has a Diversity Score of 24.

Princeton's social and economic diversity, and its walkable built environment most likely helped mitigate the pandemic's impact. With a Pandemic Impact Score of 33, Princeton was one of the 10 least impacted downtowns.

24 **Diversity Score**
*Built environment, mix of uses, population, transportation, and types of downtowns*

33 **Pandemic Impact Score**
Visits and trade area pre-pandemic, and during the shut-down and reopening periods

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Downtown Typologies

Nine downtown typologies were identified and the average Pandemic Impact Score was determined for each: *Brewery (45), Circuit (48), Classic (46), College (50), Core (43), Expanding (42), Historic (47), Opportunity (45), and Transit-Oriented (50).*

In general, more typologies equated to a lower Pandemic Impact Score. Princeton is considered to be four typologies: *Brewery, College, Expanding,* and *Historic.* Downtowns considered to be four typologies had an average Pandemic Impact Score of 44.

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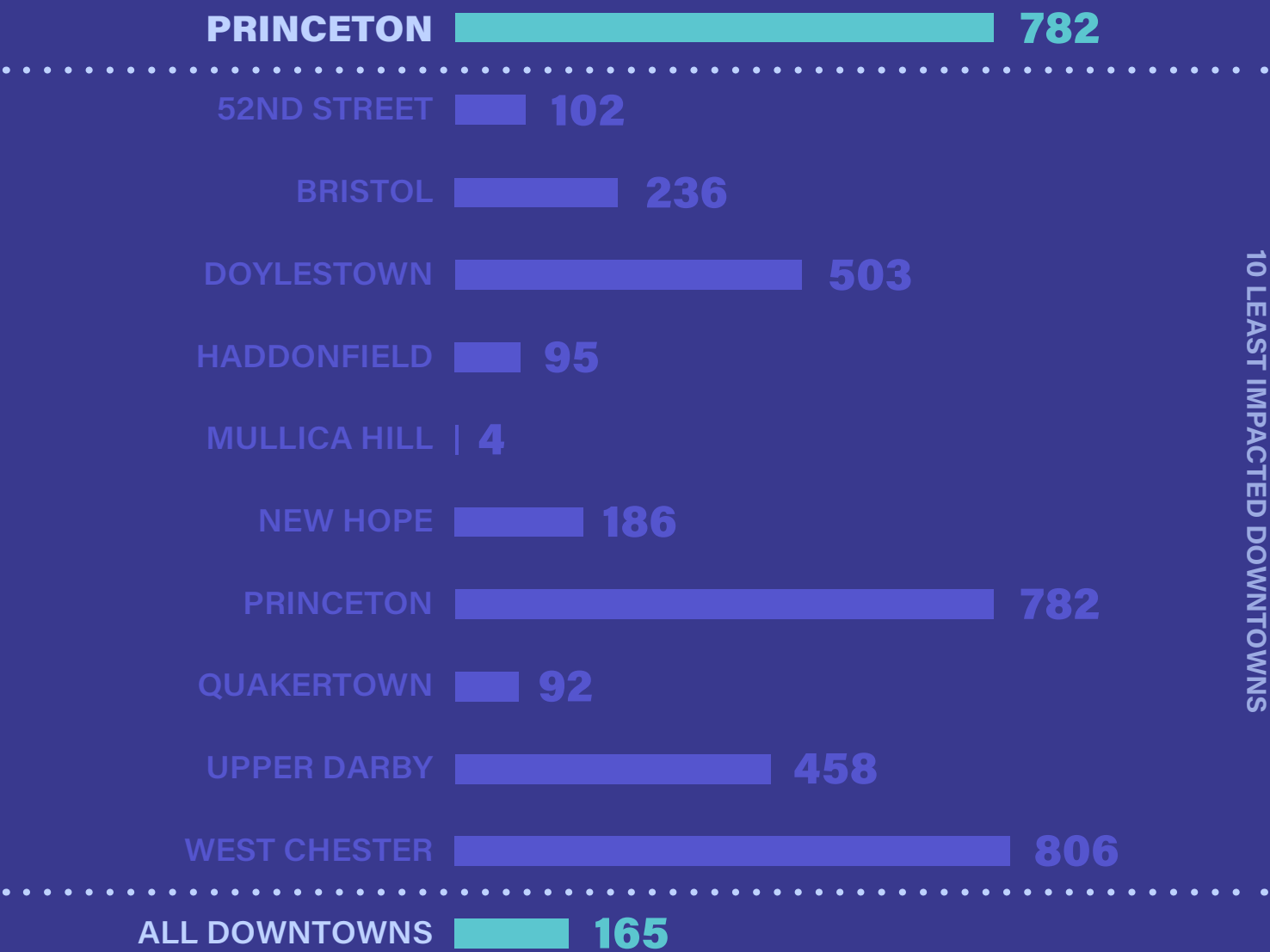| Typology	Score
BREWERY	45
CIRCUIT	48
CLASSIC	46
COLLEGE	50
CORE	43
EXPANDING	42
HISTORIC	47
OPPORTUNITY	45
TRANSIT-ORIENTED	50
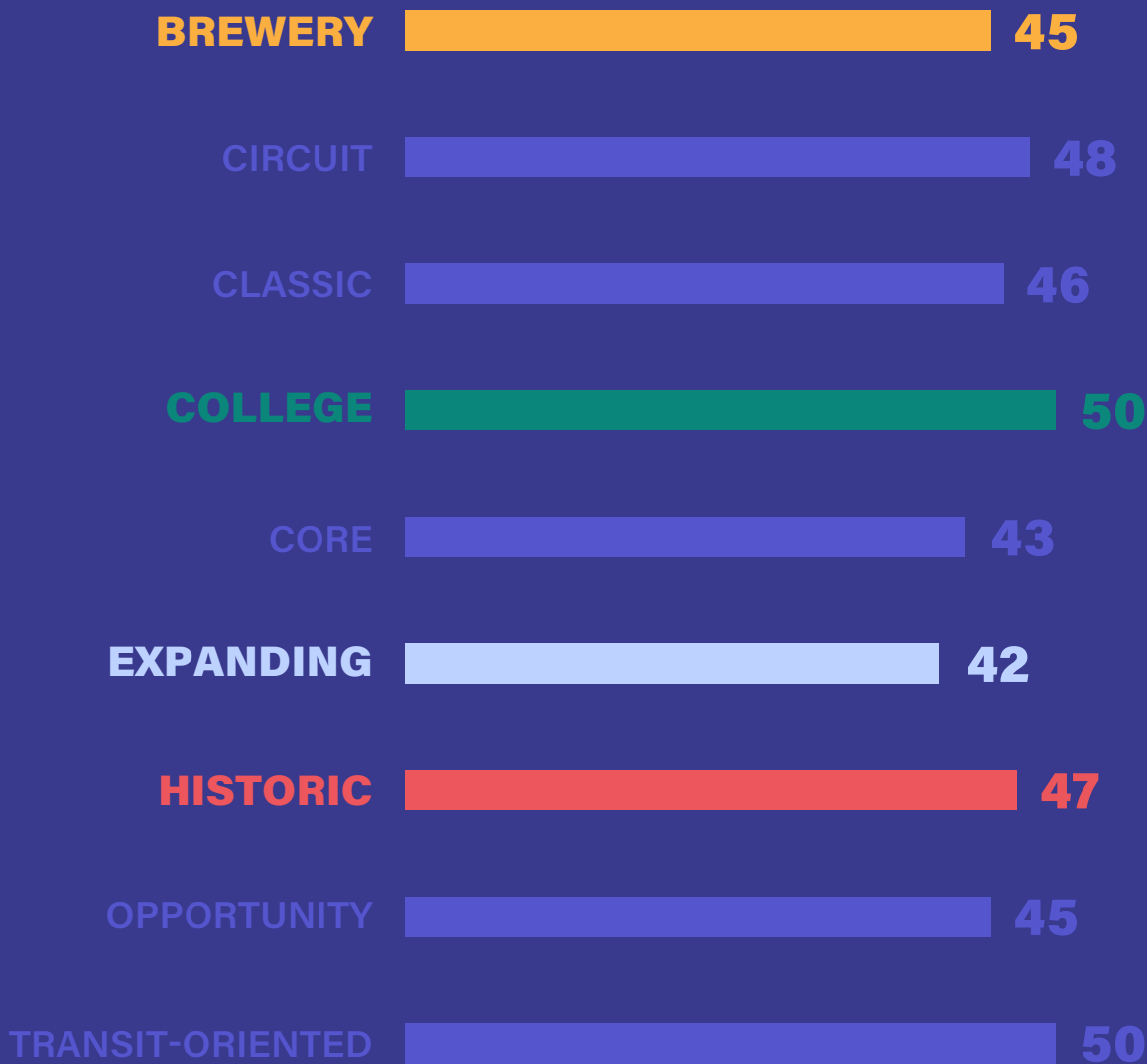
Downtown Population

