



FEASIBILITY STUDY – PROPOSED SOMERSET WEST SPECIAL RATING AREA

PERCEPTION SURVEY REPORT

JUNE 2014

This report was prepared for the Somerset West SRA Steering Committee in support of the feasibility study for the proposed Somerset West Special Rating Area by Gene Lohrentz of Geocentric Information Systems.

Disclaimer

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INTRODUCTION

Property owners, business owners and the community in the Somerset West CBD are well aware of problems in the area including incidents of crime and grime, homelessness, aggressive begging, informal car guards and general urban degradation. These problems are of great concern.

As part of evaluating the feasibility and needs for a Special Ratings Area in the Somerset West Central Business District (CBD) and in support of the development of the business plan, the SRA Steering Committee commissioned a perception survey amongst property owners, businesses and people working or visiting the area of the proposed SRA. This report summarises the survey results.

The establishment of an SRA will enable the formation of a statutory body in terms the City of Cape Town SRA By-law. If the SRA application is successful SRA levies will be collected by the local authority from ratepayers in the area and paid over to the SRA management board. Funds raised will be dedicated to supplement municipal services such as security, cleansing and urban management.

Questionnaire and methodology

The perception survey is designed to provide feedback from property owners, businesses and people working or visiting the area on safety and security, social problems and urban management issues of the area. The survey is not intended to provide quantitative statistics but rather indicative trends upon which the needs in the area can be evaluated.

Geocentric collaborates closely with a research agency in respect to questionnaire and sample design and applies internationally accepted best practice in both instances. Each question is reviewed for its suitability before the questionnaires are used in the field. This supports the application of the results to the rest of the SRA establishment process.

Two target group-specific questionnaires were developed. The first group consists of business and property owners while the second group consist of shoppers and visitors using the Somerset West CBD. Similar themes were addressed in each questionnaire, but the angle of questioning was adapted to be appropriate for the identified target group.

Broadly speaking, the following themes were covered in each questionnaire:

- Perceptions about the levels of safety and security
- Perceptions about the cleanliness of the area
- Whether social issues such as vagrancy is a problem in the area
- What are the expectations of both business owner/tenant and shopper (user)
- Predisposition towards the establishment of an Improvement Area

The property owner and/or business owner or tenant survey as well as the shopper or user surveys were conducted by Geocentric. In both instances, a structured questionnaire was used. A combination of face-to-face interviews and self-completion was applied in the data collection phase. A cover letter drafted by the Steering Committee explained the purpose of the survey and a copy of the letter was distributed to every survey respondent. Participants were also asked to rank the importance of the above listed issues at the end of the questionnaire and were also given the opportunity to express general comments and concerns in writing. The survey was conducted by contacting and interviewing property owners and businesses on an individual basis over a period of two weeks in May and June 2014.

Survey results and analysis

Survey participants

Eighty (80) participants completed the full perception survey and 29 respondents completed the user survey. Seventy-four percent (74%) of the participants that completed the full survey are business owners renting the properties they operate and only 15% are business owners owning the property they operate (See Figure 1 and 2). Figure 3 shows the general geographic location of where the surveys were conducted.

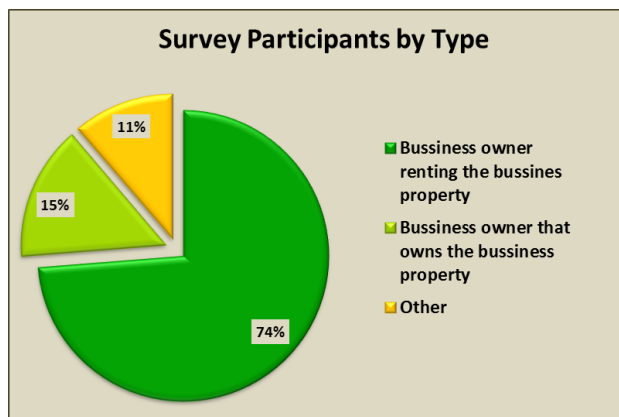


Figure 1 Survey participants by type

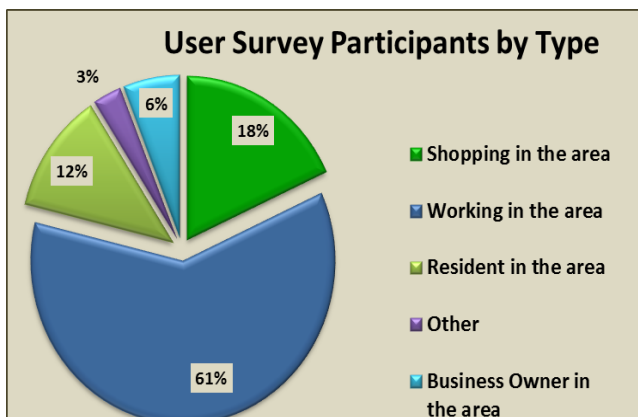


Figure 2 User Survey participants by type

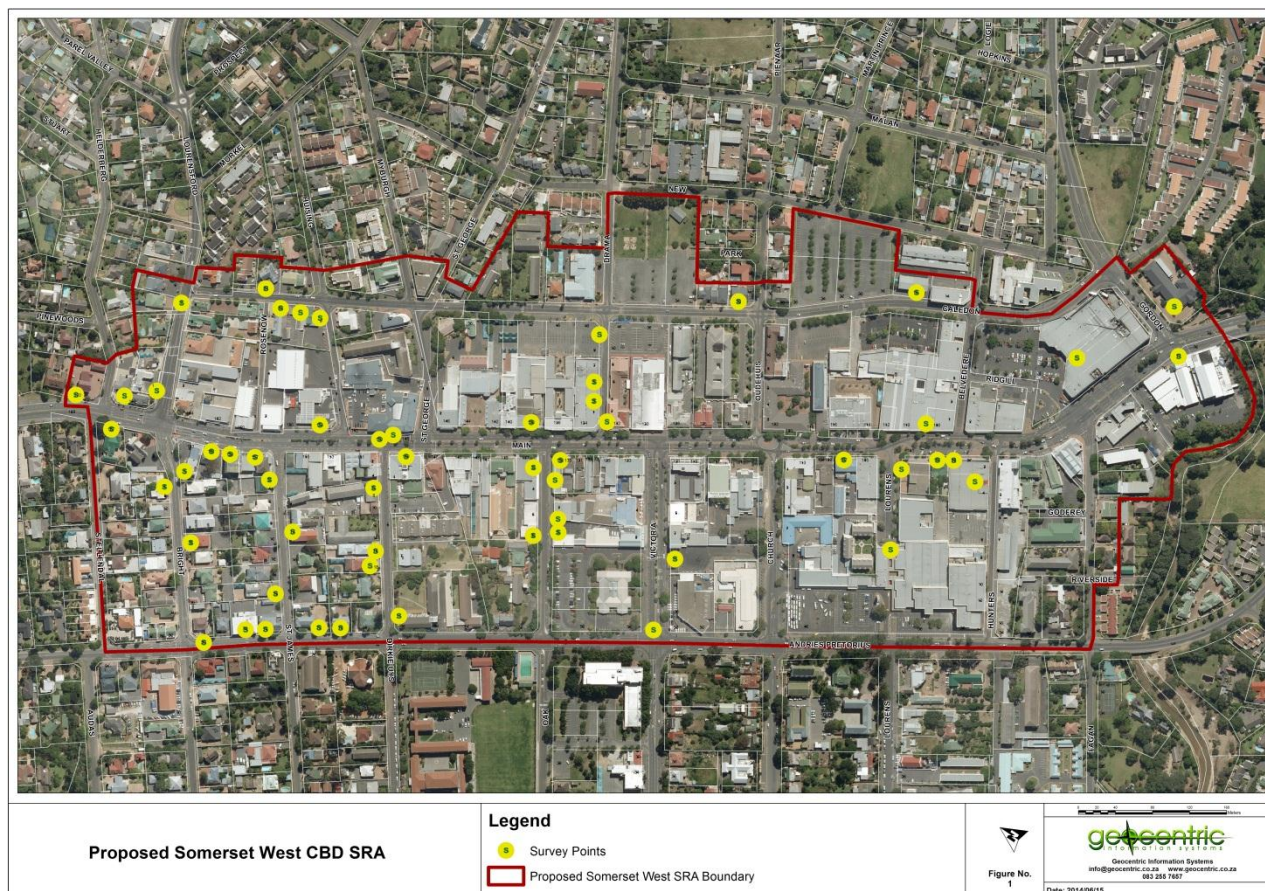


Figure 3 Indicative survey Locations

A significant number of survey respondents have been in the area as business and/or property owners for more than 10 years and therefore their opinion of the area and its current status is quite valuable. As shown in Figure 4, 26% of the participants have been in Somerset West for more than

20 years while another 25% have been there for more than 10 years and a further 28% have been there for more than 4 years.

