

# 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.



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.

# 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.

# Diverse Downtowns | Trenton (State Street), 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.

State Street is a walkable downtown with a robust and diverse residential population, and it has a healthy mix of retail types. The office and cultural uses along State Street also add to its diversity. However, the downtown has one of the highest vacancy rates in the region. These qualities are why Trenton's State Street received a Diversity Score of 39, which indicates that it is one of the more diverse downtowns in the region.

Despite its diversity, State Street was more impacted than the average downtown, and it received a Pandemic Impact Score of 58. The high vacancy rate most likely exacerbated the pandemic's impact.

39

## Diversity Score

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

58

## Pandemic Impact Score

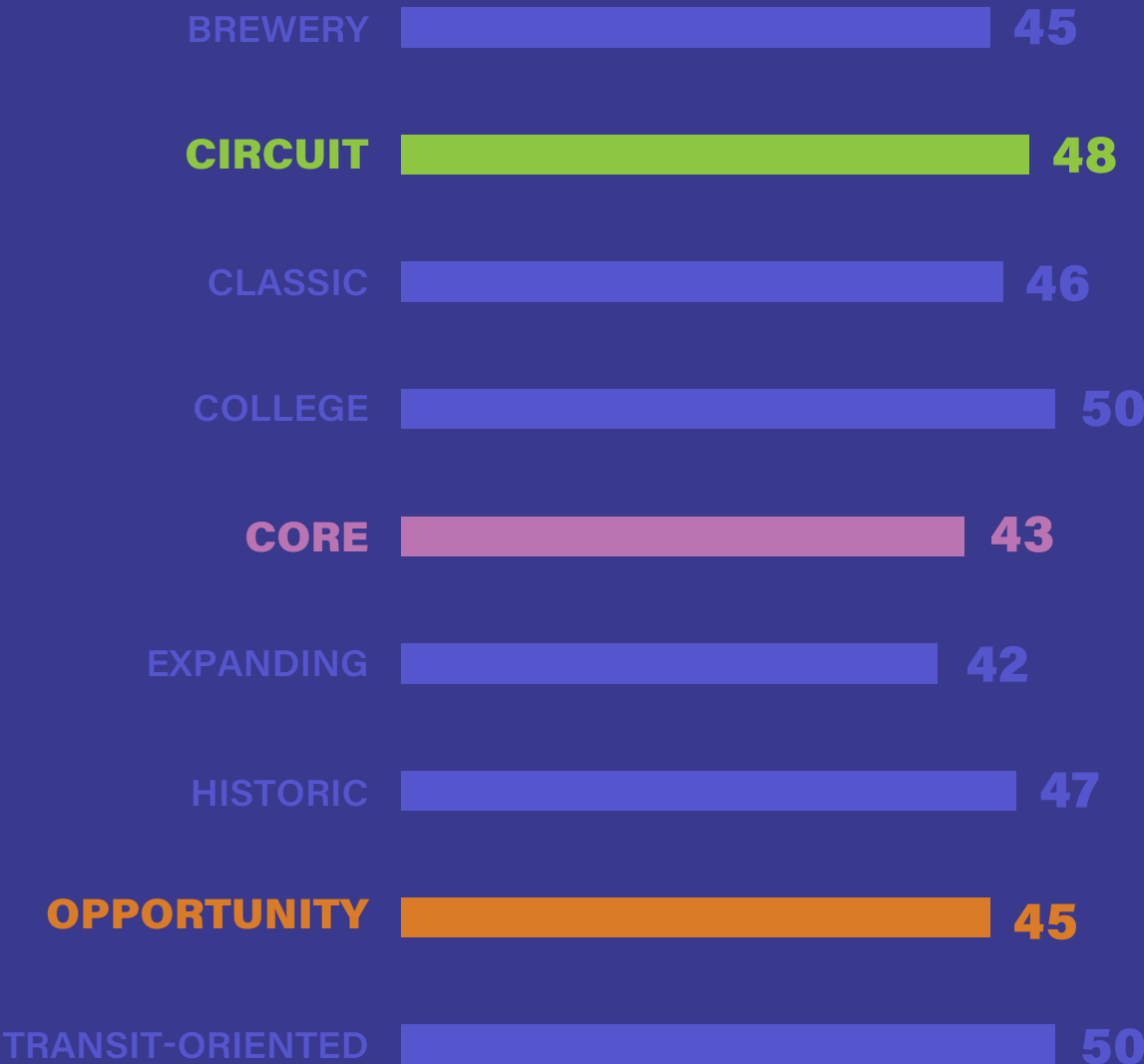
*Visits and trade area pre-pandemic, and during the shut-down and reopening periods*