A negative correlation between the estimated population of the region's downtowns and the Pandemic Impact Score was identified. In other words, the larger the downtown population, the smaller the impact.

In 2019, Princeton's downtown population was estimated to be 782, compared to an average of 165 for all downtowns and 326 for the least impacted downtowns. Princeton has the second largest population of the least impacted downtowns.

Princeton's downtown population is relatively diverse with regards to demographics, with the White, Black, and Hispanic populations accounting for 64%, 11%, and 27% respectively.

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SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

PRINCETON 782

52ND STREET 102

BRISTOL 236

DOYLESTOWN 503

HADDONFIELD 95

MULLICA HILL 4

NEW HOPE 186

PRINCETON 782

QUAKERTOWN 92

UPPER DARBY 458

WEST CHESTER 806

ALL DOWNTOWNS 165

10 LEAST IMPACTED DOWNTOWNS
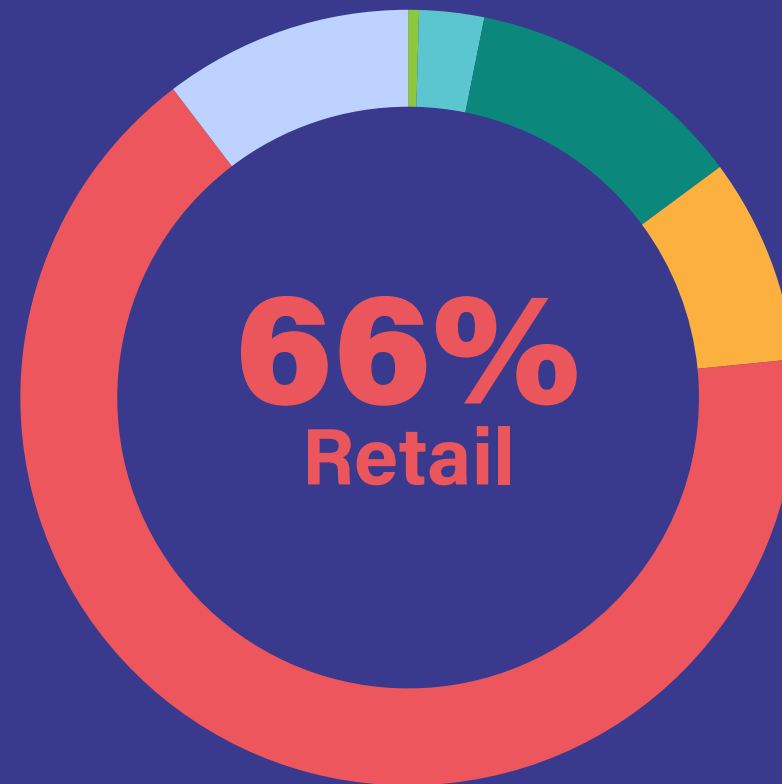
Mix of Uses

Retail Mix:

41%
Food & Beverage (FB)

39%
General Merchandise,
Apparel, Furnishings,
& Other (GAFO)

1%
Hospitality (HOSP)

19%
Neighborhood Goods
& Services (NGS)

66%
Retail

1%
Civic

3%
Cultural

0%
Institutional

12%
Office

9%
Residential

9%
Vacancy

Retail accounts for 66% of the uses in Princeton's downtown. The average was 57% for all downtowns and 60% for the least impacted downtowns.