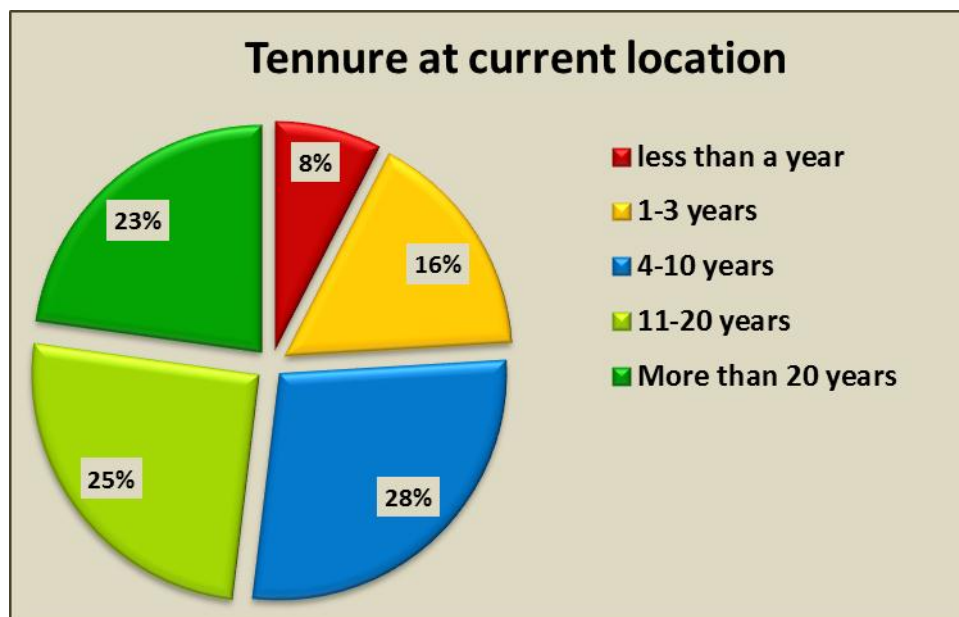


Figure 4 Tennure of respondents in Somerset West

The shopper survey showed that 61% of the participants were working in the area whilst 18% were shoppers. Although user survey respondents were not asked to provide any details of their income or financial status general observations on income and Lifestyle Measurements were recorded. Most participants could be categorised in the middle and higher income groups.

Survey results

Overall perception

The initial section of the survey tested the perception of the overall image of the Somerset West CBD, especially the areas where the surveys were conducted. Figure 5 illustrates how most respondents view the area as not welcoming, unattractive, unsafe and dirty.

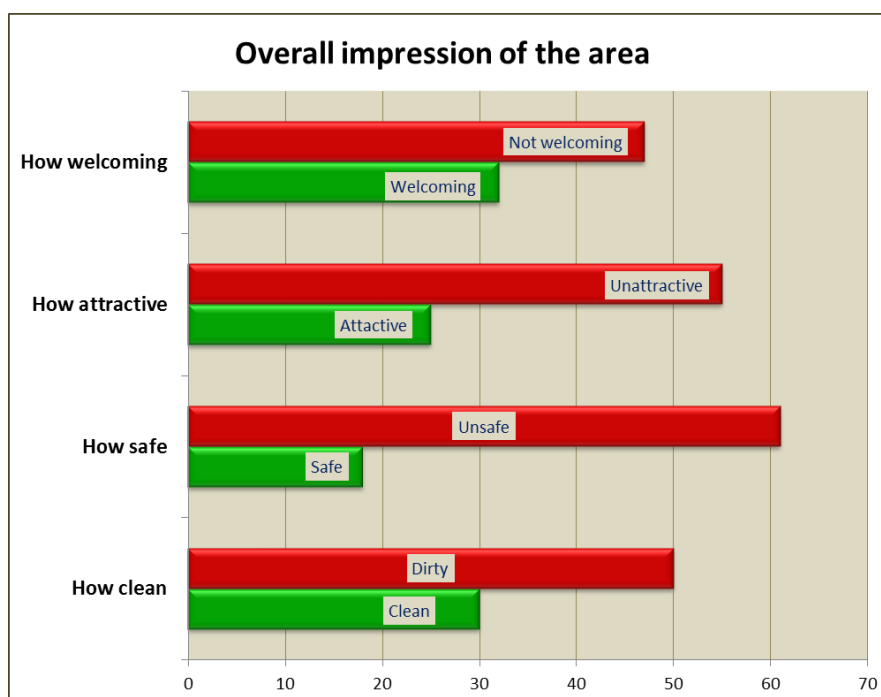


Figure 5 Overall impression of Somerset West Area

The question on the overall impression of the Somerset West area was followed by a measurement of the overall impression of municipal service delivery. Respondents were given a choice to select a range of answers from Excellent to Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor. **When these answers are analysed further, responses of Excellent and Very Good illustrates satisfaction, Good represents "middle of the road" acceptable while Fair and Poor represents dissatisfaction.** On this basis it is evident that up to 41% of the respondents are less satisfied with municipal service delivery. 14% are clearly satisfied (refer to Figure 6).

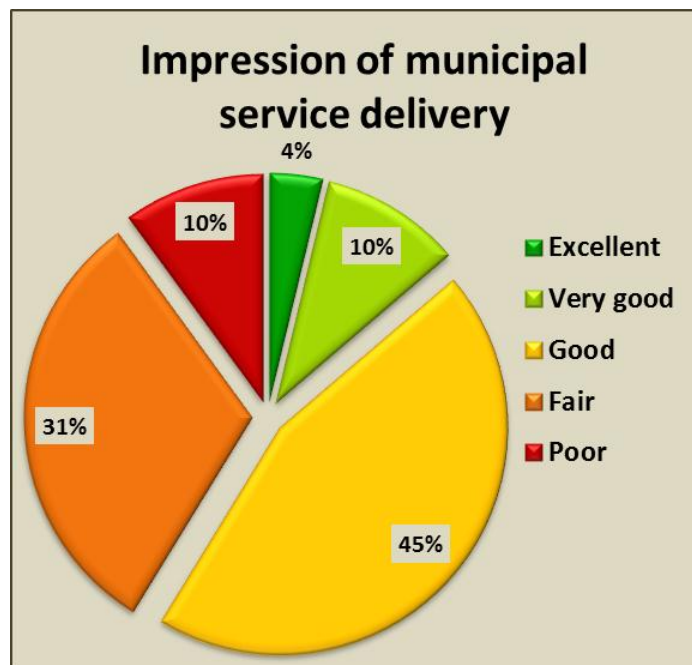


Figure 6 Impression of municipal service delivery

Section 1 - Safety and security

Section 1 focussed on safety and security. Participants were initially asked to rate the overall security situation in the Somerset West CBD. Overall, only 19% rated the overall security situation as good to very good. 28% rated it as fair and 53% rated it as poor (see Figure 7). The analysis illustrates a high level of dissatisfaction with the level of safety and security in the area. The user survey illustrated lower levels of dissatisfaction with the overall safety of the area although clearly no one is highly satisfied with the safety situation.

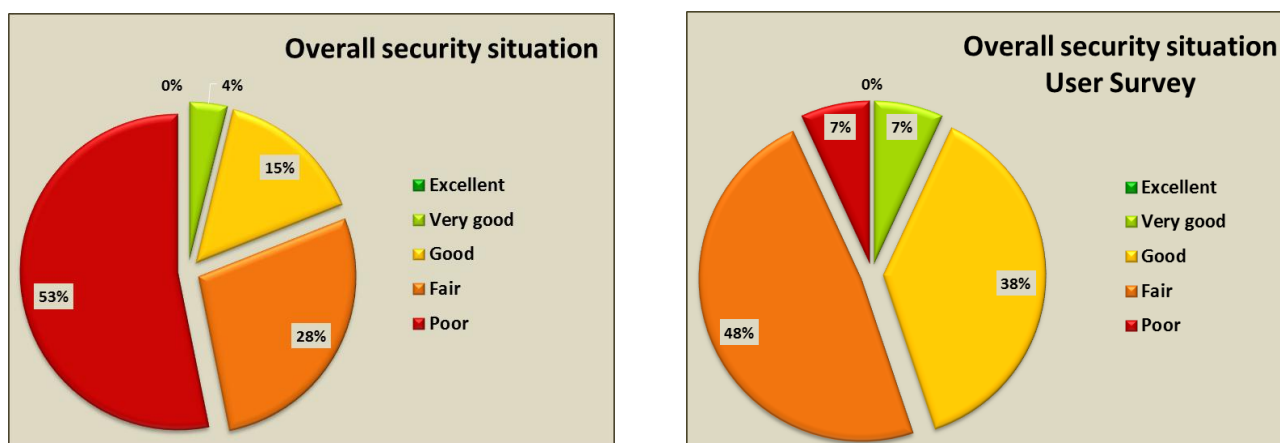


Figure 7 Overall security situation

Questions 6,7,9 and 10 focussed on respondents' experience of crime in the Somerset West CBD. Respondents were asked if they or someone close to them have been a victim of crime. Participants were given the opportunity to answer Yes or No. Seventy-eight (78) respondents answered the question. 57 Participants or 73% answered "Yes". 45% of the user survey participants answered "Yes".