# 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. State Street is considered to be three typologies: *Circuit* (although the trail has not yet been built), *Core*, and *Opportunity*. Downtowns that are considered to be three typologies had an average Pandemic Impact Score of 53.

It is worth noting that *Circuit* downtowns that have not yet built their Circuit Trail had an average score of 53, compared to a score of 48 for those that have an existing trail.



# Downtown Population

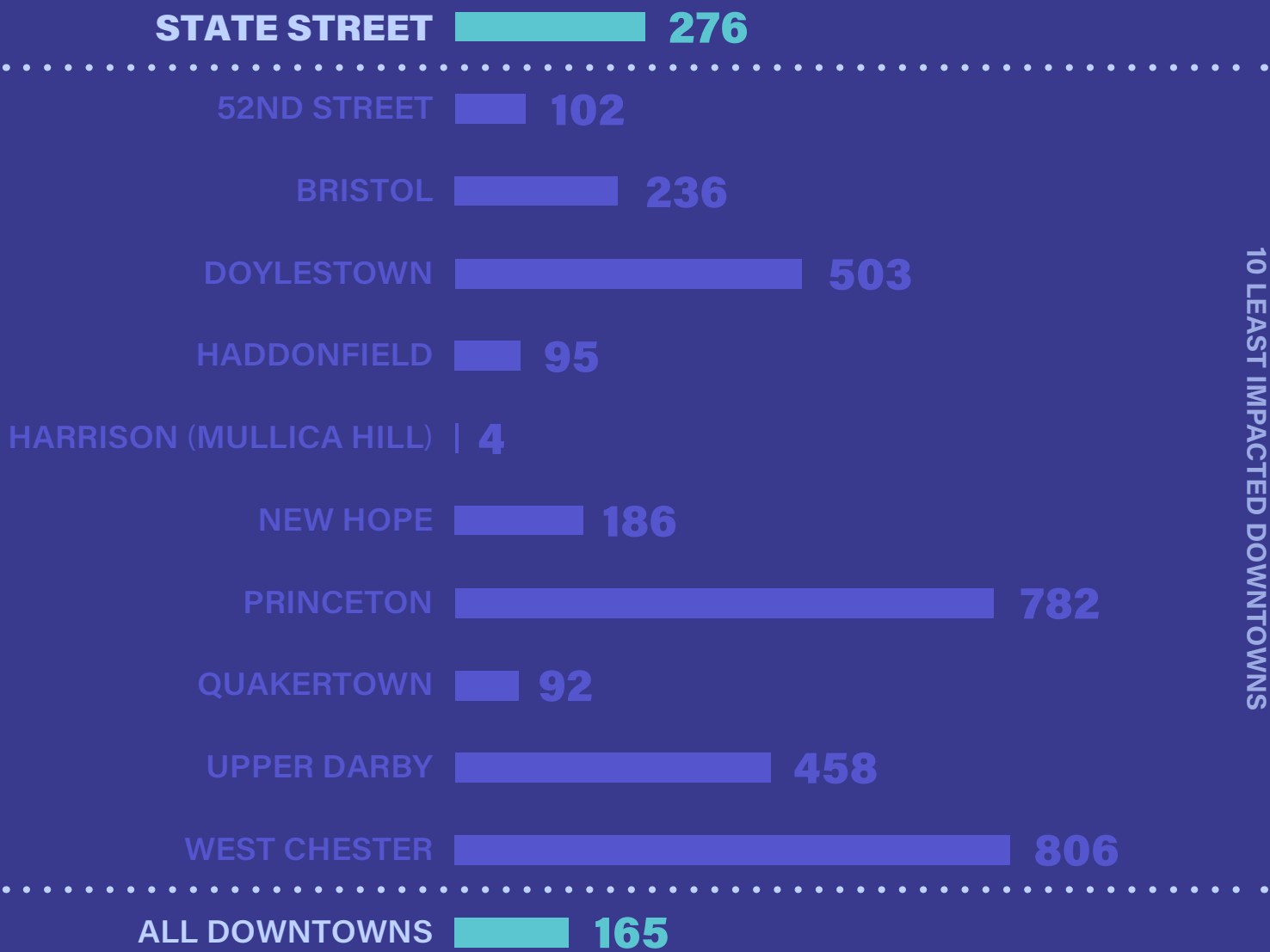
A negative correlation between the estimated population of the region’s downtowns and the Pandemic Impact Score was identified. In other words, the larger the downtown population, the smaller the impact.