In the least impacted downtowns, *Food & Beverage* (FB) makes up a much smaller share of retail uses at 30%, while *General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings & Other* (GAFO) is nearly equal at 38%. On average as the share of each of these increased, the Pandemic Impact Score decreased.

Conversely, as the share of *Neighborhood Goods & Services* (NGS) retailers increased so did the Pandemic Impact Score. In the least impacted downtowns, NGS retailers made up 30% of all retail, which is significantly more than in Princeton.

Additionally, as the vacancy rate increased, so did the Pandemic Impact Score.

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Visits to Downtown

Geolocated, deidentified cellphone location data was analyzed to determine the pandemic's impact on visits to the region's downtowns and their trade areas. Visits to Princeton's downtown were as follows:

● Pre-Pandemic

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 2.3%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 13.0%
New Jersey: 85.6%	

● Shutdown | March 13 - June 15, 2020

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 0.1%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 4.5%
New Jersey: 95.4%	

● Reopening | June 16 - October 31, 2020

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 0.3%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 8.1%
New Jersey: 91.6%	

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SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

Map Legend

LEGEND:

VISITOR HOME LOCATION

- ● March-June 2020 Visits
- ● June-October 2020 Visits
- ● Pre-Pandemic Visits
- ● Other Downtowns' Visits
- ● Downtown Location

PA
NY
NJ
MD
DE

N

20 Miles

Visits to Downtown

Pre-pandemic, visitors to Princeton's downtown came from throughout New Jersey, as well as from southeastern Pennsylvania. During the pandemic, the majority of visits came from areas in and around Mercer County.

Between August 2018 and March 2020, 27,233 people visited the downtown, which is significantly more than the average of 8,800 visits for all of the downtowns.

During the shutdown (March 13 - June 15) there were 711 visits, and during the reopening period (June 16 - October 31) there were 1,763 visits to Princeton's downtown.
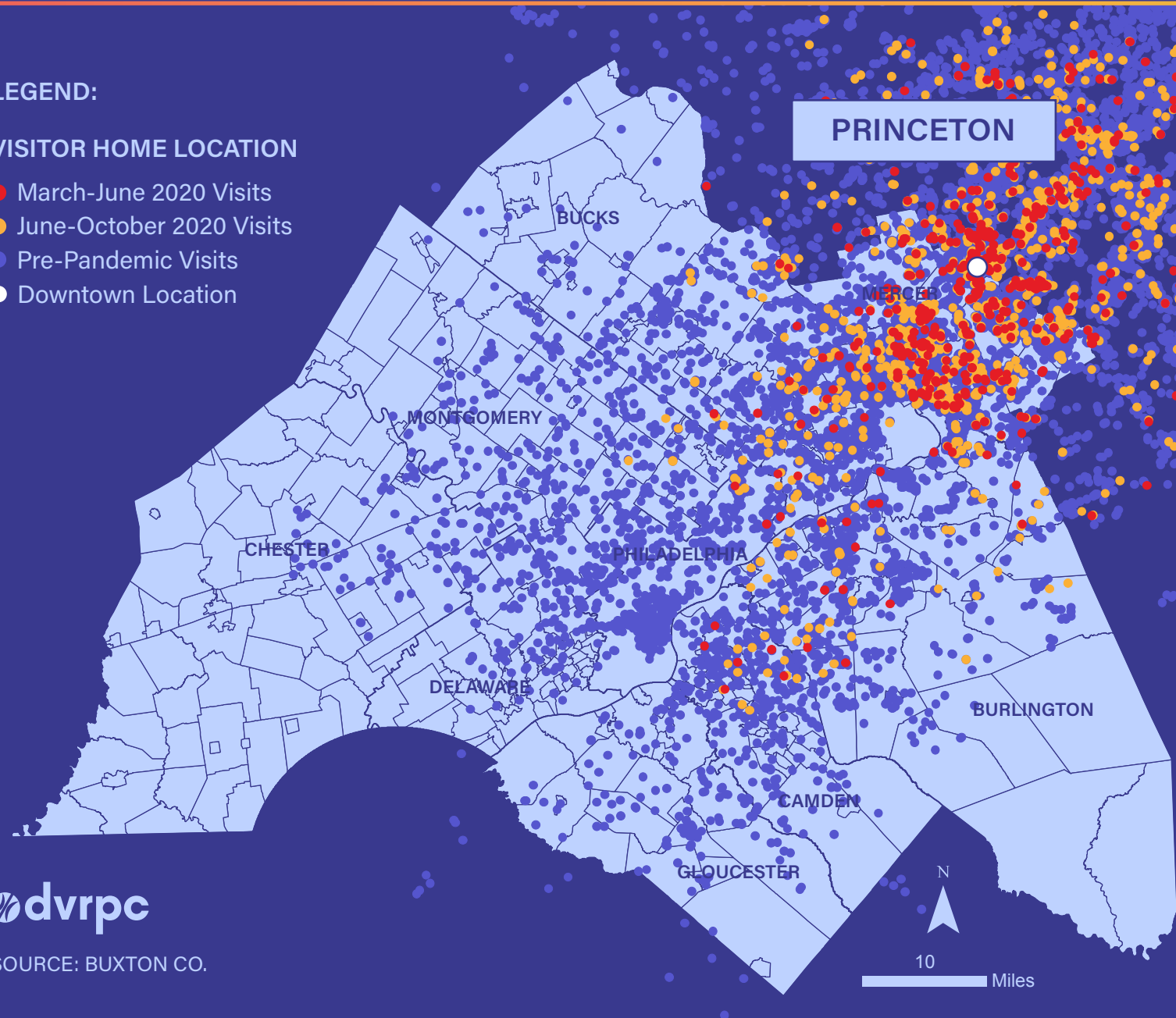
LEGEND:

VISITOR HOME LOCATION

● March-June 2020 Visits
● June-October 2020 Visits
● Pre-Pandemic Visits
○ Downtown Location

PRINCETON

BUCKS

MERCER

MONTGOMERY

CHESTER

PHILADELPHIA

DELAWARE

BURLINGTON

CAMDEN

GLOUCESTER

N

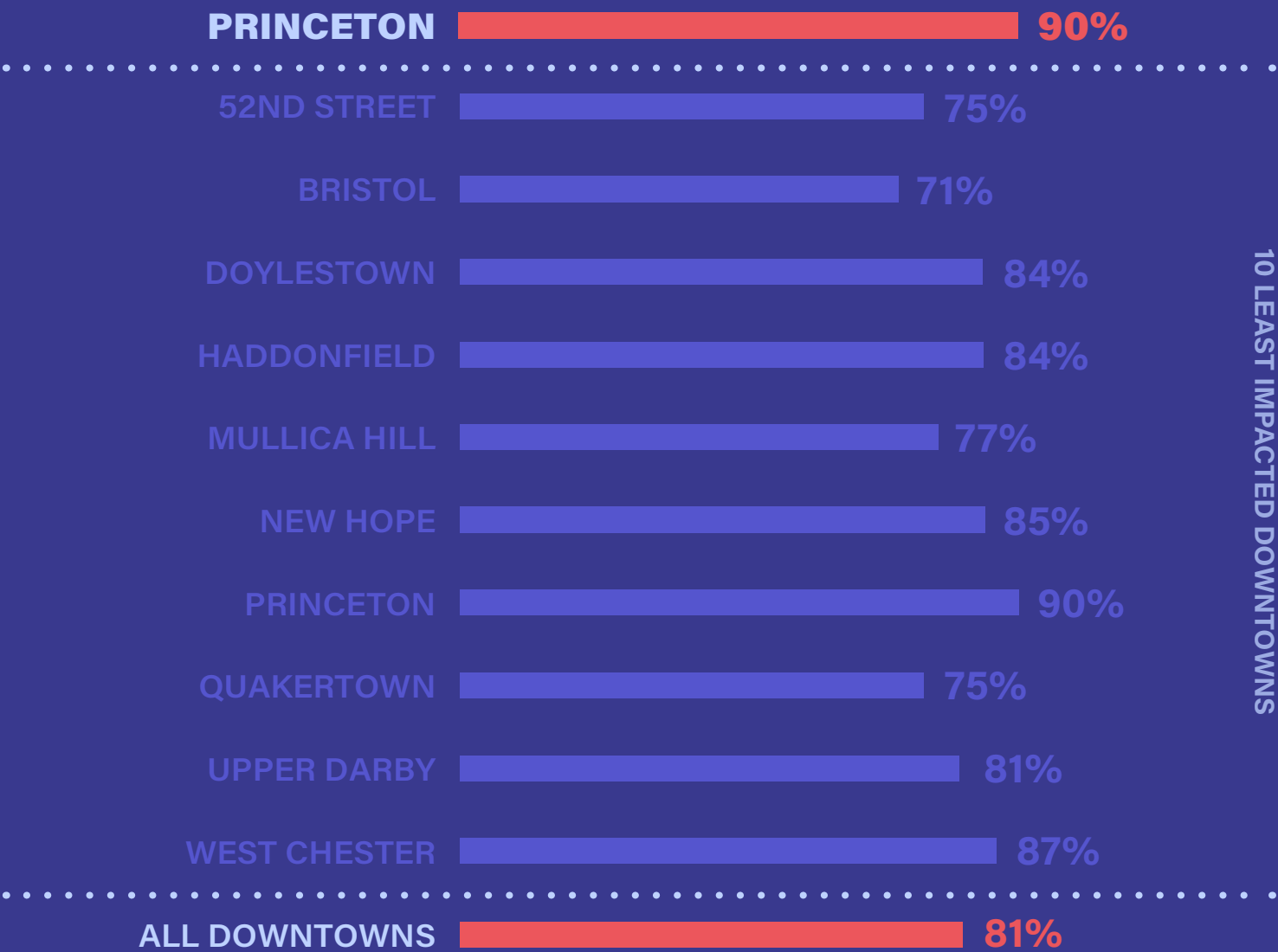10 Miles

Shutdown Impact
March 13 - June 15, 2020

During the economic shutdown, there were 711 visits to Princeton compared to 7,156 visits during the same period in 2019. This equated to a reduction of 90%, which was one of the largest reductions observed.

The average number of visits during the shutdown period was 439 compared to 2,450 visits during the same period in 2019, which equated to an average reduction of 81%.

Gloucester City's downtown had the smallest reduction in visits at 66%, and the average for the least impacted downtowns was 81%.

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SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

PRINCETON — **90%**

52ND STREET	75%
BRISTOL	71%
DOYLESTOWN	84%
HADDONFIELD	84%
MULLICA HILL	77%
NEW HOPE	85%
PRINCETON	90%
QUAKERTOWN	75%
UPPER DARBY	81%
WEST CHESTER	87%