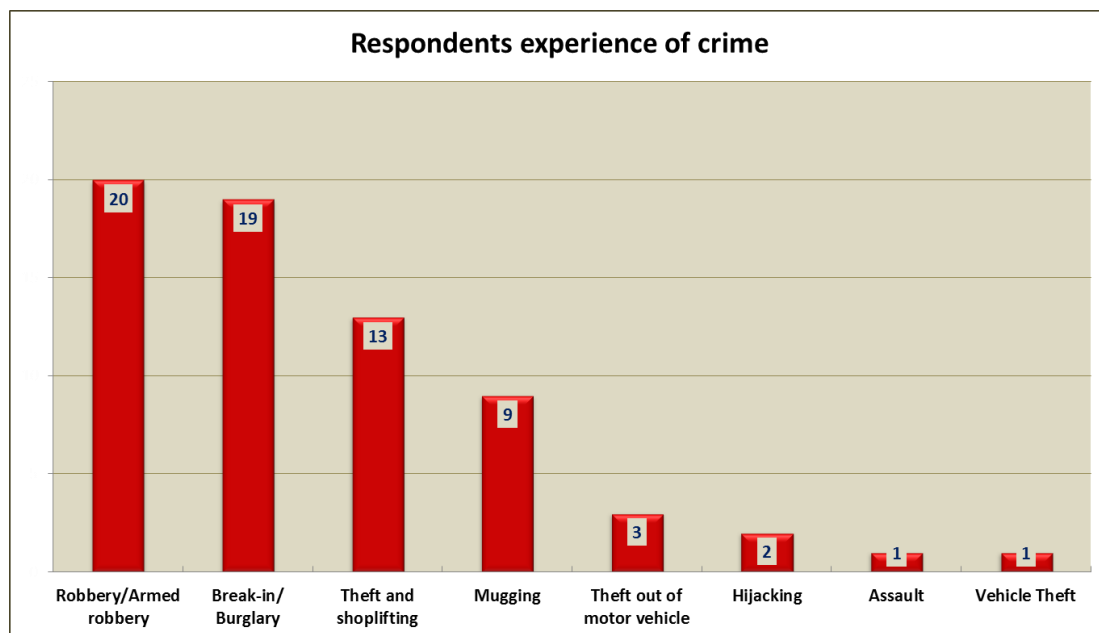


Figure 8 Experience of crime

Figure 8 illustrates the responses of the participants who answered “Yes”. Theft, robbery and burglaries are mentioned more often and indicate that contact crimes and property related crime occur most frequently. 57% of the respondents indicated that the crimes took place between 08:00 and 16:00, and 43% indicated between 16:00 and 24:00 illustrating a tendency for crimes to be committed during the day and/or early evening.

Beyond their personal experiences participants were asked to identify the types of crime that occur most frequently in their area and were provided with a list of typical criminal activities. Participants were also given the opportunity to specify any activity not listed.

Figure 9 illustrates the various criminal activities highlighted in the questionnaire and the frequency that each activity was listed by the participants. Although these figures cannot be regarded as accurate crime statistics or empirical evidence of crime, it illustrates that theft from property, theft from motor vehicles, shoplifting and snatching of belongings occurs most often in the area.

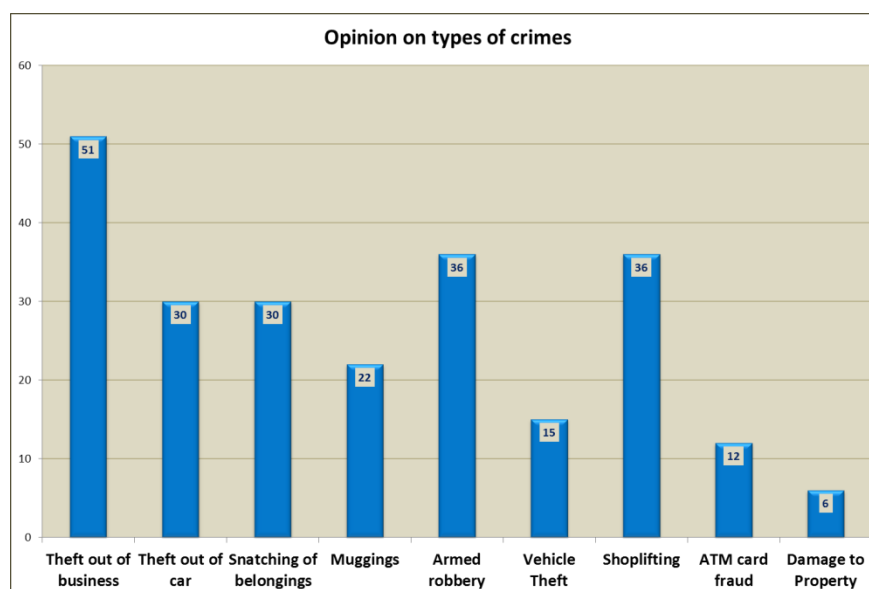


Figure 9 - Number of times that participants listed typical criminal activities

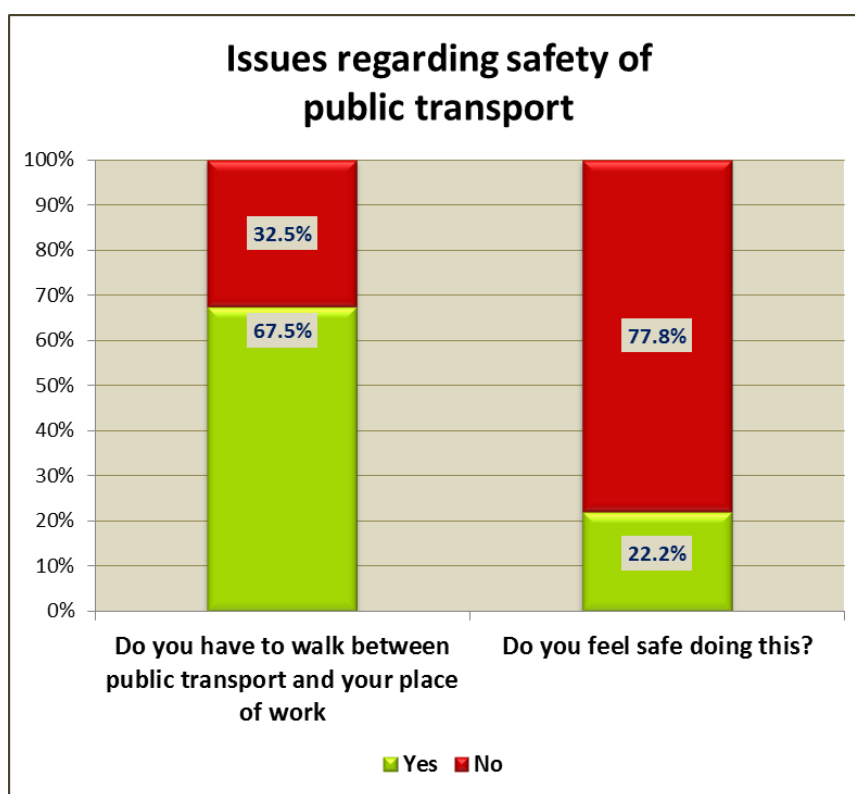
Participants were also asked to identify the location where most crimes occur. Table 1 lists the various locations and the frequency these were listed as locations of criminal activity.

Table 1 Listed criminal activity locations

Location	Frequency	Location	Frequency
Main Road	37	Parking lots	3
Shopping Centres	32	St James Street	2
All Over	8	Belvedere Street	1
Andries Pretorius Street	5	Bus Stop	1
Oudehuis Road	5	Church Street	1
Bright Road	4	Drama Street	1
Caledon Street	4	Fagon Street	1
Close to taxi rank	4	Gordon Road	1
Dirkie Uys	4	Lourensford Road	1
Victoria Road	4	Near to Library	1
Lourens Road	3	Stellendal Road	1

Participants further indicated that crimes take place at various hours of the day but most indicated that they perceive crime to take place during the day and early evenings from 08:00 until 24:00.