In 2019, the population in the State Street retail district was estimated to be 276, compared to the average of 165 for all downtowns and 326 for the least impacted downtowns.

State Street’s population is one of the most diverse with regards to demographics, with the Black, Hispanic, and White populations accounting for 64%, 35%, and 16%, respectively.



SOURCE: BUXTON CO.



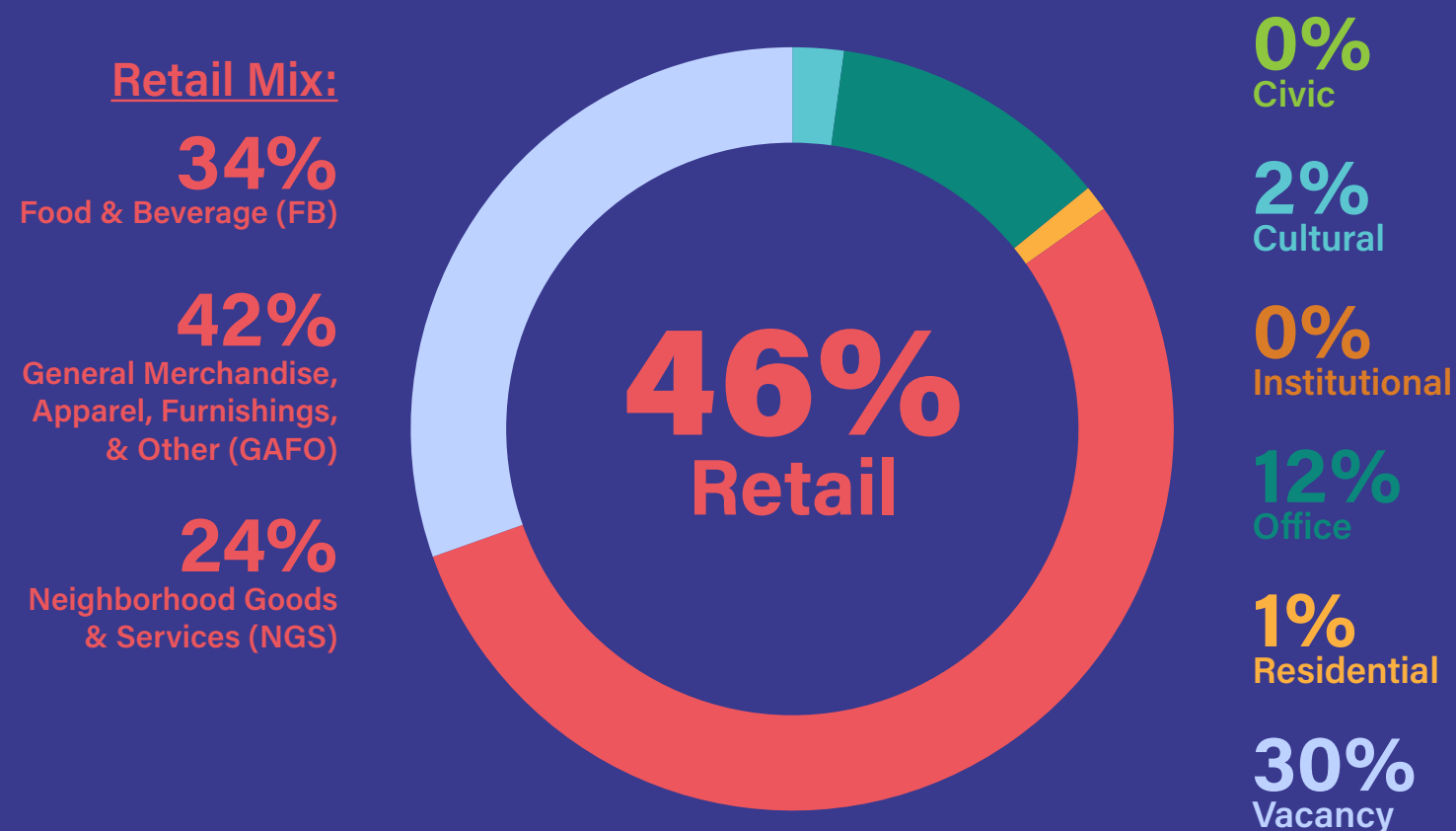
10 LEAST IMPACTED DOWNTOWNS

## Mix of Uses

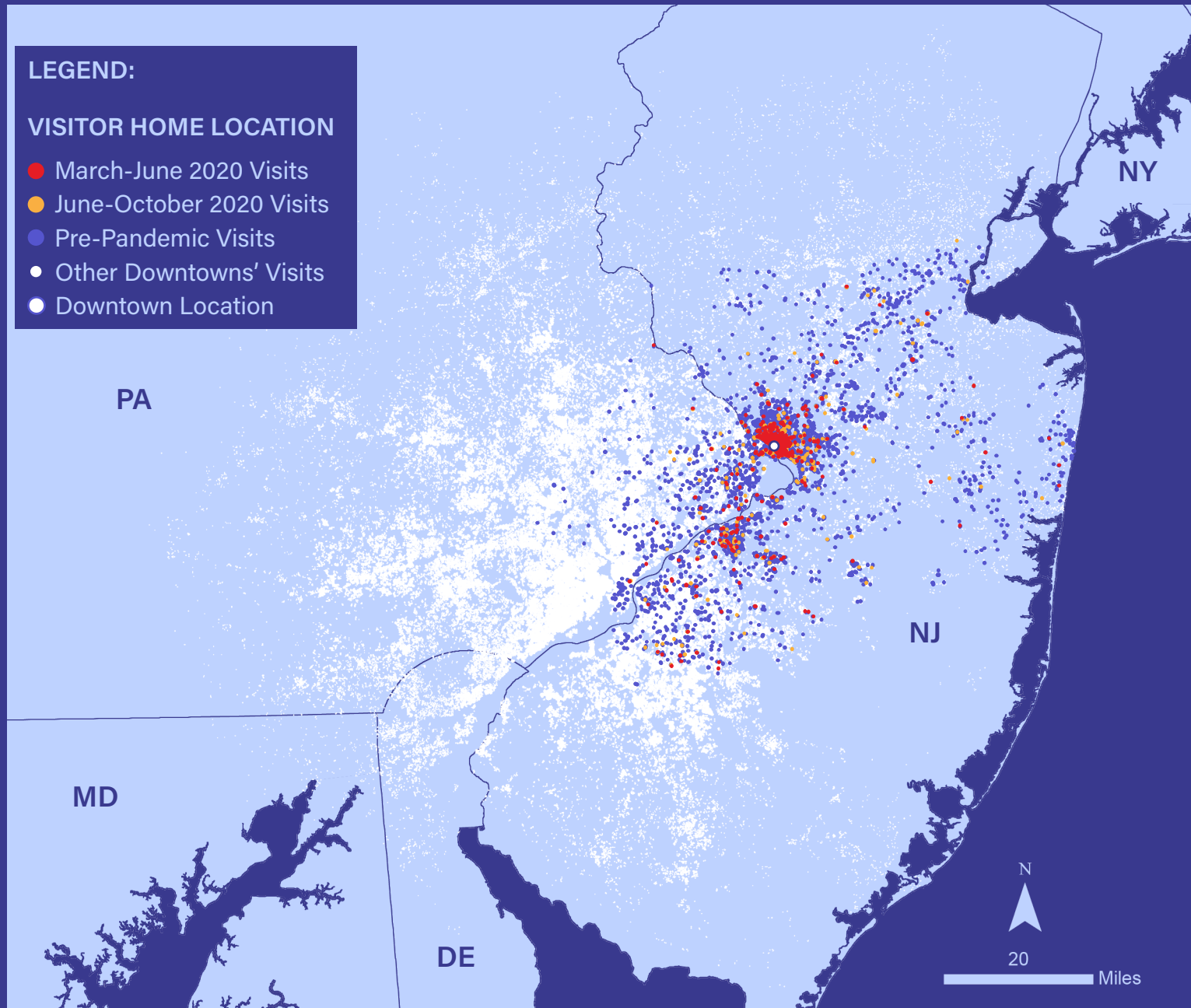
Retail accounts for 46% of the uses along State Street, which is much less than the averages of 57% for all downtowns and 60% for the least impacted downtowns.