ALL DOWNTOWNS — **81%**

10 LEAST IMPACTED DOWNTOWNS

Reopening Rebound

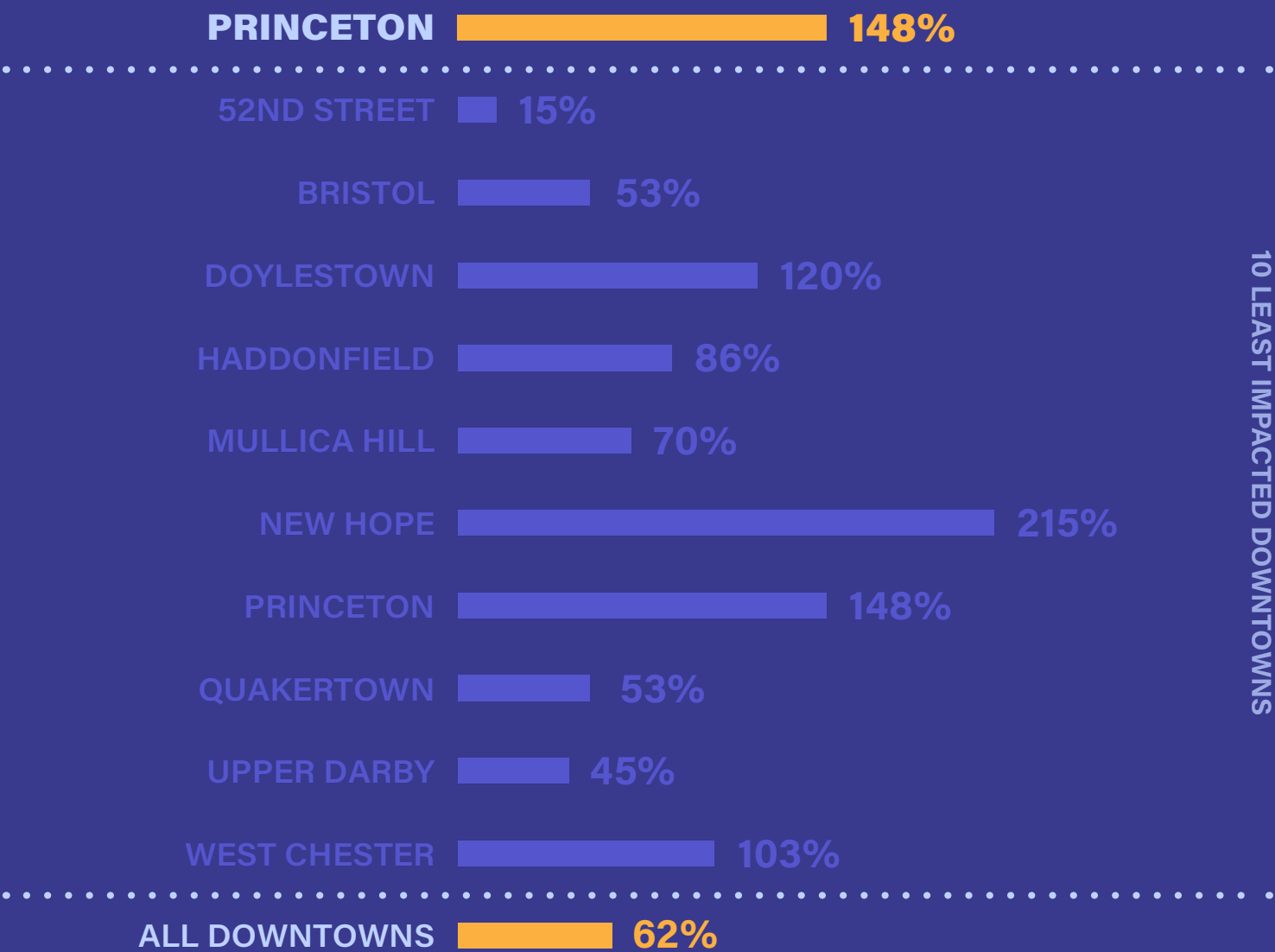## June 16 - October 31, 2020

Visits to Princeton increased by 148% during the reopening period to a total of 1,763 visits. This was 80% fewer than the 8,788 visits that occurred during the same period in 2019.

On average, visits increased by 62% for downtowns, to approximately 700 visits, and by 91% for the least impacted downtowns, to approximately 1,700 visits.

New Hope observed the greatest increase at 215%, with more than 2,800 visits during that time.

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SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

PRINCETON 148%

10 LEAST IMPACTED DOWNTOWNS

52ND STREET	15%
BRISTOL	53%
DOYLESTOWN	120%
HADDONFIELD	86%
MULLICA HILL	70%
NEW HOPE	215%
PRINCETON	148%
QUAKERTOWN	53%
UPPER DARBY	45%
WEST CHESTER	103%