Questions 11 focussed on the use of public transport, especially busses and taxis in the case of the Somerset West CBD.

**Figure 10 Perception of safety of public transport**

It is accepted that not all the respondents utilise public transport. Respondents who do utilise public transport were asked to indicate whether they feel that the taxis and busses are safe to use. A number of participants indicated that they have to walk between their place of work and available public transport. 78% of these participants did not feel safe doing so (See Figure 10).

In the user survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they make use of public transport. 55% indicated that they use public transport. 40% indicated that they don't feel safe using public transport. It would seem that in general public transport seems safe to some and unsafe to others but most participants indicated that the area between their point of work and the public transport nodes is perceived to be less safe. This underlines the perception of an unsafe public environment.

Participants were asked to express their opinion regarding the effectiveness of current policing efforts. 44% indicated that current efforts are poor. Only 24% has the opinion that the local SAPS service is good. This is illustrated in the graph shown in Figure 11.

Some of the comments listed regarding the opinion on SAPS effectiveness (ineffectiveness) include:

- Difficult conditions in the SAP removing the vagrants and them continuously returning.
- Not interested and lazy
- Police are as corrupt as the thieves
- Police poorly. We see security company, not police
- Poor members of SAPD
- Poor service of SAPS
- Response times
- They catch the criminal and a few days later they are out again

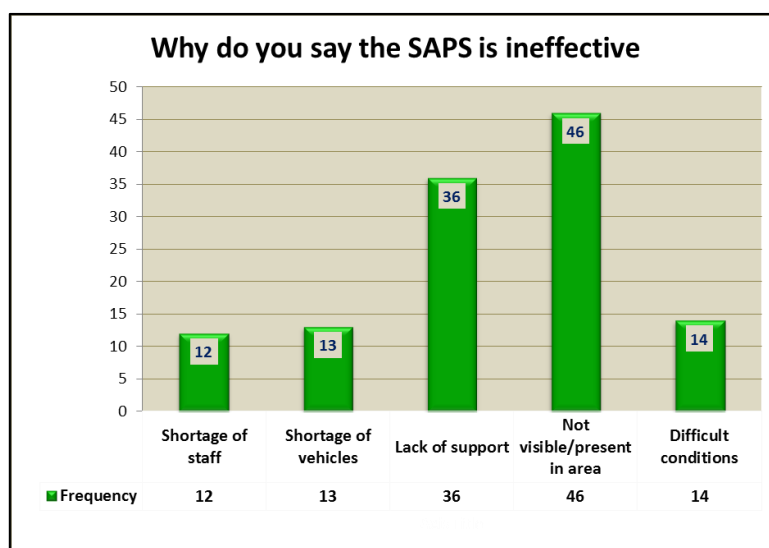
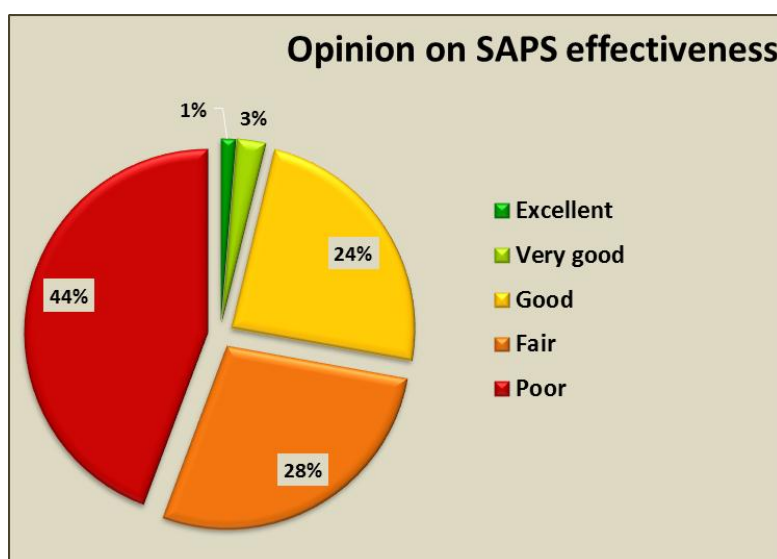


Figure 11 Opinion on SAPS effectiveness

As illustrated in Figure 11 participants indicated that the lack of visibility and presence of the SAPS in the area is the single biggest factor for their perception of SAPS ineffectiveness.

The last part of the section on safety and security dealt with the actions by property owners or businesses to ensure their own security. Participants were asked to indicate if they have private security such as a personal alarm system and/or armed response.

95% of the participants indicated that they have some form of safety and security in place (See Figure 12). 63% of respondents indicated that they would prefer any additional security services to be 24 hours per day while 25% indicated that they would prefer additional security services from 07:00 in the morning until 19:00 at night.

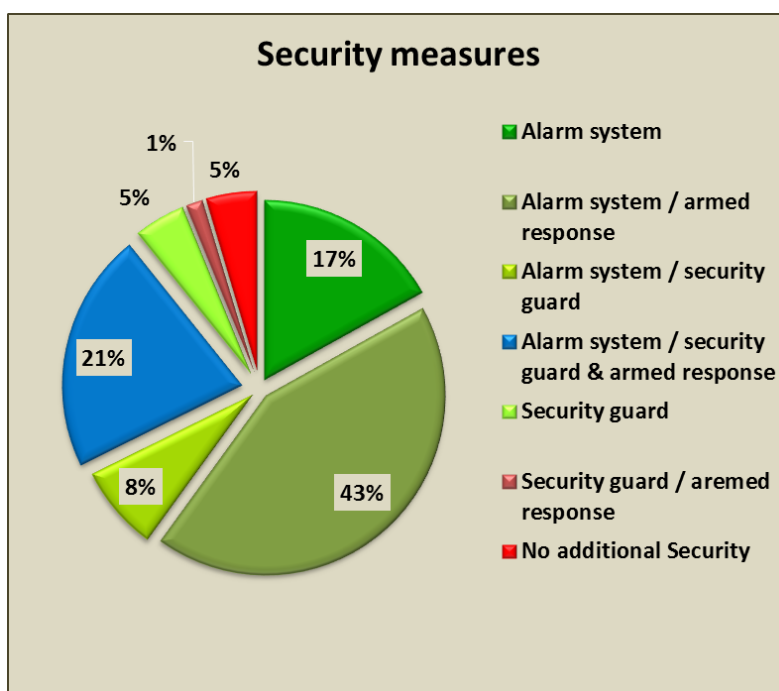


Figure 12 Personal security measures

It would seem that the overall security in the Somerset West area is dominated by property related and personal crime and that many of the problems occur during the day and early evening. The retailers and businesses are more vulnerable to crime related to robbery, shoplifting and snatching of handbags etc. which coincides with activities during business hours.

Section 2 - Litter and cleanliness

Section two of the survey asked participants for their opinion on litter and cleanliness. The opinion of people regarding litter and cleanliness can be very subjective and difficult to measure. The responses should be regarded as observations by the participants although it can be argued that the responses are based on people's desire for their area compared to the current situation. Overall, most participants regard the general state of cleanliness as fair (34%) to good (34%) while only 7% regarded it as good to excellent. This illustrates a substantial measure of dissatisfaction with current circumstances. Survey respondents participating in the user survey was more satisfied with the overall cleanliness (See Figure 13).

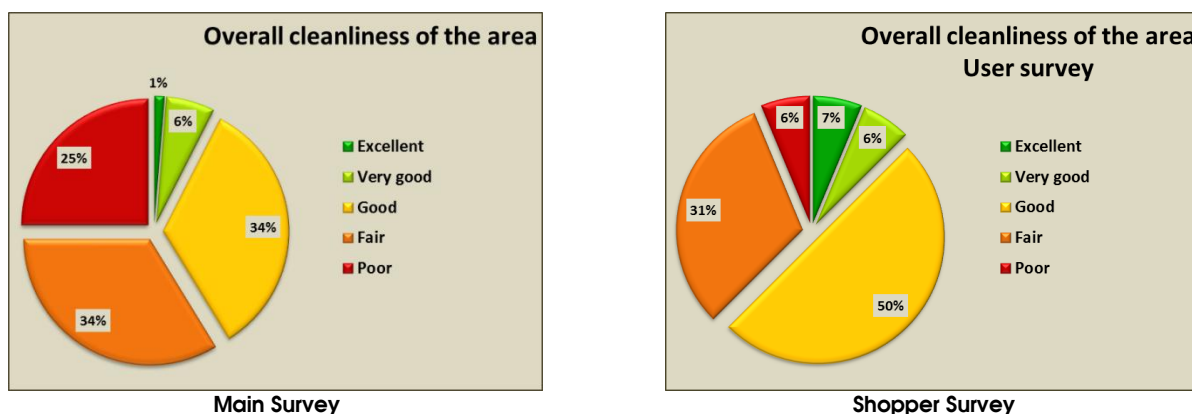


Figure 13 Overall opinion of cleanliness of the area

Figures 14 and 15 illustrate a summary of the opinions regarding litter and cleanliness. Litter in the public areas seem to be a general problem according to the survey participants. There seem to be sufficient public litter bins and it would seem that general refuse removal does not present a problem in the area.