In the least impacted downtowns, the share of *Food & Beverage (FB)* and *General Merchandise, Apparel, Furnishings & Other (GAFO)* retailers made up smaller shares of 30% and 38%, respectively. On average, as the share of each of these increased the Pandemic Impact Score decreased.

Conversely, *Neighborhood Goods & Services (NGS)* retailers made up a much larger share of 30% in the least impacted downtowns, while the average vacancy rate in the least impacted downtowns was significantly lower at 7.8%. In general, as the share of NGS retailers or the vacancy rate increased, so did the Pandemic Impact Score.







## 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 State Street were as follows:

### ● Pre-Pandemic

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 0.0%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 8.4%
New Jersey: 91.6%	

### ● Shutdown | March 13 - June 15, 2020

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 0.0%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 5.9%
New Jersey: 94.1%	

### ● Reopening | June 16 - October 31, 2020

Delaware: 0.0%	New York: 0.0%
Maryland: 0.0%	Pennsylvania: 5.5%
New Jersey: 94.5%	

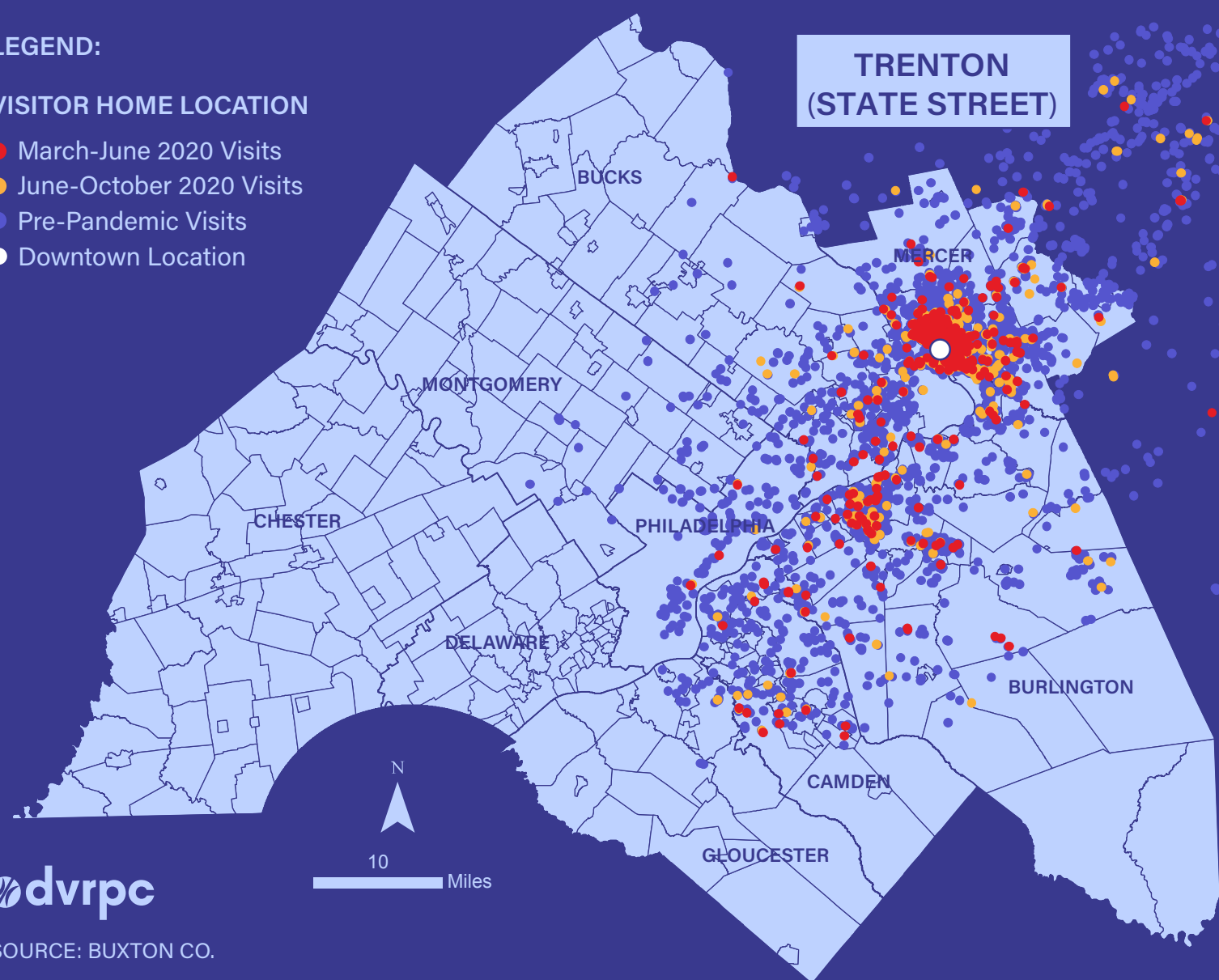




LEGEND:

VISITOR HOME LOCATION

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



SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

## Visits to Downtown

Before the pandemic, visitors to State Street came from lower Bucks, Burlington, Camden, and Mercer Counties, as well as from beyond the region. During the pandemic, most visitors came from within Mercer County, as well from portions of Burlington County.

Between August 2018 and March 2020, 9,590 people visited the downtown, which was more than the average of 8,800 visits for all of the downtowns.

During the shutdown (March 13 - June 15) there were 685 visits, and during the reopening period (June 16 - October 31) there were 809 visits to State Street.