ALL DOWNTOWNS 62%
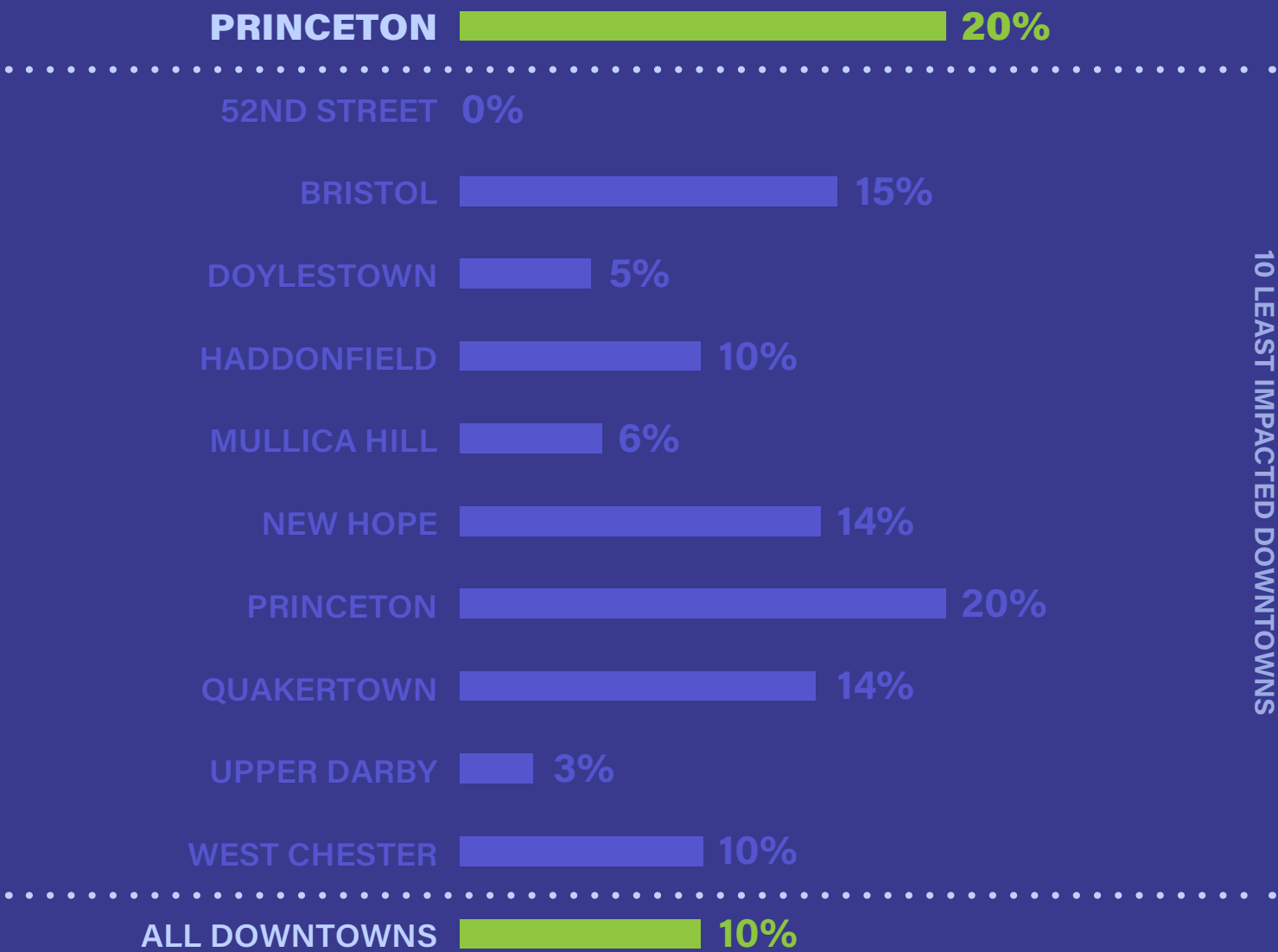
Trade Area Recovery
(Drive Time in Minutes)

Princeton's pre-pandemic trade area was a 41 minute drive time, which shrank by 22% during the shutdown to 32 minutes. The trade area recovered by 20% during the reopening period to 40 minutes.

The average pre-pandemic trade area was 31 minutes, with a 23% reduction during the shutdown down to 24 minutes. The average recovery was 10% for all downtowns up to 27 minutes.

At 69 minutes, New Hope was the only downtown with a trade area that extended beyond an hour, and that was larger during reopening (72 minutes).

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SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

PRINCETON	**20%**
52ND STREET	0%
BRISTOL	15%
DOYLESTOWN	5%
HADDONFIELD	10%
MULLICA HILL	6%
NEW HOPE	14%
PRINCETON	20%
QUAKERTOWN	14%
UPPER DARBY	3%
WEST CHESTER	10%
ALL DOWNTOWNS	**10%**