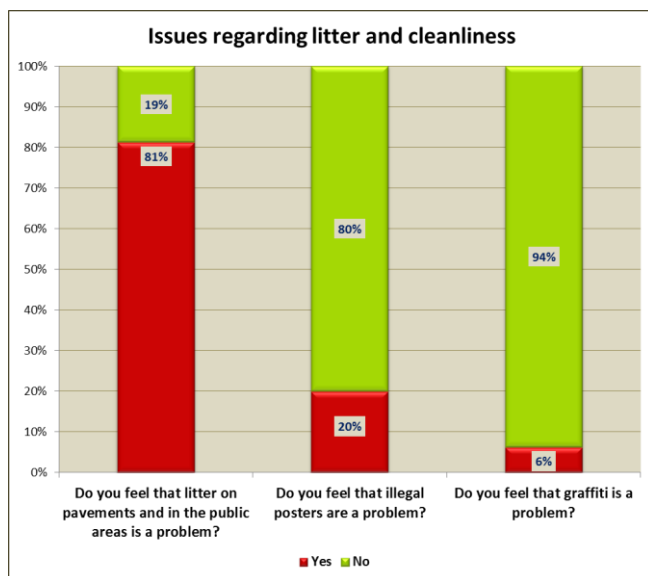


Figure 14 Opinion on litter and cleanliness

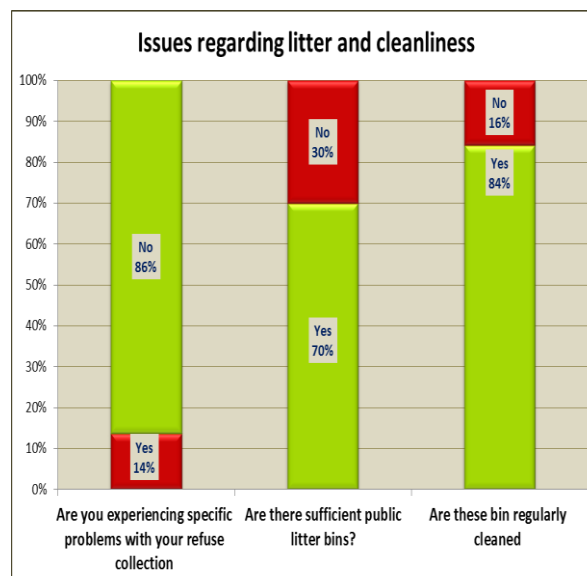


Figure 15 Opinion on litter and cleanliness

Figures 16 to 21 illustrate issues of littering in the public areas which seems to occur infrequently in the area. 81% of the survey respondents indicated that litter on pavements and in public places is a problem and it seems to be problematic in most areas. The photographic survey found litter to occur less frequently and it was bound to specific areas and not generally a problem.



Figure 16 Litter on sidewalks and in street



Figure 17 Litter on sidewalk

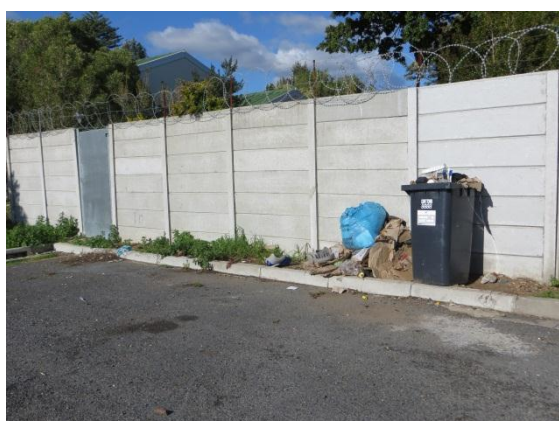


Figure 18 Litter left by vagrants on sidewalks



Figure 19 Litter in a parking area



Figure 20 Litter next to green bins



Figure 21 Full litter bins

Only 6% of survey participants indicated that there is a problem with graffiti in the Somerset West area and only 20% regarded illegal posters and advertising as a problem. The photographic survey found numerous incidents of graffiti and illegal public posters in the area as illustrated in Figures 22 to 25. Most of the graffiti can be categorised as “tagging” and most often it defaces public infrastructure.



Figure 22 Graffiti on a building



Figure 23 Graffiti



Figure 24 Illegal Posters on public infrastructure



Figure 25 Illegal Posters on public infrastructure

Table 2 lists the places and the frequency that they were mentioned as locations of littering.

Table 2 Where is litter a problem

Location	Count	Location	Count
Main Road	16	KFC area	2
Close to taxi rank	15	Andries Pretorius Street	1
Parking lots	7	Dirkie Uys	1

Location	Count	Location	Count
Shopping Centres	6	Victoria Road	1
All Over	6	Drama Street	1
Caledon Street	6	Gordon Road	1
Church Street	6	Lourensford Road	1
Post Office	5	Near to Library	1
Lourens Road	3		

Two specific cleaning issues were surveyed separately. This relates to illegal dumping and bin picking.

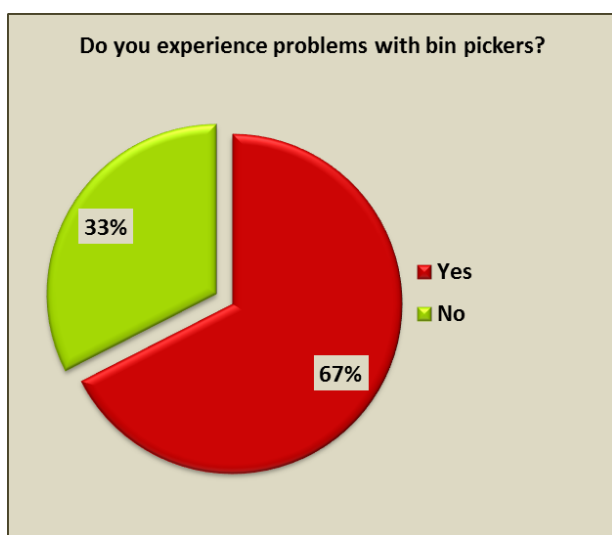


Figure 26 Problems with bin picking?

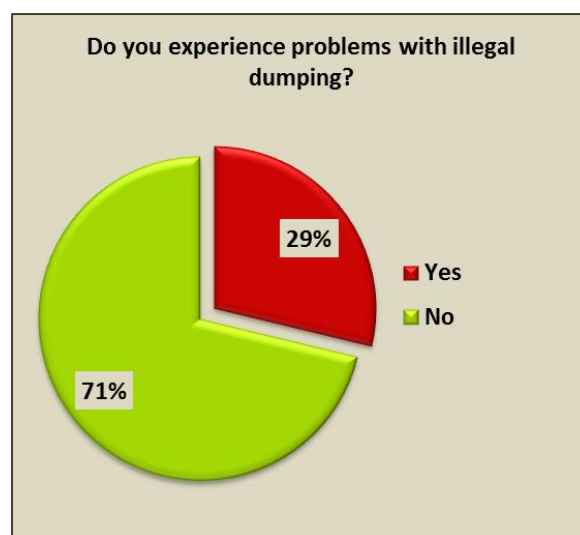


Figure 27 Perception on illegal dumping

Only 29% of respondents highlighted illegal dumping as an issue (Figure 27). Most of the participants that indicated that this is a problem also indicated where the most illegal dumping takes place. Vacant land areas, side streets and the station area are frequently mentioned as locations for illegal dumping. General household waste and packaging material are the most common types of waste illegally dumped. The photographic survey found very little if any evidence of illegal dumping.

Bin picking is mostly associated with the presence of homeless and unemployed people that frequent the area, especially on refuse collection days, to find food and recyclable materials from refuse bins. Sadly, this practice also results in additional littering when bin pickers sort the waste on sidewalks leaving the area littered and dirty. Significant numbers of homeless people and bin pickers were found in the area during the photographic survey and support the claim of 67% of the respondents who indicated problems associated with bin picking.