# Shutdown Impact

March 13 - June 15, 2020

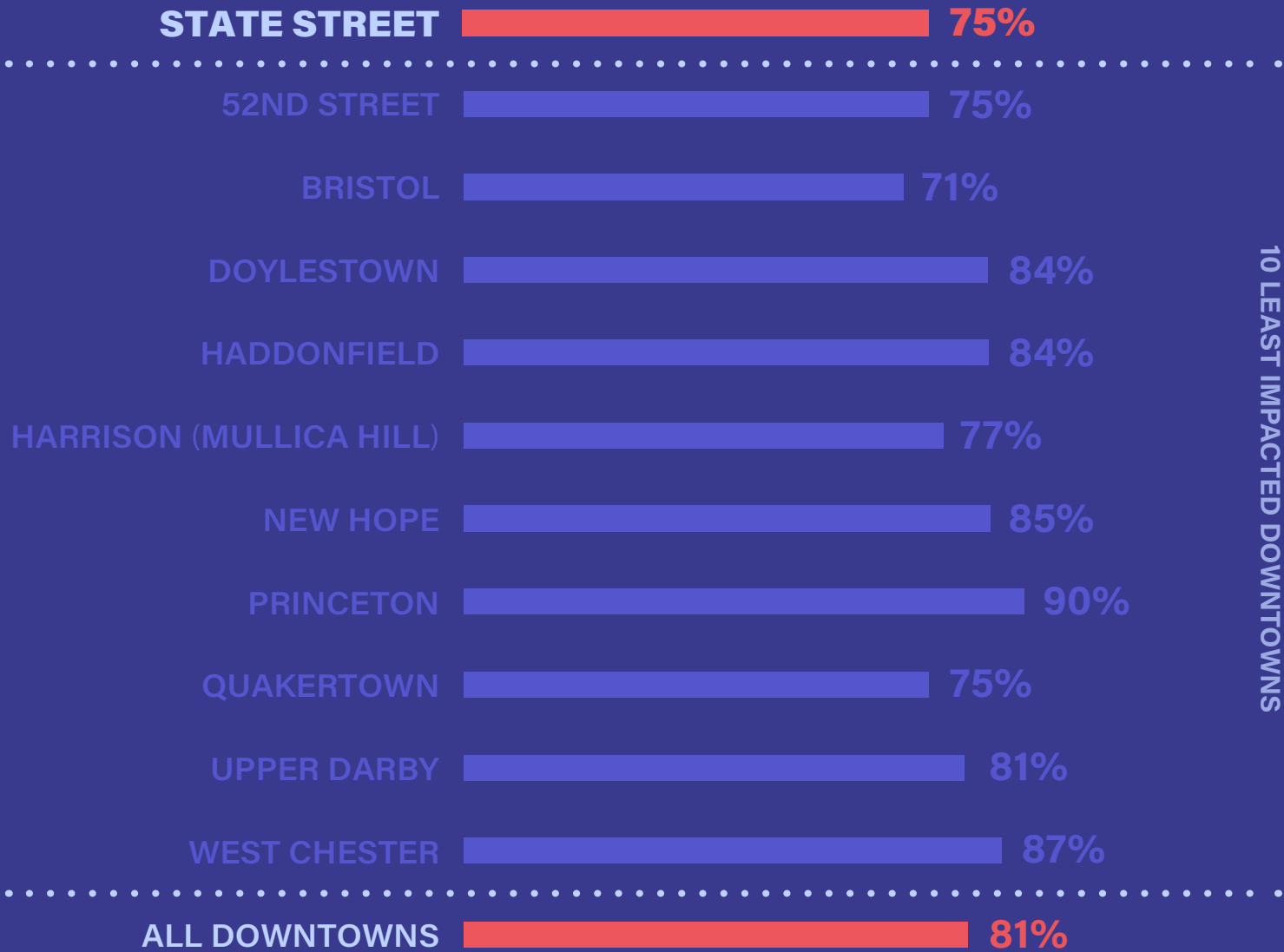
During the economic shutdown, there were 685 visits to State Street compared to 2,721 visits during the same period in 2019. This equated to a 75% reduction.

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%.



SOURCE: BUXTON CO.