Figure 28 Bin pickers open litter bins to sort waste on sidewalks

The need for waste recycling clearly exists in the area. 73% of all participants indicated that there is a need for recycling. Figure 29 illustrates the types of recycling that respondents indicated as important and the frequency that it was listed.

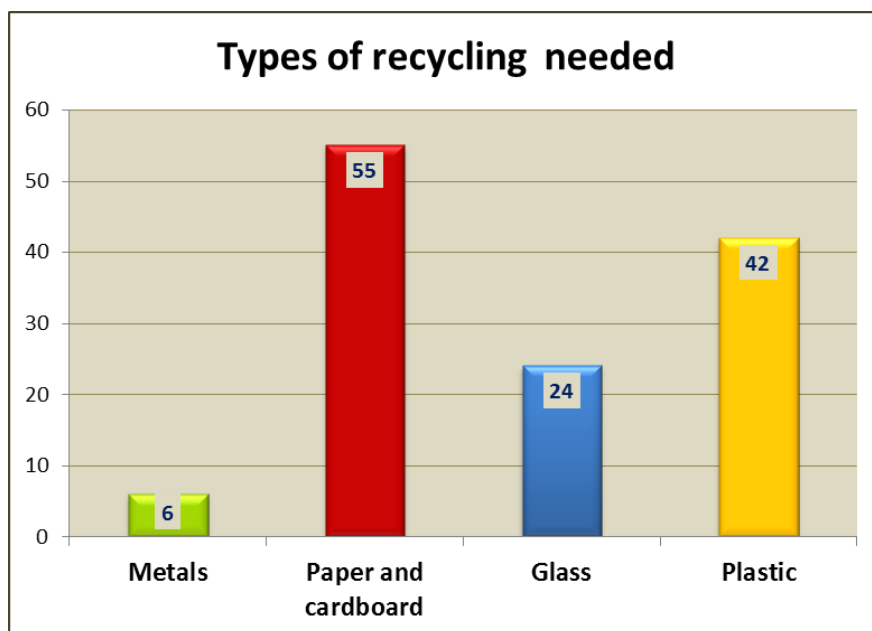


Figure 29 Types of recycling listed

Section 3 - Lighting and traffic

The third section of the survey sought the opinion of participants regarding the lighting of streets and pavements and the standards of traffic signs and road markings. Seventy-one percent (71%) of the participants regarded the street lighting as insufficient.

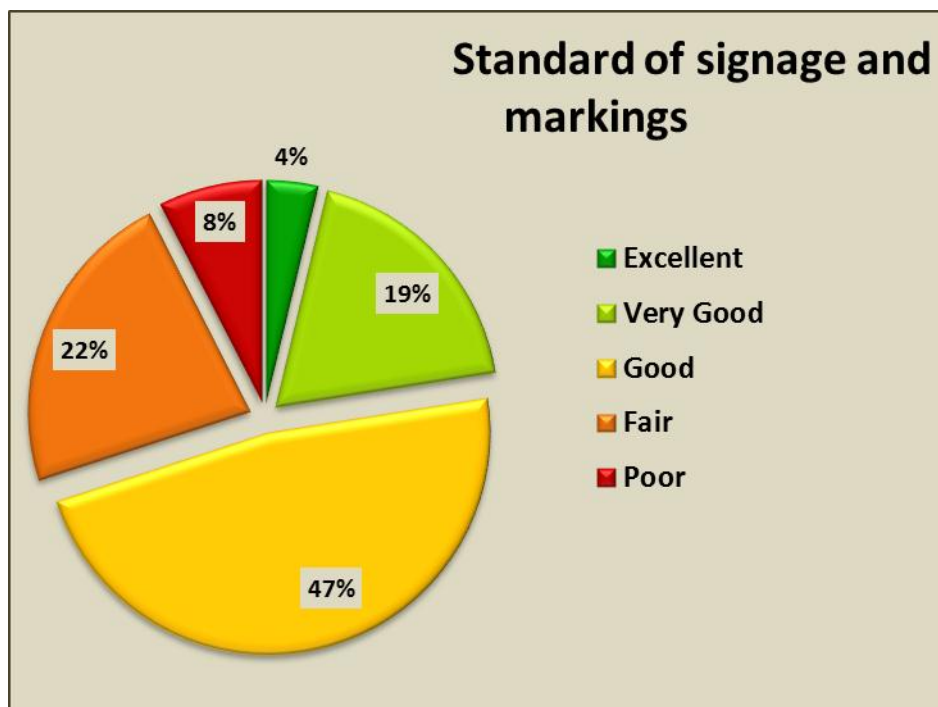


Figure 30 Standard of signage and markings

Only 70% of the participants regarded the standard of street signage and markings as good to excellent while 30% regarded it as of a fair to poor standard (See Figure 30). The photographic survey found numerous examples of poor public signage and poorly maintained signage infrastructure as shown in Figures 31-34.



Figure 31 Bent and disorientated signage



Figure 32 Bent and disorientated signage



Figure 33 Defaced signage



Figure 34 Defaced signage

Section 4 - The public environment

The forth section of the survey collected opinions regarding the public environment, especially the participants' opinion regarding the maintenance and safety of pavements and the general state of public spaces and other public amenities. Participants were asked to provide an overall rating of the public environment. As illustrated in Figure 35, 57% of the participants rated the overall quality of the public environment as good to excellent.

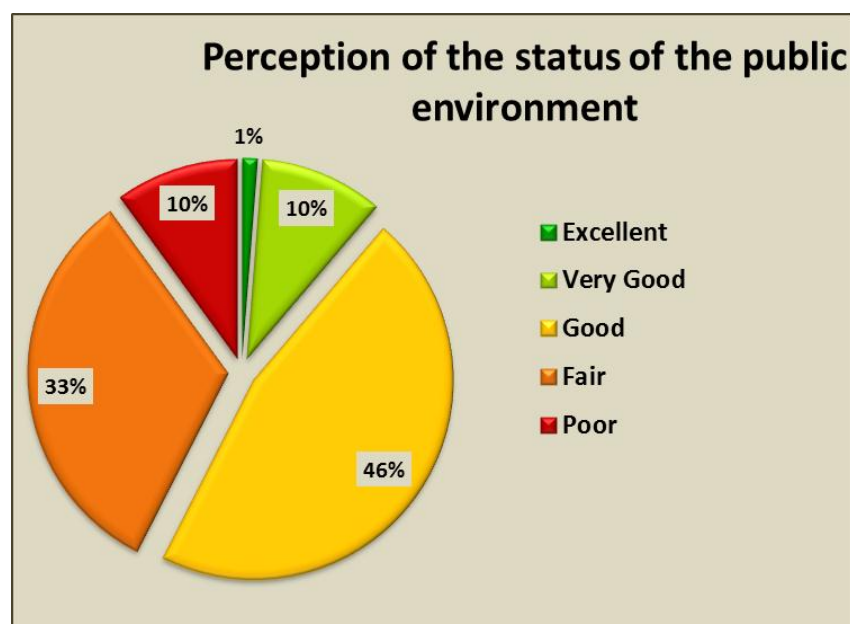


Figure 35 Rating of the overall public environment

In general the public areas in Somerset West are well maintained and fairly clean. However general disrepair of landscaping and sidewalks is visible in many areas. There are many public areas that offer attractive locations for the workers and visitors of the area but signs of general degradation are visible in many areas. This includes bent bollards, unplanted tree wells, lack of public seating and sidewalks with unpaved sections. Figures 36 to 43 illustrate the findings of the photographic survey. The photo results support the perception of some of the respondents. It can be noted that the sidewalks and other areas are considered good in terms of surface and safety.



Figure 36 Poor sidewalks in isolated locations



Figure 37 Poor sidewalk surface



Figure 38 Damaged public infrastructure



Figure 39 Street light poles with no electrical covers

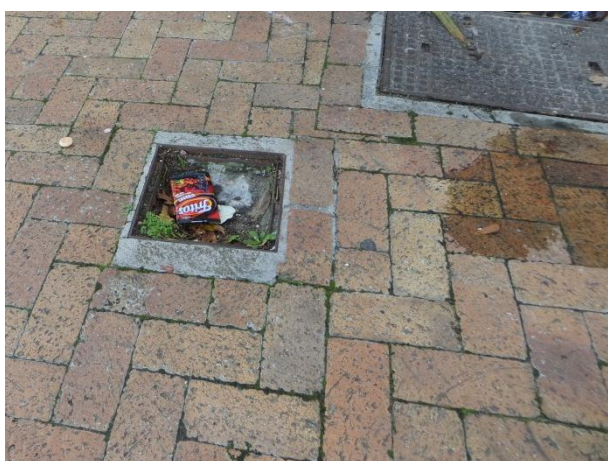


Figure 40 Open manhole on sidewalk



Figure 41 Damaged public infrastructure



Figure 42 Unmaintained tree wells



Figure 43 Unmaintained tree wells

In general, some parts of the public environment can be described as “unmaintained” with some elements suffering from neglect and general deterioration.

Participants were also questioned about informal trade activities and how it contributes to the economy of the Somerset West CBD. Respondents were offered a list of statements regarding informal trade and informal trade management. Table 3 lists the statements and shows the percentage of respondents that agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Table 3 Opinions regarding informal trade

Statements on informal trade. Do you agree or disagree?	Agree	Disagree
Informal trade is important as it contributes to the local economy	67%	33%
It needs more support	75%	25%
Informal trade is problematic as it impact negatively on formal economy	42%	58%
Support and better regulation should go hand in hand	96%	4%
Informal trading should take place in specially demarcated areas	87%	13%

Informal trade take place in many areas of the CBD and in some places at fairly high density. It would seem that better regulation and trading areas that are well managed would support this industry sector. The regulation of informal trade is a priority agreed upon by most respondents (see Table 3 and Figures 44 to 47).



Figure 44 Informal traders on the side walk in an area that does not permit trading.



Figure 45 Lack of management and control of informal trade leads to an offering that often blocks the sidewalks and detracts from more organised trading.



Figure 46 Lack of management and control of informal trade leads to an offering that often blocks the sidewalks and detracts from more organised trading.



Figure 47 Lack of management and control of informal trade leads to the degrading of public infrastructure such as trees now used for anchors and detracts from more organised trading.

Section 5 - Social environment

Social issues

The fifth section of the detailed survey focussed on the social environment. Most areas experience a level of homelessness with vagrants using the opportunities to beg for food and money. Homeless people often utilise **public areas** such as parks and alleyways for shelter and congregate on areas of potential income such as parking areas, traffic signals and shopping malls. Homelessness seems to be a problem everywhere in the area. This becomes more evident in the fact that 81% of participants perceive homelessness as a problem. If this is considered along with the fact that Somerset West has many public open areas and places where homeless people can congregate and more opportunities for begging, this perception is quite valid. Figure 48 illustrates this difference in opinion clearly.

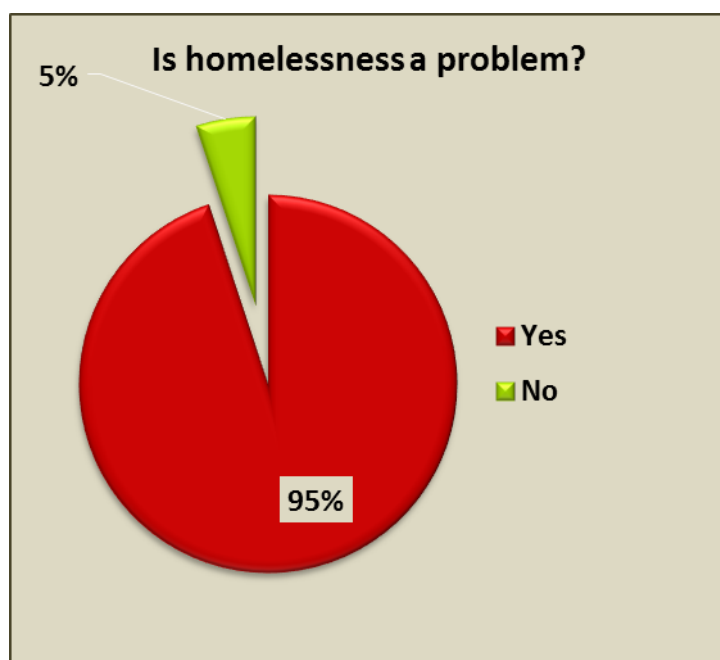


Figure 48 Perception of homelessness in the Somerset West area

Participants were asked to identify the issues associated with homeless people in the area. The most frequently identified issues in the area in order of priority is loitering, sleeping in the area, begging, bin picking, alcohol and drug abuse, and theft as shown in Figure 49 below.

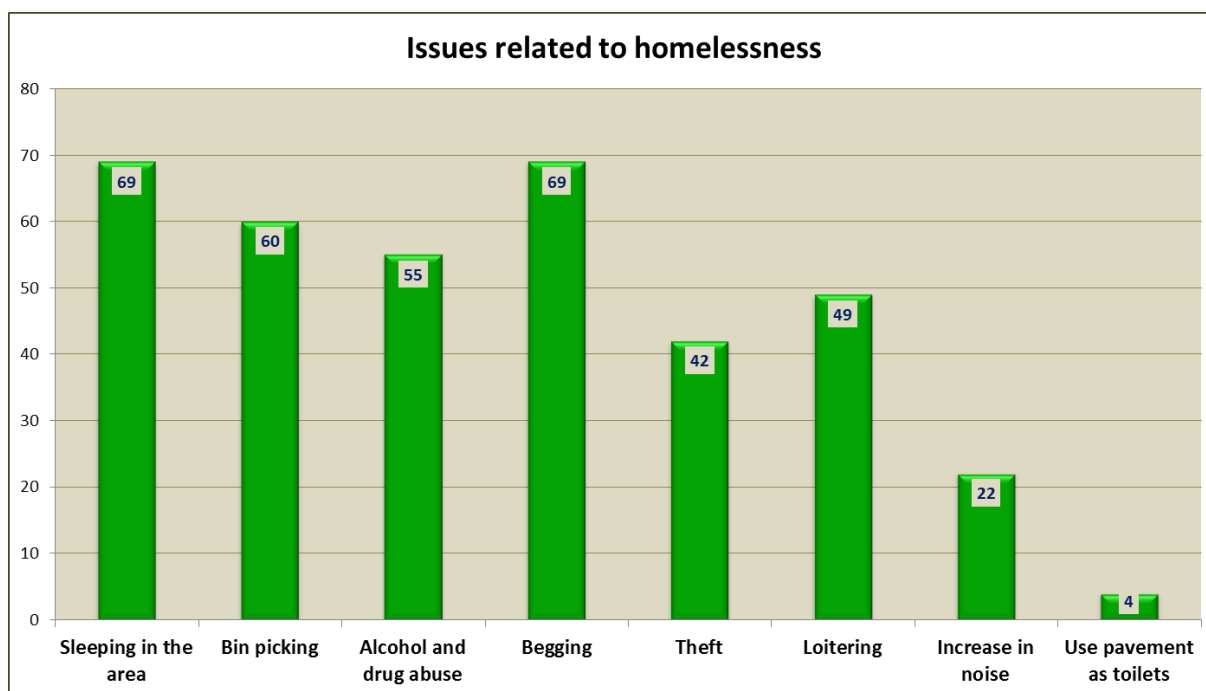


Figure 49 Issues related to homelessness and the social environment

Participants to the survey indicated various locations and public areas, especially around the shops as locations frequently used by homeless people. Table 4 lists the locations frequented by homeless people. Figures 58 to 61 illustrate the typical activities of homeless people in the area.

Table 4 Location frequented by homeless people

Location	Count	Location	Count
Main Road	27	KFC area	3
All Over	16	Andries Pretorius Street	3
Caledon Street	7	Parking lots	3
Near to Library	7	Bright Street	3
Victoria Road	6	Drama Street	2
Close to taxi rank	6	Church Street	2
Shopping Centres	5	Soup kitchen	2
Post Office	3	Dirkie Uys	1
Lourens Road	3		



Figure 50 Homeless people in the area of the taxi rank



Figure 51 Homeless persons



Figure 52 Homeless person in park area



Figure 53 Homeless people sleeping in park

Section 6 - Marketing of Somerset West

Survey participants were asked if it would be useful to have events in order to improve business opportunities in Somerset West. 85% of respondents answered yes and supported the idea. Most supported the idea of promoting business in the area. Participants were asked to indicate what type of events they would prefer and support. Some of the ideas included:

- 52% supported a carnival type event
- 60% supported a fresh food market event
- 44% support business promotion events
- Drug awareness campaign

Ranking the priorities for Somerset West

This survey element of the questionnaire concluded with an opportunity for participants to rank each of the seven general themes of the survey in terms of its importance (See Table 5). As shown in Table 5, 81% of the respondents that responded ranked safety and security as the most important issue. Litter and cleanliness was selected as the second highest priority in Somerset West. Social issues such as vagrancy and begging were ranked as the third highest priority in the area.