10 LEAST IMPACTED DOWNTOWNS

# Reopening Rebound

June 16 - October 31, 2020

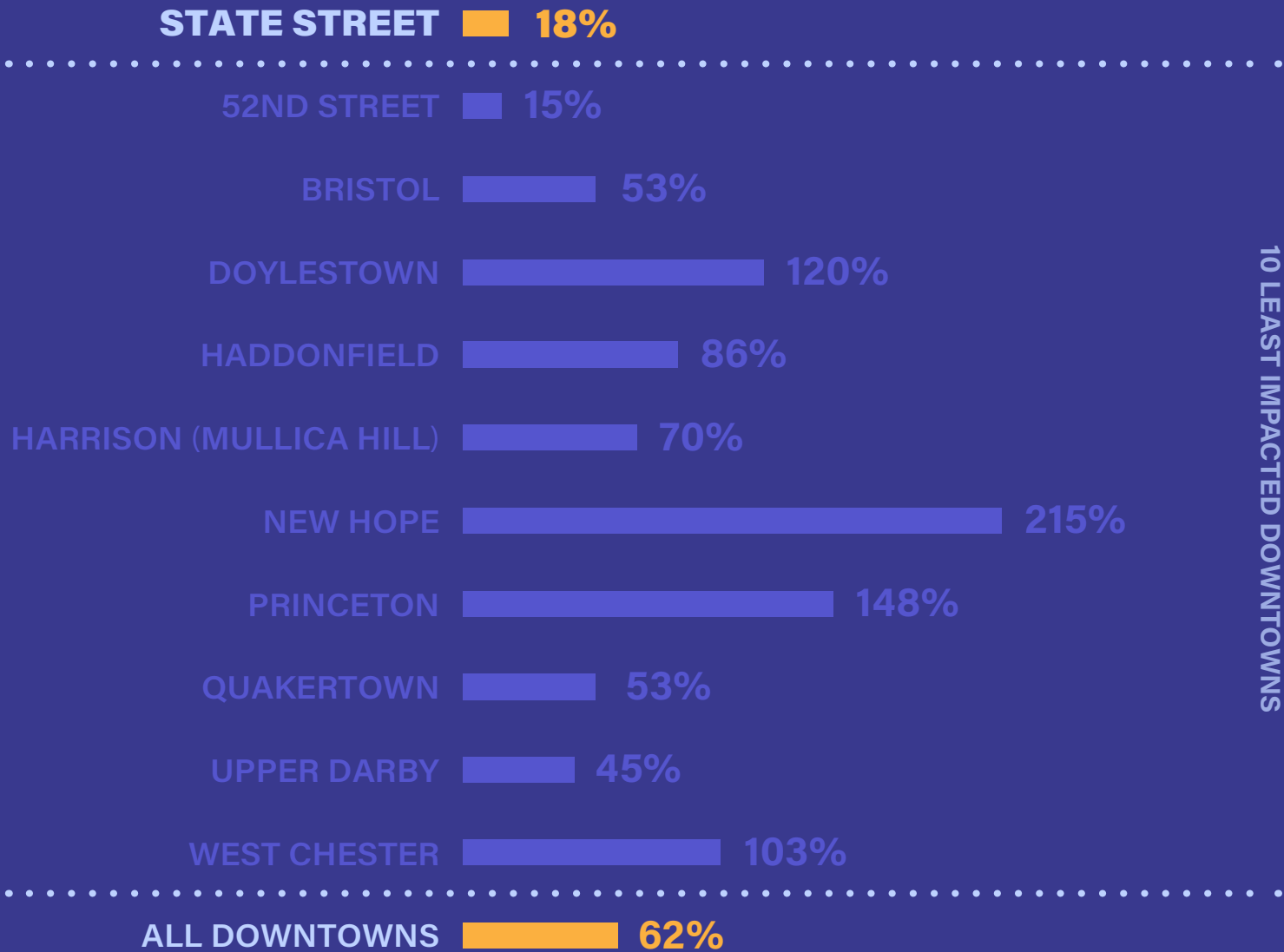
Visits to State Street increased by 18% during the reopening period to a total of 809 visits. This was 75% fewer than the 3,229 visits that occurred during the same period in 2019.

On average, visits increased by 62% for all 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.



SOURCE: BUXTON CO.



# Trade Area Recovery

(Drive Time in Minutes)

State Street's pre-pandemic trade area was a 26 minute drive time, and the trade area shrank by 38% during the shutdown to 16 minutes. State Street was one of 10 downtowns to observe no change to the trade area during the reopening period.

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.



SOURCE: BUXTON CO.