Table 5 Ranking of priorities for Somerset West

Service delivery category	Most important	2nd most important	3rd most important
Safety and security (including lighting)	81% selected		
Litter and cleanliness		47.5% selected	
Road and street signage			
Maintenance of public spaces			
Social issues such as vagrancy and begging			47.5% selected
Marketing of the area			

Respondents' predisposition towards the establishment of an SRA was tested by asking participants if they would be prepared to pay a top-up levy on their rates bill for more and improved municipal services and public security in the area. Overall, 77 respondents answered the question. 35% answered in support of the idea (See Figure 54).

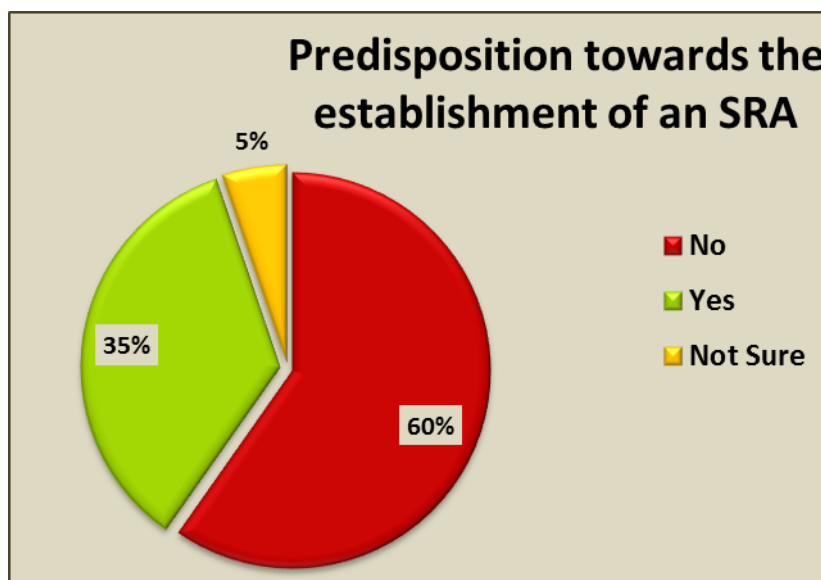


Figure 54 Predisposition towards the establishment of an SRA

Both the main survey participants as well as the shopper and user survey respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on the change in the status of the area over the last five years. 52% of the respondents of the main opinion survey indicated that the area has deteriorated. Only 13% indicated that it has improved. The user survey was mainly conducted amongst workers in the business area. Only 28% indicated that the area has deteriorated. 48% of respondents were of the opinion that the area has remained the same and 24% was of the opinion that it has improved. See Figures 55 and 56.

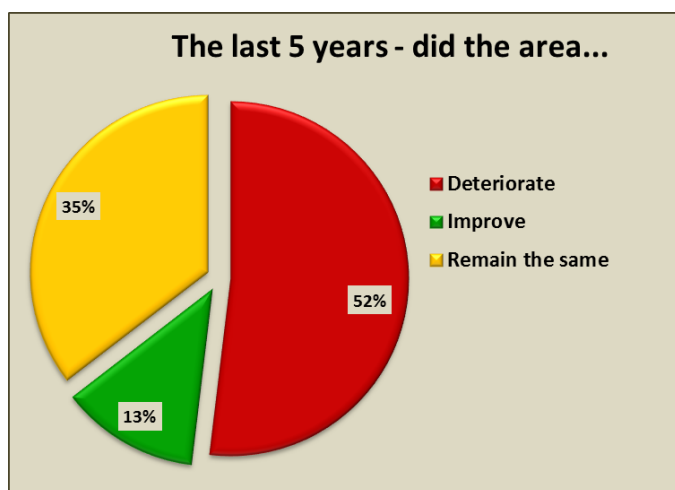


Figure 55 Status of the area over last 5 years

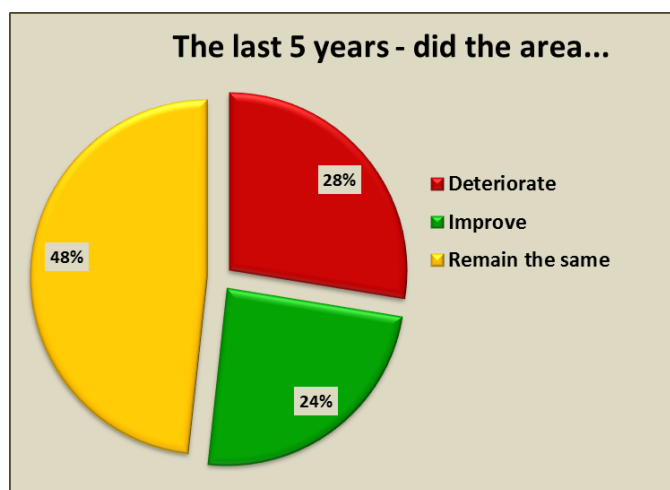


Figure 56 Status of area over last 5 years according to shoppers

General Comments

All participants were given the opportunity to express their concerns by providing specific comments at the end of the survey form. These comments were as far as possible captured directly as they were provided with due consideration of grammar and spelling where possible. However, details of the comments were not changed in any manner and in **most cases captured with obvious errors**. Table 6 lists some of the responses received.

Table 6 Comments and responses received

General Comments & Suggestions
Better security in general, lighting at Caledon street parking lots, more modernisation. My City transport link please as the current Golden Arrow City Service is only in the morning and late evening and very unreliable.
Clear up taxi rank area and informal trade in parking areas. Have police do foot patrol.

Create more work for local South Africans.
Homeless people and their litter is a great concern. My staff use the trains and busses, but are scared due to being victim of crime in the areas before.
Improved safety / security and cleanliness.
increase Safety and Security and business owners marketing awareness
I've recently been in Bela Bela their CBD is spotlessly clean. Business owners see to this
Magistrate's office - looks shocking.
Major concern is the vagrants hanging around. Security of business as well as customers.
More Security/ police visibility
Paying for parking in quiet streets seems silly
Please make the police more visible in Main Road of Somerset West
Please move the soup kitchen out of the CBD, it deteriorates the value of Somerset West CBD and causes crime, littering and violence.
Put more security on the streets, will be less crimes & muggings.
Q 39 needs further discussion, most people are happy to "pay more if they are receiving more", But the relationship should be totally transparent and the benefits must satisfy the necessities.
Road names, more shelters, Bins with lids for the public.
Security is our main concern. Police are not performing- we have to pay extra money on private security.
Send criminals to jail . Don't let them go - bring back Death Penalty.
should improve lighting in all areas - homeless people should have a certain area, having lived abroad - England and Australia in particular, they should have cameras on all robots and introduce the de-merit system with those fines put it back into infrastructure and better policing.
Should make Somerset West a cleaner and safer place.
Somerset west has so much potential- but is overrun with social problems
Somerset West is a high crime risk area and dangerous walking to stations.
Thank you for this attempt at improving our business area. As we are a charity and occupy most of Drama st. between Main rd and Caledon, could the parking be made free parking
The CBD needs to be made more pedestrian and bicycle friendly. Heavy traffic needs to be re - directed off Main st and onto the 2 roads either side (these need to be upgrade to cope). Pedestrian Life needs to be encouraged with walkways, thereby encouraging coffee shops, restaurants and bistros to come into CBD. This cannot happen before CBD has been made safe and attractive.
The local Businesses needs more support.
The police need to do their job i.e. protect the safety of citizens = a general problem in this country.
This CBD is dirty - compared to 15 yrs ago it was clean. Taxi rank is dangerous and filthy.
Use this to get the municipality just to do their jobs - we pay for it anyway.
Vagrants by the bridge area and main road make it impossible for evening / night shift workers to get home safely. Continuous problems.
Visible parking + cleaning of pavements + parking officials not welcome not necessary + Beggars is a problem to my centres.
We would like flower beds and more art (like Stellenbosch CBD)
We would like speed bumps on Andries Pretorius Street, or light on intersection of St James and Andries Pretorius St. Traffic
We would like to see safe public transportation at reasonable fees.

Conclusion

The survey was conducted over a period of two weeks in May and June 2014. From the responses received it would seem that some participants are aware of crime, concerned about crime or have been directly affected by crime. Crime seems to be focussed on property related crimes and it is perceived that most crimes are committed during the day and early evenings.

Clearly, the management of the public environment is important to those who own property or businesses in the area and the need for urban management, safety and general improvement of the area seems a high priority to most survey respondents. Although problems of safety and some deterioration of the Somerset West infrastructure are evident most participants are positive that an intervention could improve the area. The area also has distinct social problems which are highlighted frequently.

A proper level of intervention through coordinated management of the area will no doubt maintain and improve the existing infrastructure. The problems and issues of the area can be addressed through a number of formal and/or civic mechanisms which may include the formation of an SRA.